



When “Push” Comes to Shove

By Donna Micklus

DAS Provides \$\$ for Safety Equipment for State Police

At a joint news conference earlier this month, DAS Commissioner Linda Yelmini and Public Safety Commissioner Leonard Boyle announced the purchase of “push bumpers” for state trooper patrol cars.

“DAS is extremely pleased to partner with DPS to promote this important safety initiative,” Yelmini said in her remarks.

“We will be providing funds in the amount of \$50,000 for push bumpers for 256 of their 2006 Crown Victoria vehicles. We will also be providing an additional \$25,000 to have push bumpers installed on 131 of the 2004 and 2005 Crown Victorias, as well,” Yelmini said.

And just what exactly is a “push bumper” you (along with a vast majority of the population) might ask?

It’s a bumper that will allow troopers to maneuver their cars to push damaged or broken down cars off the road.

“When motor vehicle incidents block the road, troopers must act quickly and decisively to ensure that highways remain passable and safe. With push bumpers installed on their cruisers, troopers will be able to do this on the hundreds of miles of state roads and interstate highways that they cover 24 hours a day,” Boyle said.

State troopers are constantly exposed to hazardous conditions as they provide public



DAS funds the purchase of “push bumpers” seen on the above patrol vehicle as a safety precaution for state troopers..

safety enforcement and motorist vehicle assistance. Too often they are stuck by oncoming vehicles from the rear which result in extremely severe and costly injuries. The purchase of these push bumpers and accompanying training will allow troopers the ability to safely push stranded or disabled motorists’ vehicles off to a safer location on the highway.

Yelmini explained that the funds are from DAS’ Workers’ Compensation loss control appropriation, which provides safety programs and equipment to state agencies to reduce the frequency and severity of work-related injuries.

She cited a few facts and figures to underscore the need to help prevent accident-related claims:

- In FY05, **23%** of all DPS workers compensation claims resulted from motor vehicle accidents.

- In FY 06 through 4/30/06, **28%** of all DPS workers compensation claims resulted from motor vehicle accidents.

“We believe that our proactive efforts will address serious safety issues and preemptively reduce rising claim incidents,” Yelmini said.

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ConnectiFit Kickoff!

By Nina Ritson

“What a great turnout we had for the ConnectiFIT walking/pedometer program!” said Martin Anderson, chairperson of ConnectiFIT. The ConnectiFIT Advisory Committee members who planned the event reported that 78 people signed in, with future participants joining later in the week. Anderson also thanked the Public Health employees who lent assistance in making the kickoff such a success.

DAS employees filled the South Mechanical room buzzing about walking for many reasons – to lose weight, lower blood pressure, lower stress levels, or to just feel better. There is no *bad* reason to join!

Walkers will record their steps during the pedometer program, which began on May 8, and data will be collected weekly by team and floor leaders.

Nancy Bryant of SMART had this to say, “I feel that the premise of the program has many benefits for employees. Being new to DAS (one year), I look forward to meeting new people. Exercising/walking during the workday relieves stress, increases my productivity, and makes me feel happier in general.”

There were weigh-in stations and blood pressure clinics to record the “pre-walking” data that will only improve over the next ten weeks.

“Yes I will be walking too,” laughed Commissioner Yelmini as she turned in her consent form to pick up her pedometer.

“Walking routes” with mileage and other informational flyers were also available.

Information gathered for ConnectiFIT is completely confidential and is really for the benefit of the participant.

“Not only is it great for your health, but it is great to see co-workers out walking together!” Bryant added.

Stay tuned to see the results – while DAS gets FIT!



Nurses from Department of Public Health were on hand for two blood pressure clinics.



Commissioner Yelmini, a health club regular, registered and received her pedometer.

ConnectiFIT committee members: Peggy Zabawar, Franky Rivera, Cathy Abadom and Loretta Miller



No, he's not in "time out"... Franky Rivera weighed in at one of the two weighing stations.

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Visit our website at www.das.state.ct.us

Isabelle McKinney sends special praise from the Diversity Council to employees for their participation in the 5th Annual Taste of DAS:

“**Commissioner Linda Yelmini, Andrea Keilty and Sandra Guerra**, we are so appreciative that you all took the time out of your busy day to share great food and wonderful conversation with the DAS family. Again, thanks so much for helping us to make the 5th Annual Taste of DAS a success.”

“**John McKay**, we cannot say thank you enough, so we are saying it again, THANK YOU. Another year you’ve been there for us ALL THE WAY – even with a smile.”

hats off

By *Cindy Rusczyk*

“**Nina Ritson**, you have been there for us for many years as well, and we are grateful for your help. Again, thank you both for always making us look good!”

