



Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator - March 2025

by James Gerraughty
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Manager



There is a lot going on in government contracting at the moment...APEX Accelerators and our economic and stakeholder partners are doing our best to stay on top of the situation, pivot, and provide strategies and tools to help our clients and our communities. Stay tuned!

Speaking of pivoting, APEX Accelerators and their clients have a lot of items to consider in government contracting: Cybersecurity, FOCI, changes/updates to the PA COSTARS program, SAM...The list goes on. I said this in January, and it holds true: As I always say to people who ask me if I like my job, I say "I sure do...it's never boring!"

Speaking of training, please review our training opportunities that are coming up in March 2025 (and beyond for our APEX Accelerator and PREP Partners, once our funding is confirmed). A big one is our continued work on monthly Cybersecurity webinars, and some planned PA Contracting workshops. You can review and register for upcoming events 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!

AI could aid public transit track inspections

By Chris Teale, Managing Editor, Route Fifty

A prototype between New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Google Public Sector spotted 92% of track defects that had been identified by human inspectors. Experts said there is more to come in this area.

NEW YORK CITY — Looking for track defects and other maintenance issues on public transportation is traditionally a dangerous, taxing job for the inspectors who have done it for decades.

Often operating with just a flashlight, they walk miles of track looking for loose bolts, warped rails and anything else that could create issues for trains as they navigate the

network. Making things even trickier, trains might go past at all hours of the day and night, especially in 24-hour systems like the New York City subway.

But technology and artificial intelligence appear to hold promise for making those inspections easier and more efficient, based on recent results unveiled by New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Google Public Sector.

A prototype that retrofitted standard Google Pixel smartphones to subway cars along one line to capture vibrations and sound patterns through built-in sensors and microphones identified 92% of track defect locations that had been identified by inspectors. The prototype, known as TrackInspect, will now be expanded into a pilot program to look for what transit officials refer to as track non-conformities, MTA and Google Public Sector announced last week. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 3/4/2025)

Weeks after CISO announcement, Katie Arrington moves into DOD CIO role

By David DiMolfetta, Cybersecurity Reporter, Nextgov/FCW

[APEX PM note: Ms. Arrington worked closely with APEX Accelerators (then called PTACS) in 2018-2021 on the CMMC program with DoD contractors.]

A defense official said that Arrington, who was previously accused of disclosing classified data, does not concurrently have the role of DOD CISO.

Katie Arrington, the former South Carolina state lawmaker who helped steer Pentagon cybersecurity contracting policy before being placed on leave amid accusations that she disclosed classified data from a military intelligence agency, is now performing duties of the Defense Department's chief information officer.

The job announcement posted by the Office of the Chief Information Officer's LinkedIn account comes just two weeks after Arrington announced she was the DOD's new chief information security officer. Leslie Beavers, who had been serving as acting CIO since John Sherman stepped down last June, will resume her primary position as principal deputy CIO, the LinkedIn post adds.

Arrington "has begun performing the duties of DOD CIO and does not concurrently have the role of DOD CISO," a defense official told Nextgov/FCW. The statement suggests that a permanent CISO for the Defense Department has been picked or will be picked in her place. No reason for the new position was provided.

Arrington joined the Defense Department in 2019 — following a single term in the South Carolina House — and served in the Pentagon's Office of Acquisition and Sustainment in President Donald Trump's first term. She was a major cultivator of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification program, better known as CMMC, which encourages DOD contractors to augment their baseline cyber posture to shield the Defense Department and its private sector partners from cyberattacks. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 3/4/2025)

Looking to cut Pentagon costs? Start here, watchdog says

By Patrick Tucker, Science & Technology Editor, DefenseOne

As audit fights loom, a watchdog found that DOD weapons costs are going up, not down.

The Pentagon reduced waste, abuse, and mismanagement in most "high-risk" areas over the past two years, but is losing ground in weapons acquisition, the Government Accountability Office said in a recent report.

The latest edition of the biennial "High-Risk Series" arrives as the Trump administration is working to shift 8 percent of the 2026 defense spending plan to new priorities, fire up to 61,000 department civilian workers, and pass a department-wide audit.

"The government has great difficulty in controlling the costs of high dollar value [weapons systems] acquisitions in its more than \$750 billion procurement portfolio," the report says, describing "cost growth, schedule delays, or both" in major weapons purchases. For example, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter's block 4 modernization upgrade is years behind schedule and billions over budget. That could mean fewer fighters are available in a potential conflict with China and Russia.

GAO also found the potential for big cost overruns in the Next Generation Air Dominance platform, or NGAD, and said the Air Force isn't being fully transparent about cost

projections. The report also notes delays for B-21 stealth bombers, Columbia-class submarines and Ford-class aircraft carriers.

The Defense Department and the military services, with the exception of the Marine Corps, have consistently failed to pass an audit, despite Congressional pressure. But the new administration has promised to change that. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 3/4/2025)

About US

The Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The 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 APEX Accelerator are free of charge.

Whether you are an experienced contractor or new to the government marketplace, the APEX Accelerator will provide one-on-one counseling utilizing all of the program resources necessary to increase your share of contract awards. We will also coordinate assistance, if needed, with our PA PREP partners.

Contact us today at the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC to get started!

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