



## And the Award Goes To...

by John McKay



Paul Greco of DAS Procurement

Congratulations to DAS Procurement's Paul Greco! The New England Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has selected the Connecticut Disaster Debris Plan Team to receive an Environmental

Merit Award in recognition of its exceptional work and commitment to the environment in 2009. Greco is a member of the team.

EPA's Environmental Merit Award is an annual award that recognizes outstanding environmental advocates who have made significant contributions toward preserving and protecting our natural resources.

The Team was nominated by Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Amey Marrella.

The contract puts into motion a number of recovery services should a catastrophic incident happen in Connecticut; the most likely of scenarios being a category three (or more) hurricane. Connecticut and this

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## When Times Get Tough.....

By Nina Ritson

.... DAS gets going! And that is exactly what happened when the Governor's Office called upon DAS, the Department of Information Technology (DOIT), and the Department of Labor (DOL) to combat an unprecedented monster that emerged with the new surge of unemployment claims resulting from the severe economic downturn.

As the state began to lose more jobs, and laid-off workers rushed to the unemployment lines in droves, the DOL telephone and voice response system for filing claims became increasingly overburdened. Callers were experi-

encing enormous difficulty when trying to register unemployment, file weekly claims and check the status of existing claims. Many callers sought relief from this by turning to their computers to file claims online, only to witness that system grind to a stop. Unemployment in Connecticut climbed 30 percent, online claims jumped 40 percent, and the process became so bogged down that it prompted Governor Rell to gather an emergency team of folks from DOL, DOIT, and DAS to meet at the call center in Windsor and figure out an immediate remedy.

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part of the country are one of the most densely populated sections of the United States. Add all its buildings, trees and vegetation and the amount of debris littering the landscape would be devastating.

*“...the team coordinated their efforts with various state government agencies, drafted Connecticut’s Disaster Debris Management Plan, and secured essential contractor services for debris removal and monitoring. Connecticut’s Debris Plan, with prequalified contractors, is the first statewide plan approved by FEMA and is a model in New England and nationally.”*

**Environmental Merit Awards 2010  
Environmental Protection Agency**

materials. Instead of everything being gathered and shipped out, materials would be sorted and separated by metal, vegetation, glass, plastic, etc.

“With this contract in place the state will have rapid response contractors and vendors available, prepared to have 5,000 pieces of equipment ready to roll into the state to begin clearing the streets and sorting the debris,” said Greco.

The green part of the contract has the vendors separating the debris by the various

“Should a disaster hit, how would the state be able to help its citizens or receive assistance if the roads were clogged with debris?” asked Greco.

Of course it wasn’t just Paul working on this contract. He mentioned a number of people who were instrumental in getting this contract together.

“We started in mid-2007 and awarded the contract in August 2008. There was input and involvement from the federal government, homeland security, DEP, along with my other teammates Tessa Gutowski, Frank Gagliardo, Judy Pahl, and Paul Gibb.”

Commissioner Sisco said, “Congratulations Paul! This is certainly well-deserved - I know how hard and diligently you worked with DEP on the RFP and subsequent contract. This was a very time consuming and detail oriented process - you were extremely helpful and worked well with DEP in putting this together. Great job!”

## COMINGS ...

New Employee -  
Erika Searles  
Office of the Claims Commissioner  
– Office Assistant (Effective 2/8/10)  
WELCOME!!

## ...and Goings

Transfers out of DAS –  
Laura Guilmartin to DDS (Effective 3/25/10)  
Karen Graham to DSS (Effective 2/12/10)



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M. Jodi Rell  
Governor

Brenda L. Sisco  
Commissioner

Donna J. Micklus  
Editor

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Dr. Martin Anderson explained, “This phone and voice response system was built in a recession that occurred in the early 1990’s when Connecticut saw a high of 115,000 unemployment claims. Nobody imagined things could get worse than that. With this new recession and Connecticut unemployment reaching near 10 percent, there were between 140,000 and 160,000 claimants registering or continuing claims any given week. The system was so overloaded that claimants would get busy signals, and if they actually got through they would be on hold for 30 minutes in order to follow the prompts – unless the system timed out and the call was dropped. On the web, they were growing increasingly anxious because the website would spin an hourglass and time out.” Anderson went on to say that the problem also lies in the timeframe for which the calls were coming and the volume. “Over 60 percent of the people call-in between at 12 midnight on Sunday and 8 a.m. on Monday morning to guarantee check receipt by Tuesday. Plus, they would call to file the claim and call again to confirm the monetary amount and what amount was still available to them, further burdening the system.”