“**Teresa Dupont**, again, you stood by us and worked tirelessly to help make the 5th Annual Taste of DAS a success. I’m most appreciative of your support of diversity.”

“**Julie Bernosky**, you’ve volunteered year after year to support the Diversity Council, and are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. It’s co-workers like you that I’m so grateful to be in your company because you have such a positive attitude. Again, you worked along side us to help make the 5th Annual Taste of DAS a success!

“**Donna Micklus**, I want to thank you and your staff for assisting the Diversity Council once again in the most professional manner one could ask for. **John, Nina and Cindy** are absolutely a delight to work with and they always make us look good.”

“**Rita Rose**, it was so kind of you to serve as a coordinator for the TASTE even though it is a very busy time in HR with the exams. Thank you so much for taking the time to help make the 5th Annual Taste of DAS a success.”

“**Sonji Fonseca**, thank you for happily serving as a coordinator for the TASTE many times. I appreciate your help and support time after time. It’s always a pleasure to work with you!”

“To my **Diversity Council teammates**, all I can say is thank you all for the hard work and consideration that you all put forth to make the 5th Annual Taste of DAS a success. All of you are so gracious and hospitable and went out of your way to make it a happy day for all – I’m most appreciative. You are all the BEST!”

* * *

Kerry DiMatteo “wanted to shout out a big giant ‘Thank You’ to everyone that helped make the P-Card Coordinator training classes successful. **Teresa Dupont** for doing the online registration and all the labels and lists that make presentations organized and polished, **Jose Baez** for getting all the computers set up, **Rob Zalucki** for helping me with the proxima and smartboard, and **Carlos Velez** and **Carol Wilson** for the behind the scenes support and preparations. And finally, **Maureen Blackburn** - with assistance from various **Procurement staff** - for coming through in the nick of time! Thank you to all.”

Kudos to **Alex Caceres** from Rosemary Woods. “I just can’t say thank you enough. Your prompt attention to my request for Complaint Tabs was awesome. Once again you made the word ‘teamwork’ all that it is and should be. Although I called you at 7:30 in the morning, by 10 a.m. the job was done! The **Print Shop** and especially you, have always done a wonderful job!”

Vice President Ed Saez from Johnson Controls, Inc., New York, NY wrote to **Carol Wilson**: “I am truly impressed and appreciative of the promptness, courtesy and professionalism that I received from your staff. I initiated a phone call and left a message on the procurement answering service with an email to **Commissioner Yelmini**. I was contacted by a courteous member of your team, **Ruthie Hatten**, and was pleasantly surprised by the thoroughness of your email to me. You have ALL exceeded my expectations and I can only hope that I have the opportunity to return the courtesy, the excellent level of service and true value and savings to the great State of Connecticut.”

Pauline Pelczar from Saint Thomas School in Southington wrote the following message to Carlos Velez regarding **Jim Potyra, Kevin Bachman** and **Holly Crandall**: “I just wanted to take time and let you know how much the children at my school have benefited from this (surplus) program. I just learned about the program the beginning of this year...and now I check weekly to see what may benefit our school. We have gotten computers, keyboards, mice, and even a server. Our children would never have been able to get anywhere near the amount of equipment that we have gotten from your program. I cannot tell you in mere words what this has meant to

More Kudos !!

our computer program. I wish, and the children of our school wish to thank anyone that was involved in making this system possible.”

Correctional Chief of Food Services Robert E. Frank applauded **Jim Gotta** for the savings of \$836,537 that they achieved this fiscal year, resulting specifically from the contract requirements initiated with Sysco Foods. “Thanks to our more advantageous contract with Sysco, we will have many more opportunities to save and the more we save, the more other companies will be calling us with cost effective products. An all around job well-done by DOC and DAS for their ability to prepare a great contract.”

Director of Communications Dennis Schain from the Department of Environmental Protection sent the following note to **Nina Ritson**: “Nina, thanks as always for your great work - and for your patience. I can’t believe how you and **Donna Micklus** always come through at the drop of a hat whenever I call with crazy stuff.”

Christine Sisbarro commended **Nina Ritson** for the Workers’ Compensation brochures that she designed, and **Mike Guimond** for the great printing. “The brochures came in and look fabulous! Thank you so much for your hard work on making them turn out so well and for all of the endless hours that you put into this project!”

Kudos to **Mark Martinez** from Henry Jovanelly for “updating the Collections content on the DAS website. This effort will get more info to the public on the process of recoveries from windfall assets.”

DAS Holds Fifth Annual Nurse of the Year Awards

By Donna Micklus

They have been called “unsung heroes” and “angels of mercy”, but perhaps someone said it best when describing nurses as “angels in comfortable shoes.”

