

Charleston Defense Contractors Association

67th Small Business and Industry Outreach Initiative Symposium

North Charleston, SC

Trip Report



Image: Attendees intently focus on a presentation by Mr. John Oldfield, Competency Manager, 4.7 Production, Quality & Manufacturing, NIWC Atlantic regarding "Corporate Production Contract Update"

Conference Details:

Name: Charleston Defense Contractors Association (CDCA) 67th Small Business and Industry Outreach Initiative (SBIOI) Symposium

Date: 19 March 2024

Venue: Trident Technical College

Location: North Charleston, SC

Attendee: Steve Carioti

Event Synopsis:

The Charleston Defense Contractors Association (CDCA) Small Business and Industry Outreach Initiative (SBIOI) is a strategic partnership between the defense industry and governmental entities. Its primary goal is to foster growth opportunities for the Defense Industrial Base located in Charleston, South Carolina. The core mission of the CDCA SBIOI is to promote, protect, enhance, and expand the defense sector in Charleston through active engagement with stakeholders and the local community.

One of the key activities organized by the CDCA is hosting multiple SBIOI symposiums annually. These gatherings are designed to boost the defense business landscape in Charleston by increasing its variety and inclusivity. Moreover, the symposiums aim to bolster the development of a skilled workforce by forging partnerships with educational institutions, employers, and training facilities.

As a Nonprofit and 501(c)(6) business corporation headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina, the CDCA is dedicated to driving the sustainable growth of the defense industry in the region through collaborative initiatives and support from various stakeholders and community members.

Event Highlights:

I. *Presentations:* The symposium presenters provided over five hours of engaging and informational material aimed at educating the defense community on the state of government contracting.

- "Command Update" (CAPT Nicole Nigro, Commanding Officer, NIWC Atlantic)
- "Platinum Member Company Spotlight" (Gray Analytics)
- "Corporate Production Contract Update" (Mr. John Oldfield, Competency Manager, 4.7 Production, Quality & Manufacturing, NIWC Atlantic)
- "Department Update" (Mr. Kevin Allen, SSTM, ES Department Head, NIWC Atlantic)
- "PEO Manpower, Logistics and Business Solutions" (Mr. Brandon Wehler, SSTM, Technical Director, PEO MLB)
- "PEO Digital" (Mr. Jeff Hays, Senior IT Director/Manager, PEO Digital)

2. *By the Numbers:*

- 352 attendees
- 4 government stakeholders
- 23 businesses met.
- 8 matchmaking sessions
- 4 follow-up meetings

Key Takeaways:

1. *SBIR/STTR Outreach:*

- South Carolina, specifically the City of Charleston, has a large defense industrial base. The majority of these defense focused stakeholders are unfamiliar with the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) SBIR/STTR Program. Continued attendance at CDCA hosted events is vital for bringing awareness to the NAVSEA SBIR/STTR Program and bringing more technology focused businesses into the fold.

2. *Networking/Partnering:*

- To reach the greatest number of small businesses in the state of South Carolina the NAVSEA SBIR/STTR Outreach Team should continue to network/partner with organizations such as the North Charleston Area Small Business Development Center, The South Carolina APEX Accelerator, the NavalX Palmetto Tech Bridge, the CDCA, and the Office of Small Business Programs at NIWC Atlantic.