

DAS Times

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Connecticut counts !

By Donna Micklus

It's your future. Don't leave it blank. That was the rallying cry on January 18 as Lt. Governor Jodi Rell officially kicked off Census 2000 with a news conference at the Capitol.

Flanked by various commissioners and census officials, the Lt. Governor spoke of the unprecedented effort on the part of state agencies to help ensure that Connecticut residents are not undercounted.

"Every year over \$100 billion in federal funds are allocated to states based on census numbers," Rell said. "There are so many ways an accurate census affects our every day lives, and most people don't even realize it."

Wonder Woman

By John McKay

It's no wonder that Suzanne Liquerman was nominated Woman of the Year by the *Connecticut*

Post. Not only is she DAS' disability specialist, she's a member of countless organizations and committees dedicated to helping people with disabilities, as well as helping businesses and organizations become ADA compliant.



Suzanne Liquerman



Lt. Governor Jodi Rell at Census 2000 press conference with agency commissioners. At left is DAS Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola.

Rell explained that census numbers are used for planning schools, hospitals, day-care and senior citizen centers, bus routes, and countless other community services. Ten years ago, Hartford's children were the most significant underrepresented segment of the population; as a result, three schools that were needed were never built.

Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola and SLC's Dr. Martin Anderson are the point people at DAS to mobilize state agencies' activities in the census effort. "I'm really pleased with the creativity they have displayed in their plans," Mazzola said.

Mazzola added that census enumerator jobs are posted on DAS' homepage in an effort to help recruit the 8,000 census workers needed in Connecticut. "Clearly state agencies are in a position to make a difference."

Mazzola urged all DAS employees to complete their census forms as soon as they are mailed out in March.

Please see Wonder, page 2

The end of an era

By Mike Mansfield

The new year brought an end to one era and the beginning of another, as DAS Fleet Operations officially opened its newly expanded and renovated New Haven garage for business following the closing of the facility in Seymour.

The consolidation marks a welcome and well-earned end of several months of effort by DAS Fleet personnel.

“I am grateful to the Fleet employees who have worked so hard to make this happen,” said Roy Dion, director of Business Enterprises.

“The result is a greatly improved New Haven facility which they



A skeleton crew of Bob Negri, Fran Cerruto, Al Aeschulmann, and Mahesh Talwar held down the fort in Seymour the last day.

richly deserve. And despite the inconvenience and disruption, they have continued to provide excellent customer service, which once again proves they are the best,” Dion added.

“It’s nice to have it all behind us now,” said Fleet Operations’ Tom Yuhás, echoing the sentiments of many involved in the consolidation effort.

Employees of the Seymour facility have all been reassigned to other Fleet garages, with many going to the larger New Haven facility a few miles away. Manager Steve Dygus and Yuhás toured both facilities during the New Year’s changeover period and reported that they, like so many of the people they spoke with on the floor, look forward to an extremely productive year in 2000.



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Wonder Woman, cont.

“I was so honored just to be nominated,” said Liquerman.

“As a state employee, the public’s perception is that you service the public and that’s your job. To even be acknowledged is reward enough.”

Liquerman went on to say that it’s her commitment to the community that she’s most proud of.

“We are so proud of Suzanne for receiving such a wonderful honor. No one has worked harder than she has to bring disability awareness to a new level,” said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

Eight different associates nominated Liquerman for the award.

Fred Frank, senior community educator from the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County wrote, “This outstanding woman has changed her life and the life of many others through her work, volunteer activities, and commitment to Connecticut. She has been an educator, counselor, employment specialist, advocate, and role model to people with disabilities, businesses, and organization in and outside of Connecticut.”

Liquerman is also one of the main subjects of the feature story “Access Denied” in this month’s *Woman* magazine. She was cited for her work in placing people with disabilities in positions of employment.

Captain Peter F. Warren from the Statewide Narcotics Task Force praised **Nina Ritson** for her outstanding design of this year's annual report. "The time and energy that you have spent on this report is apparent as the finished product is excellent," said Warren.

Kenn Stephenson commended **Dan Donahue, Kevin Bachman, and Jim Potyra** for lending a helping-hand with the removal of 1,800 computers for the Computers 4 Kids donation. "These folks are part of the reason that DAS is a great agency."

