HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES REVIEW PANEL

PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: Thursday, November 20, 2008

TIME: 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Westin Harbour Island
725 South Harbour Island Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33602

REPORTED BY: CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, RMR, FPR
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A T T E N D E E S

HSRP PANEL MEMBERS:

Thomas Skinner, Chair
Edmund Welch, Vice Chair
Jonathan Dasler, HSRP
Elaine Dickinson, HSRP
Captain Sherri Hickman, HSRP
Captain Thomas Jacobsen, HSRP
Dr. Gary Jeffress, HSRP
Robert McBride, HSRP
Captain Andy McGovern, HSRP
Captain Minas Myrtidis, HSRP
Matthew Wellslager, HSRP
Rear Admiral Richard West, HSRP
Larry Whiting, HSRP

NON-HSRP MEMBERS:

Andy Armstrong, OCS
Captain Steven Barnum, OCS
Michael Szabados, CO-OPS
Dave Zilkoski, NGS
Mitch Ross, NOAA Procurement

FACILITATORS:

Lynn Carbone, Consultant
Alisa Ayar, Assistant

STAFF MEMBERS:

Kathy Watson, NOAA Office, Co-Survey and CO-OPS
Ashley Chappell, Co-Survey
Danielle Stuby, NGS
Virginia Dentler, CO-OPS

(WHEREUPON, the following Public Meeting was had and taken.)

MR. SKINNER: We're very fortunate today to have Lynn Carbone to facilitate the meeting which will take up most of the day.

Again, this was -- we talked a little bit about this. This is an effort to help us refocus and figure out what we will be looking at over the next several years.

One of the reasons for this is we have issued a report, great report, got us a lot of attraction, but now what's next? Do we focus on the next report?

We have some new members, relatively new, from a year ago. We may actually decide we're on the right track and want to continue. We may want to decide that we want to do something different.

So we thought this was a good opportunity to have some professional help -- Lord knows we need it -- and focus on what we're doing for the next couple of years.

So we're very glad to have you here, Lynn, today. And Lynn is here with Alisa Ayar, who is over here, and we look forward to starting in about 20 minutes.

I just want to go over some things that came out as a result of the end of yesterday's meeting and at the Crab Fest afterwards.

I think in the future what we'll try and do, and granted at this meeting I was impressed because we wanted to devote as much as possible to today to facilitate the meeting. We did try and cram a lot into yesterday and I know it was very frustrating.

I think what we'll try and do in the future is make sure that we finish up presentations by around 2:00 in the afternoon so that we actually have some time to reflect and consider what we've heard, and maybe take a little bit more of a balanced approach to coming up with a recommendations.

So I think if people are agreeable to that, we will look at that as sort of a format for the next upcoming meetings. Is there a sense of the group that that would work? Okay.

People okay with the 8:00 o'clock start time? Well, I think we'll play that one by ear just on logistics for each meeting, but figure on a start time of around 8:30 in the future.

I want to take one last crack at getting a vote on recommendations, recommendations we're going to have hopefully as a result of this meeting.

We have gotten the "okay" to get a voted motion for a recommendation in principle subject to future refinement by E-mail, and I think that's the way we'd

like to proceed.

If people are amenable to trying to do that within the next ten minutes or so, I think what I would perceive is the first motion is, again, a motion supporting PORTS with a focus on particular characteristics of the Tampa Bay since that would include, as Captain McGovern pointed out, there are integrations with other information and IOOS as a potential positive that should be replicated, at least if possible, of course, focusing on the PORTS data and making sure that that is provided and no reduction in QA QC or anything like that. Then maybe that's the format for the motion or recommendation that has those characteristics?

Shall I let you all drink a little more coffee? It's only 17 minutes before you get rid of me, so is there a motion to that effect?

(Motion made from a member of the panel.)

MR. SKINNER: All in favor?

(Collectively.) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? I'm sorry. Any discussion? All in favor?

(Collectively) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? No. Okay. Any abstentions? Motion carries. Great. Thank you.

Cathy, we're all very pleased to see when a reporter

comes back for the second day and we really appreciate it. She went through 450 pages of transcript yesterday and it wasn't all Keelin. So we did a lot of talking. Thank you very much.

The next one on the list was Ed's recommendation that we recommend that the CFDS continue possibly, and correct me if I'm wrong, possibly through an Executive Order?

MR. WELCH: I took a shot at giving it to Ashley, but I don't think she's got where she can project it up yet.

MS. CHAPPELL: The HSRP recommends that NOAA continue participation by its incoming Secretary of Commerce and incoming NOAA administrator in the CMTS and that it advocate continuation and installation of the CMTA through the issuance of the presidential Executive Order or the enactment of all kinds of legislation as appropriate.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: I think you need to add in there about interagency because that's our interagency thing. Just stick "interagency" in there someplace. Put it any old place.

MR. SKINNER: Any other comments? Is there a motion to accept the language as amended by Admiral West?

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: So moved.

MR. SKINNER: A second?

(The motion was seconded by a member of the panel.

MR. SKINNER: Any discussion? All in favor?

(Collectively) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion carries. Thank you.

John, what did we decide?

MR. DASLER: I didn't see them on the sheet, but I was understanding we were going to put some recommendations forward those two line items that we added. I didn't see them listed on here, but it was, I think -- I want to make a motion that we just make a recommendation as stated on that sheet the other day of the adds to the items.

MR. SKINNER: This sheet is not for this meeting.

MR. DASLER: Okay. This is past meetings, so it wouldn't -- okay, but I don't know if Ashley has that or if you want to put it up.

MS. CHAPPELL: I have a slide that I did yesterday where after the CMTS item I included the item geo coastal mapping, because you had commented you'd like to do the same thing for ocean coastal mapping as for CMTS; is that correct?

MR. DASLER: I think we decided what -- I'd like to make a motion to move those forward as recommendations,

those two line items.

MS. CHAPPELL: In the summary?

MR. DASLER: Yes.

MS. CHAPPELL: Okay. I think you need to read them.

MR. SKINNER: John, maybe we can go on to the next area, which I believe was the climate's Stakeholder Panel.

And I would envision recommendation for this talking about some of the impacts of climate change on the additional demand on hydrographic services sort of capsulating what we heard from the three speakers with a specific focus on the Arctic, specifically an additional recommendation that someone from NOAA be on the Coast Guard's missions that go up to the Arctic, and a broader recommendation that NOAA have a greater presence up there, particularly the hydrographic offices.

MR. WELCH: Again, Ashley, a draft of -- that addresses the first part, but not the broader part that you mentioned. Maybe she can read that one, too.

MS. CHAPPELL: The HSRP noticeably -- placement of the office on the Coast Guard Cutter SPAR during its 2008 deployment to the Arctic Ocean and commends both NOAA and the Coast Guard for this, understanding the HSRP recommends both agencies continue their operations in the future with respect to expanding hydrographic services in

Northern Alaska. I'm sorry. I missed his comment about a broader look at something. I missed what you said.

MR. SKINNER: Well, in the letters that we write we generally do some sort of synopsis of what we heard from the panel, and I was just suggesting that to lay it out we end in that narrative we talked about or summarize what we've heard about the impacts of climate change and their effects on the need for a hydrographic data.

So that's not part of the recommendation. It sets it up so that we capture the essence of what we heard. And then the specific recommendation was, I think, really focused on the issue of the Arctic. Is that okay with everyone?

Can we have a motion to accept the recommendation as something similar to, if not the actual language, to what Ed has drafted?

MR. WELLSLAGER: So moved.

MR. WHITING: Second.

MR. SKINNER: Any discussion? All in favor?

(Collectively) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Great. The motion carries. I'm sorry.

Were there any other recommendations? There was one Steve -- after your presentation I think one of -- there was a concern that we -- and, I'm sorry, I'm

forgetting -- the question was asked if there's something that we could do to help. Anyone remembering this? This doesn't help me on the record.

MR. DASLER: I think that was related to the recommendations we had relative to IOCM.

MR. SKINNER: Okay. Thank you, John. I knew there was one other thing that I was thinking of.

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: One of the recommendations from one of the pilots yesterday -- I hate to get back to the right whales with you-- it was to put the speed reduction zones on the chart. And I had talked to Captain Barnum about this for New York, and there seems to be -- I guess it's not as easy as it sounds.

Do we need a recommendation from this panel?

Does that help you, Steve, at all, or I mean you had mentioned to me it's not as easy as saying that.

CAPTAIN BARNUM: Portraying it on the chart, you know, trying to make sure the information is clear and therefore safe navigation, you know, adding these types of limits is easier in an electronic navigational chart, because it has layers.

Adding to a paper chart sometimes adds confusion to all the other information that may be on the chart. And, particularly in this case, some of these areas are temporary, and many times they are cases of -- putting

this type of information on the coast pilot.

But as I mentioned earlier yesterday on these, some of these standards for portraying this kind of information, still you have to be decide international -- that's not to say that we are not having to portray certainly in the electronic charts.

MR. WELCH: Steve, with regard to paper charts, what's their life use expectancy? In other words, when you issue one, how long do you expect a commercial mariner to continue using that particular chart?

CAPTAIN BARNUM: It depends how often the information turns over. It could be as quick as three or four, it could be years, depending on the area.

MR. WELCH: The reason I ask is there's regulations of a five-year life expectancy.

CAPTAIN MYRTIDIS: I would be -- yeah.

MR. WELCH: At the end of five years, they may continue it or expand it or change the speed limit. We don't know. And if there are much paper charts out there that says here's the speed limit and all of a sudden it's out of date for, you know, after the time they change the regulation --

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: That's why they have to chart corrections so they can do that. I mean it's -- but specifically electronically, I think it really needs to

be put on -- you know, these things need to be portrayed on the charts, because it's going to be the only way to enforce it, and also for the mariner to know when he actually crosses that line and needs to reduce speed, but that hasn't been determined, but it needs to be portrayed, I believe. And it was also mentioned yesterday, the gentleman from Jacksonville mentioned the same thing.

So that seems to be a universal feeling down the coast that as much as we're reticent about these regulations, the only way we're really going to be able to enforce it and for those coming in from offshore to know where the storm starts is to have it on the chart, and sounds like we may not be quite ready for recommendation. Is that what I'm hearing or --

CAPTAIN BARNUM: I think it's fair to say that NOAA should investigate or should encourage to portray this type of information on its part on its navigational products.

MR. SKINNER: I stand corrected.

CAPTAIN BARNUM: I was going to add one thing. It may help also, because as -- this is an issue and other member states view that this type of information should not be.

United States feels that this type of information

should be portrayed on the nautical charts. As was mentioned earlier, some of the standards don't exist. Some of the other member states of the world feel that this information should not be.

United States moved forward last year to come up with ways of portraying sensitive coral areas to include such as the Bahama areas. The only word we got from Brazil, they came up again this year, was to continue the effort. And we got support from UK.

So there is growing support. So having this recognized from the fact that potentially could -- potentially show support from the U.S.'s position.

MR. SKINNER: Do we have a motion to adopt the recommendations using the general language that Steve provided?

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: So move.

MR. SZABADOS: Second.

MR. SKINNER: Any discussion? All in favor?

(Collectively) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? Any abstentions? The motion carries.

Is that it? Anything else from yesterday that we need to touch on briefly?

Regardless of how we work this out, John always has to have the last word. Go ahead.

MR. DASLER: Okay. This obviously needs some word mincing, but this isn't related to the national ocean coastal mapping and the IOCM methods move forward. The HSRP supports -- mapping agencies for a more unified interagency mapping front.

To that extent, the HSRP recommends that NOAA develop a vehicle for dissemination of planned mapping to other agencies and coastal communities well in advance of operations to provide opportunity to address other needs and expand surveillance; and second, on demonstrating upon success, it's the opinion of HSRP that NOAA could improve internal coordination of mapping efforts.

The HSRP recommends that NOAA implement internal coordinating mapping effort within NOAA as a demonstration of integrated mapping.

MR. SKINNER: The only comment I have, we want to make sure that it doesn't duplicate recommendations we had from the large meeting, but with that provision I would entertain a motion to move the recommendation including the content or the general content of what John just presented. Any motion?

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Motion made.

CAPTAIN JACOBSEN: Second.

MR. SKINNER: Any discussion? All in favor?

(Collectively) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion carries. That I think concludes the section from yesterday. Yes.

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: Sorry about that, Tom, one more. We were talking yesterday about the data strain on the AIS to be very promising to get additional information for the mariners.

There's an additional data stream that is available. When Mike talked yesterday about what was being done in New York a long time ago, it was a bit of an error. We did not use the AIS data stream during our experiments. We used the differential correction data stream.

There is an additional space on that -- on the differential correction for messages, and that's been available.