As the recession deepened and claims multiplied, it also became increasingly difficult to keep these centers adequately staffed. It was the task of this team to make change which meant greatly expanding the server capacities for the phone and online systems, expanding the staffing hours for call response by

bumping to Saturdays and allowing overtime, and changing behavior – trying to get claimants to call into the system any day but Sunday.

“Most of the heavy lifting was done by DOL and DOIT - by installing new servers with greater capacity. These voice response servers were flown in from Ireland and quickly brought through customs to be installed in the Hamden Call Center. With this increased capacity, DOL could now seek permission to hire more staff so they called upon retirees to man the centers and allowed overtime even converting training space into an extra call center,” Anderson explained.

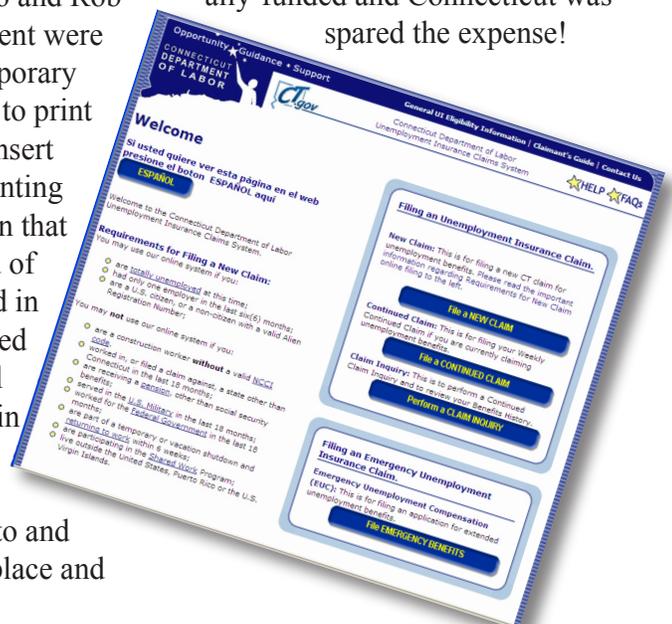
On the production side, the federal extension of benefits has put a prolonged strain on the system, causing printing and inserting of the checks to recipients to far exceed capacity at DOIT. DAS answered the call by procuring Pitney Bowes Management Services to print, insert and mail the overflow of unemployment checks. Joe Giliberto and Rob Zalucki of DAS Procurement were able to rapidly issue a temporary contract for Pitney Bowes to print high security checks and insert them for mailing. “The printing of these checks is unique in that MICR toner is used in lieu of regular toner which is used in office copiers. MICR is used in the industry so that mail sorters can detect a check in a sealed envelope,” Giliberto noted. Within four weeks from onset, Giliberto and Zalucki had a contract in place and

now checks are being issued as of 1 a.m. on the Monday of each claim week. “Like everyone, we are hoping the economy will begin to grow again so we will see a decrease in unemployment claims. This is why we procured a temporary contract for service as opposed to outright purchase of equipment,” explained Zalucki.

The results...instant relief! Callers began getting through, people were able to file online without hitches and checks were being mailed in a regular, reliable time frame.

On March 21, George Gombossy, the consumer protection watchdog who is collecting unemployment benefits as a result of his recent lay-off from the Hartford Courant, had this to say on his website [ctwatchdog.com](http://ctwatchdog.com): “It’s time to give credit where credit is due: Connecticut appears to have finally fixed its Internet site that allows people to file continuing claims online.”

The beauty of all this - it was federally-funded and Connecticut was spared the expense!



