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# News Release

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## **VA Reaching Out to Suppliers, Contractors** ***Deputy Secretary Gould Cites Partnership with Private Sector***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is strengthening its working relationship with the private-sector to improve service for Veterans, cut costs for taxpayers and enhance the operation of federal employees, VA’s Deputy Secretary W. Scott Gould said recently.

“VA is committed to our partnership with industry over the long term,” Gould told a VA-sponsored forum with suppliers Aug. 13. “We are committed to acquisition reform. And we are committed to the Veterans we serve. We can do none of this without a strong, healthy partnership with the private sector.”

Last year, VA purchased more than \$19 billion in services, material and supplies. About \$1.6 billion was with businesses owned by service-disabled Veterans. Another \$400 million in VA contracts went to other Veteran-owned businesses.

Gould addressed a VA conference with suppliers in northern Virginia to obtain the private sector’s input on measures needed to transform VA’s procurement process to meet the needs of Veterans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“We will synchronize acquisitions with our IT, human resources and financial management functions to advance a high-performance culture where suppliers are not viewed as adversaries, where open communications are the rule, and clearly-articulated requirements are not the exception,” he added.

Gould, who serves as VA’s chief operating officer, noted the Department is hiring over 350 contracting and procurement specialists. VA’s Acquisitions Academy, the first of its kind among federal civilian agencies, received the 2009 Acquisitions Excellence Award from the Office of Management and Budget.

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