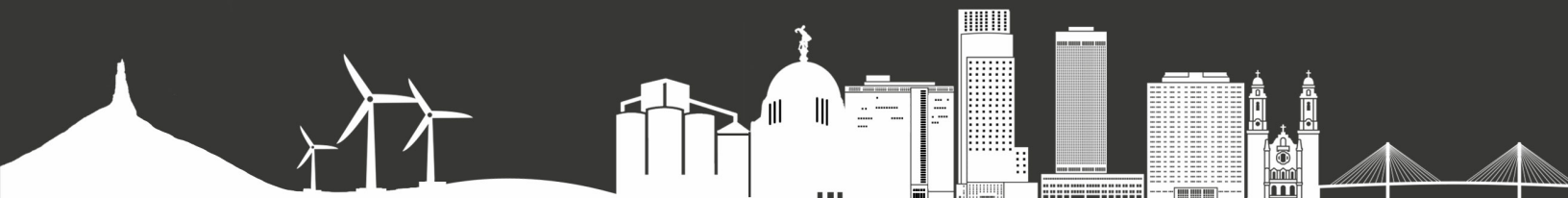


# SUCCESS STORY: U.S. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

## Tackling Red Tape Yields Big Results



The valuable advice available from the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) at the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) has led to a “true partnership” with U.S. Grounds Maintenance that has lasted more than 20 years, says founder John Hoich.

“The biggest thing NBDC PTAC has done for us through the years has been to provide the knowledge and guidance we needed to work with the government,” Hoich says. “I know my industry. They know how to cut through all the government red tape to make sure we follow the process and meet the requirements, because there is no simple way to get it done.”

Hoich, who started his company in 1974 at age 16 with a single Craftsman lawnmower, has won contracts for grounds maintenance at nine different military bases. Most recently, his Bellevue-based company won a five-year contract from the U.S. Army for grounds maintenance at Fort Benning, GA. He credits the assistance of PTAC contracting consultant Mary Graff as instrumental in obtaining the Fort Benning contract, as well as other federal contracts since his company became a PTAC client in 1999. “In my opinion, it is a true partnership,” Hoich says.

In addition to Hoich, Graff has also worked with Mark Morgan, senior vice president, and Steve Welte, the company’s operations manager of government contracts. In their most recent collaboration, Morgan contacted Graff in October 2018 for help downloading information from the company’s registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) that Morgan needed for the Fort Benning proposal.

Later that month, Morgan again contacted Graff, when he learned that, although the company was the “apparent successful offeror” for the contract at Fort Benning, a size protest had been filed by the incumbent contractor, as well as one of the other bidders. Both bidders claimed that U.S. Grounds Maintenance is not a small business according to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards.

Graff advised Morgan what steps the company needed to take to prove to the SBA that it is, indeed, a small business. In late November, the SBA concluded that U.S. Grounds Maintenance is a small business and could be awarded the contract for Fort Benning.

Hoich says that since his company started work on the contract, Graff has been instrumental in assisting with invoicing the government through the Department of Defense Wide Area Workflow (WAWF) electronic invoicing system. “It isn’t like sending a bill and getting a check,” he says.

Hoich says he has the highest regards for Graff and her fellow PTAC consultants. “Without NBDC PTAC helping with our submissions, we never would have received some of the contracts we have,” he says. “When we were protested in Georgia, Mary did just as much work as our attorneys, and she did it at no charge.”

### REPORT DATE

- › May 2019

### INDUSTRY

- › NAICS 541320 Landscaping Architectural Services

### CONSULTING

- › Contract information
- › SBA size standard dispute
- › Invoicing through WAWF

### RESULTS

- › Five-year contract with Ft. Benning

CONSULTANT: MARY GRAFF  
SARPY COUNTY  
STATE SENATE DISTRICT 45  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1