# UP CLOSE

## With Lynn Peccerillo

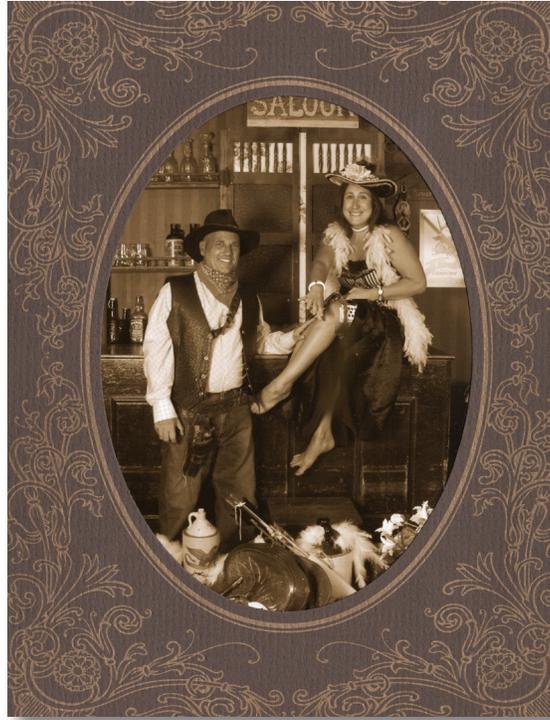
By Nina Ritson

Planning a wedding can be stressful, all-consuming, taxing, a negotiating challenge and just plain overwhelming - unless your line of work is procurement! And one year from now – on April 16, 2011 – DAS Procurement’s Lynn Peccerillo will have procured quite the party when she becomes Mrs. George Hills!

Peccerillo, of Construction Contractor Prequalification has been seasoned in matters of Procurement throughout her 14 years at DAS. She began her state career at UConn Health Center in 1992, which also happens to be where she met her groom-to-be. “We dated for a while then drifted apart but always remained friends,” says Peccerillo. “We got back together about five years ago and before I knew it I was pricing restaurants for our reception.”

“I still need to get my dress but I did pick the restaurant!” said Peccerillo. “There is so much to do – and it really is not that far away. But picking the restaurant has taken a huge weight off my shoulders.....everything else falls into place from here.”

She went on to explain, “I was biking with Lori Coleman on the bike path in Simsbury and happened to see the sign for Riverview, which also had been on my list of places to check out. Lori came with me and we looked at the restaurant that day – it was done – what a beautiful



George Hills proposes marriage to an unsuspecting Lynn Peccerillo in August 2009.

place and they were so negotiable. This is where I will have my wedding and reception!!”

Peccerillo tells the very unique story of how George popped the question to her last summer on August 21. Both our families vacationed together in Hampton Beach, New Hampshire including brothers and sisters

and aunts and uncles. We really are a close family. George and I were taking a walk one night and my mom said she’d like to join us. We decided to go to one of those old time photo places where they dress you up in period clothing. I was all dressed up and horsing around with a fake revolver and laughing..... when I went over to the picture window in the front of the store where tourists like to peer in and saw my whole family outside the window watching me. Not yet connecting the dots, I turned suddenly to George and saw he had a ring in his hand – he asked me to marry him. I was so stunned and caught off guard that all I could do was laugh and point the gun at him. Our families were thrilled as they watched the event unfold. He is not a romantic type of guy but he is wonderful. He even surprised his own mother - she couldn’t believe he pulled the whole thing off. He had been planning this for months.”

Peccerillo went on to say that her sisters, Laurie and Lisa will certainly be her bridesmaids, “The three of us look like triplets.”

For the moment she is off to the Bridal Expo being held in Cromwell to pick the invitations and the photographer. “I know my benchmarks, and I can negotiate anything!”

Over the past few weeks DAS has received a number of inquiries about the Toyota products in their fleet. They've heard from drivers, managers, ATA's and at

## Regarding Toyota

By Jim Palmer

least one TV station. Considering that many of the recent updates regarding Toyota bring more troubling news, they thought that now would be an appropriate time to share how Toyota's situation impacts the state, and also to shed some light on why they have Toyotas in the first place.