Steffanie Godsill from Foodshare thanked **Nancy Jones** for her assistance with Care and Share 1999, collecting 836 pounds of food and \$440.

Kerry DiMatteo applauded **Jose Baez** for helping her on numerous occasions with problems with her laptop computer. "He figured out what the problems were and made taking care of them a priority."

Deborah Craig from the Dept. of Mental Retardation and Mary Ann Goggin from the Dept. of Correction extended their appreciation to **Commissioner Barbara Waters** and the **HRBC Staff** who facilitated the exchange of personnel from one agency to another.

Pat DiGiacomo from the Hartford Board of Education complimented **Shirley Crowley, Christopher Fons, Sonji Fonseca, Donna Golas, Larry Goulart, Will Hauschulz, Barbara Jenec, Eva Williams, and Lilka Vega**, for providing excellent customer service and always getting their billing done in a timely manner.

The Federal Donated Foods staff thanked **Carlos Velez** for quickly coming to the rescue with an overhead projector for their customer workshop. "Thank you for saving the day Carlos!"

A big thank you to **Bill Skyrme** from Carol Wilson for devoting half of his day sending out a special electric RFP on short notice. "We really appreciate it!"

Peter O'Neil of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control extended his thanks to **Bill Skyrme** for his help and immediate response with a contract search on the DAS website.

Commissioner Barbara Waters applauded **Joann McAllister** for her involvement with DOC and DMV's license plate project and Long Lane School's use of DAS' linen rental contract which had a combined savings of almost \$600,000 for Connecticut taxpayers. "This leaves me speechless. Keep up the great work!"

President Blaise Lamphier from the CT Public Employer Labor Relations Association commended **Mike Barletta** for his time and efforts which made their third annual fall breakfast so successful.

Congratulations to **Michael Felix** from Jerry Lynn for a job well-done on the DAS Turkey Drive. "You've made a huge difference around here and it's a pleasure working alongside you."

Mayme Casady praised the **Employee Recognition Committee**. "Their time and effort with the gifts, luncheons, announcements, and letters sent to those who weren't selected – were all first class."

Congratulations to the **Communications Staff** from Kathy Valone "for producing another wonderful and truly enjoyable

publication - December's *DAS Times*."

Ann Pomeroy Dixon applauded **Jim West** for furnishing her with requested files and for providing really "stellar customer service!"



Carol Wilson appreciated the great support from **Janet DelGreco** and the **FSC Team** for the quick creation of a purchase order for the Y2K fuel purchase for OPM/OEM and said, "You folks definitely exemplify superior customer service."

George Scott from Scott's Jamaican Bakery commended **Meg Yetishefsky** at the "Business Leader of the Year" award ceremony on behalf of all minority-vendors for her great assistance with the DAS Set-Aside program.

Dr. Martin Anderson was recognized by David Dye, president of the International Personnel Management Association Assessment Counsel. "The success of the past year is due to the hard work and dedication of all the board members and committee chairs. We would not have been able to accomplish all that we set out to do if it were not for your efforts."

Edward Jones from the Southbury Training School thanked **Susan Thomas** for finding better pricing and delivery on a product for their school.

Y2K, Go away!

New Year's Day 2000 came with a bang and went almost as quickly. Fortunately, it left behind few residual bug-related computer problems.

And that suits DAS' MIS department just fine. DAS had been preparing for New Year's Eve 1999 for some time. DAS did 96 percent of its Y2K-related work in-house, and was still the first and only agency to score a green (A+) compliance rating. As time went on, more people in DAS got involved in Y2K planning, working on embedded systems in buildings, business contingency planning, and the

Victories

By Mike Mansfield and Heather Cavanaugh

command center. What started as an IT project, ballooned into an agency-wide initiative.

Given these extensive preparations, it came as little surprise that the agency weathered the rollover period without so much as a blip. "MIS started to prepare for Y2K in the summer of 1997," said Kim Shepard, DAS' Y2K coordinator. "There was a lot of work to do and a drop dead deadline!"

"I'm pleased everything went so well, and I'm thrilled it's over!" said Shepard. "My only hope is that people understand that the reason this turned out to be a nonevent is because everyone worked so hard to make it a nonevent."

