



Time Equals Money!

By Nina Ritson



Dave Lynn addresses attendees

Achieving good attendance is everyone's responsibility – the employee and the supervisor. Like all agencies, DAS continues to be fiscally conservative and every effort to save adds up – even savings by eliminating lost time. Lost time is lost money, communication and productivity.

With this charge, DAS held several attendance policy sessions to inform or reeducate employees of their responsibility and of the attendance expectations within the agency.

"The updated policy DAS enforces is fair and reasonable," said Director of Human Resources Dave Lynn. "But attendance agency-wide is in much need of improvement."

So what are the goals? To manage and curb absenteeism and tardiness, to ensure consistent and fair treatment of employees and to communicate and clarify the responsibilities for employees, supervisors and Human Resources staff.

"The staff in Human Resources is here for all employees, and they want everyone to know what they are entitled to and what the expectations are."

"These sessions have been well-attended!" Lynn reports. He enlisted the help of Erin Choquette, Legislative and Administrative Advisor for the Office of the Commissioner, to present four sessions on attendance training for managers and supervisors, which were mandatory. They also presented six voluntary sessions for non-supervisory employees. One of the mandatory classes was held especially for the Fleet supervisors and another special class for the Small Agencies Resource Team.

Each attendance session covered an overview of attendance policy - vacation, personal, comp time and sick time occurrences.

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Erin Choquette explains FMLA terminology at an Attendance Policy Session

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DAS Coordinates Pandemic Flu conference - Session II

By John McKay

DAS was center stage again at Session II of the state's emergency reaction to pandemic flu or any other catastrophic occurrence. Session III will be held in December, Session IV in January, and a statewide practice drill is scheduled for February.

Dr. Martin Anderson opened the session with welcome remarks and introductions and highlighted the importance of these meetings. "Many of you are beginning to understand that this kind of planning is important to your agency, your employees and the state as a whole, and that's great." The training took place at Rentschler Field Club House above the UConn Huskies football field, in East Hartford.



No one could be more prepared for a flu pandemic than Steve Caliendo of SMART.



Anderson then turned over the instructional portion of the meeting to IBM's Sarah Magnuson and Paul Doyle who walked participants through three key exercises: assigning Operation Section Team leaders, and documenting and prioritizing business functions and services.

As the administrator of the session, DAS was ahead of the game by having most of the information already completed, since team leaders were selected and many functions were prioritized after Session I.

One participant said, "At first I thought this was just another drill, however, now that I've learned more and can apply it to any statewide emergency or disaster, I see its importance and relevance."



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

ERP Kick-Off

The Fall Employee Recognition Program kicked off on November 21 in the South Mechanical Room.

Now is the time to give recognition, give thanks, give praise, and nominate!

Do you sometimes think employees don't get the recognition they deserve? Nominate them for ERP!

You can also join the ERP Committee - they are looking for volunteers!

The winners of the "pie" door prizes were **Michelle Fournier, Jill Belisle, Robin Riddlesworth, Lori Thibeault**, with the Grand Prize, a 20 lb. turkey, going to **Alina Kalisz!**



Clockwise from the top: ERP Committee members greet DAS Employees at the door.

Matt Shea twirls a blindfolded Lionel Corbin in a round of "Pin the Feather on the Turkey."

Close, Lionel, but no cigar...



hats off

By *Cindy Rusczyk*

Jean Micheal praised **Jerry Lynn** and **Mike Felix**: "The success of the Turkey Drive is due not only to the generosity of people but the effort, hard work, and dedication of Jerry and Mike. There aren't many people that would get in a turkey costume and gobble at folks as they came in to work. They even risked being mistaken for food by Mr. Hawk. Mike found himself in that situation and had to cover his head for fear of being attacked as Jerry ran for cover in the Food Share truck. Because of the hawk looking for food, this effort has become 'hazardous duty', but Jerry and Mike will still continue to risk their lives as they man their Food Share posts in years to come. Thank you both for being such "turkeys" and doing a wonderful job."

Donna Wadhams sent the following message to the **Diversity Council** regarding the Sweet Taste of DAS: "The committee did a wonderful job once again this year. There were so many desserts to choose from!"