"First and most important, to date none of our Prius vehicles (this is the only Toyota model that DAS owns) is part of a recall for unintended acceleration – zero. However, DAS was notified some months back regarding the concern of floor mats potentially interfering with the gas pedal. Upon receipt of that notice the Fleet Administration asked that drivers

remove floor mats and place them into the trunk until such time that Toyota identifies, and communicates a solution. Additionally, DAS maintenance facilities have been instructed to check every Prius at each service to make certain that the mat has been removed. If it is still on the driver's floor, our staff has been directed to move it to the trunk," stated Frank Sanzo, Director of Fleet Operations.

Regarding the size of the Prius fleet, in total they have 330 models that are 2005-2008. In addition to Toyota hybrids, DAS also owns 100 Honda Civic hybrids, also 2005-2008 models.

"We were led to hybrids because, as the state's primary light-duty vehicle operator, DAS needs to be in compliance with conflicting, state and federal requirements. For example, there is a state statute that requires 50 percent of our purchases to average in excess of 40 MPG. To achieve this we had no option but to buy large quantities of the Toyota and Honda hybrids, since no American manufacturers offered hybrids that could achieve 45+

MPG like those offered by Toyota and Honda. Simply put, they were the only vehicles available that achieved the MPG required by State law," said Sanzo.

"On the other hand, DAS must comply with federal Department of Energy (EPA) guidelines requiring that 75 percent of our fleet purchases be classified as alternate fuel vehicles. Regretfully, DOE fails to recognize hybrid vehicles as being alternate fuel. Therefore purchasing a large quantity of E85 vehicles became necessary to achieve the EPA requirements, but they do not yet meet state fuel efficiency standards," added Assistant Director, Jim Palmer. "Up until this point in time, our maintenance, reliability, and safety experience with both the Toyota and Honda have been superb. And with actual real world fuel mileage of close to 50 MPG, they have proven to be extremely fuel-efficient as well."

DAS will continue to monitor the Toyota situation on a daily basis, and provide updates as new information becomes available.



April might be a tad early for most commencement exercises, but DAS is always ahead of the curve. On Thursday, April 15 at the Department of Higher Education, 33 new managers from 17 state agencies graduated from DAS' New Managers Orientation Program. It was DAS' eleventh program and to date has graduated 340 managers. The program is overseen by DAS' Strategic Services Unit.

The curriculum focuses on the practical skills managers should know regarding the operations of state government and information needed to be effective in their managerial positions.

## Managing the Managers

By John McKay

There are 11 modules to the program covering such topics as: Overview of State Government, Ethics, Dealing with the Media, Overview of the Classification System, How to Hire within the State's Merit System, Introduction to Labor Relations, Overview of FMLA and ADA, Diversity Training, and Managing Performance.

In addition, new managers participate in two group exercises: Totem Pole Exercise and the Table Top Forum both designed to provide an opportunity to meet and discuss common topics among peers and to realize that they face very similar issues.

At the end of the program feedback from participants included such comments as:

"The program was very comprehensive even for someone such as myself who has been in state service over 20 years. I learned a considerable amount of information that will be helpful to me as a new manager."

"Topics covered were excellent. This was a lengthy commitment that I am grateful to have participated in."

Congratulations to DAS' Strategic Services Unit of Nancy Jones, Diane Mazar Roberts, Steve Soklow, and Peggy Zabawar.



Commissioner Brenda Sisco addresses the graduates of the New Managers Orientation Program.

The latest graduating class is pictured to the right.



## DAS Takes Out the Trash! *By John McKay*

Amendments, addendums, supplements. Repeat.

This is no way to administer a state contract. DAS Procurement's Joe Giliberto and Rob Zalucki realized this and reformatted the new state agency trash contract 09PSX0015 into a manageable and flexible piece of art.

By taking several trash contracts and rolling them into one, state agencies can customize their usage with the potential of substantial savings. "One of the first benefits of this process made all the bidders more competitive," said Zalucki. "By having multiple vendors throughout the state handling various types of trash and recycling, everyone had to be competitive."

"Another benefit of this contract is now agencies can right-size their rubbish needs," added DAS' Joe Giliberto. "Getting the right size dumpster, with the right number of weekly pick-ups, for the right type of trash along with proper recycling, really streamlines the entire process which will lead to savings." He went on to mention the overall flexibility of the contract where agencies can change their trash requirements as their trash needs change. "In the past we would have had to issue addendums and supplements to the contract, delaying overall response time."

