

## Tennessee Veterans Business Association Facilitates Partnership and Protégé Between Local Disabled Veteran Owned Business Small, UCOR, and Y-12

“As a small, veteran-owned business, I know how hard it is to break into the government arena with the U.S. Department of Energy and their Prime Contractors,” says Brian Quinley, COO of BES Technologies, LLC. On November 11, 2011 Brian and his partners at BES Technologies, LLC had a chance to do just that. The Tennessee Veterans Business Association hosted a Meet & Greet between URS | CH2M Oak Ridge, LLC (UCOR) and various veteran-owned member companies. The Meet and Greet provided a valuable exchange amongst the participants, especially Karen Reeve, UCOR Small Business Program Manager. Later, at the Tennessee Veterans Business Association’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Business and Education Expo in January of 2012, Mr. Quinley was able to reconnect with Ms. Reeve, furthering discussion related to BES Technologies’ qualifications and capabilities as well as other possible opportunities within the DOE environment. BES Technologies, LLC is a service-disabled veteran-owned small business located in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, specializing in respirator cleaning and laundry services for radioactive contaminated material. Based upon the type of work that UCOR performs at the K-25 DOE site, BES Technologies, LLC appeared to possess the capability need and compatibility with UCOR’s mission.

Through the previous communication with Ms. Reeve, BES Technologies, LLC became aware of and was provided an opportunity to submit a proposal for one of UCOR’s major procurements posted on UCOR’s 90-day Forecast. BES Technologies, LLC was awarded UCOR’s respiratory cleaning contract, which was their largest federal government contract.

Through his efforts working with Ms. Reeve, Brian and partners Erik Connard and Shannon Eaker were able to begin building a relationship with UCOR’s Quality Assurance, Engineering, ES&H and Procurement departments. By building strong relationships with these various organizations, BES Technologies, LLC was able to obtain a better understanding of the essential requirements of working in the highly regulated DOE environment. As Quinley emphatically states, “Without the assistance of Karen and the UCOR management team, BES Technologies would not be in the position we are in today.”

Over the past year, BES Technologies, LLC has continued to grow their relationships with other DOE Prime Contractors. “In the meantime, we have also become a DOE Protégé for Y-12. This program will be an essential part of our future growth,” said Quinley. Lisa Copeland, Y-12 Socioeconomic Programs Office states “we are pleased to

have BES Technologies join our Mentor-Protégé program and we look forward to exchanging information and ideas to create a successful relationship”.

The catalyst for this astounding growth has been the Tennessee Veterans Business Association. According to Jonathan Williams, the association’s founder, “The Tennessee Veterans Business Association was started for this reason; helping small, veteran-owned businesses grow and thrive.” As the premier advocate for Tennessee veterans with an entrepreneurial spirit, the Tennessee Veterans Business Association hosts a myriad of events with the same purpose: to spark local economic development by assisting veteran-owned businesses. This year’s signature event is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Business & Education Expo, January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, held at the Knoxville Convention Center. A kick-off dinner on the 28<sup>th</sup> will feature keynote speaker Jim Haslam, founder and CEO of Pilot Corporation and Army Veteran. As a result of the work that the Tennessee Veterans Business Association has done in the community, Governor Bill Haslam has proclaimed the week of the Expo as “Veteran-Owned Business Week.”

The theme of the 2013 event is “Celebrating the Diversity within the East TN Business Community.” Williams says, “The event will attract over 150 exhibitors and over 3,000 participants and will be very high energy.” For more information about the association as well as the Expo and registration, please visit [www.jointvba.org](http://www.jointvba.org) or call 865.675.9384.