

***“National Security is job one for the U.S. Government. I can’t think of many better ways for North Dakota’s young people to support this than either through employment in the defense industry or in uniform service.”  
-LTG(R) Jerry Sinn***

## DDA Updates

By: Kristin Hedger

I hope business has been good these past couple of months. From floods to financial breakdowns and bailouts, this has been a challenging spring on the heels of a tough winter. But the days are warming, the flowers will bloom again, and better times, I am convinced, are ahead.

The Dakota Defense Alliance (DDA) has been progressing in our efforts to generate greater opportunity for our state. I’d like to specifically thank XIO, one of our new member companies, and NeTia, our outstanding new DDA associate, for all of the hard work and creativity they have provided to help with a number of positive initiatives.

Our alliance has grown exponentially over the past two years. Still, more than just growth, we need results. While we brought in some contracts last year, we need to become more diversified and more complementary in our capabilities in order to benefit our member firms and our state.

## State Legislation

Senator Tom Seymour (D-Minot), introduced legislation that would "plus-up" our state's commerce department and direct the funds to the DDA. This legislation would enable our alliance to have access to \$50,000 to aid with our marketplace visibility enhancement efforts (getting our company names and capabilities out), our educational efforts (e.g., Go Green, Operation Intern Partnerships, etc.), and our efforts to target specific contracts coming out of the federal government. Our bill, S.B. 2387, passed the Senate, but was not supported in the House. Still, there is some hope. Legislators I have spoken with have described the bill as "in conference and competitive." Friends, if you have a chance to call your legislators, it's crucial that we make them understand that we've have brought dollars, visibility, and opportunity into our state -- and that we can do so much more with adequate resources.

## Accomplishments

2009 will be Dickinson State University's first semester offering classes associated with the 2+2 engineering program, which had strong backing from DDA leadership and has the potential to be a win/win for western North Dakota students and businesses. Elsewhere, I had the honor of providing a DDA presence at the National Missile Defense Conference hosted by Raytheon, where I spoke to some 500 people concerning the capabilities of small-to-medium-sized North and South Dakota suppliers.

## Opportunities and Challenges Moving forward

Opportunities abound in the areas of defense, homeland security, and border patrol. Many of the technologies applicable to those arenas have heavy crossover into the commercial realm. There are many DDA "lock-and-load" technologies that fit this description; the remote micro-observer, developed to provide situational awareness for war fighters, first responders and others, is just one example. There is so much more we need to show America. Many members of the DDA team have been working to put together a D.C. Fly-in for our members to hear, first hand from DoD Intelligence, and others about opportunities on the horizon. We are also hoping to

provide a productive strategy and networking venue for us all. NeTia will be sending out more information on this July 16<sup>th</sup> event.

## 2009 DC Flyout Planned for Mid-June

By: NeTia Richards

This year the DDA is organizing a fly-in that will bring awareness to the Small Business Administration as well as Congress on the issues regarding the Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) Act of 1997. The legislation was enacted with good intentions and has helped a variety of areas throughout this country; however it has failed to assist a high number of companies in rural areas, especially in ND.

Our goal is to address high-ranking officials in an attempt to change the language of the policy in such a way that would create more areas in sparsely populated areas (like ND) to the option to qualify. Once you qualify you would be eligible for more government contracts/bids, etc.

We will also cover Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and Item Unique Identification (IUID) topics with industry leading key note speakers including Congressional Delegates.

We have worked with North West Airlines (NWA) for reduced airfare as well as reduced room rates at The Washington Court Hotel on the Hill-where the breakfast, luncheon and panel discussions will also be held. A reception will follow that evening at The Monacle. More information will be available in the coming weeks. Hope to see you all there.

## DRS Technologies Internship Positions Awarded

By: NeTia Richards

The DDA would like to congratulate the three ND college students who were selected for Program Management internship positions with DRS Technologies. These internships were channeled through the DDA-we had the pleasure of marketing these positions to ND colleges and working with the applicants. The DDA also played a major role in the final selection of these students as well. There were two Engineering students from UND chosen-Crystal Kelly and Shane Dutton and one from NDSU-Jameson Bickert.

The positions will last through the summer and will be at a DRS Technologies location in Melbourne, Florida. We are pleased that we were given the opportunity to assist such a high-standing weapons defense manufacturer in finding and selecting top applicants for these high-rated positions. Congratulations to the interns and we all wish you the best of luck! Our hope is to have them come back to the State, finish their education and find employment here.

[www.dakotadefensealliance.com](http://www.dakotadefensealliance.com)