And they actually do put messages on it, but there's only so much bandwidth on the AIS message data stream, and that's probably going to be filled up pretty quickly.

So maybe NOAA could look at also using the differential data stream, which is actually more widely used, more especially on the recreational side. More people will have GPSs than have AIS, so that they'll be able to get more -- whatever messages needs to get out we'll be able to get out better on the differential stream than it would be on the AIS. It's an additional

resource for NOAA to use. I'd just ask them to look into it. I don't know if there needs to be a recommendation, or if Steve's nodding head that may be good.

CAPTAIN BARNUM: I'm just nodding my head. I had forgotten that capability for putting information out.

MR. SKINNER: We need a recommendation or is that --

CAPTAIN BARNUM: It wouldn't hurt, but, you know, it needs some way of standardizing -- getting the information out in a standardized format, and I don't know if GPS is the way to do it. I'm just not familiar with those formats, even the bandwidth with the GPS message streaming.

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: Our original experiments were to put the boards out on a differential signal and it was available with the bandwidth to do that then.

Again, it's limited because it's VHS radio and so is the AIS, and between the two of them -- I know there's a lot of information that everyone would like to get out via that format.

Maybe between the two different messaging capabilities that we can get out one needs to be gotten out to the mariner.

So it's just an additional resource that when we fill one that we can look at the other or we could say that, you know, that information that needs to be out to

a wider population should be on the differential correction signal, and that is more specialized -- maybe for commercial should be on AIS, because it's more commercially used. I'm not sure, but it's something to look at.

MR. SKINNER: Before we get into a full discussion of this, it sounds like this may not be the right -- I would suggest that I think this is an issue that we would benefit from additional information and maybe come back in the last -- at the next HSRP meeting with some additional information on whether it's even feasible.

CAPTAIN BARNUM: I was just going to add maybe keep this more generic and -- maybe that suggestion or recommendation, maybe NOAA should investigate or move forward with the electronic dissemination of its realtime or information -- its navigational information to mariners, something like that, along the lines of leave the details out of it.

MR. ZILKOSKI: I was going to say something similar. I wouldn't get specific about it, but some recommendation coming from the board would be helpful, because NOAA doesn't run the DTPS.

So we have to have a good reason why we can do it. So if we have something from the board, we can go and say they're asking us to look at this, and we need you to

partner with us, so that would be helpful.

MR. SKINNER: That more generic language is acceptable to folks, and is there a motion to adopt that principle for recommendation?

MR. DASLER: Yeah, I make that.

MR. SKINNER: Is there a second?

CAPTAIN HICKMAN: Second.

MR. SKINNER: Any discussion? All in favor?

(Collectively) Aye.

MR. SKINNER: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion carries.

I'll say this very softly so no one will hear: Are there any other issues?

MR. DASLER: Well, not to raise this again, but I thought we had discussion yesterday about making a recommendation again to pursue full funding of operation and maintenance reports.

MR. SKINNER: Yes, but I think we can work that in the recommendation.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: John, why did you have to bring this up?

I really do think that's a long-term project for us to figure out and help NOAA put reports into the mainstream.

There's different ways, different models

to -- there's all sorts of things that I think a sub group of this group should take a hard look at and make some recommendations as the next administration builds, because we can sit here and say fund it, fund it, fund it, but, you know, we need to give more than that.

Is this a rule for a federal advisory committee, how to build a budget? I think it is. That's why you're special government employees.

So, anyway, I think it's a little bit bigger than saying fund PORTS.

MR. SKINNER: I'll stop looking over at this corner. John, you all set?

MR. DASLER: Well, just another -- I thought we discussed yesterday moving that forward that there may be many avenues and restating that with the new administration would be beneficial.

MR. SKINNER: Maybe we'll see what we can come up with, some language. All right. Great. Thank you all very much. I think that's a good recommendation.

And, Lynn, we're turning it over to you. So if you want to make a few opening remarks about -- are you done? I'm done. Just ask them, I'm done.

MS. CARBONE: I'm going to use the hand-held mike. It's on.

Good morning, everybody. So I guess if you're sick

of his voice from yesterday you'll be sick of mine after today, but welcome. This is going to be very interactive.

It will have some structure, and I think absolutely that the kind of item that Admiral West brought up is the kind of item we would see come up on the strategic agenda. So it's totally appropriate we get into that kind of discussion. So let's see if the clicker is working.

You have in your folders, a black folder in front of you, some materials we'll be working with. The workbook has the process materials that I'll be working with.

So what we want to get done by the end of the day, we want to understand the current and emerging environment and the implications for NOAA's navigation services mission.

We want to identify issues of challenges in which the panel is uniquely positioned to advise and contribute to over the next three to four years.

And then we really want to look at the next 12 to actually I would say 24 months and what does that mean in terms of what we should get started on.

So let me just tell you the overall process. We're going to do a little bit of background this morning. Dave is going to get up and give an overview of what the

three NOAA offices have done together and Ashley's going to get up and give you a recap of things that have come up in your previous meetings that you should consider because you've brought them up before, and then we're going to do a little bit of thinking about the environment and talking about what relevant trends of the ones that should be on our screen as we think strategically.

And then I'm going to show you -- there's three flip charts with numbers on them. We're going to break you up into three groups, and we're going to do the initial formulation and consideration of proposals for the rest of the groups, for sub groups, and that's because sub groups, groups smaller than seven, are far more creative than large groups.

And the large group is -- everybody will weigh in on everything. And, of course, eventually you will vote hopefully with the consensus based on whether or not you support what the different groups are proposing.

So the format is that we're going to go into a -- we'll break out for a little bit, come back. Each sub group will report their results.

We'll look at the top items that have cut across all of the groups and we'll consider those as the major pieces of the multi-year strategy, agree on those, and

then break those down into what does that mean over three or four years, what does that mean in the near term.

So your charter I just pulled out because that's the contents for everything, of course, that we'll be doing, what are the unique things that the panel's positioned to do in support of navigation services for NOAA.

So in the planning framework that we'll be working with, clearly the backdrop to this is what are the navigation community's needs.

That very much drives what NOAA's navigation services puts into their plans and strategies and priorities, and that clearly should drive what this group decides to do over the near or long-term.

Just so everybody knows, strategic planning is a mystical, magical experience. It really is an opportunity for organizations to define who we are, what we hope to be, where we are today, where we want to be in the future, and how we're going to get from where we are today to where we want to go. It's really actually pretty simple.

These strategic plans, except actually for government organizations, are pretty fluid. Only my government clients have to publish their five-year plans linked to the budget cycle.

None of my corporate clientele do more than a

three-year plan now looking at two-year plan, also because the environment is rapidly changing and things have to change almost on an annual basis.

So what we need to do is to -- we're going to look at those in the strategic cycle.

What you do is you look at the environment and you say what are the opportunities and the threats out there for us. You look at how does that influence or impact or affirm your fundamental mission, your vision of the future, NOAA's products and services.

You look at the organization and how well it's positioned to support driving towards that mission and vision. And then you put a strategy together that has multi years and near-term implementation plans.

So we're going to be doing steps 1, 2 and 4 in a one-day compressed process, but I feel confident we'll get there.

People who think strategy do the following things: They clearly prepare for the future; they focus on opportunities; they capitalize on their strengths to realize those opportunities; they actually really take advantage of changing environments.

Matter of fact, I will go on record to say that during transition, that sometimes in a new administration you get things done that you might not otherwise get

things done, because there's a change. There's an acting mode, and you can slip some things under the radar that are innovative that otherwise may not have been able to come into play.

So it's really actually an opportunity to innovate in a changing environment. Strategic thinkers are partners to progress.

They recognize nothing gets done by single entities, that you need to leverage each other. Structure supports growth. Very, very high focus on results. High focus on always seeking better alternatives for achieving things. And finally they are supportive of others.

So I'm going to go around the room and ask each of you to tell us what comes to mind when you hear the following statements.

The reason I like to do this at the beginning is because participants in strategic planning really have one or two things they think are really, really, really important and we'll hear that from them throughout the day.

So you may as well put us on notice now. We like to know what really -- first, if you can think about the most important contribution that the HSRP can make to the nation, to NOAA, over the next three to four years, what would it be, just one thing. If we do nothing else, the

most important thing we can do. And then within the next 12 to 24 months what we should focus on is.

So you're going to have opportunities to offer more than one thing throughout the day, but I'm going to go around and ask you to give us one item.

Alisa will go ahead and capture that realtime and you'll print that out and be able to use that as a reference as we move through the day. So anybody that wants to start.

MR. McBRIDE: I think the most important thing we should be doing is focusing more attention on the mapping and charting backlog, distribution of that information to the navigational community and support of the PORTS system.

MS. CARBONE: Backlog. No, just put backlog up there. And then what 12 to 24 months?

MR. McBRIDE: What I was focusing on longer term is if we get this PORTS system supported.

MS. CARBONE: Flip that over and the left column would be PORTS system support.

CAPTAIN JACOBSEN: Yeah, I'd like to see NOAA get as much done as possible with the limited budget they have. So I think outside the box, be more efficient and partner as much as possible.

MS. CARBONE: Okay. Be most efficient with a

limited budget.

CAPTAIN JACOBSEN: In short-term --

MS. CARBONE: Most efficient with a limited budget.

CAPTAIN JACOBSEN: Short-term supporting PORTS system, expanding the PORTS system, and funding somehow.

MS. CARBONE: Alisa, this is going to drive you crazy, but when they say "PORTS system," it's all caps. Alisa has only been with me four months. She knows a lot of the acronyms from the NOAA crew, but when you're in a room and you talk about ports and PORTS, this is a little --

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Use the same thing that was already said.

MS. CARBONE: Oh, sure. Yeah.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Long-term would be find a long-term funding mechanism for NOAA such as a trust fund, specifically for navigation, and short-term would be catch up the survey backlog.

DR. JEFFRESS: I believe that long-term one of the critical things we should be looking at is make sure there's enough expertise of what they're doing in terms of training and education.

The profession is getting old and there is not enough young people coming in.

Short-term, I think that from a technical important

GravD is the most critical and most productive thing that we can get up to speed, which will enable GPS to give us accurate elevations relative to sea level.

MR. SZABADOS: Well, we're supposed to represent the maritime industry in that focus. On long-term, to establish requirements of navigational services. And in the end we're looking at new technology or products we should develop and integrate into our programs.

On the short-term, I think one of the things to focus on is you have got -- is the fact of identifying -- some of those five priorities is the strategy of how to in the new administration make your voice heard.

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: I think long-term I think what we need to do or what -- we thought about this for years also -- is educate the public and the politicians on the importance of the marine transportation system.

Once you do that, the whole funding process gets a lot easier if they know the importance of the system.

In the short-term, I think they can copy and paste the second one up there. That would do it for me. Thanks.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: You'll have to click back down, because I'm going with what you've already got up there.

I think we ought to get more involved with developing a budget process for NOAA in two ways: One,

the annual budget process; and also the five-year process. You'll have a whole new administration coming in and they'll be doing the 11 through 14 budget here next fall. The new administrator will put out his annual guidance this summer.

So each spring, I think, me especially -- NOAA doesn't like to have FACA get involved. I think that's a mistake, because I think you can use the credibility of a group like this.

The other one is what -- I don't know if that's long-term, short-term, whatever it is. The other one is a better awareness of the hydrographic services, kind of what Andy just said about the education part.

MR. DASLER: For long-term, I would have that we reduce the vertical error in hydrographic surveys; and short-term would be implementing of use of GPS for water levels and use of VDatum; implement the use of GPS for water levels and use of VDatum.

MS. CARBONE: So I want to get the long-term.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Long-term, I would like to see the panel help NOAA improve its products and services in support of navigation; and short-term, I'd agree with better awareness of hydrographic services.

MR. WELCH: Long-term I'd like to give some attention to the issue of technological innovation and

outstripping government's ability to keep up with navigational services.

And short-term, I'd like to better equate the navigation services to international trade functions for -- with secretarial offices and the congressional offices.

MR. SKINNER: I want to expand on something that was already said. In the long-term, greater public awareness of the importance of hydrographic information.

It's similar to what Captain McGovern mentioned, but it's broader, because I think one of the important things is to get other groups involved other than those that relate directly to CMTS.

And short-term is expand the PORTS system and find funding.

CAPTAIN BARNUM: For the long-term, I'd like to see continued participation in the strategic planning process for navigation services, much like was being done yesterday.

And for the short-term, I'd like to see better awareness of hydrographic services for navigation and/or other science, such as climate change.

MR. WHITING: Yeah, I'd like to eliminate the Pinga chart and that would be realtime navigation services, I guess.