Team Leader Mark Martinez for the DMHAS/DVA Team in Collections thanked **Marc Stango, Robert Lapointe** and **Brenda Minter** "for their hard work and attention to detail with the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership. This was a new program set up to get DMHAS clients enrolled in Husky Medicaid to have their services pre-authorized in order to be paid. Marc, Robert and Brenda had to learn a new software program and enter all the enrolled clients into our Avatar billing system. This new source of revenue will add to DAS' reputation as an efficient revenue generator. Great job!"

Brenda Willard, Assistant Director of Procurement, from the Department of Administration, State of Minnesota called to tell the **DAS Communications Office** how they (Minnesota Procurement) were wowed by the procurement video on the DAS website. "We loved it so much they want to do the same thing for Minnesota's website!" She wanted to know details about whether we outsourced it or did it in-house. She just thought it was beautiful!

Dave Lynn expressed his appreciation to **Erin Choquette** "for her assistance in presenting the DAS Attendance Policy Informational Sessions to agency staff. Erin's thorough knowledge and understanding of the related State and Federal Labor Laws, as well as her ability to explain and communicate the complex legal terms/conditions in plain language, made each session very informative and worthwhile."

DAS' New Web Feature to Help Connecticut Small Businesses

By John McKay

To help small businesses compete for state contracts, Governor M. Jodi Rell announced in November that a new online search engine has been designed in order to make it easier for Connecticut state agencies to better identify certified small, women and minority-owned businesses.

The search engine can be found on the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Procurement homepage at: www.das.state.ct.us/busopp.asp.

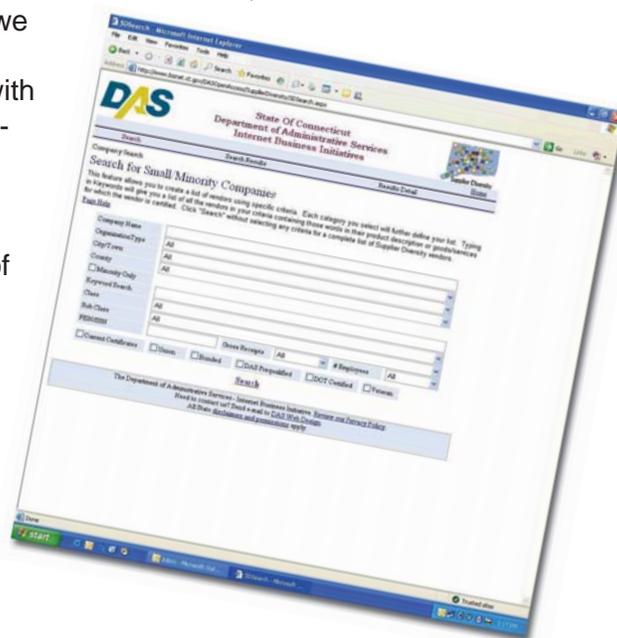
"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and we want to do all we can to make it easier for them to do business with the State of Connecticut," Governor Rell said.

"When we take steps to better identify these businesses, we help improve their chances of being awarded state contracts. This new search engine enables us to learn details about companies that were not previously available to us via the web."

The new feature allows state officials to find a business using any of the following criteria:

- Location within the state
- Minority group
- Bonding
- Current certifications
- Union
- Product/services provided
- DOT-certification

"These features will help vendors and state agencies find specific



suppliers to fill their small business goals," Governor Rell said.

The program allows users to view a profile of the business including owner(s), links to company web pages, class and subclass descriptions, company affiliates and company certification designation. DAS currently has

almost 1,500 certified vendors in the database with more applications added daily.

State law requires that 25 percent of the total value of the annual budget for all contracts (including construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of public buildings, the construction and maintenance of highways and the purchasing of goods and services), shall be set aside for small businesses, and of that computed amount, 25 percent must be awarded to minority business enterprises.

In 2004, Governor Rell issued Executive Order No. 3, which directs DAS to include in the State Contracting Portal prominent features to encourage the active recruitment and participation of small businesses, including women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

"I want to make sure that small businesses have total access to state contract information," Governor Rell said.

"These businesses are vital to Connecticut's economy and it is important that we provide them with an equal opportunity to compete for state contracts."

