

# DCMA Group Leaders Meet in Reno

by Mr. Art Forster, Director, Congressional and Public Affairs,  
DCMA Headquarters

“Achieving Customer Outcomes with an Agile Workforce” was the theme for the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Group Leaders Conference in Reno, Nev., Aug. 22-24. Approximately 250 technical assessment and operations group leaders, customer liaison representatives and operational center directors from throughout the Agency were in attendance. In his opening remarks, Mr. Keith Ernst, DCMA acting director, updated attendees on the progress of the Agency’s realignment efforts. He emphasized “this is not about reorganization — it’s about realigning to improve our enterprise-wide support to our customers.” He also said that DCMA can expect more budget challenges in the future and that the Agency will be using customer outcomes as a basis for allocating resources.

The conference included presentations, panel discussions and breakout sessions covering a variety of subjects including earned value management, product assurance, forward pricing rate agreements and performance-based management. Several guest speakers shared their perspectives on the importance of leadership in assuring the success of Agency programs. Former DCMA attorney Mr. Robert Burton, now acting administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, addressed the challenges facing the acquisition community and underscored the importance of training for government acquisition professionals. Another DCMA alumnus, Air Force Col. John Daniels, director of the Missile Defense Agency’s airborne laser system program office, challenged group leaders to “be excited about your job and work hard to improve the Agency’s core competencies.” He said leaders are “in a position to change

the environment” and that “we should all welcome diversity.”



Members of the DCMA senior leadership team provided updates on their respective areas of responsibility and described how their staffs were adjusting to the new organizational changes resulting from the Agency’s realignment. Mr. Jerry Derrick, director of the Customer Management division on the Headquarters Contract Operations staff, outlined the Agency’s new customer engagement strategy and described the critical role of DCMA’s customer liaison representatives.

In her summary remarks, conference host Ms. Becky Davies, executive director, Contract Operations and Customer Relations, expressed her appreciation to all for their hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence. She asked team leaders to “encourage and support those who volunteer to deploy overseas for contingency contracting assignments.” Ms. Davies pledged that her staff is “focused on delivering better policy, counsel and training to enable the DCMA workforce to succeed.” She also reaffirmed the Agency’s leadership commitment to developing leaders through the Agency’s recently announced Tomorrow’s Leaders program.

**(Above)** Mr. Jerry Derrick, director, Customer Management division, DCMA Contract Operations, addresses attendees of the Group Leaders Conference in Reno, Nev., Aug. 22-24. (Photo by Mr. Art Forster, DCMA Headquarters)