And then short-term is to use GPS for water levels. And you've got them like in -- what is that?

CAPTAIN HICKMAN: Short-term, I would like to afford every port that wants a PORTS system to be able to have it and the O&M fully funded.

And long-term, it's been said several different ways up there already, but to educate, maybe even have -- educated about NOAA and get, how do I say it, maybe at a high school level, get them involved so that they may want to continue so that NOAA can have its core capabilities.

CAPTAIN MYRTIDIS: Okay. Here towards the end with the lines get more difficult, I think so much repeating is okay, because it's going to tell us about levels of importance. It will help us be much more focused on priorities, so it's great. I think I broke it. Okay.

Okay. Basically I think one of the points that I see coming out here is -- that I can explain a little more is public awareness, but I want to take this in a different way, both long and short-term.

It appears to be that for the longest time now we have several agencies within and outside that are doing the same thing, but nobody asks what the other person or agency have done.

So what I would like to see is all us business

owners getting together and have a global point, a place to meet and exchange ideas and have a glowing path into the future.

We've heard yesterday and we have heard at other meetings, somebody works on a project and the next thing you know, there is another agency working on the same project, but the two they don't know what the other does.

So I think it's important if there is a way for going to -- try this effort, not only for the U.S., but internationally.

MR. WELLSLAGER: I'll keep it as simple as absolutely possible. For the long-term, I would like for you to go and copy and paste number ten, what Andy said.

And then I agree with the short-term with what Gary had said on number four of having GRAV-D for better navigational needs with GPS.

MR. ZILKOSKI: I think for long-term I'd like to see identifying ways to leverage other federal resources to help us do our mapping services and for navigational services.

And for short time, I think we need to describe how the navigational services are required for climate services that NOAA is trying to create with foundation data, so how it's necessary. They're going to get some -- there's going to be money for climate services.

That's it.

MS. CARBONE: Okay. So for me the good news is that these feel like they're clustering very nicely. We're not all over the map, so that's important, and we'll print it this out.

We're going to be using this as one -- actually end up probably being a really good check list for us as we move through the day, but let me just ask now does anybody have any questions of anybody's item that they saw go up that they didn't want to interrupt at the time but would like to understand something said better?

Yes, sir.

MR. SKINNER: I think Admiral West put down better awareness of hydrographic services. I thought you were talking about within NOAA, and I didn't know if some of the other ones were specifically within NOAA or broader.

MS. CARBONE: Okay. So the other folks that had those, why don't you chime in now.

CAPTAIN BARNUM: I was going to add I was thinking both within and external.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Me, too.

MS. CARBONE: You both meant internal and externally. Okay. So it's internal and external. Slightly different strategies, but definitely looking for

the same outcome.

Okay. Other questions of each other?

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: I don't know what GRAV-D is. Is there a short answer?

MS. CARBONE: Who's taking that?

MR. ZILKOSKI: GRAV-D is -- it's a program to measure gravity across the nation. And you need GRAV-D to be able to compute a model if you -- you can use satellite information, GPS, to get a height which will tell you which way water will flow.

So it's really just -- it's a collection of gravity across the nation to improve the geode model, if you will, but then you can go out with a satellite information, a GPS, get a value, add this other value and you get an accurate height. Without it, you can't.

MS. CARBONE: Does that make sense? Anybody want to help?

CAPTAIN BARNUM: I was going to say, and the challenge is explaining that internally and externally what it means.

MS. CARBONE: It's tough. It's tough, but that is part -- this is part of what you deal with in communicating within the agency to the Hill beyond the navigation services.

I mean this has to do -- I mean this is the

challenge, is being able to compel people and explain the valuable contribution to the economy and to the nation with things that are very technical and scientific that people just don't get. So this is a good example of it.

Okay. So we're going to just ask you to put all this in a holding pattern for a little bit, and we're going to take some -- a little more information and we're going to ask Dave to come up and give us a summary of what the three NOAA navigation services did in a joint strategic planning meeting that just took place October 31st.

I remember because we had Halloween candy in the room, so I was fortunate enough to -- and I have supported all three offices and I helped facilitate that effort.

So they are very focused on finding those crossover areas in the VIN diagram and leveraging one another and looking at what more there can be in terms of availability of products and services and value added to the nation for navigation if they come together and work together.

So I think they have some great results and Dave is going to walk you through those.

MR. ZILKOSKI: Yeah. She is going to get the -- I have a short presentation. And in your handouts you

actually have what's going to be up on the screen and there's some backup slides in there.

MS. CARBONE: They have these handouts yet?

MR. ZILKOSKI: Yeah, they should have them. They're in the blue folder. They're in the NOAA folder.

So what Lynn was talking about, three offices, the ones that you're responsible for, Co-Survey and CO-OPS have been -- for almost a little over a year now we've been coming together and trying to figure out how would we work better together.

Sort of what we've been asking you all to give us some guidance on, we've been doing it inside. And what I'm going to give you is just some highlights of some of our joint collaboration and maybe some of our management activities, because it's really -- you know, we're starting to work together strategically planning.

We're starting to work together just in our annual work -- in developing of our annual work plans and that's sort of what I'm going to highlight.

These are some of our joint collaborations and we've talked a little bit about them.

Can you see from the research and development we service on the flip side and we talked about GPS water level buoys.

These are issued that need all three offices if

we're going to implement them and we're going to try to be able to meet the future needs of our products and services.

And then that includes models and tools and VDatum, which we've heard a couple of people talk about is a tool that is helpful to all three offices, and to take all three offices to create this tool.

So we developed a plan together about how we're going to accomplish it, and we're putting it into our own work plans, and we're putting it into the budget plans that go up to NOAA.

And there's another one I put on there called Maptite, which is a restoration planning tool. We have been working with non-navigation people to find out how do we use our nav tools to help them, and this is one example.

And, once again, all three offices participate in a group that we call coastal, then it takes our nav products and services and changes them and puts them in that slightly different format, but meets the needs of others.

For climate change, this is a very important one, that how are you going to meet the climate change needs of the user.

And it's not going to be the navigation people that

need this type of information, it's going to be those coastal managers. It's part of where I think we need to get our message out a little bit more and in an outreach.

We had something, PORTS 101, that was really where we had some congressional groups in and around several ports around the nation where we brought that in and described our products and services for the three offices, and that's one way we tried to outreach and show to the Hill what our products were, once again, how do we fit into the community, not just in the navigation end, but, once again, how we fit into the non-navigation end of it.

We spent a lot of time talking about the integrated ocean coastal mapping. Obviously, we spent some time here talking about it.

So it's very, very important that we collaborate with NOAA, but also outside so we have some projects working with Corps of Engineers and MGS and others.

So we're really able to survey once and use the data many times and we're identifying what do each one of our programs need to do so that we can better implement the IOCM with the other federal agencies.

If we can't do it inside, we'll never be able to do it outside.

So we actually have a dedicated team to look at these things and how do we plan for this in the next coming year, where do we want to be three years from now. So we're thinking that way inside these offices.

And probably one of the biggest and the most important aspects of this is that the leadership and management team, we meet monthly, the directors, the three of us in the room now and our deputies, and we come together monthly and we talk about issues, all these things I just mentioned about the collaboration, but we come together and we have people explain to us are you on target to meet this, what do you need from us so that we can make this happen.

And that's where we created teams where we have leads where they come and they explain to us where they're going so, as a group, we're all understanding what we need from each other.

And we're having milestones now and so, accordingly, we will have people come to us and say, okay, you said there is a group, you're going to move this survey and if you've got limited resources sometimes you are not going to meet a deadline, but our people have to come to us quarterly and say one way or another, hey, I didn't meet it and here's why and I need more resources or not.

And then we either look and realign our resources in

our three offices to make something happen, or we recognize that we're not going to do that this year because something came up.

Point being we created the teams that are focusing on the issues that we think are important and the three directors have come together in understanding.

You know, if we had to move some resources we do it, or we just live with the result of it, but we all know where we're going.

So that's an important aspect of what we're trying to do and our employees needed that because they're trying to balance priorities. So we're giving them that avenue to be able to -- to be able to give them that time with us and we all do it together.

Let's see. This is a diagram that just -- I know you can't read that, but this is something that we sat down and said how do we do this, and we tried to put dates on this. This is not something that's a one-time shot deal where strategizing.

We're going to come together every year and talk about strategic planning. We're going to come together every year and look at what kind of milestones that we need, what's at the outcome that we want to get this year and start creating work plans jointly to be able to accomplish them.

So this process right there is just giving us that mechanism and putting in the time to say we're coming together and we're going to do this as a group.

We're going to bring not just ourselves, but we're going to bring our employees that are going to have to do the work so we can really create -- how do I NGS, what are my resources so that I can meet what's important to Co-Survey and CO-OPS so we can meet a common goal, so we can agree on a common goal that we want.

And it's not -- I mean the common goal and outcome may not be getting grabbed, that's not the common goal. The common goal is we need to get better heights in the coast where we have a relationship between the water level and the land, that's our common goal.

And I have to do GRAV-D to do to my -- and the coast survey has to link with their -- so we all come together to create this.

And this diagram just allows us to do that, but more importantly, it puts in place like when someone leaves, in the case where I'm retiring, we have some placement. It's something this person can come up with and know, which I think is important.

This is just some of our common goals that we talked about. We create these joint milestones that we're committed to doing and we come in and talk about them and

some of these -- not all of our joint do them, but some of them goes up to Jack Dunnigan and we report to Jack every month.

We tell Jack we have certain milestones to meet and at the end of the year hopefully we're to him and saying we accomplished these milestones.

So he sees what we're doing and what's important to us and he's -- you know, he can ask questions of us and he reports some of ours that go up to the NOAA level.

And, obviously, the list that we send to Jack gets paired down too, because he has all the other program offices, but some of our milestones actually get up in front of NOAA, Mary Lacken, and others that are very important, which helps to give us the visibility.

These are just some, and you can see we're trying to put it together so that our employees can come to us and say, hey, we're on track to do this, or we're not on track, here's what we need, so if you want this done this year, directors, you've got to either realign resources or stop doing something.

So you can see that these are just some of the examples and some talk about training, some talk about models and tools like the VDatum, some talk about research, and we just have a variety of them.

And this is just some internal ones where -- we

don't pass these up to Jack Dunnigan, but we do still do internal ones. So everything we do, some of them go up to the level of NOAA, and some of them go up before us and we track them.

So what are our major challenges? Raise awareness and relevance of our programs with respect to climate. That was one of my things I just brought up at the end here.

I think this group needs to think about how do we get that, but internally NOAA does not recognize -- well, it recognizes NOAA as its products and services.

Our nav services are always an afterthought, because -- they're necessary and they're needed, but most people that are in NOAA that are talking about it don't really push for it. They say we need it. It's kind of separate, because they're focused on what the outcome of it is and the impact rather than how do you measure the baseline.

A lack of infrastructure and resources, we have been talking about that and every time we always get together you guys always want to get more money into our budget.

We need some kind of, you know, different attack because we haven't really been extremely successful, but you all realize we can't so we have to get some -- we have to figure out better ways to leverage resources and

get others to help us do that.

I mean NOAA gets money now, $4 billion dollars. So if we can figure out where we can tap into climate services or others that need our services, we just have to convince why they need it and then we have a shot of getting some of it, and we've been -- we've been getting more successful that way.

One of the budget items that was pushed and is going to be funded is talking about integrating our navigation products and services for product change in our resources.

We're there looking for sea level rise and climate change and the effect on the environment, and it's in collaboration between all four goals.

And our foundation products have been recognized as being important, so it's a start and it's happened.

Now that money's not supposed to come for another couple of years -- and that's another site -- NOAA also likes GRAV-D and it's not because they understand it, because they don't, but what they like about it is you're going to get better heights for that community and that's what they need.

All they understand is they need better heights to help the weather service. They need better heights for the coastal managers, for the emergency planning, to help

our coastal zone. So that's what's important to them, but they're willing to fund it.

Insufficient staff, training tools and technology has alluded to some of the core capabilities where we're not getting a lot of increases in our FTEs. We just don't have the money to pay for people.

And as people get older and retire, we're trying to strategically backfill, but as three offices we're coming together and saying what's that expertise we need and we need some geographers, some cryptographers.

Well, the three offices were strategically thinking about when we replace something in our interoffice does that person -- if I look now, do I go back and hire a system that can do that, do I look for someone that can have a lot of understanding of the three offices so I can build the core capabilities and maybe I get someone who's got geophysical background so that they understand picking up how the maps are made and fit together, so we're thinking that way, well, it's a big issue, because we're losing folks.

