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Contact: Renee Miscione (212) 264-0424
renee.miscione@gsa.gov

**GSA Appoints Regional Champion to Advance Contracting Efforts
With Service-Disabled Veterans**

Eileen Long-Chelales, Regional Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Northeast and Caribbean Region, is pleased to announce the appointment of Kerry Blette to head the region's Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Initiative. Ms. Long-Chelales has tasked Mr. Blette, a veteran of the Vietnam War, with responsibility for helping the region meet President Bush's 3% goal for government contracting with service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

We are pleased to support this initiative that further demonstrates the federal government's commitment to our veterans who have made such significant personal sacrifices in the service of our country," Long-Chelales, who was appointed Regional Administrator in 2004, said.

In December 2003, President Bush and Congress enacted the Veterans Benefits Act which established greater economic entrepreneurial opportunities for the 2.2 million service-disabled veterans in the U.S. The legislation also established a preference for the U.S. federal government to contract with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs).

In his new position, Blette will develop programs and policies that encourage and facilitate service-disabled veteran businesses in doing business with the agency. Specific efforts include:

- encouraging and facilitating participation by service-disabled veterans in contract competitions;
- encouraging contractors to subcontract with service-disabled veterans (and actively monitor the contractor's efforts);
- reserving agency contracts exclusively for service-disabled veterans;

(more)

- training associates on applicable law and policies; and
- disseminating information to service-disabled veterans to help assist other businesses to participate in contracting opportunities.

In addition to Mr. Blette's service in the Army, he brings many years of government procurement experience to this new position, including service for the past four years as Assistant Regional Administrator for the Northeast and Caribbean Region's Federal Technology Service.

GSA contracts for almost \$45 billion each year nationally for commodities, equipment and services to carry out its mission as the preeminent federal landlord and purveyor of procurement services. The current numbers provided by the Small Business Administration estimate that the GSA target for the SDVOSB goal ranges from \$4 billion to \$13 billion depending on whether schedules are included or not.

Earlier this year GSA issued a request for proposals for the Veterans Technology Services (VETS) governmentwide acquisition contract (GWAC) -- the first GWAC set aside for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. The VETS GWAC for information technology (IT) services is consistent with GSA's disabled-veteran initiative and is valued at \$5 billion over 10 years, has a five-year base with five options. GSA expects to award the GWAC early in 2006.

Mr. Blette can be reached directly at GSA by e-mail to kerry.blette@gsa.gov , or by telephone at (212) 264-3633. Information on doing business with the agency can also be obtained by calling the region's Small Business Utilization Center at (212) 264-1234.

GSA is a centralized federal procurement, property management and policy agency, created by Congress to improve government efficiency and help federal agencies better serve the public. On behalf of federal agencies, GSA acquires office space, equipment, telecommunications, information technology, supplies and services. It also plays a key role in developing and implementing government wide policies. GSA's 13,000 associates provide services and solutions for office operations for more than one million federal workers located in more than 8,000 government-owned and leased buildings in 2,000 U.S. communities. GSA's Northeast and Caribbean Region and its 800 associates deliver agency services to federal customers in New York, Northern New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Additional information regarding GSA programs and policies, as well as information on contracting opportunities with GSA can be found at the agency's website: www.gsa.gov.