Over 100 gathered to honor these unsung heroes on May 10 at a ceremony at the State Capitol. DAS Commissioner Linda Yelmini greeted the honorees, their families, colleagues and guests.

“This is the fifth year that we are honoring nurses employed by the State. We hold the event each May to coincide with the annual observance of National Nurses’ Week, which begins on May 6th and ends fittingly on May 12th, the birthday of Florence Nightingale,” Yelmini told the crowd.

Yelmini said the Nurse of the Year Award is a unique way to recognize the dedicated services of nurses in state government. It raises the visibility of the value of the profession and highlights the distinctive types of nursing one can practice in government.

A panel of judges selected Pat Knowles of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services as the 2006 Nurse of the Year.

In state service today, there are more than 1,400 registered nurses who provide care to Connecticut’s children, elderly, mentally ill, mentally



Commissioner Linda Yelmini opens the Nurse of the Year Ceremony on May 10 at the State Capitol

challenged and incarcerated. Their service clearly underscores this year’s theme of National Nurses Week: *Strength, Commitment, Compassion.*

Among a number of people who helped make the event a success, Commissioner Yelmini thanked the DAS Team of:

Deb Atkinson
Diane Fitzpatrick
Carla Kushin
Carla Martin
John McKay
Donna Micklus
Ellen Morris
Cindy Rusczyk
Heather Tweeddale

Law and Order

By John McKay

If it got any bigger, DAS would need its own Law Enforcement team.

Every few years the Department of Administrative Services is tasked with organizing, advertising and executing one of the largest open enrollments in the state – the Law Enforcement Career Fair.

But it's so much more than just a one-day career fair. The advertising and web postings are the tantalizing appetizers that lead up to the main course.

Weeks before the fair, people are allowed to sign up to take the required written exam. Within the first day over 500 people signed up via the DAS website, and by the time registration had closed on May 9, over 6,000 people had signed up for the exam.

"Where people signed up for the exam on our website, we advertised the career fair," said DAS recruiter Patsy McLaughlin.

"The point is to get them to the fair to meet face-to-face with state troopers, correction officers and protective service personnel to talk one-on-one with them and get a feel for what the job is all about," McLaughlin explained.

DAS also advertised in numerous newspapers throughout the state as well as MIX 93.7 FM radio. The fair had over 300 attendees, generating more applications and heightened interest in Connecticut law enforcement.

Now comes the tough part...putting the "administrative" in the Department of Administrative Services.

DAS now has to organize multiple locations to administer the written test and coordinate all passing candidates for the next step - the physical exam. The physical exam consists of stretching, sit-ups, pushups and a 1.5-mile run. Fail any of these and you're out.

"I think organizing and executing this event is more mentally challenging than the physical exam," said McLaughlin.

"But what we end up with is what's most important," said McLaughlin.

"A list of qualified individuals who have passed all the phases of the exam and provide Connecticut with its finest applicants," she concluded.



Multiple agencies participate in the fair



DAS' Dale Greenwood meets and greets attendees



Above and right: Connecticut law enforcement is serious business!



SPECIAL: THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

By Donna Micklus

And so the gavel falls on another legislative session. While no new legislation will greatly affect your lives at DAS, some new laws may impact you as a private citizen. Here's a summary of highlights excerpted from the *Office of Legislative Research Report* and the *Hartford Courant*:

The Budget

Lawmakers passed a nearly \$16.1 billion budget compromise that includes more money for public schools and municipalities. The budget does not include Governor Rell's proposals to eliminate local car taxes and phase out the inheritance tax. It also left out a Democratic plan for a new earned income tax credit program and a \$500 tax rebate for low-income taxpayers.

Campaign Finance

In the final minutes of the session, lawmakers passed fixes to last year's campaign finance reform (CFR) law, including limits on contributions from legislative political action committees and an end to a provision that could have scrapped all the reforms if the courts took certain actions. A provision from last year's CFR law that requires contracting agencies such as DAS to provide a list of all contractors to the State Elections Enforcement Commission remained unchanged in this year's reforms

Transportation

A 10-year, \$2.3 billion transportation package got the go-ahead from lawmakers. It will fund mass transit improvements across the state without requiring tolls or increasing the gas tax.