All of Connecticut's state agencies, along with 77 municipalities, 27 non-profit agencies, and 34 public schools and Boards of Education have enrolled to post bid information on the state's Internet site for public contracts. The move to online posting of contract information is expected to save taxpayers at least \$300,000 a year through reduced costs for copying, mailing and legal notices.

Good Turnout for DAS' Fed Food Show

By John McKay

A large conference room filled with the tantalizing aromas of meatballs, pizza, and chicken nuggets? How could it not be a success?

"Our customers are happy," said Hubeny. "We've made a lot of improvements and increased our flexibility in ordering and have been responsive to their needs."

DAS' Federal Food Distribution Program Commodity Processing Food Show was considered not only a success, but also an epicurean strategy session according to program director Linda Hubeny.

"I'm delighted with the turnout and was really happy to get most of our largest school district representatives to come. I could see the vendors were really pleased about that also," she said.

The Food Show provided a venue for vendors to showcase their products to school district representatives and show them what was available for their lunch menus. It also gave the school district reps the opportunity to talk directly with the vendors, ask questions and, in some cases, place orders on the spot.

A noticeable change of the times is that most vendors are now leaning towards healthier foods for school children. Land O' Lakes Northeast Sales Manager Judith Fitzgerald agreed, "Everyone is definitely pushing for the healthier menus. It's become a huge issue locally and nationally. We've responded by introducing low fat and reduced fat products and the schools are really asking for these items."

A new strategy is to market Connecticut as a testing ground. Even though Connecticut is considered a small state, its population allows for broader appeal to larger states. "The USDA has tested a few things with us and we've had a lot of success," said Hubeny.

"I think our processors and customers enjoy being the first for certain products or procedures to see if they work and give their feedback. Like our slogan says, 'We're DAS, and we're at your service,' " she said.

Hubeny Goes to Washington – And Gets Results

Hubeny for state representative? Maybe not yet, but you definitely want her to represent the DAS Fed Food Program. After a back-and-forth with some USDA representatives about listing ingredients on certain packaging, Hubeny said, "It just made sense to me to have the ingredients listed so food service directors, and others know what's in the food children are eating in our schools. This will be especially helpful for children with allergies. I had also heard a few of my customers say the same thing. I was persistent, and USDA changed their packaging to reflect the ingredients listing starting the next school year."



*And the winner is.....
Carolyn Koloseus!*



Congratulations to Carolyn, who won the new “Employee of the Month Award.” She is the first employee to win this new recognition award at DAS, an addition to the Employee Recognition Awards. On a monthly basis, you can let your fellow employees know you appreciate their great work! The following explains the procedure in more detail:

- A locked wooden box is going to be placed in the fifth floor breakroom
- Ballots will be available in various units for people to fill out
- A person can only win once per year
- The rating process will be anonymous - committee members will not know who they are voting for
- Deadline for placing ballots in the box will be the 20th of each month
- For those units that are not located in the State Office Building, ballots can be mailed to Nancy Jones labeled “confidential”
- The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Division Directors are ineligible

This individual shall perform above and beyond their regular duties; please be specific when nominating this person.

So, what did Carolyn win? A choice parking space in the SOB parking lot for the entire month of November!
Congratulations!!!

Time Equals Money! Continued from page 1

The new policy emphasizes two very important items:

- All absences (including late arrivals and early departures) should be scheduled in advance whenever possible
- Whether the request is approved will depend on DAS’ operating needs

Also covered were definitions of occasion of absence, time coding, family illness and funeral, the alphabet soup of medical leave (FMLA, ADA, CFEPa, USERRA, CBA and state family and medical leave act), and consequences for repeated occurrences.

Choquette, who is well versed in the laws of medical leave of absence, was optimistic that employees can change behavior.

“We are hoping to work with people early – before they get into problems with attendance and we want to make sure the employee is aware of this expectation and that we are here to help. We must assure employees use their leave time appropriately,” Choquette emphasized.

How Sweet It Is...

By *Nina Ritson*

ConnectiFIT walkers may be celebrating their return from Hawaii in steps, but they may need to walk a little further now after they visited the Fourth Annual Sweet Taste of DAS on Wednesday, November 1.

