



Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator - July
by James Gerraughty
SAP&DC APEX Accelerator Program Manager



Wrapping up our first whirlwind, er, quarter has been fun. We've had a lot of communications with clients and stakeholders, and are planning some outreach events for the 2nd half of 2024.

This newsletter will be bittersweet, with the retirement of SAP&DC's Director of Business Development, Deborah (Debbi) Prosser at the end of June. Debbi was with SAP&DC for 40 years (!) and is looking forward to her next act! I've had the pleasure of working with Debbi since I started in 2012, and have found her counsel reassuring through all the changes that our program has gone through. She is also a heck of a baker! I wish her well in her retirement!

It's also a good time to introduce Zachary Lee as our new Director of Business Development! I look forward to working with him towards the benefit of our clients, community and organization!

For upcoming outreach events, we have an ongoing DCAA monthly class, a cybersecurity monthly class, a HUBZone webinar on 7 AUG 2024, and an NSA Cybersecurity webinar on 13 AUG 2024. All of these classes are free to attend, but you need to register to get the login information. Please review our training opportunities that are coming up in June 2024 and beyond on our [eCenter page](#). Stop back often, as the training events do update regularly!

Finally, 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](#). We'd love to hear from you!



I'm happy to have updated signage for our APEX's front door! Special thanks out to Jennifer Judd Designs, LLC and StelTek Graphics, both of Bedford, PA, for their outstanding design work and decal installation!

Highway Humor is Over Some Drivers' Heads By Tim Henderson, Stateline

States to drivers: READ OUR WITTY HIGHWAY SIGNS. Feds to states: YOU'RE NOT FUNNY. States have had their fun with highway safety messages, posting everything from Taylor Swift lyrics to discourage texting in Mississippi, to a "vibe check" — winking at Gen Z — to encourage seat belt use in Arizona.

Such messages are shown intermittently on thousands of highway signs, known as variable messaging signs, when the billboards aren't lit up with alerts about accidents, construction or other real-time traffic issues.

As the summer vacation season gets going, millions of America's interstate drivers can expect to find more puns, silly turns of phrase or cultural references on those massive missives.

But federal safety officials aren't amused by states' cheek. In recent years, they've begun to discourage what they view as overly creative messages, fearing that in trying to entertain drivers, highway officials are confusing rather than enlightening them. Some states, most recently Arizona and New Jersey, have pushed back. As a result, officials at the Federal Highway Administration clarified this year that they're not banning road-sign humor outright. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 6/26/2024)

SBA Proposed Rule: Make WOSB, SDVOSB, and 8(a) Regulations More Consistent By Stephanie Ellis, Attorney, Koprince McCall Pottroff LLC

If you ask any small business federal government contractor or their attorney for the top complaints about the regulations that apply to the Small Business Administration, inconsistency between the various programs is likely to show up on that list. At first glance, it seems the requirements are pretty standard across the board. However, when you dive deeper, you'll likely notice that even though the requirements are similar, there are enough small differences in the language you can't just assume that, say, a requirement for service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) is going to be the same for a woman-owned small business (WOSB) or an 8(a) Program participant.

The differences make it crucial to look at the specific regulations for the specific SBA program to ensure compliance. You can't just assume that they are the same. Thankfully, it looks like the SBA has finally heard our cries for consistency with a recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, in which it attempts to align the WOSB Program with the new SDVOSB/VetCert Program and the 8(a) Program. And, as an added bonus, the beginnings of what appears to be a plan to make the WOSB certification process a bit easier if your business is already certified under either the 8(a) program or the SDVOSB program.

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(Accessed 6/26/2024)

SBA Certification Website Upgrade By SBA Staff

SBA CERTIFICATIONS UPGRADE: What You Need to Know

The SBA is upgrading how our customers apply for and manage their federal contracting certifications. What do you need to know?

SBA's certification upgrade starts August 1, 2024.

- Initial certification applications will not be accepted during the upgrade period.
- The upgraded system is expected to be available for new certifications in early September.

What will this mean for my firm?

- Most certified firms will not be impacted by the pause in applications.
- New or prospective applicants are encouraged to wait to apply after the upgrade.
- Applications submitted before August 1 will be processed in the order received.
- Firms needing to renew should receive guidance from their certification program.
- Firms facing a critical contracting deadline can contact certifications@sba.gov.
- Please provide proposal number, agency, and bid due date. [Continue Reading](#)

