



DAS Prepares for H1N1

By John McKay

Inside this Issue

It's no secret that the H1N1 (aka swine) flu is widespread across most of the country and has certainly made its presence known here in Connecticut.

For some time DAS has been proactive in its emergency preparations and is working in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS).

"The state is in the monitoring phase of tracking absenteeism purely as an information gathering tool," said Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson. "DAS had built a Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP) when the bird

flu was a priority in 2007. This plan has been revised and updated to address the H1N1 virus and we've identified the steps that need to be taken to keep DAS running should there be a large number of employees unable to report to work."

Various functions within DAS have been given a 1, 2, or 3 priority number. Priority 1 represents the most important functions of DAS that MUST continue, with Priority 3 being functions that can be discontinued for a prescribed period of time. For each of these services DAS has identified what would have to be done to keep operations functioning along with the number of employees and what skill sets would be required to keep DAS running.

With the ability to check voice-mail and email off-site, and the availability of cell phones, many options present themselves for keeping in constant touch with fellow employees and keeping essential functions flowing.

"While we've all heard the preventative tips of frequently washing your hands, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, etc., it's important that DAS employees know that there is a plan in place and actions are being taken to monitor the H1N1 situation in the state and here at DAS," said DAS Commissioner Brenda Sisco.

Note: A great resource here in Connecticut is the CT Flu Watch website at: <http://www.ct.gov/ct-fluwatch/site/default.asp>. The site has an H1N1 hotline, state press releases, flu facts, resources for school and work, and other vital information.

Let's Talk Turkey



Jerry Lynn and Mike Felix once again headed up the SOB's efforts to collect turkeys and contributions on behalf of FOODSHARE. This year was the second best ever for the turkey count, bringing in 343! Contributions in cash and checks totaled \$1,128! Lynn and Felix are pictured above with other volunteers from the SOB and FOODSHARE. GREAT JOB!!

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Sweet...With a Touch of Healthy Common Sense

By John McKay

The 7th Annual Sweet Taste of DAS was another savory success. DAS employees gathered all the right ingredients and made some exceptional desserts representing their rich variety of cultures and traditions.

Hosted by the DAS Diversity Council on November 12, desserts were served in the South Mechanical Room which was festively decorated with warm brown plaid tablecloths and burgundy and gold autumnal floral arrangements.

“We realize the date we set was right after the Veterans Day holiday, but we also wanted to pick a time not too close to Halloween and not too soon before Thanksgiving,” said Diversity Council Chair Donna Camillone.

Added to this year’s Taste, was the DAS CT Fit committee’s efforts to make desserts a little more fat and calorie conscious. “We’re having a ‘Ready-Set-Lose’ contest over these next few months, so we thought if we could incorporate a few healthier desserts into the mix, it would benefit everyone,” said CT Fit’s Peggy Zabawar. ‘Ready-Set-Lose’ is a friendly weight loss competition loosely based on the TV show “The Biggest Loser.”

Desserts ranged from the favorite staples of cupcakes and cookies to the exotic Raguolis and Rodgrod med flode. “It’s the unique desserts I like the most, and also seeing how people have put a different twist on traditional dishes,” said Commissioner Brenda Sisco.

“My dad and I made this Swedish cardamom bread - one batch produces ten loaves! This recipe is from the bakery my



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dad worked at back in Sweden. It is a lot of work, but it is so good!” exclaimed Susanne Hawkins.

On the CT Fit-friendly side, Nancy Jones made a pumpkin cheese cake with reduced fat ingredients while others contributed fresh fruit and vegetable dishes.



And what else did folks bring?

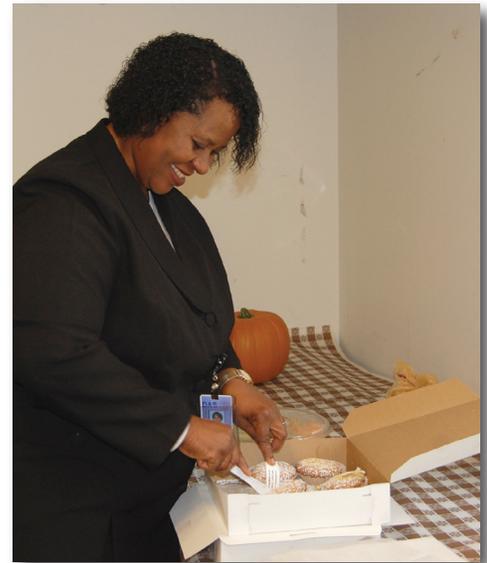
You name it – there was pecan pie, sweet potato pie, apple pie, Karo nut pie, carrot cake, yogurt cake, pumpkin cheesecake, yellow cake, three layer cake, Oreo cookie cake, chewy bars and shortbread.

