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To: James F. Gerraughty
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Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator - October 2023
*by James Gerraughty,
APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC) Program Manager*



I usually ramble on in these openers to the newsletter about seasonal items. This time, the opener will be about our funding extension through March 31,2024! We received our funding extension and are happy that we can continue our support to businesses in the area in their pursuit of government contracting! I want to heartily thank our APEX staff for getting me the information for the application, our leadership for working with me on the budgeting and planning, and our funding partners at DoD Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) and the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED) in this process!

As we head into Fall and Winter, we're going to have various training courses, some online, some face-to-face, on various topics related to government contracting. We have our annual virtual Tri State Mega Matchmaker on December 5-6, 2023, and it's shaping up to be an interesting one with numerous agencies and prime contractors. All of these events are free to attend, but you must register. You can review and register for upcoming events on our [eCenter page](#).

If you have ideas for topics, or would like to learn more about something, please drop us a line at (814) 949-6500 or by [email](#).

For Rural Communities, Broadband Expansion is no Single Thing

By Ilana Newman, The Daily Yonder, via Route Fifty

Small communities trying to take advantage of massive federal funding now available for broadband expansion deal with multiple hurdles. Resistance from major providers is just one of them.

Tourism runs the economy in the old mining town of Silverton, Colorado. From skiers in the winter to hikers and four-wheelers and mountain enthusiasts of all stripes in the summer—without tourism, the town of around 600 people has very little industry.

And there is one resource the town is absolutely dependent on—the internet.

Most coffee shops, restaurants, and souvenir shops rely on the Internet to keep their business running—without it, owners can't accept credit or debit cards. Without reliable, affordable internet, rural communities have limited economic opportunities and lack access to education, healthcare, and many other services.

[The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#), under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed in November of 2021, provides grants to states for broadband expansion to provide accessible, high-speed internet especially to rural communities. States, local governments, and nonprofits are now tasked with finding ways to use the currently available funding to bring broadband to residents.

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(Accessed 10/03/2023)

New Pentagon Cyber Strategy Emphasizes Industry and Global Partnerships

By Chris Riotta, Staff Reporter, NextGov/FCW

A top Defense Department official described the private sector as “absolutely essential” in implementing the agency’s new cyber strategy.

A top Defense Department official said Wednesday that expanding information sharing relationships with industry and international partners will be crucial for implementing the department's 2023 cyber strategy.

An unclassified version of the strategy released this week described capacity-building and cooperation with allies and partners as a top priority for the department in cyberspace, in addition to enhanced bilateral technical collaboration with key stakeholders.

The fourth iteration of the cyber strategy builds on lessons learned from previous large-scale cybersecurity operations and observations of how Russia has leveraged cyber throughout its invasion of Ukraine, according to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy John Plumb.

"The private sector is absolutely essential in our collective efforts to become more cyber resilient, from adopting cyber best practices to mitigating threats in a crisis," Plumb said at an event on the 2023 DOD cyber strategy hosted by the Center for a New American Security. "Our success as a nation is not just up to the U.S. military — it can't be." [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 10/03/2023)

No Work No Play: SBA Reminds Contractors of HUBZone Employment Requirements

By Gregory Webber, Snr Associate Attorney, Koprince McCall Pottroff LLC

One of the pillars of the SBA's HUBZone program is the location of a company's employees. In August of this year, SBA released an Information Notice emphasizing important points about where employees reside, and HUBZone entity's efforts to employ the necessary amount of employees residing in HUBZone areas. While SBA's HUBZone policies don't have the weight of law as compared to a regulation, the HUBZone office will generally enforce this sort of guidance quite strictly. So don't think it's just a suggestion. As these are crucial elements of eligibility, it is important for all HUBZone businesses to be aware and reminded of SBA's expectations.

We have covered the basics of how to qualify for the HUBZone program before. I highly recommend you read that article, along with this one (and our other HUBZone articles), if you are interested in the HUBZone program. As you may notice, one of the unique aspects of the HUBZone program is the emphasis on where employees reside.

To qualify to participate in the HUBZone program (among many other items) a business must have at least 35% of its employees residing within a HUBZone. Participants must also certify that they will attempt to maintain the 35% requirement throughout performance of any HUBZone contract, and those that fall below 20% during contract performance will be definitively determined to have failed to attempt to maintain the HUBZone residency requirements. SBA, in a recent Information Notice focused in on

reminders to contractors about what truly qualifies as employing a HUBZone resident, and how to maintain the necessary employment percentages.

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(Accessed 10-03-2023)

About US

The PTAC/APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The PTAC/APEX Accelerator stands ready to support businesses in the central PA Alleghenies region in the pursuit to secure contracts with local, state and/or federal government agencies nationwide.



Due to the generous support of our Commonwealth and Federal funding partners, services provided by the PTAC/APEX Accelerator are free of charge.

Whether you are an experienced contractor or new to the government marketplace, the PTAC/APEX Accelerator will provide one-on-one counseling utilizing all of the program resources necessary to increase your share of contract awards.

Contact us today at the PTAC/APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC to get started!

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