The South Mechanical room was packed once again with feasters eager to indulge in scrumptious desserts - a labor of love- prepared for the employees of DAS, by the employees of DAS, to celebrate our rich diversity.

Accompanying Commissioner Linda Yelmini to the buffet was a special guest, her mother, Nellie Peterson.

Employees sampled an incredible Trifle layered in a tall glass bowl, compliments of Commissioner Yelmini, and chocolate-covered cookies by Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco, a treat in any country!

From the U.S.A, Peach Praline Pie, Date Bars, Cheesecake, Apple Squares, Lemon Cake, Sock-It-To-Me Cake and Sweet Potato Pie from the Low Country. From Puerto Rico was Tembleque also known as Coconut Pudding, from Ecuador we enjoyed Coconut Flan, and Black Forest Cake from England. From Sweden came Peanut Butter Balls and from Italy, Cannolis and Brasadela, an Italian coffee cake. Of course, it would not be the Sweet Taste of DAS without the ever so labor intensive, but delightful Ragoulis from Lithuania.

What were people saying? "My favorite is the cannoli - but I am Italian," said Joe Giliberto. Jay Yasensky reported, "This is my first Sweet Taste of DAS - I'm a brownie sort of guy!"

Frank and Marisol Rivera had this to say, "Food is great and it's a chance to indulge with fellow employees."

Thank you to all those who helped share their heritage by sharing their kitchen magic and a special thank you for all the hard work of the Diversity Committee members: Isabelle McKinney, Wayne Grant, Donna Camillone, Glenda Rollins, Juliet Colebrook, Alex Caceres, Quincy Cole, Laura Guilmartin, Carlos Kebe, Peggy Zabawar, and Nancy Bryant.

Ray Bailey summed up the event perfectly, "This is DAS at its best! We always do family things very well - we come together well!"

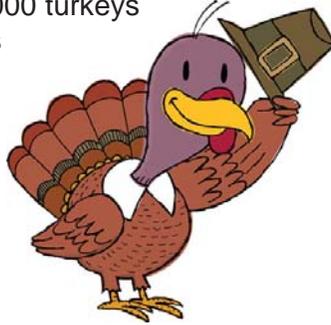


...our strength is in our differences

Turkey Drive

By John McKay

It was another terrific year! Just a week ago, FoodShare was estimating this year's goal of 14,000 turkeys looked unattainable. However, thanks to drives like DAS' and the huge efforts of local supermarket chains, our FoodShare truck driver Paul told organizers Mike Felix and Jerry Lynn that it looks like they will meet their goal!



This year's DAS numbers for the Turkey Drive are:

2006 Turkey Drive

Turkeys = 272

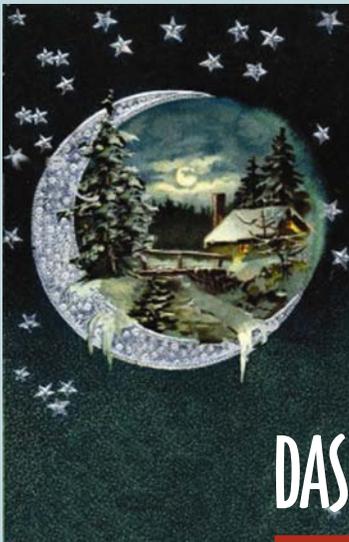
Cash/Checks = \$806

The 13-Year Accumulated Totals

Turkeys = 2379

Cash/Checks = \$9734.35

Jerry and Mike wanted to thank everyone at DAS who contributed. "Especially Diane Fitzpatrick," said Lynn, "Her idea to bring in the inflatable turkey was a very nice addition to the nonsense outside! It brought some laughs, smiles, strange looks, etc. It was a nice touch! We also had a very nice contribution from the Office of the Comptroller - 17 turkeys - and many other State Office Building agencies contributed."



CONTACT

Heather Berte
713-5179

Friday, December 15,
12 noon-4 pm
U.S.S. Chowder Pot
\$25.00

DAS Holiday Party

*Don't Forget to Buy Your
Holiday Party Ticket!*

*Last Day of Sale,
December 8!*