

Rusty Hatfield ©

By Connie J. Schlosberg

Fresh from his day-to-day program manager activities overseeing the FENCE contract, Rusty Hatfield is heading towards the main lobby in building 350 to volunteer as an entry control person for the doorway during the 21st Space Wing's latest exercise. Rusty's can-do attitude has been a big asset for him during his 22 years of civil service starting in 1986. As a program manager, he is responsible for developing and implementing the contractual, financial, and technical aspects for his contract. He was working at the Fort Carson Contracting Office as a contracting officer before assuming his role as a program manager for the 21st Program Management Division.

While working for Fort Carson's Contract Office, Rusty was the first person to achieve contracting officer status as a GS-11. He eventually took the job of Chief of the Commercial Acquisition Branch. However, he enjoys his new job as program manager learning the tools and processes it takes to facilitate and fund space surveillance programs to keep them running. His favorite times are the team-building days such as Wingman Day with his coworkers. "We need these fun adventures to lighten up the atmosphere," he says. With his FENCE contract, he feels good about taking a Navy-inherited program and finessing it into an Air Force compliant one to meet its mission requirements. A big highlight for him was when Col Faith, the commander for the now deactivated Maintenance Group, presented him with his 30 years of service pin. The switch from contracting officer to program manager has allowed him to have more diverse and interactive tasks than what he was accomplishing with contract administration.

Rusty has been here at Peterson Air Force Base for three years. The best change he has seen at Peterson is his organization's move from the parachute building 605 near the flight line to a suite in the new addition of building 350. In recent months, some members of 21st Contracting Squadron co-located with the 21st Program Management Division, which Rusty feels has facilitated team cohesiveness enhancing their working relationships. He's also noticed improved efforts on information technology and email exchange allowing an easy flow of resources between squadrons, groups, and contractors. An avid sportsman and runner, Rusty enjoys the services the base provides such as the gym where he lifts weights and runs track. The newly renovated swimming pool has Rusty swimming laps although he admits he's not quite "as proficient as Michael Phelps." He thinks the procedures for accessing the installation has become smoother than when he first got here. "There are hardly any wait times to get on the base," he says.

Rusty spent the first 13 years of his government career serving his country in the Army before changing over to the Army Reserves. His most memorable moment was in 2005 when he returned from Desert Storm Mobilization to Fort Carson. His Carson Contracting Office held a reception in the unit's honor showing their appreciation for the hard work they had accomplished. Rusty was mobile for two years even spending the

last six months of his mobilization finishing out his bachelor's degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix. He was working 12-hour shifts training guards for combat at Fort Bliss, TX, and Fort Polk, LA. It took him 20 years to achieve his bachelor's degree, but he is proud that he persevered. His most successful job has been raising four well-rounded children into adulthood.