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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For Immediate Release:
June 9, 2010

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Huntsville Center welcomes a new Small Business chief

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Rebecca Vucinaj joined the Small Business Office in April in a move from Center Contracting's Pre-Award Branch. She had worked as a contract specialist in the Pre-Award Branch since November 2008.

She brings to the SBO chief position more than 15 years contracting experience with Naval Facilities Engineering Command, and was previously a Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization representative with the Marine Corps and Navy at Camp LeJeune, N.C and NAVFAC, Marianas on Guam, respectively.

Vucinaj received a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Maryland, and a master's degree in management from Troy State University.

Vucinaj said she is all about goal achievement through communication and partnering large and small businesses with key persons in Center Contracting and Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate at Huntsville Center.

This is not the first time Vucinaj has been assigned to the Huntsville Center SBO. According to Vucinaj, it was during a 120-day detail assignment to the SBO in 2008 that she began fostering a good working environment between businesses and Huntsville Center's product delivery teams. Vucinaj managed to set up a central repository site that allows employees to enter data electronically to a DD-Form 2579. The DD Form 2579 is a management tool used to screen proposed acquisition to ensure that consideration has been afforded to small and small disadvantaged business concerns, and that they receive an equitable opportunity to participate in the proposed acquisition. The contracting officer is responsible for preparing DD Form 2579 and coordinating her/or his decisions or recommendations on a particular acquisition with the Office of Small Business Programs. Vucinaj streamlined the three-day process down to four hours, and contract specialist and contracting officers are able to sign and submit the form to the SBO electronically.

Tonju Butler, Pre-award Team B branch chief and also Vucinaj's former supervisor said Vucinaj's move to the new position has helped to build on the positive relationship between Center Contracting and the SBO that Vucinaj began while on the temporary assignment to the SBO.

"Rebecca has a zest for improving processes to help the customer," Butler said. "She streamlined the tracking process for 2579's, and made the entire process easier for Center Contracting teams because we couldn't go forward with a contract unless the paper form was date-stamped and signed by the contract specialist, contracting officer, and the small business specialist. We can work faster."

Vucinaj said partnering is her first priority. She welcomes the opportunity to foster good working relationships between businesses and Huntsville Center teams. Her background in Center Contracting and experience within other organizations has prepared her for the job.

“This is an exciting opportunity for me,” Vucinaj said. “The puzzle (match-making) can look challenging; it’s my job to find the right fit for businesses with our organization.”