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Harford County Executive

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Harford County Hosts Successful “Meet the Primes” Networking Event for Small Defense Contractors

BEL AIR, Md., (Sept. 29, 2023) - The Harford County Office of Economic Development offered small defense and tech companies an opportunity to meet with larger “prime” defense contractors at a networking event on September 20, 2023. Eighty-four meetings took place among the 24 small businesses and 12 prime contractors in attendance at the county’s first “Meet the Primes” event.

"Aberdeen Proving Ground and its defense community are a critical economic engine in the region," County Executive Bob Cassilly said. "The more we can build capacity and capability among our prime contractors and small businesses, the stronger our defense base will be for keeping contract award dollars here in Harford County."

Prime contractors work directly for the federal government. Those in attendance at the event work directly with the Department of Defense and include Amentum, ASRC Federal, Boeing, Booz Allen Hamilton, CACI, DRS, General Dynamics, Leidos, MAG Aerospace, Northrop Grumman, Parsons, and SURVICE Engineering.

Primes include on their teams smaller businesses, known as subcontractors, that work under the prime and not for the government itself. Small companies in attendance were current or prospective subcontractors that submitted business capability statements in advance. They were then matched accordingly with primes to discuss potential future opportunities in a private, secure space.

Feedback was enthusiastic among the primes and small businesses alike.

“We were not aware of the depth of capabilities available with local businesses and would not have connected with them until this event,” Bob Pyne, director of business development, for DRS, said.

D.J. Brown, CEO of Data Haven Solutions, a potential subcontractor at the event, said, “The primes actually wanted to participate, and today’s conversations resulted in several follow-up meetings.”

“For me, the Meet the Primes was a great opportunity,” Scott Chaney, vice president of corporate strategies at RTR Technologies, a small business in attendance, said. “I met with three different primes and the time spent with each one was very productive. This was a ‘one stop’ event for both the primes and the defense contractors.”

Small businesses and defense contractors that want to learn more about county resources and initiatives involving defense and technology may contact Larry Muzzelo, assistant director at the Office of Economic Development, at lmuzzelo@harfordcountymd.gov or 410-638-1069.



Left to right: Kernan Kelly, MNS Group, Clark Dutterer, SURVICE Engineering, Larry Muzzelo, Harford County Office of Economic Development (OED) and Bonnie Barresi, Harford County OED


gather for a photo before Mr. Kelly and Mr. Dutterer head to their private one-on-one meeting during the recent Meet the Primes event.



Kernan Kelly (left), Business Development Executive with MNS Group, talks with Clark Dutterer, CTO & VP, Business Development with SURVICE Engineering, in a one-on-one meeting during the recent Meet the Primes event. Dutterer represented one of the prime contractors participating at the Meet The Primes event.

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