Adding to the efficiency, many trash haulers use the single stream recycling format in which all paper fibers and containers are mixed together in a collection truck, instead of being sorted into separate commodities (newspaper, cardboard, plastic, glass, etc.) then handled separately throughout the collection process.

To prevent any break in service, DAS made sure there were multiple vendors per town in Connecticut. "Should one vendor have equipment or delivery failure, our agencies can rest assure there won't be an interruption in trash pickup because we'll have other vendors in place for such an occasion," added Giliberto.

Is there really any savings? Connecticut Department of Transportation is already estimating a 20 percent savings.

In a letter to Procurement Director Carol Wilson, David Hartley from Connecticut DOT wrote, "This contract covers all types of trash, recycling and material disposal in a

user friendly contract that has many options on the menu and should not require a lot of intervention or supplements by DAS. DAS is also to be commended in that some small vendors are on the contract that can do a cost effective job in a small area and there are some state-wide vendors that can also do a good job. The best news is that by combing all the states needs, some very significant cost savings were realized for all agencies..."



Joe Giliberto and Rob Zalucki of DAS Procurement.

# SAVE THE DATE!



**DAS SUMMER PICNIC**  
**JUNE 30, 2010**

**ROCK CATS**  
**(Minnesota Twins)**  
 vs.

**TRENTON THUNDER**  
**(New York Yankees)**  
**12:05 p.m. start**

**\$23 per person**  
 (kids under 4 are \$5,  
 over 4 are full price)

Additional \$3 per car for parking.  
 This picnic ticket entitles the holder to one (1) game ticket to be provided separately

**All kids under 12 receive a Rock Cats Baseball.**

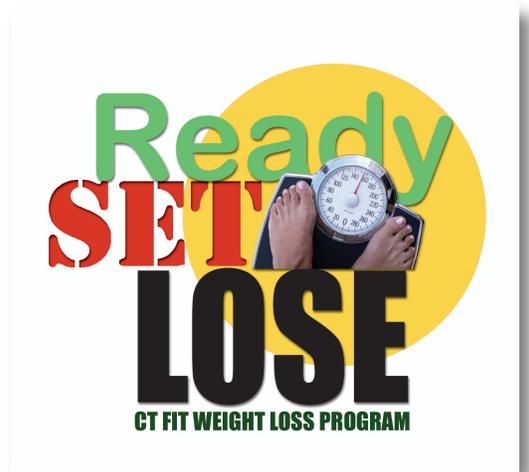
Hotdogs, Hamburgers,  
 Cheeseburgers,  
 Grilled Chicken, Beans,  
 Pasta Salad  
 (soft drinks included)  
 Cookies for dessert

**10 a.m. Arrive**  
**10:30 a.m. Agency Meeting**  
**11a.m. BBQ**  
**12:05 p.m. First Pitch**

## CT Fit UPDATE

by Peggy Zabawar

The DAS workplace wellness committee CT Fit is currently running its 2nd pay-to-play weight loss program, called Ready Set Lose II 2010. 16 Teams of 2, for a total of 32 brave pioneers, have joined the competition to see who can drop the most weight before summer! The prize pool of \$320 will give each member of the winning team \$110 and each member of the 2nd place team \$50. This round, weight loss is vastly improved, without the pesky holiday season interrupting people's goals! Percentages at week 10 of the program for many teams are up over 5, 6, and 7%. The last weigh-in day is May 4th – so there are only 2 weeks left! CT Fit will have a close-out ceremony soon to announce our winners and present them with their cash prizes. We invite everyone to join us! Look for an infogram soon.



CT Fit is introducing 'Wear Your Sneakers to Work' days. As part of our ongoing efforts to maintain our 'Fit Friendly Workplace' designation from the American Heart Association, Sneaker Days will be a regular theme to promote walking and fitness at work. Our first Sneaker Day was April 7, coinciding with AHA's National Start Walking Day. Look for more Sneaker Days soon, and join us in incorporating 30 minutes of walking into your workdays.