A new dessert to the table from Denmark, Rod-grod med flode, looked like it could be absolutely addictive! Then there was butterscotch candy, cheese bites, haverflan, banana bread, pasticotti, canolis, angel wings, shortbread, funfetti, and bananas and strawberries.

That said – it was back on the CT Fit scale on Friday, and the planning for the Taste of DAS is already in the works for next spring.

To the Diversity Council – once again - excellent job!

The DAS Diversity Council would like to thank all of the employees who brought in the yummy desserts to make this year's Sweet Taste of DAS a wonderful success. Thank you to those who brought all the creative healthier choices in support of our CTFit program. Thank you, also, to all who attended and shared in this event. We hope everyone enjoyed themselves!



RoseMarie Peshka, Chief Financial Officer from the Department of Public Works, sent the following words of praise to SmART Director Steve Caliendo regarding **Tim Geary**: “I would like to reintroduce myself and let you know how helpful Tim Geary has been during my transition/transfer. He was a consummate professional right from the recruitment phase. When we encountered an obstacle to my transfer, he did his best to keep me informed. I believe it was his follow-through that produced a favorable outcome. I look forward to working with both you and Tim.”

HATS OFF!

By Cindy Rusczyk

Steve Caliendo also commented on **Tim Geary**, “Thank you RoseMarie. It is great to hear about – but not surprising to know – of the assistance that Tim provided to you. We are truly fortunate to have Tim in SmART, and we all appreciate his good work. We look forward to working with you as well. Thank you again for your kind comments.”

Jim Palmer applauded **David Berry, Robert Negri, Wayne Stocking, Ronald Johnson, David Marsh, David Tufano and Allen Landry** “for taking parts inventory seriously. The results of Saturday’s inventory clearly show that the parts and supervisory personnel at each of our maintenance locations are doing an excellent job in managing the stor-

age and assignment of our motor vehicle parts. That’s a tribute to each of you, especially Bob, Dave and Wayne as the key men in the parts room. To achieve the high level of accuracy in a year when you were significantly reducing your inventory levels is quite an accomplishment.”

Commissioner Sisco also extended her “sincere thanks for doing a great job on managing fleet inventory. Not only are these savings welcome in these difficult fiscal times, the dedication of all of you to manage and streamline our parts inventory system means

more than cost savings and truly speaks volumes of your commitment to your jobs and ensuring things are done the right way. Special thanks to **Dave, Bob and Wayne** – DAS appreciates your dedication and hard work.”

John McKay would like to thank **Erin Choquette and Jim Potyra** “for their early morning dedication. Although our Channel 3 live interview never took place, you two were up *really* early to make sure everything was in place at last month’s DAS vehicle auction. Thanks again!”

Commissioner Sisco had special thanks to all of you who took the time to help collect turkeys and cash this past Friday and today. “To **Jerry Lynn, Mike Felix,**

Jane Slupecki (Agriculture), John Phillips-Sandy and Paul Moreau (both from Foodshare) for hanging outside this year and every year - your commitment to our success is invaluable. We could not have done this without you. Thanks also to **June Seichter (Consumer Protection), Barbara Canzonetti (Education) and Holly Hart (Public Works)** for your commitment to this effort on behalf of your agency. To see such kindness and generosity in such difficult financial times is truly heartwarming.

Jean Michael echoed Commissioner Sisco’s sentiments. “What an amazing job was done by everyone involved with the Turkey Drive. It is truly a wonderful feeling to know that you have helped in some small way to make Thanksgiving a special day for those less fortunate. I am very proud of DAS’ two favorite ‘turkeys’, **Jerry Lynn** who has been the main turkey for all of the 16 years and **Mike Felix** who has been involved for the past 10 years. Thank you all!



**DAS
HOLIDAY PARTY**

Friday, December 11, 2009
11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

THE CHOWDER POT RESTAURANT
Hartford, CT

\$30 PER PERSON

UP CLOSE

With Jacqui Gelpi *By Nina Ritson*

When the word was out that DAS SmART was absorbing the business functions of Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, their employees were a little apprehensive.

Jacqui Gelpi, who had eight years at CHRO, had many reservations about her transfer to DAS, “I was worried about how people would feel that I was joining their office – was I taking someone else’s job – would they feel uncomfortable about me coming?”

Well Gelpi was quite pleasantly surprised. “I was so happy with how wonderful everyone in DAS has been since I came here. Jean Michael gave everyone a huge welcoming gathering and the Commissioner hosted a Meet and Greet that was so special - what a great way to get to know people here.”

