

Florida Defense Expo  
Florida Defense Contractor Association (FDCA)  
Prime Osborn Convention Center, Jacksonville, FL  
November 10, 2015

Approximately five years ago Pompano Beach's economic development team assisted a company, BRS Aerospace, in securing an abandoned facility on the west side of Powerline Road formerly occupied by Superior Shades. The facility was just what the company needed, large open areas to stretch out and sew fabric together to create the large parachutes for airplanes. BRS initially employed approximately 450 low skilled workers, but ultimately left the city as if found the ebb and flow of the federal governments' procurement process too difficult in maintaining a consistent labor force.

At the same time, the City's economic development team had also met with various companies throughout Pompano Beach's 30+ million square feet of industrial space and had noted that a number of the companies from the industrial district did significant business with the federal government; these included, Precision Metal Industries, ProFab Electronics, GE Aviation, KAM Industries and Point Blank Enterprises. This was a significant realization given that fact that there is no military facility or presence in Broward County; the city, through its immense industrial district spanning numerous market sectors, still had companies that serviced the U.S. military.

Ric Green then came across, what was then known as, the Florida League of Defense Contractors and saw that the organization was hosting its first Defense Expo at Cecil Field, a former Naval Air Station, in Jacksonville. He suggested that Chris Clemens accompany him up to Jacksonville for the Expo. The first visit to the Expo was in 2012. 2015 marked the third time in four years the two had made the trip up to Jacksonville for the Expo, now being held at the Prime Osborn Convention Center in downtown (versus Cecil Field).

The FDCA materials state "Hosted by the Florida Defense Contractors Association (FDCA) in conjunction with Congressman Ander Crenshaw, the Expo offers an exceptional opportunity to meet with top leaders to discuss our nation's most pressing national security challenges, participate in education panels with event VIPs, and network with defense firms from around the state and across the nation. The Expo will convene military, law enforcement, Homeland Security and other organizations serving our country with businesses dedicated to providing high quality, safe, and innovative products and services to our warfighters and first responders. Federal, state and local leaders will also be on-hand."

As many already know, the military is often the first to recognize the need for advanced technology in their equipment and the private sector often responds to that need via government contracts before offering like products to the private sector and general public.

In 2012 and 13 the Pompano Beach economic development team brought with them a listing, including contact information, for the known defense subcontractors from Pompano's industrial district. The list included less than 10 companies. Vendors noted to the team that it was the first time they'd seen ANY city's economic development team at an event for defense contractors.

Earlier this year Mr. Clemens attended a presentation on "The Economic Impact of the Military in Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties." The presentation was less than noteworthy aside from a website that Mr. Clemens identified and investigated ([www.governmentcontractswon.com](http://www.governmentcontractswon.com)). The website had to a listing of 200+ companies from Pompano Beach zip codes that had all won

government contracts since 2000. Mr. Clemens vetted the company listing through the City's existing BTR database to identify those companies still located in and currently active in the city. The listing was now at 45+ companies. The team then put that listing, along with a short tourism video, on 40 Pompano Beach logoed usb-ports and took them to the Expo as handouts for the vendors they were going to meet.

The economic development team spent the day meeting vendors and discussing their products and services, as well as, Pompano Beach and some of our company's products and services. One thing the team did learn was that the larger companies that deal directly with the large military contracts (Northrop Grumman, Boeing and General Dynamics) could NOT accept the Pompano-logoed usb-ports due to security issues (nothing from external sources is allowed to be plugged into their systems); however, those smaller companies with less security concerns readily accepted the ports and told us that they'd add the listing to their subcontractor listing.



What the economic development team has not learned at this point is if any of the Pompano Beach based companies have won any contracts through their efforts; however, given the nature and size of some of the defense department contracts, even just a few jobs for local companies will more than justify the minimal investment the team has spent in their trips up to Jacksonville.