And then identification of the combined requirements with respect to IOCM, we have our requirements, and the three offices are really identifying what we're needing and it's working. That's what this whole thing we're putting together is, but the bigger part of the IOCM is

the other part of NOAA. Mapping, folks. What are their real requirements? It's hard to get that out of folks, but the other issue is the other federal agencies, Corps of Engineers.

USGS said yesterday that -- I attended one of their strategic meetings and they were doing -- everybody was doing something around the table and it was just amazing that nobody in the other offices knew what people were doing, and these were a group of people that were supposedly working together.

So it's just so difficult. So trying to get those requirements and get everybody on the same page is a challenge. And we just have to keep working at it, and we will.

And so that's part of what the activities are, and I think our three offices in the collaboration will help this process, because we all deal with these different agencies.

And the more we come together and talk about them, the more we'll talk to these different agencies. And it's all communication. It's just all about communication. Everybody wants to work together and many times they just don't know how to do that.

And that's really all I wanted to show you. In your handouts there is a lot more slides in there. I don't

see any point in going through them. They do provide information about some of the teams and what we're doing with a little bit more detail, but I don't think we need to spend a time period going through them. So that's all I have.

MS. CARBONE: Any questions for Dave?

MR. ZILKOSKI: Where are the other two directors, the other two directors?

MS. CARBONE: Okay. Last facet that we need in terms of front end loading for our process is -- Ashley went back through your meetings and the kinds of things that come up that could need a future agenda so she's going to summarize that for you.

And you have that as a single-page handout, her slides you have all on one page.

MS. CHAPPELL: Food for thought, in addition to this slide that you found this morning, on one of your folders you also have the recommendation letter which was just signed from the July meeting. That's in your packet as well, of course, around on the table.

What we did was go back through the meeting notes from July from San Francisco and the two prior I had access to and I pulled out not just the recommendations that came from those meetings, but also in the discussion with ideas that you had that you thought you might be

interested in. And so some of that may not have crystalized into recommendations, but I just tried to capture it all here for the things in the slide.

Just very quickly to run through these, something that you've said on several occasions is collaborating more with other advisory panels, with the NOAA Project Board, or the National Advisory Committee that mirror steps theirs.

This is going to be sort of duplicative of the exercise you went through earlier this morning telling how many more -- recommending target areas for investment that could be done relatively in short order.

Some of the discussions you had around these topics were HSRP be more into these. You wanted to try to do these.

More on the survey backlog, different sort of takes on the backlogs in the Arctic. Homeland Security requires -- that's something that you had expressed an interest in, and I'm not sure that we've really gotten into it that much yet.

Improving integration of coastal mapping, chart printing improvements. I can't remember if it was the last meeting or the one prior where you said that taking a look at a hundred percent continuing, or coming back to that and re-examining it was very important to do.

PORTS, a number of things there. Of course, IOOS, just -- I just run these things team. Processing something about Cosco Busan, that was our San Francisco meeting, that was a big focus there, and perhaps showing how the outcome of that accident might have been different had your recommendations been fully in effect.

Strengthening navigation services for emergency response, and the focus here endorsing the Mapping and Signs Committee study.

I think that we discussed at the last meeting -- you didn't ultimately make a recommendation on it, but you said you wanted to come back to it, and you did make a recommendation on the height modernization and pursue the GRAV-D and doing those in a comprehensive fashion.

And somebody talked about actually it might have been in the recommendation to have sub group to even dig into that further.

And this is a final slide, more on data storage and processing, delivery of large data sets. I think that was from the Miami meeting. There was some extensive discussion about that standard and standard mechanisms for acquiring and distributing data, storing that data, data continuity, those kinds of issues.

And then the last bullet is about outreach, which you also talked about this morning, and awareness.

That's it. Okay. Questions?

CAPTAIN MYRTIDIS: Just a comment actually, you know, a theory. It's very apparent to me from the exercise we just went through the points that you brought up, and this is only two minutes, and I'm sure if we were to go a few meetings further back we would realize that we have said the same things more than once.

In my opinion, if we have said it more than once and we're still talking about it, there is a problem. So I think we need to do something about that.

I think it's very apparent that at the next presentation we were talking about in collaboration just five minutes ago and here you're presenting us with basically that concept, right?

So I think what we're doing right now is good, but also I think it's time to address some of these points.

MS. CARBONE: Right. So I think the purpose of today is going to do exactly that. It's going to affirm for this group in a formal way what should our road map be for the next three to four years and what has urgency or opportunity and makes sense to do in the next 12 to 24 months.

So I think one of the reasons we want a recap of everything that's going on is to say, okay, what is that -- what's the discrete set of things that this panel

can contribute to to really have an impact, and so what does that mean over the next three years in terms of our strategy for doing it, and what does that mean for the near term for the next 12 to 24 months, especially in light of the new administration, what's the opportunity there, what's the threat there, and what does it mean we have got to get moving on. That's exactly what we're going to be doing. So it ends up being win/win.

What I'd like to suggest now because we started at 8:00, I'd like to take a break every hour and-a-half. I think that's just good for people's brains and et cetera.

Let's take our first break. And when we come back, I'm going to just ask you about current and emerging trends.

We'll do a quick brainstorm of that, what do we really need to have in the back of our mind, what's happening in the universe that really plays into decisions we're going to make.

And then I am going to give you the instructions and we're going to break up into three corners of the room and we're going to start rolling up our sleeves and talking about this stuff and making choices.

So that's wonderful we have all these great ideas of what will we do about it. We'll talk about that. We're going to do a count-off. There is no preconceived motion

except I'll ask each of the NOAA directors to go to one group. That's it. Let's come back at quarter 'til.

And do not pay attention to the agenda. We're a half hour late. So we're lagging, but I promise you we'll catch up. It's not going to be a problem.

(There was a brief recess taken at 9:30 a.m.)

(The meeting resumed at 9:45 a.m.)

MS. CARBONE: When you do strategic planning, you start thinking about the future. You look at the opportunities and the threats that the environment trends present to you as an organization, as a community.

So what I want to do is do a quick once-around with what are the relevant trends that are happening now in the global environment that really are things we should have on our own screen and are going to present either opportunities or threats to us.

So I'm just going to give you an example. I don't want you to tell me what the opportunity or threat is. I just want you to tell me about the trend or something that's current or emerging.

And so an example is we have a new administration, right? And we have a Democratic president and Congress. That presents to you and your community potentially opportunities and/or threats.

So I want to stay with what's out there that's in

front of us that we should be thinking about dealing with as we do our planning.

So let me just go ahead, and if you don't have an item, if you don't have a trend that you want to offer that we should have on our screen, just pass. I'm going to go around and ask for other trends.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Millions and millions of baby boomers are retiring.

MS. CARBONE: Millions and millions -- oh, baby boomers.

Okay. Did you have more? Are you going to retire?

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Yeah, retiring.

MS. CARBONE: Right. Keep going around.

MR. SZABADOS: I'll pass right now.

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: The economy.

MS. CARBONE: Right.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Climate change.

MS. CARBONE: You want to tell us -- so just the whole subject and the urgency of it, all that?

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Yeah. NOAA should be the lead agency for what the world does with climate.

MS. CARBONE: The opportunity to lead. All right. Other trends?

MR. DASLER: Sea level rise.

MS. CARBONE: Okay.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Rapid changes in technology.

MR. WELCH: Pass.

MR. SKINNER: More needs, less money.

MS. CARBONE: Okay.

MR. WHITING: I'll pass.

CAPTAIN HICKMAN: Pass.

MR. WELLSLAGER: The evolution of realtime networks with GPS and adapting those for positioning.

MR. ZILKOSKI: The use of new web technology in services.

MS. CARBONE: Did you say navigation technology?

MR. ZILKOSKI: Web, Internet web.

MS. CARBONE: Coming around.

MR. McBRIDE: The new technology for data acquisition and dissemination, both sides.

MR. JACOBSEN: Keeping up with training and educational use of technology.

MS. CARBONE: Okay. New items? Coming around. Anybody? Talking about trends in the current or emerging environment.

MR. SZABADOS: New technology for delivering information to the public.

MS. CARBONE: I'm sorry.

MR. SZABADOS: New technology for data delivery information.

MS. CARBONE: Okay. New items. Anybody?

CAPTAIN BARNUM: Along with the new technology, it's the user expectations for the delivery of the data. I want to say user expectation, I mean rapid delivery.

MR. SKINNER: We're in an iPhone and You Tube era.

MR. WHITING: Resumption of trades -- I'm sorry. Resumption of trades to what began nations, I guess is what it is.

MS. CARBONE: I'm sorry. You aren't in the microphone. Your voice is peeling off.

MR. WHITING: Resuming trade with nations such as Cuba.

MS. CARBONE: Sorry. It's a big room. Some of you had hands up here.

MR. DASLER: Yeah. Increased demands and stresses on coastal environment.

MS. CARBONE: Other hands that were up? Yes, sir.

MR. SZABADOS: The obvious one is the increase in range of transportation, the number of ships coming in.

MS. CARBONE: Okay. Anybody else? Okay.

So as you look at these, if you can read my handwriting that's pretty good. We'll print these out for you.

As you look at these trends and you can now start to couple the things that you've been talking about that we

talked about this morning already in your initial once-around and you can say, okay, what opportunities or threats do those trends present to us as a panel or present to NOAA, and then what can the panel do to have an impact in supporting NOAA either mitigating those treads or taking advantage of those opportunities.

And that's really what our job has to be in putting our plan together. There are a multitude of things from technology to a new administration to absolutely a much more intelligent public and consumer with high expectations, with access to information, with demanding more and more access to things.

So absolutely -- and, of course, the economy completely puts a whole new view on everything that we're doing, which causes us to have to make even more finite choices than we did before.

One of the things -- and I will talk to you about -- actually, Alisa, if you could do me a favor and click to the next slide. I'll come back to this one.

So Adam Lackenbacher assigned this book many years to his execution. So Larry Bossidy up at Allied Signal partnered with Ram Charan, an independent consultant, and the book talks about execution plans, of course, where things usually fall apart, it's actually execution plans.

And while I think some chapters in that book were

very difficult to get through, the message is a really good one.

So now with the tighter economy, having to make choices is even that much more important. So some of these guidelines I want to really put in front of you as you start to think about the choices that the panel wants to make about what it wants to do.

One is you really need to be honest about the organization's realities. It's very important to engage in very candid dialogue about what can and should be done.

You have to be completely realistic and find realistic solutions to challenges. We need to take ownership as we move towards making commitments.

This next one is really important: Asking the tough questions before committing to implementation. And that includes the NOAA partners participating in very honest dialogue about what's reasonable and do'able in light of everything else they know.

So focusing and not committing to too much is what will make both the panel and NOAA feel pretty good about the time you spent together.

So I think you're going to find what we do in this planning process is we generally bite off too much and then you end up feeling pretty bad yourself.

I don't have a problem biting off too much in the three-year horizon. You get to negotiate that down every year, but we need to be really tight on the 12 to 24-month commitments that you make, the recommendations that you make, that they are things that have high impact and are do'able.

So I thought this would be pretty important so this does require you to engage in very candid dialogue. My sense is you probably do that.

It's kind of nice the public isn't here so you can do that even more. So that's going to be important with what we do today. Okay.

So these trends definitely should align with the opportunities and the threats, the strategies that you choose. We want to absolutely leverage or mitigate the opportunities and the threats that are presented to us by these trends.

And by the way, of course, you all know that I'm preaching to the choir, but many of these opportunities and threats become wonderful talking points for making a case about the importance of the world that you all live in and the importance to the economy and the nation and the importance to the environment.

So I think all of these things really, while they're terribly threatening for our world, they do present

opportunities for you to be able to make strong cases for the contributions for the marine transportation system for the economy, and I think you know that already. Okay. Yes.

MR. WELCH: I'm getting a little bit confused as I watch the points you're making.

Are we here talking about strategic planning from the NOAA programs or are we here talking about strategic planning for your panel?

MS. CARBONE: For your panel.

MR. WELCH: Okay.

MS. CARBONE: In the context of your charter.

MR. WELCH: Because it would be easy to take the lists that we have come up with, you know, opportunities and threats and that type of stuff, and evaluate them in terms of the NOAA navigation services rather than what our panel can and can't do.

MS. CARBONE: No. It's what your panel can do, but your panel's chart are links directly to the NOAA organization. If there's discrete -- there's things I'm assuming the panel can do to make a contribution and that's what we're going to be looking for.

So correct me if I'm wrong on this. This is definitely a strategic plan for the panel. The NOAA partners are here as a feed line to you, as resources to

you, but this is what can you do, what do you chose to do in line with your charter in support of navigation services. Does that make sense?

MR. WELCH: Thank you.