Gelpi briefly described life at CHRO, and with a huge smile said, “DAS is such an upbeat agency! At CHRO there was a lot of turmoil and maybe it is the nature of the business of the agency – but there was also inner turmoil and morale was not that good. Everyone in the DAS business unit works together very well, there is no gossip – and Jean is an awesome boss!”

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Gelpi came to the U.S. with her folks and sister and brothers at

the age of eight. Her parents settled in the shoreline area. “Up until last month I was in Old Saybrook helping my parents, who are getting on in years. I just recently moved to Manchester. My girlfriend and I were talking one day at lunch, and I expressed to her how tired I was of the long commute, and the next day, she asked me if I would be interested in moving in with them, since they had a spare bedroom. I jumped at the chance, as this would give me the opportunity to be closer to their son Lucian, who is also my godson. I will be able to watch him grow, and will be able to help out with the baby whenever they need me to. Her husband will be deployed to Afghanistan in the months ahead. Lucian is the love of my life!”

Gelpi is no stranger to helping others. On Fridays she can be seen picking up loaves of bread from the West Hartford Panera Bread store – to bring with her to Church Street Eats in Harford on Saturdays. Each Saturday afternoon she joins a group who runs a program that makes bag lunches for the hungry and distributes these lunches to people near the carousel in Bushnell Park.

Where does Gelpi get her energy? “I am a runner – well I am



new to it, but I love it! I try to run at least four to six miles per day, plus go to the YMCA to workout.” She is planning to run the Manchester Road Race on Thanksgiving Day. She credits her boyfriend, who is also a runner, for his encouragement. Gelpi, whose perfect smile and gentle demeanor lay foundation to a sought-after volunteer, credits her inner strength to a *Women of Faith* conference she attended in Boston and became so inspired she has been volunteering ever since.

Before we closed the interview Gelpi wanted to get the word out, “This really is a very friendly agency! I want to thank everyone for the nice welcoming – it makes such a difference to know you are actually wanted at work.”

Procurement Pointers

By John McKay

Procurement's Pat DeConti and Arlene Watson attended the Clean Cities Clean Fuels & Vehicles Technology Expo at the Connecticut Expo Center in late October. Clean Cities is a government and industry partnership sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. Their mission is to reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation industry.

"The expo covered a wide array of topics regarding alternative fuels, electric cars and the next generation of vehicles," said Watson.

Both DeConti and Watson agreed the most interesting product was Idleright. Typically, a vehicle that idles for six hours at an emergency or construction can use as much as four gallons of gas. The same vehicle with Idleright device uses less than one-quarter of a gallon of gas and never jeopardizes the charge of the battery. The technology is currently being tested by Connecticut State Police.

Another feather in Procurement's cap has been their keen negotiating skills. Pat DeConti renegotiated contract 06PSX0067 for trucks with no increase in price. "With the state's current budget constraints and the type of year the auto industry has had, we were able to negotiate no price increase in the contract," said DeConti.

Also, a natural gas auction was held, saving the state of Connecticut a projected \$3.1 million over the next two years in energy costs.

State Vehicle Auction Brings in More Than \$543,000!

By John McKay

After the auctioneer said "sold" for the final vehicle, DAS' October 31 State Vehicle Auction resulted in 228 vehicles sold and brought in more than \$543,000.

"The money raised goes toward balancing our state budget," Governor M. Jodi Rell said. "We couldn't have had such a successful auction without the public's help, and I thank the 356 bidders for coming out on Saturday morning. We continue to do everything we can to trim the cost and size of state government, and we will continue to find more efficient ways to conduct the state's business."

The highest priced vehicle was a 2004 Toyota Corolla which sold for \$6,300 and the lowest priced vehicle was a 1997 Ford Taurus Station Wagon which sold for \$500. High bidders drove away with Crown Victorias, sedans, station wagons and cargo vans.

In August, Governor Rell announced the state had reduced its fleet of cars and trucks by more than 20 percent, saving more than \$1 million and exceeding the goal she set through an Executive Order issued this past February.

"Because we will be getting more agency vehicle turn-ins as a result of the Governor's Executive Order, we anticipate holding two more auctions before the end of the year...our average is generally four auctions per year," said Surplus Program Manager Carlos Velez.

Here are some facts and figures from DAS vehicle auctions since January 2009.

Vehicle Auctions To Date Calendar Year 09:

Date:	Number of Lots:	Total Dollars Generated:
January 10, 2009	235	\$500,800
May 9, 2009	224	\$504,100
June 6, 2009	234	\$496,700
August 15, 2009	223	\$511,000
October 31, 2009	228	\$543,000
Calendar year total:	916	\$2,555,400

WELCOME !

By John McKay

No one puts together a better welcome wagon than DAS.

