

DIRECTOR SPEAKS AT AEROSPACE, DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

By Cassandra Locke, DCMA Public Affairs

The Defense Contract Management Agency was represented at the 2010 Aerospace and Defense Contract Management Conference in San Diego, March 25-26. The conference theme was “Better Program Results through Improved Government-Industry Relations.”

Charlie E. Williams, Jr., DCMA director, along with Francis Summers, Defense Contract Audit Agency deputy director, and Karl Bird, Jet Propulsion Laboratory Acquisition Division manager, were panelists in the Aerospace and Defense Acquisition: Perspectives of Government Leaders discussion.

Williams was first to speak and started his introduction with illustrating the agency’s critical role in contract management.

“We’ve spread out quite broadly and are hiring about 3,000 people in the next few years,” said Williams. “We have a tremendous responsibility, and [we] can’t just worry about total numbers; we need to hire those who are competent.”

Williams then elaborated on what he called the “five truisms.” The first truism he touched on was how the level of oversight in contract management has heightened. Second, he said the agency has a significant amount of programs that are over cost and overscheduled.

“We need clear and defined requirements. This places challenges on our warfighters and industry,



Charlie E. Williams, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency director, speaks to those in attendance at the 2010 Aerospace and Defense Contract Management Conference in San Diego, March 25. Williams discussed the agency’s critical support to the warfighters, the agency’s upcoming challenges and the agency’s future recruitment goals.

and this results in more oversight,” said Williams.

The third truism addressed was the workforce challenges the agency faces. He said DCMA needs to recruit trained, competent individuals in contract management and noted that knowledge sharing among those in the profession is critical.

The last truism was how the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have taught contract managers how to overcome challenges. He said there needs to be collaboration to produce the results the warfighters deserve. “We’ve got to figure out the right answer; we have a collective interest,” said Williams.

Lastly, Williams touched on the DCMA relationship with DCAA and rebutted misconceptions about the organizations’ relationship.

“It’s important our agencies work together collectively. We may not

always agree, but we need to reconcile our issues at the tactical level together,” said Williams.

The conference was hosted by the National Contract Management Association, and the goal was to assemble a wide variety of leaders from both government and industry who can provide different perspectives that can help everyone become better contracting professionals. NCMA provided a forum to provide an opportunity to meet with those outside of the traditional workplace to exchange lessons learned and build relationships.

DCMA was an exhibitor at the conference, and outside entities asked several questions ranging from recruitment opportunities, the agency realignment and the agency’s new core processes. More than 30 conference attendees inquired about the agency’s Keystone Intern Program. ■

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