

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory small-business service wins national award

An electronic alerting service for small businesses, developed by the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, has won a national award for improving government through information technology.

The E-Gov 2003 Trailblazer Award honors PNNL's free service that automatically notifies subscribers about current federal funding and related opportunities for small businesses. E-Gov (www.e-gov.com) is a national organization that promotes information technology to improve the public sector.

Federal agencies award more than \$1.4 billion in grants every year to fund competitive research-and-development proposals submitted by small businesses throughout the country. The effort goes by two names: the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program. Each of 10 federal agencies administers its own program to seek and review proposals and to award grants to hundreds of recipients.

With funding from DOE, PNNL developed and operates the first free, nationwide service that selectively searches for, consolidates and regularly e-mails information from the 10 federal agencies on current funding available from the SBIR and STTR programs.

The service also lists upcoming SBIR/STTR training and conferences, plus tips from experts to help small businesses participate successfully in the programs. A searchable Web site contains current and back issues of the e-mail alerts at www.pnl.gov/edo/sbir.stm.

Since PNNL began offering the service in 1997, more than 3,300 subscribers nationwide have signed up to receive the alerts. PNNL estimates the service has saved U.S. businesses up to \$10 million annually by replacing time-consuming and inefficient searching with free, consolidated notifications delivered directly to the subscriber's desktop.

The 20 winners of the 2003 Trailblazer Awards were selected from more than 250 nominations across the country for "contributing significantly to enabling the business of government in their organizations."

Of the 20 winners of Trailblazer Awards and 30 additional "Pioneer" and "Explorer" winners to be showcased at the E-Gov 2003 conference in Washington, D.C., in June, PNNL is the only national laboratory represented and the only organization affiliated with DOE.

Winning organizations included federal agencies responsible for homeland security, defense, the treasury, health and human services, Social Security and emergency management, as well as state government agencies. More information on the awards can be found at: www.e-gov.com/events/2003/egov/expo/gsc.asp. ■