MS. CARBONE: Thank you. You can ask these guys. Anybody can do one of these --

MR. WELCH: Excuse me. I don't want know what planet I'm on, but I'm not getting this.

MS. CARBONE: -- because chances are that if one of you is thinking like that, others are. And definitely feel free to stop the works anytime, so that's great.

All right. So for these kinds of meetings this is what I like to propose, is that clearly that everybody feel that they are in a position to speak their minds.

In strategic planning, it's very useful to be open to new or different ideas that some of your colleagues may present.

When you feel as though you're polarized maybe with some of your colleagues and it's an either/or, generally speaking, there's a solution. So we look to somebody that's not engaged in that debate to say wait a minute, wait a minute, I think we could use both of those ideas.

It's generally nice to avoid interrupting others and don't speak for others. The NOAA participants are here. I know they're not voting members. They're listeners.

They're resources. You've gotten an awful lot of information from them and you are now going to be in a decision mode about what the panel wants to do. I always recommend limiting war stories to two minutes. So what that means is real case examples are wonderful, but when they exceed two minutes nobody's listening to you, so try to keep them right to two minutes.

Give us your punch line or other details. Somebody might say I don't really understand what that means and ask you for more information, but if you have examples keeping it to two minutes is great.

I'm going to ask you to just strive for consensus decisions, and I'm going to show you -- if you'll pull it out, in your packet you've got these little cards. I'm going to show you how we're going to use those in a minute.

I already mentioned that we should identify double strategies and actions that have true meaningful impacts for the panel.

And finally, I'm sure you have some guidelines already. Put your Blackberries and cell phones on vibrate. I will be breaking every hour and-a-half, so you can anticipate that.

So when we make our decisions later on -- I'm going to be sending you to break-out groups in a couple of

minutes. And ultimately you're going to come back and we're going to be looking at what each sub group is proposing. We're going to look for the common threads.

While you're being briefed at lunch time, I'm going to try to consolidate those products into one set of things for you to consider that came out as cross cuts from all the groups.

You will be briefed by each other on everything that each groups comes up with, but when it comes down to it and we have a plan in front of us, we're going to move through the plan.

And I'm going to ask you line by line when we have a candidate item up on the board how do you feel about that item. And you have your consensus cards and these cards offer levels of consensus. The sheet is on the back of the white card.

So when we're moving through the decision process, if you absolutely love what's up there and you support it, you're going to say, great, it's a five, go for it. If you are satisfied and comfortable, you'll be a blue, go with a four. If you're okay, yellow. And here's where it gets a little dicey. If you flash a two, it means that you are not real comfortable, but you're not uncomfortable enough to show us your trump card, which is the red card. But now the red card, you should feel you

can use it frequently.

You are not a bad person if you flash the red card. It means that you don't agree with what's being recommended; however, you must offer us an alternative. That is the hook. The hook is you don't like it, what would you prefer, and what would you like the group to entertain.

So if we see a lot of pink cards, we have more of a conversation because that means several people are uncomfortable and it probably isn't going to work out in the end anyway, so we talk about it more.

So you'll see later this is a realtime feedback, a way to know where everybody is on an item so that we can move through the process pretty quickly without having to go around the table every time.

Okay. I'm going to be sending you into sub groups and I'm going to ask -- what will happen is I'll ask each of the NOAA directors to go to one of the groups to be a resource. We're also going to have a staff person -- we'll have a staff person go to each group. I'm hoping that they're willing to be the scribe up on the flip charts for you, and you're going to see -- I'm going to ask you to do structured brainstorming. We'll talk about that.

Structured brainstorming looks a little bit like

when I went around the table collecting ideas and when you didn't have something on that round you passed, but it's a way of collecting a lot of information quickly, getting a lot of ideas up on the board and then not repeating what somebody else says so you'll have everything in front of you.

So we're going to ask you in the sub groups to absolutely start your brainstorming. I'll talk about that.

Okay. We're going to ask -- when you go in your groups you're going to be self-facilitating. So I would be wandering from group to group, but basically we ask you to split up these roles so that the group can work in a collaborative way.

One of the NOAA staff members will be recorder on the board. I'm also going to ask a group member, and maybe this could be the director -- although Mike Szabados' handwriting is terrible so I hope you don't volunteer. These are report forms that if the flip charts don't tell the whole story of your product we'll ask you to fill out these yellow forms. We'll bring them over to your group. We'll turn them into a list who's going to turn this around very quickly so we can have something for us to look at as a draft plan.

So I'm going to be giving you a time period. So one

person should volunteer to be the second recorder, not on the flip chart, but on the paper.

Second role, if you are somebody that is schedule-driven naturally and you are concerned with time naturally, you're going to watch the schedule, please volunteer to be the timekeeper, because you will be on a tight schedule doing your sub group work.

The third role is what I call the gatekeeper. This is the person that makes sure that everybody is getting to weigh in and that nobody in particular is dominating and no one's on system shutdown.

So we ask someone to monitor to make sure if someone isn't weighing in just to check with that person. If someone's talking too much and I say, Tom, I think you've been dominating this whole time, let's move around the room, so Tom probably won't be talking that much. He's probably exhausted.

So that gatekeeper, the final one person from the group, is going to present their sub group's product. So if you're comfortable with that, if you can be succinct -- if you tend to be long-winded and you like to tell long stories, don't volunteer for this job. We need you to be very succinct and give us the punch lines of what your group comes up with.

So if you go into your little blue workbook and if

you could go to page 13, okay, the first thing you're going to do is decide who's going to do what. You're doing your group setup. You're going to remember the HSRP charter.

Keep in mind the discussions that we've had this morning and all of the little pieces of paper you have from Ashley's summary, Dave's yesterday's work as you think about this.

And the first thing that you're going to do is to brainstorm all of the ways the panel can provide value-added advice and support to NOAA's navigation mission over the next three to four years.

So you're going to think about the opportunities and the threats. You're going to think about -- the little green packet that was passed out to you is the grid of what folks said for long-term, short-term.

And several of you already made a point about what you thought was important. Those things should show up on the screen. You're going to brainstorm all of the ways.

So all of the ways that panel can make a contribution and what you feel can be your valued-added advice.

So here's what's going to happen. This is for the reporters. You're going to go around the circle and

offer one idea at a time to each person. So the recorder is going to number every single item, just going to collect every item that everybody says. Okay. So you're going to do the brainstorming. No discussion. Just put your item up.

After all of the items are up, you're going to see here in the corners you'll have walls and you tape up all of the items. You're going to look at all of the items and you're going to say I like what we did, what do you mean by that, who had that number three, what does that mean, explain that to me. You're not judging it at this point. You're just getting clarification.

So once the brainstorming and the clarification is completed, you're then going to look at this whole list of things and you're going to say do any of these things really duplicate one another or link together or cluster, are there natural clusters here.

So you might say, yeah, 3, 6 and 13, those are really -- all are IOCM things, so these are going to cluster. They might be a cluster of IOCM items, so you would put those numbers under here, and those are things that there will be strategies to support things that cluster together as IOCM.

Another one might be expertise needed, so that might be another one. So as I have up here, those items will

cluster.

Now there may be a number of -- you don't have to cluster everything. There might be a number of discrete items up on the board, so you just leave the rest alone. So once you've clustered things, you're going to have to now make the choices.

Remember, I told you everything can't be important. You have to be focused.

You're going to find on the chairs that I have given you dots, and the dots have point values.

And once you've clustered items, every team member, except for the NOAA folks, will go up -- because this is voted -- will go up and pick their top three contributions strategically that the panel can do over the next three or four years, and these are the things I think are of value that we can contribute to.

So I'm going to go up and I'm going to vote that's my top item, my second item; there was another one on funding, so I'm going to do that; and there was a third item on outreach, so that's how I'm going to vote mine.

Everybody is going to vote. And in the end a red dot is worth four points, a yellow dot worth two points, this is in your workbook, and a blue dot is worth one point. Everybody's going to put their dots up. And in the end, you will circle what the group said were their

top three to five strategic priorities or contributions that the panel can make over the next three to four years, okay, and then you'll have them. They'll be circled.

Now, once you have those, you're then going to -- we go to the next line. You're going to look at each one of the top items and you're going to talk about, well, how are we going to do that over the next three to four years, how do we advance that?

If the outcome is that we want to get more funding for NOAA, what are the things that we're going to do, what are the major strategies for us to do that.

And you actually might decide outreach is one of those, so that might be one strategy. Another might be connected with other advisory groups. I know that's on your list. So you're going to put major strategies under it and you'll again brainstorm that.

For each one of these, I would say to stay with the top three, because I don't think you're going to get too much time for more than that.

So if each one of these three major items you're going to brainstorm, how will we do it? You'll vote the items.

Again, you'll select the top three strategies to support them, and then the last thing you're going to do

is you're going to say, okay, for each of those things what are we going to do over the next 12, 18, 24 months, what are the specific things we're going to do as a panel to advance those.

Okay. So everything is in the workbook. You'll just follow the process. Unfortunately, the NOAA folks and the staff have worked these processes before, and I'm in the room and we're all kind of holding hands in traffic. We'll all be doing this together.

You're going to move through and essentially each group will come back with the top three strategic priorities for the panel, here's what we can do over the next three to four years, and here's how we're going to do it, here's our major ways of getting there, and in the next 12 to 24 months this is what we have to do to advance those.

So for each one of the three you'll have how we're going to get there and you'll have what those are and you'll have discrete actions for the panel in the near term 12 to 24 months.

Okay. You're going to sort those out. We're going to hear from each group before lunch just to hear what everybody said. We're not going to debate them.

When you're having your working lunch, I'm going to take those common items and I'm going to try to

consolidate them into a draft for you to look at which will integrate what we've done.

If they're discrete items, I'll leave them alone. I'll eliminate nothing. That's going to be your job. I'm going to do some staff work on the side to prepare for you.

Okay. So the way we're going to break up is random. We're going to ask you to count off one, two, three literally. The ones here, twos here, and threes in the back. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: I just see a problem all morning talking about the navigation mission. We're not supposed to be looking at just the navigation with -- the hydrographic services with the navigation services.

MS. CARBONE: I was working off the charter language. Just eliminate that. That's just my -- I was only reading what the charter said. So if it's broader, absolutely go as broad as you need to.

MR. SKINNER: Do we have a copy of the charter?

MS. CARBONE: I think I took my language right out of the report.

MS. CHAPPELL: I think navigation services, that's what we call ourselves in NOAA, all three, CO-OPS, GS and OGS.

So hydrographic services and navigation services to

us are one in the same. Did you need more than --

CAPTAIN McGOVERN: Yeah, because we looked at coastal zone management and not necessarily navigation, the way I understand navigation anyway, and probably the way the public figures what navigation is.

And that's some of the problems we talked about earlier when we were talking about the outreach. You know, a lot of this stuff NOAA talks about is whether to use nav, GRAV-D, you know, it's in PORTS, and everything else.

MS. CARBONE: Please do not -- I took literally the first line. I didn't ask for the formal charter. I lifted the first line out of the report as a context piece, and that's how it's written in here.

I agree with you, coastal zone management, climate change. You guys are in a bigger world. These services can make contributions. Their assets can make contributions to things broader than navigation absolutely evidenced by what they put together as a strategic plan.

So, yes, I stand corrected, and I by no stretch was limiting you to navigation. I was just lifting the language out of this report.

So actually that's a good outreach thing about the panel. It's a little side bar we have got to correct.

Okay. So let's try to count off.

(Whereupon, the panel members counted off appropriately.)

MS. CARBONE: Okay. So you need to take your little blue books with you and any materials that you might have. If you're one, you're going to go up in this corner; a two will go to that corner; a three -- I guess directors could split up and be random, and I need the staff to each go to them.

Okay. Let me give you the schedule. I'm going to ask you to have your proposals ready. I know we're a little behind, so I want to make this realistic.

Okay. So it's 10:16, and we are going to attempt to sort this out. Let's say 11:30. So we're running a little bit behind and all we're going to get are highlights, and then we're going to have a lunch break.

So we'll get each team to report what they said and so everybody knows what everybody's done. Okay. So just follow the little blue road in your workbook on page 13.

Okay. Here's what we're going to do. I told you this part's informal. Wander over this way with your spokesperson.

We're going to look at everybody's highlights, what we've got. We'll see a more -- a few housekeeping things

on the schedule this afternoon. We are going to try and move things along so that people who have flights.

Now, for the lunch presentation we had some questions. I wanted additional information on the contracting issues.

And, Mike, I will turn it right over to you. Thank you. Tom.

