



Mary Barber, Fort Carson installation sustainability resource officer and Arleen Kinder, GSA Federal Acquisition Service customer service director, share information during the inaugural Fort Carson Sustainability Expo at the Elkhorn Conference Center Feb. 26.

Sustainability expo delivers green knowledge

Story and photo by Scott Prater
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Fort Carson hosted its first Sustainable-Green Procurement Expo and Workshop Feb. 26. Acquisition managers, government purchase card holders and contract specialists packed the Elkhorn Conference Center to learn about federal sustainability requirements and compliance policies.

The event was hosted by the Fort Carson Installation Sustainability Resource Office (FCISRO) and featured a guidance briefing from U.S. Army Public Health Command (USAPHC).

"We have seven long-term sustainability goals and three of those are to be net zero as an installation in

energy, water and waste by 2020," said Mary Barber of FCISRO. "There are a lot of different executive orders and statutes that we at Fort Carson are required to follow. This expo was a great way for people who buy things to learn about those requirements."

Dave Asiello, DOD Sustainability Program manager, traveled from Washington, D.C., to advise event organizers and meet Soldiers and civilians at Fort Carson.

"We travel to a lot of military installations around the country to help educate folks about laws, regulations and compliance requirements," Asiello said. "But, we also want to relay the benefits of going sustainable. Many of these products work better, they're better for the mission and

lessen negative health impacts."

Beth Martin, USAPHC supervisory environmental scientist, informed attendees about the types of products covered by federal compliance requirements and how to obtain more information from vendors and government agencies.

"We want people to come away from the expo with an understanding that not only are sustainable procurement practices good for the installation, they're easy to implement," she said. "Yes, there are several preference (areas) including recycled content, bio-based products and energy efficient products, in all, about 180 categories. But, a specific buyer may only be involved with four of them."

A buyer simply needs to determine

his needs first. Then his sustainment product research is significantly limited.

Martin advised attendees on different sustainability statutes and regulations, such as reducing the use of petroleum-based products and substituting them with bio-based versions.

"The fact is that much of the petroleum used in the U.S. is in making products," she said. "Plastics are heavily petroleum based. So, when we buy bio-based products, we reduce our dependence on foreign oil."

Buying recycled-content products also helps create a market for those products, she explained. It's one thing to separate paper, cans and plastic, throw them into blue bins and then have them shipped off somewhere. But, if no one buys the products created from recycled content, that paper, aluminum and plastic has nowhere to go.

"Besides the tree hugger reasons, people need to understand that sustainable procurement is the law," she said.

Following their briefing, attendees got a chance to learn about specific products from dozens of sustainable product vendors and government agency representatives.

Many of the attendees were responsible for acquiring products for the post in some way, but the expo was open to everyone and people from all walks of life, including Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College students who strolled through the information booths and watched product demonstrations.

Despite wintry weather that hampered attendance, Barber and Asiello were pleased with the expo's production and its turnout, especially as a first-time event.

"We're all about outreach and educating people," Asiello said. "This format is a good way to reach the many different types of procurement people on an installation."

George Handy, DOD Sustainable Products Center program manager and Dave Asiello, DOD Sustainability program manager visit with vendors and attendees at the Fort Carson Sustainability Expo Feb. 26. Handy and Asiello travel to military installations around the country to promote sustainable products and practices.