In early November, Commissioner Brenda Sisco and Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson invited all DAS employees to an open house to welcome the 12 new employees DAS inherited through the absorption of several state boards and commissions: State Properties Review Board, State Insurance & Risk Management Board, State Marshal Commission, State Properties Review Board, Office of the Claims Commissioner, as well as some employees transferred from CHRO.

In her welcoming speech Commissioner Sisco said, "I want to welcome all of you to DAS. Everyone in this agency is committed to helping our new folks with their transition to DAS and we're all here to support you, make it easy for you, and make you a part of the DAS family."

The new DAS employees are:

- Anna Candelario from State Properties Review Board
- Angela Choinski from Comptroller's Office
- Daria Cirish from State Insurance & Risk Management Board



- Elizabeth Collins from State Marshal Commission

- Jacquelin Gelpi from CHRO

- Mary Goodhouse from State Properties Review Board

- Paula McIllduff from Office of the Claims Commissioner

- Eileen McNeil from State Insurance Risk & Management Board

- Terri Miro from Workers' Compensation Commission

- Shelley Mosig from Comptroller's Office

- Denise Phuong from DOIT

- Michelle Provost from CHRO

- Mary Rice from DOIT
- Claribel Rosario from State Marshal Commission
- James Smith from Office of the Claims Commissioner
- Kathy Stone from CHRO

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

By Jim Palmer

Earlier this year Governor Rell issued Executive Order 22, which among other things called for a 20% reduction in the total of light trucks and cars used by state agencies to complete their mission.

In total, 881 cars and small trucks were turned back to DAS. As they were returned, fleet operations assigned most of the ones that are beyond seven-years old or with over 100,000 miles to Surplus for disposal through our statewide auction program. Additionally, whenever possible, newer turn-ins were reassigned to replace the oldest and highest mileage vehicles that remained in our fleet.

These two steps significantly reduced the total of the vehicles returned. However, even after these actions were completed some cars and trucks with a lot of life in them remained.

Therefore, we developed an action plan to best utilize those that were left, keeping in mind two important factors;

- the current fiscal climate is such that the purchase of new vehicles is on an indefinite hold
- revenue shortfalls are placing ever increasing pressure on agencies to cut expenses and/or generate additional revenue whenever possible.

With these factors in mind, we have elected to keep a small number of the newer and lower mileage vehicles to serve as replacements for vehicles that could be lost due to accidents or major component failure. Once some reserve/back-up vehicles were put aside, we were left with about late model ten light duty trucks that we could not see

any reason to continue holding on to, as there was no short or even medium-term need for their use.

Since we couldn't justify parking them until who knows when, we contacted Jim Potyra of DAS Surplus. In addition to overseeing our vehicle and surplus property auctions, Jim also is DAS's main conduit with other state agencies and municipalities who are looking for particular items, often vehicles. By using this network we were able to dispose of the vehicles and capture 100% of the book value, with the

end result being about \$150,000 returned to the state coffers.

Also, besides not purchasing new cars since late spring of 2008, DAS has held three vehicle auctions in the second half of 2008 and five more in 2009. The 2009 auctions alone have raised close to \$2.5 million through the sale of approximately 916 DAS cars and light duty trucks, and we still have dozens more ready to be sold at our next auction!

Wicked Weather...what to do?

By John McKay

It's starting to be *that* time of year.

Will there be a delayed opening? What's the weather like for the commute?

As we approach December and the winter months, employees are encouraged to watch the news and listen to the radio when the weather turns bad. Local TV and radio stations will typically carry the announcement of delayed state openings.

Another resource is the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) website: <http://www.ct.gov/demhs/site/default.asp>. The top icon in the left-hand column posts valuable information.

Although DEMHS posts the information, the decision is ultimately made by the Governor after discussions with DOT, Public Works and other state agencies.



Comings and Goings



Shirley Drueschler in Delinquent Accounts is retiring December 1. All the best!



Pam McCormick is new to Procurement's Supplier Diversity. Welcome!

Come and Get It!



Guess who was serving up lunch?? Commissioner Sisco and Deputy Commissioner Anderson served up a chili lunch on Thursday, November 19 to benefit the State Employees Campaign for Charitable Giving. For just \$3, DAS employees enjoyed a delicious bowl of traditional spicy or mild beef chili, veggie or turkey chili, complete with corn bread and garnishes. An astonishing \$357 was raised and donated to the CSEC. Thank you to chili chefs extraordinaire Commissioner Sisco, Deputy Commissioner Anderson, Andrea Keilty, Erin Choquette, Peggy Zabawar and Nancy Jones for the fantastic lunch and the generous donations for such a worthy cause!