MR. SZABADOS: I think at the last meeting and previous couple of meetings a request was made to how CO-OPS contracts have -- and just an introduction to that, let me just say one of the reasons why we contract out is that, you know, to manage the PORTS program it's going to be 20 ports and 27 sea ports. We manage over 200 world gauge and multiple short-term gauge is 70 currently a year.

My work force, federal work force, to do that is on the neighborhood of 16 teams traveling all the way from Wake Highland (sic) up to the Arctic circle down to Puerto Rico to Virginia.

And with 16 people, we cannot maintain, install and operate those gauges. So we do contract out. So that's the reason we contract out.

And as far as the way we contract out, we turn to NOAA's material office for how to do these -- that's why I asked Mitch Ross -- a little background.

Mitch has been our consultant on how to contract for awhile. Mitch is transitioning to be the head of NOAA currently.

MR. ROSS: Thanks very much for inviting me. I was here, I guess, a couple of years ago talking to you folks. And I realize that some of you are new and some of you have been here before.

So when Mike talked to me and asked me to make this presentation, I tried to recognize that we covered previously some of this repeatedly, so what I've tried to incorporate here is cover material that I don't want to spend too much time on, but I want to let you have in your package to actually see what it looks like, and then a little bit on the how does NOAA do it, how are we focused on making decisions and functions and then leave time -- is this on? It's on.

Okay. So I've got about 20 minutes' worth of slides here, and some of it is printed material that will be old hat for some of you, some you may need that.

Talk a little bit about inherently government functions and core capabilities and to touch on which affects the work we do here at the hydrographic services, hydrographic data, and show you the process we go through in evaluation and then leave some time for questions.

Okay. So we'll cover the federal acquisition system briefly and then we'll talk a little bit about the acquisition methodology we use at NOAA, and then a little bit on Brooks Act, the history of how we got into the problems that we're facing with Brooks Act and a little bit on statute regulation that you can take away with you. That is more of a printed material that some of you have heard already.

Okay. So here's the statement that we're all trying to achieve. As a federal warranted contracting officer, my job is to implement the federal acquisition system as it's described up here.

Note the term "best value." It's throughout the regulation since 1984. We've moved significantly as a federal government toward the concept of best value.

We're responsible for trying to achieve commerciality along the way as well. So we're facing socio-economic requirements as we buy our products and services.

We're facing a requirement to inject competition into the process, and we're facing a requirement to emphasize best value, as I'll define it for you in a second.

Where we deviate from that is by exception as indicated in statute and regulation, and significantly we

have statute regulation that applies to the work we're engaged here with you folks, which are the Brooks A&E Act and the Brooks Hydrographic Services Improvement Act, which you are intimately familiar with.

So what is our goal? Note that in our goals stated at the top we use cost. We're interested in cost, quality and timeliness. We're interested in maximizing commercial products and services. We're interested in past performance and we're interested in promoting competition.

All of that has to be at the forefront of whatever acquisition strategy we come up with. We try to minimize administrative operating cost.

As a point of reference, ten years ago when we were spending about $200 billion across the federal government for products and service, we had 37 warranted contractor officers.

Today, we're spending about $400 billion and we have 27 warranted federal contracting officers. So we are spending more money, more complex products for services that we have significantly less people.

Along about the 1990s, we took a significant hit in the acquisition system as a whole and lost people. It wasn't quite as bad as in the civilian sector as in the military services, but it was still pretty bad.

All right. This is our methodology and how we insure that we're widely extending the resources that are intrusted to us.

Bona fide need is the stacking requirement. So a program manager like Mike Szabados or Dave Zilkoski will establish a bona fide need based on a make by section.

So those of you from industry, you're familiar with a make by section. Am I going to make this product for service, or am I going to buy it once that decision is made based on capability.

And that's when we get into the discussion of inherently core capability of private sector lives.

Once that decision is made, then it comes as a bona fide need to a contracted officer. Along the way, it stops at an independent person who is a certifying official for public funds expenditure, that person is not the program manager, not the warranted contracting officer, certifies that folks have been authorized and appropriate for use in the public sector to match up to the bona fide need.

So that's an independent certification by that certifying funds official.

The third leg is the warranting contracting officer who received that and develops a strategy how to move forward.

So there's three independent players in the process before we go out the door with the contract.

Okay. Once we have the need established, the contracting officer, as part of the team which includes that program official, includes budget, legal, accounting, all of the technical support that we might need, goes into developing an acquisition strategy.

What we look at in developing the strategy is what kind of legislative mandates or statutory regulatory mandates we have to face up to.

In this kind of work, we're always looking at the Brooks A&E Act and the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act. We're looking at what is the definition of hydrographic data, what is the definition of services, what is the definition of mapping that is related to the traditional A&E function.

So we're looking at those definitions and trying to find out what are the constraints on us that would prevent us from using our preferred tried-and-true method of acquisition, which is best value.

These other factors that we're looking at, type, scope, complexity, requirement, drive the nature of the contract we use.

Do we use a task order vehicle? Do we use a cost reimbursable contract? Do we used a fixed price range?

Are we anticipating a five-year program? How reliable is the pricing that we can rely on? Those are the factors that we can consider during the scope and complexity.

Then we look at the capacity of the supplier base. We probably have about 12,000 suppliers in the organization at NOAA that processes 16,000 actions a year for about $1.2 billion in acquisitions. That's way too many suppliers.

In order to have a more effective relationship with the suppliers and to get into more positive give-and-take with the suppliers, we need to reduce the number of suppliers, but we also have to be mindful we're promoting competition. Everybody gets a fair shake.

So we're trying to balance that need to have a better relationship with our suppliers with the competition requirement.

How much subcontracting is required in the work? How many records are we going to make? Is it going to be a multiple or single award? These are the factors that go into the strategy.

Okay. For most of the things that we buy, we're going to make a decision that says we've looked at the product or service and we've decided whether it is commercially available or not and now we're going to move into a mode of selection that picks that source. And

there are two primary methods that we rely on.

Historically, going back to the beginning of the republic when we were buying products, mostly we would price on basis of lowest that is technically acceptable. So we would say if you meet our requirement, if you are technically acceptable, we will make our decision on low price. We operated that way from all the way up into the 1980s.

What we found was that it wasn't working. We were not ending up with quality solutions. And as we moved more into services which now dominate more than half of that $400 billion that we spend every year, we were not getting what we wanted, and it was becoming a bad solution for meeting the mission effectively.

Along about 1984 we moved to a best value continuum. What is best value?

Best value is an approach that says I am going to consider the approach to solving the problem by the past performance and prior experience of my supplier and the cost to do the job.

Those are the three basic elements of best value, and I'm going to consider all of those factors in an integrated way where I make trade-offs between the three.

So I'm going to say maybe I'll pay a little more for a more attractive technical approach, and maybe I'll pay

a little bit more for a better past performance or prior experience or maybe I don't want to pay anymore.

So depending upon the situation, there will be a integrated assessment made using all of those factors. What we hope is the best value solution for the client, and that's where we are across the government in 99 percent of what we do.

However, in our statute and regulation there is about six pages, a little narrow slice, it says starting in 1972 and then modified significantly in '88.

We're going to ignore that for this little nitch of work that we call architect engineer work, and that's where we engage in some of the Brooks Act activity.

So it really isn't even a part. There's 52 parts to the federal acquisition regulation that guides us. Our authority comes from two statutes. Title 10 of the U.S. Code covers the military. Title 41of the U.S. Code covers civilian agencies. We have evolved from that statute to a regular federal acquisition regulation. There's 52 parts.

One sub part of one part about six pages called 36.6 deals with Brooks A&E. And it says, what all this really comes down to, you shall not consider price when you select, you will look at other factors, you will look at approach to solving the problem, you will look at past

performance, you'll look at qualifications, you'll look at capacity and capability, but you must not look at price when you make a selection.

After you make a selection and you pick your winner, you sit down and you negotiate with that winner and try to develop a fair and reasonable price. That's the fundamental difference between Brooks A&E and best value.

How did we get there? Way back when we were mostly buying product and we were mostly doing that technically acceptable low price approach, we started to have some problems.

After 1939 and moving into World War II, we ran out of capacity. We had to rely on the private sector for traditional A&E work than in the past; traditional roads, bridges, buildings. So people were on their own saying I'm going to emphasize quality.

In 1967, the Comptroller General said, you know, under the statutory authority that we have in Title 41, we might not be able to do this, we may have to go to the technically acceptable low price.

And along came a Congressman named Jack Brooks that said that doesn't make any sense, let's make a it based not on the basis of price, but on capability.

And that came out ahead of its time, ahead of the

best value concept is what governed us until this very day.

Along about 1980, we changed to the best value approach, but we never repealed the Brooks Act. And so it's still on the books and we still operate it.

And on top of that, we have a Hydrographic Services Improvement Act that says you'll use the Brooks Act whenever you're involved with hydrographic data.

It was not a real problem for awhile, because there's a six percent cap that says the A&E work cannot be more than six percent of the total project when doing facilities, bridges and roads.

Along about 1988 the Brooks Act was amended. The original act from 1972 was amended and expanded greatly with a lot of lengthy language, which is in your package, and it loosely said we're also going to include sue /TPHEUR.

And so, in 1988 it got a little convoluted, and it's been getting convoluted to a greater extent ever since 1988.

So we have piecemeal legislation and all kinds of separate statutes in effect how we interpret the regulations governing the Brooks Act.

We've had litigation -- we have the federal court case right now that's recently dismissed. That's about

the sixth time that we've litigated this issue or have protesting before the GAO.

So we're struggling to interpret when do we ignore our typical method of best value and use the Brooks Act approach.

Here's the definition. If you would just circle in paragraph A, if applicable. That's what the reasonable litigation is about. That's the argument we're having in federal court right now.

The case was thrown out without addressing the merits. It will be back, and it's all focused on that little phrase "applicable."

Here's the definition right out of the statute. Here's the definition out of the definition section of regulation. Here's the definition out of the sub part. They're all slightly different, but they all say the same thing.

When you're buying architect engineer services, including surveying mapping, that is related to the traditional function of architect engineer, whatever that is, you shall use the Brooks Act and you shall not consider price in selection. Only after selection you discuss price.

Okay. So how do we do contracting in NOAA in CO-OPS and in all of the parts of the bureau? We do it by

relying on three separate independent performances: A program manager that establishes need; a funds certifying official that determines that we have authorized the appropriated funds who is independent of the program manager and the contracting officer; and then we rely on a warranted contracting officer to obligate the government in the form of a written contract.

So three independent players before we end up going out and buying a product or a service.

The contracting officer approves the strategy and makes the determination on the technique that has to comply with the statute and regulation, and then we proceed and buy it. That's the process by which we buy products and services.

MR. JACOBSEN: So simple. It sounds simple and really is if you keep it reduced to the fundamentals. Sometimes we can get involved in issues. Some of the issues -- that is what is inherent in government, how much core capability do we need to make sure we do the adequate job.

MR. WHITING: Larry Whiting. You and I have had this discussion before, Mitch.

I think that the A&E was put in the Brooks Act basically for safety of the public, if I remember correctly, and that's what was the emphasis for starting.

Okay. As time progressed, it was -- did come down to mapping and charting.

Now, all of your definitions list state law as being the primary deciding factor of the selection routine for getting people.

Thirty-seven of the states now specifically state that hydrographic data collected must be collected under a professional and setting of the geode monuments and the establishing of elevations and something else.

Anyway, 37 of them use this almost identical -- well, 37 on my last count. I don't know how many now. So how does best value enter into what CO-OPS does when they set tide gauges, tide stations, benchmarks, running GPS, establishing those geode points? How does your procurement justify that?

MR. ROSS: Okay. Good question. There's really two parts to your question, Larry. The first part of your question has to do with state law and the fact that there are states that require professional engineers to perform certain tasks associated with architect engineering, surveying and mapping. That's the first part of the question.

The second part of the question has to do with how do we justify the course of action that we take. So let's address them that way.

The first part dealing with state law is the subject of the recent litigation. So the federal government was sued in federal court and the allegation was, as Larry said, many, many states according to state law require professional engineers to perform functions with surveying, mapping, architect engineering.

Why isn't the federal government therefore using professional engineers? And if you did use professional engineers, you would be required, we think, to follow the Brooks Act.

The answer is the federal government does not require professional engineers in anything it does, if I got the question right, let me just try to explain, from a federal perspective, does not require professional engineers.

Any specification issued when we come out does not require, 99 percent of the time, does not require professional engineers, so that's point number one.

The second point is, according to the statute, even when we do have a professional engineer requirement, the decision on whether or not to invoke the state mandate of a federal government is at the discretion of the federal government, and it only is required under the statute if applicable, if applicable.

