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Woman-Owned Small Business Lands NASA Contract Participant in SBA's 8(a) Certification Program

FAIRMONT, W.VA. – Allegheny Technology Corporation (ATC), a small woman-owned, disadvantaged company, signed their first federal contract with the NASA IV&V Facility in Fairmont, W.Va. The company, based in Weston, W.Va., is a participant in the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program.

The signing took place at the NASA IV&V Facility on Monday, November 16, 2009. Arria Whiston, president of ATC, Judy K. McCauley, director of SBA's West Virginia District Office, and Dr. Dale S. "Butch" Caffall, director of NASA's IV&V Facility, participated in the contract signing ceremony.

The \$1.34 million dollar NASA contract was awarded for Knowledge and Program Management support. The contract will provide the NASA IV&V Facility with program metric development, strategic planning, and knowledge management support. ATC will be assisting NASA IV&V with developing best practices in industry and specifically addressing the internal drivers for enhancing their ability to share knowledge among projects, customers and stakeholders.

"Allegheny Technology Corporation is a perfect example of SBA's 8(a) business development program in action," said McCauley. *"The 8(a) program provides excellent opportunities for small firms such as ATC to develop business experience through the federal procurement process."*

"This is very exciting for Allegheny Technology to receive its first SBA 8(a) award from the NASA IV&V Facility," said Whiston. *"This award is another instance of NASA's commitment to the advancement of the small business community in West Virginia."*

Kaci Reynolds, chief, Knowledge Management Office at NASA, IV&V Facility adds, *"We are happy to have Allegheny Technology on board. I look forward to utilizing their skills and talent to support the many Knowledge Management initiatives currently underway at the Facility."*

"The 8(a) program will open a lot more doors for Allegheny Technology," added Whiston. *"It is an excellent program for small disadvantaged businesses to obtain federal contracts. The support and guidance Allegheny Technology received during the certification process and business development planning activities from West Virginia District Office has been outstanding."*

The 8(a) program is an essential instrument for helping socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs gain access to the economic mainstream of American society. This program has helped thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs gain a foothold in government contracting. Divided into two phases over nine years, certified companies advance from a four-year development stage to a five-year transitional stage.

The program provides access to sole-source contracts, up to a ceiling \$3.5 million for goods and services and \$5.5 million for manufacturing. While the 8(a) certification program helps firms build competitive and institutional know-how through sole-source contracts, the SBA also encourages participation in competitive contracts as well as commercial contracts.

Whiston officially became an entrepreneur in 1998 starting Whiston Accounting which evolved into AW Consulting. Early in 2009, she incorporated the business and became Allegheny Technology Corporation. ATC provides professional services, Program Management and Information Technology solutions for federal, state, and local governments, federal civilian agencies, and commercial clients. The company focuses on areas such as project management, financial analysis, software and systems engineering, as well as training and simulation, and specialized scientific, engineering, and technical support.

To learn more about the SBA and their business development programs, visit the SBA's web site at www.sba.gov or contact Melissa Loder at SBA's West Virginia District Office at (304) 623-5631.

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(l-r) Judy K. McCauley, Director SBA West Virginia District Office; Arria Whiston, President/CEO, Allegheny Technology Corporation; Dr. Dale S. "Butch" Caffall, Director, NASA IV&V Facility.