



# NEWS RELEASE

**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

## **HEADQUARTERS STANDARD SYSTEMS GROUP**

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## **Standard Systems Group vice director set to depart**

By Darlene Foote  
SSG Public Affairs

**MAXWELL AFB, GUNTER ANNEX, Ala** – Col. Steven Jones, Standard System Group vice director, is a witness that first impressions, especially when they are formed based on limited information, are not always accurate. At least that's what he found out about SSG.

“To be honest, I did not want to come down here,” said the colonel, who has spent the last six years at SSG. “I didn't think it was that great of an assignment or mission ... but I quickly found out that I was dead wrong,” he said. “Not only did I discover that SSG has a really important mission that the Air Force can't do without, but also this is a great assignment.”

The colonel, who has held four different positions within SSG since his arrival will relinquish military command of the group on May 30. He moves to Air University to become the Air Force Materiel Command chair for Air University.

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## **SSG Vice Director to leave**

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Jones said one of the biggest challenges the group faces is that a lot of people in the Air Force don't even know that SSG exists, much less what they contribute to the Air Force mission. "We're somewhat like the telephone company in that aspect, while the job that we do is crucial, no one ever calls and says 'nice dial tone,' they just expect it to work. Everyone just expects the software on their desk to work ... we're the guys that make that happen."

While Jones, who has 20-plus years of acquisition experience, does not propose to be an expert in information technology, he has picked up some knowledge from the experts at SSG over the years. "The information technologists at SSG are probably the best and smartest group of IT folks that we have anywhere in the Air Force ... I mean absolutely first rate," he said.

Complementing SSG's information technologists are acquisition specialists (like himself) and the functionals, who are field subject matter experts who help ensure the products the organization produces meets the users needs. "We have some of the best transportation, supply and maintenance chiefs in the Air Force right here helping us field what's really required in the field ... they are the people who know what is needed to get the job done," he said. "Good requirements make good software so the functionals here are first rate, as they should be."

The colonel has also seen major changes in information technology since arriving at SSG. "One of the biggest changes we've seen has been transitioning from mainframe, client servers and desk tops going to the internet where we're putting the programs on the web. In a matter of years we have gone from the old green DOS, user-unfriendly systems to windows and web based systems where we look like YAHOO," he said.

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## **SSG Vice Director to leave**

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According to Jones, SSG also played a critical role in Y2K. “Y2K was interesting ... everyone was ready for the world to end and we were ready to fix it if it did. Fortunately, we had done our job so well that when Y2K finally happened, it was like watching grass grow. Nothing bad happen, but we had done our job and stood ready.”

As with any information technology organization, SSG cannot survive in the IT world without transforming as the need arises. Jones admits that change can be tough and scary, but emphasizes that it is a key element for any organization that hopes to survive in today’s environment.

“The status quo in the IT world changes every 18 months and organizations need to change with it. Organizations not willing to change can quickly turn into dinosaurs,” he said. “The IT world is one of the few environments where it can be done, faster, better and cheaper. We recognize a need for continuous change in this organization – it’s either transform or die.”

The colonel says that, while many people don’t know much about SSG, the perception for some is that SSG isn’t a good place to work, that it’s not interesting or crucial to the USAF, but nothing could be further from the truth. “SSG is and will continue to be a full service organization that can do anything related to IT: software, hardware, infrastructure and architecture -- we do it all when it comes to IT,” he said. “Also while bombs and planes are exciting I often quote Field Marshal Erwin Rommel about his African campaign, ‘Amateurs study strategy. Professionals study logistics.’ He knew first hand since logistics was a key factor in his defeat in North Africa during World War II. SSG helps provide the logistics, infrastructure and security that wins wars.”

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