So if the government determines that because the

state follows the course of action to employ professional engineers in this function, in performing this function, the federal government is not bound by that unless it wants to be bound by that, if it finds it to be applicable.

So in developing the specification, the requirement, as it's prepared by the federal government, has to make a decision are we going to require professional engineers or not.

That takes care of the state of applicability because if it does not and the federal government finds the state requirements are not applicable, the federal government doesn't follow them.

Second part of the question, how do you justify the course of action that you take, the contracting officer relies on the determination of that by those people who develop the bona fide need, so that would be in the case of NOAA.

Captain Barnum and Mr. Zilkoski would define it, and they would be asked by the contracting officer what are we doing here and does it qualify under these statutory definitions, these regulatory requirements, are we engaged in collecting hydrographic data, are we engaged in surveying, are we engaged when performing mapping and geodesy and surveying and those that are associated with

traditional functions.

The convolution of the statute and the regulation is such that not only do you have to have mapping and geodesy that is as defined, but it has to be related to those traditionally performed daily functions. So it's a two-part test.

You bring in the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act and now we have a definition of hydrographic data. So we also have to make certain that if we're engaged in the collection and development and manipulation of hydrographic data, we also have to move into the Brooks A&E arena.

So those are the ways we justify. We rely very heavily on the determination of specification and then the contracting officer has to interpret what has been said, what the specification requires, does it move into that definition of requiring the Brooks A&E Act.

So in the case of hydrographic surveying, because we call it hydrographic surveying, we say that that falls under the definition.

In the case of environment field services where we're out in the field performing maintenance looking at tide gauges, looking at water level stations, but not actually manipulating hydrographic data, we say it doesn't. Does that help?

MR. WHITING: Well, you missed -- one of the points I asked was in setting those tide gauges, and you have contracts out there where the guys go out and they set the tide gauges, they set their staffs, they set their monuments, they run levels through them, they collect GPS data, at that time there's no processing of that data. Okay. That's what I've been told.

Now, I've never had one of these contracts. I don't know. I've retired since then. So, anyway, these guys are setting these things.

In setting those monuments and setting those tide staffs, they are also furnishing information to watch for marine high water, low water, to set the boundaries of for federal, state -- so there is a lot of professionality up to that point that is not covered by the Brooks Act.

Okay. I think that that extends -- that professionality extends down to setting that monument, not the maintenance of it, none of that. And I'm not saying that about that, but setting those new tide gauges. So does it?

MR. ROSS: Well, when we litigated it with your firm the government accountability office said that it was de minimis.

MR. WHITING: Pardon?

MR. ROSS: That it was de minimis. And the term "de minimis" meant that some of the aspects kept into the specification, but the preponderance of the specification was therefore considered so small, de minimis, as to not warrant treating the whole specification in that manner.

MR. WHITING: Okay. Now, you said something about costs of administering contracts, you have issued contracts under that, and then you take that data and then you try to have a professional services contract to, what, turn it into a -- to process the data and to put it into your database and establish the elevations on it and stuff like this.

MR. ROSS: How much is the difference in those two projects -- two contracts and administering them?

MR. WHITING: Okay. You have two contracts that you issued for one set of tide gauges, tide staffs and monuments out there.

How much does it cost to administer both contracts, because you issued two contracts?

MR. ROSS: How much does it cost?

MR. WHITING: Yes.

MR. ROSS: It costs more to administer two than one.

MR. WHITING: So will that usually -- or does it equate to saving money if you don't have to do two

contracts when the work is being done?

MR. ROSS: I see. I see. Why do we award multiple contracts for the same thing?

MR. WHITING: Yes. And I've got one more comment. Technically, that work has to be performed under the supervision of a professional if he's going to stamp it, and so therefore you're making him break the law if it's not the same contractor.

MR. ROSS: Well, we don't want to make anybody break the law. Why do we award multiple award contracts?

Mostly because we have a statutory requirement to promote competition, and that has been interpreted to state that when we create one of these large vehicles that we loosely call multiple or indefinite delivery and develop quantity contracts that have a broad statement of work or specification, that covers a lot of things and probably runs for several years. We decide that as we issue task orders.

For specific requirements of shorter duration, then we want to have multiple suppliers available who will receive -- you don't like this answer, Larry?

MR. WHITING: No. You kind of ignored -- I'm saying not multiple contractors or multiple contracts that are available to you. I'm saying for one monument in the ground, why do you set it and collect data and then have

that contract to do that, and then the next contractor comes along and he's supposed to process the data and turn it into a professional what, professionally used points?

He's the one that is responsible for that, but he can't be responsible for that, because he didn't supervise the job so --

MR. ROSS: Why do we have one contractor placing a monument and another contractor inspecting it?

MR. WHITING: Doing the data processing.

MR. ROSS: Doing the data processing on the monument?

MR. WHITING: Right, in arriving at the geode position, the elevation of the water.

MR. ROSS: I don't know. I don't know why.

MR. WHITING: Okay. Why is it, Mike?

MR. SZABADOS: First of all, the surveying and/or tide gauge is probably one of the -- it's a very important factor, but it's probably one of the -- how do you say, it's an important factor, but it's a small part of the process of doing maintenance on a tide gauge. I mean you took calibration, swapping sensors out and those things.

Same thing as putting a mooring together, picking up the mooring and putting it down. And I think

the focus is that we're not collecting data, we're not contracting data, we're contracting services to do maintenance or installations. The data is processed and analyzed by the federal government.

MR. WHITING: Who collected the data?

MR. SZABADOS: The data is collected by the tide -- in this case, the tide gauge -- tide gauge transmits it through the satellite and we process it in Silver Springs.

MR. WHITING: And the GPS and the levels?

MR. SZABADOS: I can't answer the GPS. I'm not familiar with the GPS process, but the levels come back and we have a group that enters that information into our database.

MR. ROSS: Larry -- I'm sorry. John.

MR. DASLER: Yeah. John Dasler. Actually, we have one of the contracts for -- we're doing work in Alaska. It's under a GSA contract up there. And I'm pretty familiar with the argument with the professional surveying community.

And, as a professional surveyor, I can see the point. There is -- I think when you're running three-wired differential levels, that's surveying. When you're taking elevations and you're establishing and publishing monuments that reference state and

in-state boundaries, in a lot of states that is looked at as a surveying practice.

But Mike is right, most of that work that's being done is maintenance of the equipment, you know, putting in wind sensors, and a lot of work doing it, but the leveling part is still vital.

But I could see that there could be a valid argument being from the professional surveying community. That's a surveying practice, putting elevations on monuments that are --

MR. ROSS: Sure. So if that was the case and the specification was as you described, John, then we'd have to spike out that component that is labeled survey, not do that under the contract that you have and do it under a separate contract. Fine, we would support that and we're going to do our best to comply with the law where we have to.

Our point is, if you go back just to the 10,000-foot level for a second, you have a contract to do certain work that is very close and related to what we would define as surveying or mapping or hydrographic data collection. Are we doing it in a satisfactory way? are we getting less quality because we did not use the Brooks A&E?

MR. DASLER: No. I don't -- I think probably the

cost is the same. Actually sometimes under GSA contract costs may be a little higher at times. It just depends on -- but probably your costs are the same regardless of the contracting.

MR. ROSS: Regardless of the cost. How's the quality?

MR. DASLER: Well, the quality is there because the people we have doing it are licensed.

MR. ROSS: So you're capable of providing quality service on a non-Brooks A&E contract?

MR. DASLER: The work is being done supervised by a professional land surveyor in the State of Alaska. So we have professional staff that are doing it, but it's not under a Brooks Act.

But what you could do is end up getting other contractors that are not professionally licensed doing that, I guess.

MR. ROSS: Is that a problem?

MR. DASLER: It could be under some requirements under the states.

MR. ROSS: It could be a state requirement?

MR. DASLER: Right.

MR. ROSS: And the government, of course, as we discussed earlier, the federal government decides whether or not to use a professional engineer.

MR. DASLER: And that's where I think there's a difference between that contracting that you're doing and the Corps of Engineers.

So the Corps of Engineers says define hydrographic work where they require a licensed surveyor under those contracts.

And I know federal governments, I'm not exactly sure about the policies, but I know none of the federal employees within the Corps of Engineers 1078 are licensed, but -- there's not a requirement, but when it goes out to private contracting then the professional licensures is required so --

MR. ROSS: Well, let's go to the 10,000-foot level again for a second. Whether it's surveying or mapping, whether professional engineer is required or not, the contracting officer isn't going to decide that. That's going to be left to the program manager who establishes bona fide need. That program manager is going to decide am I going to keep it in-house or contract it out.

Once they decide to contract out, they're going to develop their requirement and we're going to listen to them and they're going to say I need professional engineers or I don't. They make that determination. They make the determination of whether or not we're collecting hydrographic data.

They make the determination of whether or not the architect engineer worked, the mapping worked, that is so intimately related to architect engineering work that qualifies as being Brooks Act work. It's part of the specification.

If it is, then we go don't approach that. Virtually all of our hydrographic surveying is done Brooks Act.

Now, having said that, if you come to me as a contracting officer and say do I get a good deal under best value contracting, you get a great deal. You get quality. You get competition. You get price consideration. You get performance.

Of the $400 billion we spend as a federal government, which includes space, medical, all kinds of laboratory work, food safety, we do it best value. A minute portion of what we buy out of that $400 billion a year is Brooks Act A&E, a minute portion.

The statute is convoluted. The regulations are convoluted. It's heavily litigated. It's not going to go away. It's going to either be rewritten or eliminated, because the structures that urge a broad interpretation are not giving up and the federal government each time -- let's have a look at this -- has chosen not to take a broad interpretation of the Brooks A&E Act.

MR. SKINNER: We have a couple of people who have been waiting patiently. I want to make sure we address this issue. So maybe if we can go ahead -- and, Adam, you had --

MR. McBRIDE: Mitch, does each agency have its own contracting officers, or is there a pool for the whole federal government?

MR. ROSS: Each agency has its own contracting officers. There are about 26,000 contracting officers; that is to say, people who have warrants at the 1102 level throughout the federal government.

The acquisition community, which includes a lot more people, purchasing agents, people that support the acquisition function, number in the hundreds of thousands, but each agency has its own contracting officers that are warranted under a common set of requirements established by the executive branch at the office of management and budget level.

MR. McBRIDE: How many are within NOAA?

MR. ROSS: NOAA has about 160 acquisition people involved. And of that, it has about 50 contracting officers. So working with those contracting officers there, it would be purchasing agents, for example?

MR. ROSS: Correct. However, some of those purchase agents would also be contracting officers. So that's

part of the 50.

MR. McBRIDE: So there are 160 involved in the acquisition process within NOAA?

MR. ROSS: (Nodding head.)

MR. McBRIDE: Okay. Thank you.

MR. SKINNER: Are there other questions? Let me check around. Okay. Ed and then John.

MR. WELCH: Mitch, thank you. I'm one of the new people, so I might have a couple of simplistic questions. And I don't know much about this except the fact I knew Congressman Brooks. He was one of the most cantankerous congressmen there was, very smart though.

With regard to the contested suite of services that you're talking about, whether it needs to go Brooks Act or best value, has there been any showing that if it went best value the quality of the engineering and surveying services have suffered?

MR. ROSS: There is no empirical evidence to say that. There is anecdotal evidence that's been presented. You had a presentation -- or this panel had a presentation about three years ago by Curt Allen, who represents one of the associations interested in this.

And if you listen to Curt talk, he would say it's a safety -- it's a national safety concern that you have price not be a factor in selection, the Brooks Act

approach.

MR. WELCH: That's sort of a philosophical approach. Has anybody been able to point specific --

MR. ROSS: Not that I know of.

MR. WELCH: Now, flipping it, with regard to the stuff that is clearly covered by the Brooks Act, because it's clearly engineering and surveying, does the agency feel like it's significantly overpaying with a considerable amount of money if it went through the best value process?

Or is it just a philosophical approach by the government that most everything else is on best value and they just like to do everything together?

MR. ROSS: For the record, the agency position is that we have no evidence that we are paying too much under the Brooks A&E Act. We have no empirical data to show that.

In addition, our position is that when we comply with the Brooks Act and the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act, as best we can interpret those acts separately, we also believe that the requirement under the federal action regulatory system to promote competition is a significant requirement and we will strive wherever we can to promote that competition by using best value procurement techniques where we're

allowed.

So we have studied -- can I go off the record? We have had studies conducted in the past that have tried to look at cost per nautical mile and other measures in hydrographic surveying, and those studies have been insightful, but not conclusive as to the point that you're raising.

MR. SKINNER: Are there other people that want to make comments? I'll come back to you. John.