Soda Ban

Lawmakers banned all public schools from selling regular or diet

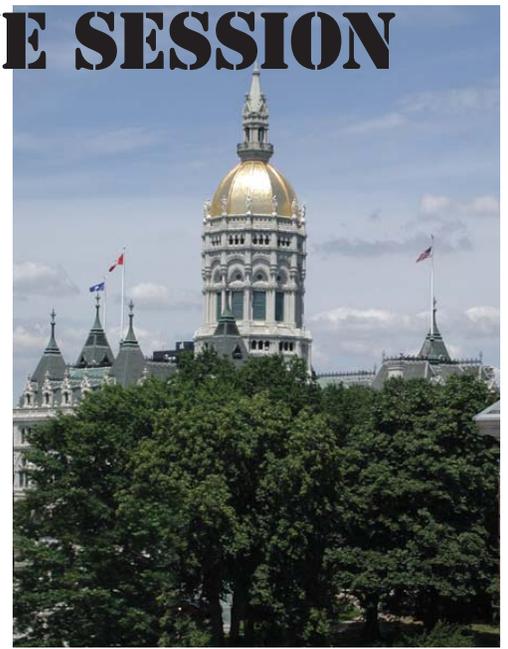
soda and sports drinks in vending machines or stores. The bill includes a narrow exception for sales at concession stands at school-sponsored events on weekends or after school. The bill does not ban junk food, but does provide extra money for school lunch programs at schools that offer healthy snacks.

Jobs

The Governor signed a jobs bill that will phase out the local property tax on manufacturing machinery equipment over five years to fight sluggish job growth. The bill creates a new business advocate office to help small businesses and establishes tax credits for producing films in Connecticut.

UCONN Construction

Lawmakers passed a bill that would impose tighter oversight and financial controls on UCONN construction projects. The bill is designed to prevent further problems with the \$2.3 billion renovation and construction program, which started in 1995 and has been plagued by cost overruns and safety code violations.



Adoption

The legislature passed a bill that will allow people whose adoptions are finalized after October 1, 2006, to access their original birth certificates when they turn 21.

Underage Drinking

A bill was passed to make underage drinking on private property illegal, closing a loophole that has allowed parents to hold house parties with alcohol for their teens and friends.

*Don't Miss the DAS
Summer Outing on
August 11 !!*

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The (Delectable!) Taste of DAS

By *Nina Ritson*

It was definitely *not* a day for counting carbs or calories! The 5th Annual Taste of DAS on May 18, was once again a huge hit. The Diversity Committee, now event-planning pros, went all out this year with festive decorations, and a well-presented buffet of incredible flavors.

Without carrying two plates, it was tough to choose what to eat from the huge display of hot dishes and salads that lined the walls of the South Mechanical Room. Since the diet was now out the window and ConnectiFIT became a “hush word,” it was only natural to wander into the New Haven Room filled with mouth-watering desserts, including a computer shell of “Geek Food” by Dan Sears.

So what was DAS serving? Here is just a sampling:

Kielbasa with Sauerkraut from Poland, German/Yiddish Challah, Chinese Cabbage from Korea, Sweet Fried Plantains from Puerto Rico, Spinach Cheese Tortellini from Italy, Plantain Rice and Black Eyed Peas from Nigeria, Jambalya Mac and Cheese from the USA, Empanada from Columbia, Goulash with Spaetzle from Eastern Europe, French-American Turkey, Jamaican Beef Patties, Curry Chicken from Guyana, Yelmini Chili from Glastonbury, and Prebleanian Macaroni Salad.

Room left for dessert?

Cannoli from Italy, European Strawberry Cake, Chocolate Chip Scones from Ireland, Rice Pudding – Ecuadorian style, Double Chocolate Crisps from Sweden, Poppy seed cake from Hungary, Kisses from USA, Scottish Shortbread.

What did DAS folks have to say?

Carlos Kebe: “This is the culmination of a lot of hard work. Although the committee is seasoned now (in its fifth year) the planning goes quickly. My thanks go out to the individuals who prepared all the dishes – a lot of time and effort goes into each dish. It is a labor of love. DAS folks share a love of food, pride in their culture and willingness to share with coworkers.”

Angie Martinez: “Ditto-all the flavors are excellent – an explosion of wonderful food!”

Mary Opperman: “This is my first Taste of DAS – It is fantastic. I want to thank the committee members for all their hard work. We did not experience anything like this at the agency I came from.”



...our strength is in our differences

Happenings

Once again the Diversity Council has outdone itself with a very well-planned and extremely fun celebration of our diverse backgrounds. On behalf of everyone at DAS, thanks to the Diversity Council Members and to all who contributed to the wonderful cultural cuisine!

Carol Wilson: “I am drinking this great “Sweet Sixteen Punch” and it is just awesome!”

Franky Rivera: “My favorite dish is the Flan – I made it!”

Nancy Jones: “The displays are just lovely – the turnout is bigger than last year.”

Mark Carroza: “I’m not going to enjoy any of this until I get back from my run!”

Quincy Cole: (summer intern at 18-20 Trinity) “This is my first week – I never saw anything like this before – love my boss...Linda Hubeny.”

Henry Jovanelly: “The Tequila Shooters are great!”

Mike Guimond: “Food is great!”

Check out great photos on the next pages!