CT Fit continues to run our weight/cardio classes with James from the YMCA at noon and 12:30 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and our Zumba classes Tuesdays at 3:45 or 4:45.

For information on these low cost, on-site exercise opportunities, please contact [peggy.zabawar@ct.gov](mailto:peggy.zabawar@ct.gov).

The CT Fit committee is gearing up for a summer walking program. Do you want to help with lunch-n-learn speakers, committee kick off ceremonies, developing bulletin boards, emails and web content on healthy eating and exercise? Please join the CT Fit committee! Contact [peggy.zabawar@ct.gov](mailto:peggy.zabawar@ct.gov) for more information.

A message from Procurement Director Carol Wilson: “Congratulations and a huge thank you to **Rob Zalucki** and **Joe Giliberto** who

## HATSOFF

by Cindy Rusczyk

were recognized amongst other DOL and DOIT employees, along with our own Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson, for their work in assisting DOL on unemployment claims process improvement project. Joe and Rob received a very nice certificate for their work on this project work from the Governor. Hats off to a job well done! Thanks for going the extra mile over the past two months on this project.”

Chief Fiscal Administrative Officer Ann Williams from the Department of Public Safety extended her “appreciation and gratitude” to **Ellen Morris** “for your efforts in the analysis of the Fiscal Services workforce by taking the time and meeting with the DPS Fiscal Staff, researching the optimal level of staff, and preparing your presentation of your plan yesterday to management. You provided some very interesting and unique ideas. During these economic times we certainly have to be very cognizant of ‘lean practices’ and efficiencies as it is not business as usual. We will be meeting in the next week to incorporate your ideas with ours in restructuring the unit. I would like to invite you to meet with us upon our completion of our plan.”

Janice Pack from Equipment Environments, Inc. commended **John McKay** for the Procurement newsletter BuyLines stating: “Just wanted to take a minute to say that you do a really awesome job with this newsletter!”

Governor M. Jodi Rell signed the deficit mitigation bill that has become law which includes our new cooperative purchasing authority. Procurement Director Carol Wilson applauded **Andrea Keilty** “for all your hard work on the cooperative purchasing authority. Great news!”

## Save the Date!

Its time to pull out those old family recipes once again or try some new ones! Get ready for the ninth Annual Taste of DAS which will be held Wednesday, May 26 in the South Mechanical room from noon until the food runs out!

Stay tuned for details or contact Donna Camillone at [donna.camillone@ct.gov](mailto:donna.camillone@ct.gov).

Don't forget to ask her about the Fast Pass!!



...our strength is in our differences

## Final Four Fans

By John McKay



Many UConn women basketball fans thought a national championship was in the bag this year. Then there was the first half of the final game versus Stamford. Stamford 20, UConn 12.

“I was still confident,” said DAS Workers’ Compensation super-fan Martha Gallagher. “And once the second half started, I knew UConn was in control and going to win.” Hardly in her rookie season, this was her fifth Final Four. Gallagher, a UConn alum, went to San Antonio with her college roommate. They arrived in time for the semi-final and final game and also did the touristy things like see the Alamo and cruise the San Antonio Riverwalk, really enjoying the city and the culture.

A Texas native humorously asked her, “Did you leave anyone at home?” referring to the fact that it appeared everyone from Connecticut was in Texas for the weekend. “It was great to be in a sea of UConn blue,” added Gallagher.

Steve Caliendo had a different experience in San Antonio. “The last time I saw them play in the National Championship semi-finals they lost to Stamford,” he cringed. “My wife and I even joked that if UConn was losing to Stamford at

the half we would leave the building because we were a jinx to the team.” Swayed by the fans around them, they stayed.

After the semi-final win over Baylor, Steve and his wife went to the UConn team hotel where there was a meet-and-greet of the player and coaches. “You could talk to the players and their families, as well as have your picture taken with them, it was great,” said Caliendo. He went on to say after the final win, the rally back at the player’s hotel was a bit more formal. “But we were able to see the NCAA National Championship trophies and the band and cheerleaders were there. I was a really great time.”



*Huskies Fan  
Martha Gallagher of  
DAS Workers’ Compensation*