MR. DASLER: It seems to me there is a common misunderstanding of the Brooks Act even though the selection originally is made based on qualifications, then everything is audited rates, you have to have competitive and fair pricing that's submitted.

So established rates are set, but there is an individual task order and actually those rates as it goes through there can be negotiation.

So if the government doesn't agree with that, there's negotiations involved in that, and as the task order comes on line, there's negotiations for what's the level of effort to get that task order done.

So the government prepares a cost estimate. The contractor prepares a cost estimate. And there's some level of negotiations.

And we've seen it before, even on the rates, where a

contract had been denied just because they couldn't come to an agreement on that. So if the government thought it was too expensive, they could pass and go to the next selected contractor in line, and we've seen that happen before.

MR. ROSS: Tom, can I respond to that?

MR. SKINNER: Sure.

MR. ROSS: John, I object to that comment in a couple of areas, because I think it is a little bit misleading, and let me make two points on that.

First, in regard to the role of competition, we believe fundamentally that competition drives better pricing and solutions.

So to say that we can get a good deal anyway might be accurate, but it misses the point that we firmly believe as a federal government that competition drives better solutions and better pricing. That's point number one.

Point number two is the Brooks Act, as it is defined and then as sometimes is referred to as a QBS, or quality base selection, is a misnomer. That is not what the Brooks Act says. It refers to qualifications as part of a larger set of considerations in making selection.

And while price is clearly excluded from the selection process, the selection is not exclusively made

on the basis of qualifications. It also takes into consideration the prior performance and experience of the supplier.

So the label that is sometimes bantered about, QBS, or quality base selection, is a mislabeling of that part of the federal acquisition regulation. That is a term of art that has been created by proponents.

MR. DASLER: Thanks for that clarification, but I still think that there is competition that exists. Otherwise, a lot of these -- companies aren't going to exist if they're going to be overpriced, and there's not going to be that much key competition.

And we probably see that more on the Corps of Engineers level, so they have historical background performance.

And even though cost isn't evaluated, there's knowledge of underperforming on projects that's been overpriced, you're probably not going to be selected even though technically that can't be a qualifying factor in the selection, but it tends to sort itself out after awhile.

And there are a number of contractors selected for the hydrographic component of it to where I think everybody is cost conscious about moving things forward and trying to do it in the most effective method to make

the most value for what available funding there is.

MR. ROSS: It can work out. Sometimes it works out.

MR. DASLER: And then I guess I had another question on how that works across different agencies.

And I don't know if this is just the Department of Defense, but there's usually an ACO that coordinates all government contracts. And, do you know, is that just the Department of Defense or is that --

MR. ROSS: It is -- the term "contracting officer" is a common term government-wide in particular agencies. That term is expanded so that you have -- for instance, in the Defense Department, which is the largest buyer of federal government by far, a set of contracting officers, they have a procuring contracting officer. That's all about contract formation and administrating contract officer.

That's all about administrative functions, no inspection and payment, a termination contracting officer that strictly handles termination of contracts. All three of those persons are contracting officers. That system does not exist in most agencies outside of the Defense Department.

MR. SKINNER: Larry.

MR. WHITING: Yeah. Mitch, one thing you left out, and it said the selection -- let's see. This is slide

number eight, Brooks Act -- Brooks Act features. It says selection based on competence and qualifications and then cost. I don't see it. I think it's eight. Brooks Act features -- back up about three. Right there.

"The selection is based on demonstrated competence and qualifications."

Okay. Now, at fair and reasonable price, doesn't that apply to each task order, not to the selection?

MR. ROSS: No. When we select -- let's say we do have -- first of all, we're only talking about the situation where we're not awarding a stand-alone contract, we're awarding a multiple or duplicable contract. That contemplates task orders at the selection or to receive a contract initially we do not in selection consider price.

So then the contract is awarded when task orders are given out to the contract holders. We do not consider price in selecting who should get the task order. We do not.

Once we have decided who will receive the task order, we try, as John was saying, we try to negotiate one-on-one fair and reasonable prices.

MR. WHITING: For the government.

MR. ROSS: Well, for both parties.

MR. WHITING: For the government. It doesn't say

for the contractor. It says for the government. So what I'm stating here is that I think that NOAA could improve their cost benefit if they would have better estimates for their production on those jobs. Not your fault, but it's the fault of the contracting, what is it, the technical representatives.

They need to not do a wile guess -- I guess there's another term coming up -- a wild guess of the cost, but they need to do a real estimate of the cost of those jobs.

MR. ROSS: Well, good point, Larry. We certainly welcome better independent government process that would certainly help us.

Remember that the task order that is issued to the contractor, the contractor has an opportunity to accept or reject that task order. So if the pricing is unacceptable, they don't take it.

MR. WHITING: That's right.

MR. ROSS: So it's not a one-way street. It's not a hammer. As far as independent government process helping us, that's great, but as John was saying, once you have selected the contractor and you sit down to negotiate the price, you're in a one-on-one negotiation over that price.

That is a different scenario than when you're

competing for contracts and there are multiple competent --

MR. WHITING: Isn't this what fair value is all about, is getting the best price, the best, fair and reasonable price for the government?

MR. ROSS: It is. And the government believes that one of the magnificent tools available to us to get the best value for the government is the power of competition.

MR. WHITING: Now, I've been selected, John's got a contract, and I go in there and I negotiate with you and negotiate with you, and you have this bottom dollar and I can't get there.

Okay. John comes in and he negotiates, he's more efficient than I am, and he can do the job for that.

Okay. What is -- you know, the reasonable price comes to play in the negotiations. That's where it's at, not in your qualifications.

MR. ROSS: Right. I mean that's a good point. If we negotiate one-on-one with you and we can't reach agreement, we can walk away from you and start over with John. We have that -- we have that available to us.

MR. WHITING: Yeah.

MR. DASLER: I just had one last comment, because I think that the -- for us, we believe that the largest

component of it, because once that's negotiated, it's lump sum.

So if we're going to go survey in the Arctic and we've got a hundred square miles, it's a one lump sum cost. You have to compete, no matter what. So there's a large element of risk involved in that whether other contingencies can do that.

So if the government is truly looking at trying to reduce costs, there could be approach taken of shared risk. And we do that sometimes under our Corps of Engineers contract. Probably the Arctic contractors, they're going to jump on me after this, but under the Corps of Engineers we'll estimate a project to where we move through it based on what it would take without any weather contingency, and then there's a day rate for weather contingency that has to be documented over and above that, which in this case the government is taking on more of a risk.

So there's big risk components in hydrographic operations that also come into play here. That's what I was trying to point out, and that's probably a largely contributing factor to negotiation of costs.

So think to how much risk you're willing to take for a given project, because we are bound to get that project done, you know, no matter what it takes.

MR. SKINNER: I want to, once again, because there seems to be some members that are much more knowledgeable about this than others, but I want to make sure that everyone has a chance to ask a question or to make comment. Gary.

DR. JEFFRESS: Gary Jeffress. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about contractors having to have a policy on subcontracting to start leases on businesses.

MR. ROSS: Okay. This is a question that goes to that goal that we have on one of the earlier slides that talked about socio-economic requirements.

So our job at the federal procurement level is not simply to maintain the integrity of the system and get the best value based on mission and cost control, but it's also to implement those socio-economic societal goals that the Congress has imposed on us.

So we have requirements by statute that we have to impose on our federal contractors at the prime level that tell the contractors how to treat their subcontractors. And one of the major ones is the small business -- Small Disadvantaged Business Socio-Economic Program that says we're going to establish goals for you as you perform your project on a percentage of dollar basis and we're going to track you, and if you don't make a good faith

effort to meet those goals we are going to come after you.

And we establish those categories, and it changes all the time from small business to small disadvantaged business to service disabled veterans to institutions that are historically by colleges and universities, the categories -- women-owned businesses.

The categories change and the percentages change, but that has been with us for a long time.

DR. JEFFRESS: But the requirement, does it have a policy historically on business, it's not to actually put that into place, right?

MR. ROSS: No, it is. There should be numerical goals under 95507 like for those that are above $55,000, we should be imposing on you a small disadvantaged business, small business contracting plan that says how you are to expend those dollars.

DR. JEFFRESS: Even if you're not planning on having any subcontractors, right?

MR. ROSS: You should negotiate the goals as part of your contract negotiation to be as realistic as possible. And if it truly is such that you cannot subcontract, that it's just not possible, then the goals would be very lean.

DR. JEFFRESS: Does the plan have to match the

percentages of the federal government --

MR. ROSS: No.

DR. JEFFRESS: -- exactly?

MR. ROSS: No. If you did not make a good faith effort, a good faith effort is the way it is written, then you would be in position of possibly being called to a procurer otherwise defaulted, but a good faith effort is something you ought to be able to achieve.

DR. JEFFRESS: Right.

MR. SKINNER: Larry.

MR. WHITING: Thank you, Tom.

Mitch, one of the real problems with NOAA contracting is the length of time from the solicitation, actually probably before the solicitation, but from the solicitation to the selection.

Is there any way that NOAA could speed up those procedures? Do you have any ideas about that? You know, it says we are locked into the 80 by the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act.

Is there some way to shorten up that time frame? You know the issue on here.

MR. ROSS: It's a good question. I'm all about streamlining, because with the declining work force that's a real problem for me. So let me say a couple of things about that.

Tom, I've got about five minutes left and then I've got to take off. Does that work?

MR. SKINNER: Yep.

MR. ROSS: Okay. On solicitations, on how to do acquisition streamlining, our work force is stuck where it is. It's stuck at the NOAA level. We have got about 12,000 civilians.

For the last decade, it's stuck at the acquisition grants office level.

We are not getting anymore people. Our mandate is expanding. The number of transactions is expanding. So even -- so we're all about streamlining.

And the best way we can do it is to consolidate requirements if we can consolidate requirements.

We can focus more resources on those smaller number of requirements that remain and shorten the time it takes to get them done, because we have more people on it.

Deliver and develop quality contracts that have broader scopes. The time to issue the task orders other than those contracts is less than building a contract from scratch.

If we do those things, the result will be contracts are awarded quicker. The amount of time that it takes to award a stand-alone contract is roughly six months from scratch.

A large contract, the amount of time it takes to award the task order ranges from 15 to 60 days. Does that help?

MR. WHITING: I think so. I think so, Mitch. I appreciate you coming down, by the way.

MR. ROSS: It's good to see you, Larry.

MR. SKINNER: As Mitch just indicated, we're going to have to wrap this up fairly quickly. So I want to catch a few other comments.

REAR ADMIRAL WEST: Just a general question. I was on an acquisition work force with the DOD. I was program manager and I was part of the team that looks at the -- as far as in the '90s when they recommended downsizing that -- by the way, I recommended that they don't do it -- it's horrible, and it's in the federal government.

Is there any movement within the federal government to re-look at that and raise the work force, I mean federally, you know, government employees in the system?

MR. ROSS: That's a great question. The outgoing administrator of the Office of Procurement Policy, Paul Denna, who was a real breath of fresh air after having the previous set of administrators strapped that one on, and he's actually been successful.

We have more warranted contracting officers in

federal government today than a year ago. Not a lot more, but more. Maybe a thousand more. And he's also strengthened the work force requirement with federal acquisition circulars that have been issued for program managers, contracting officers, and contracting officers' representatives. So he's strengthened the education requirement.

So we can tap into that part of the work force. We have some very small baby steps that are being taken, but they're positive steps.

There's a couple of intern programs that are creeping up throughout the government to bring people out of the colleges. It's slow-going, but there are some positive steps.

MR. SKINNER: Thank you very much for coming down here. I know that we had to weave in and out of your schedule to get you here, and I think it's been very helpful. So thank you very much and congratulations on your new position.

MR. ROSS: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

MR. SKINNER: Safe travels. And thank you, Mike, for arranging this. And I think we will maybe try and wrap -- actually a break would be good. Take five.

Lynn is finishing up collating all of the information from the morning session. So we should

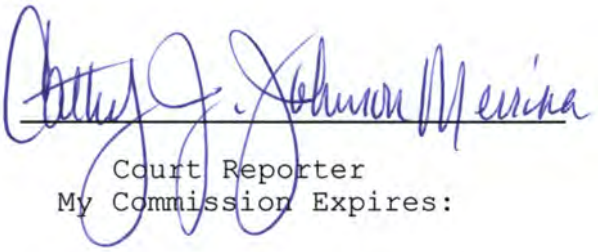
probably come back here around, I think, 1:30.

(Whereupon, the court reporter was released from her duties.)

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

I, CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, Registered Merit Reporter, Registered Florida Reporter, and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at large, hereby certify that the meeting was recorded in Stenotypy by me and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of my recordings thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal this 9th day of January, 2009, at Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida.



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