MIS' Donna Camillone said, "Kim did a great job in keeping us on task to ensure we did the investigation and testing of all our applications and coordinating the MIS team to make sure we did all the necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition. Her dedication to her task as coordinator really paid off, because DAS had by far one of the best transitions possible."

MIS staffers monitored DAS' computer systems into the weekend and through the first full workday of the new millennium. At the Office of Emergency Management Center, DAS Communications' Mike Mansfield was on duty acting as press secretary, issuing news advisories that aside from a few minor date-related issues, the State of Connecticut had

made it through largely unaffected. For all DAS' success, Commissioner Waters was met with a resounding "thank you" by the Governor's Co-Chief of Staff Peter Ellef.

"Peter proceeded to single out DAS as well as DSS for the extra effort those employees put forth," Waters said.

"I hope each and every one of you can appreciate just how proud I was that DAS folks received such special, public acclaim in the presence of every other commissioner in state government!"

Buy smarter, easier

Procurement Services has put its "one-stop-shopping" mindset to the test. The recent \$5,000,000 industrial supply contract blankets thousands of supplies needed by state workers, from ladders to heating equipment.

Peter Smith of Procurement Services, along with other team members, negotiated a contract with Grainger Industrial Supply that has proven to be a win-win for all parties.

"We wanted to work out a small business component," Smith said. Teaming with the Business CONNECTIONS unit, that important component was included in the contract.

"Everyone rolled up their sleeves and we got to work," he explained. "We worked out the set-aside piece before the nuts and bolts of the contract."

While many small businesses don't supply some of the items offered by Grainger, they are still able to compete for business. All contracts that overlap are included on this contract award. By including these small businesses on the contract, towns, cities, school boards, and agencies have the freedom to choose a local vendor, or buy from a set-aside to help meet their goals.

When contracts are about to expire, DAS meets with the vendor to allow them to remain as an additional source on the prime vendor contract.

"This is uncharted territory," Smith explained. DAS will continue to follow this path of contract consolidation in the future. The recent Corporate Express paper contract serves as another great example.

All products on the industrial supply contract will be available through the e-commerce system, Orderlink.

"People can buy all of their supplies at once," Smith added. "We had numerous voicemails within two days of the contract being signed from folks that wanted to buy."

Smith added that Grainger was also happy to be on board with Connecticut, "one of the most forward-thinking states in the country."

"This was a great example of three parties working together to end up with a tremendous success," Smith said.

Starring Deborah Lewis

By Heather Cavanaugh

Deborah Lewis is a woman with a voice. In her government and singing careers, she has always aspired to be heard.

From an early age, Lewis pursued her inherent talent of singing.

"I said I was going to be a star," Lewis proclaimed. Determined to do so, she joined a choral group in high school

which toured Europe, and in the summer she attended the HARTT music camp. This talented soprano followed this dream beyond her high school years. Her natural gift landed her at the Boston Conservatory where she studied classical and opera music. Because these genres include many different languages, Lewis was required to learn Italian, French, and German so she could perform these pieces.

"We performed once a week," Lewis explained. Sometimes it was for a small class, sometimes for a crowd. "You had to have a tough skin to be in one of the performing arts. If you weren't cutting the mustard, they told you so."

For her senior year, she returned to her Connecticut roots to study at the University of Bridgeport under an opera singer who had recently debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

After finishing her undergraduate degree, rather than pursuing show business Lewis continued her studies, earning two master's degrees: a

master's in public administration from the University of Hartford and a master's of science from Southern Connecticut State University.

"I've made many choices over the years, some have been very interesting," she commented. One of those was her choice to work for the Department of Commerce (DOC) in 1981. Lewis worked for the Secretary of Commerce, promoting

exports and managing special projects.

On occasion she was asked to showcase her beautiful voice by singing a cappella versions of the *National Anthem* at various department functions.

"I also kept my skills honed by singing in a church choir in Washington." Her busy schedule didn't allow for much more.

After living in Washington D.C. for some time, she returned to her hometown of Waterbury and worked in the DOC district office in Hartford. In 1990, Lewis left the DOC to work in the fifth district congressional office. She wore many hats such as campaign manager, finance director, fundraiser, and event planner.

"I've always been a writer and a speaker," Lewis said. "Those are my strengths so I put them to work in everything I do." As a current member of the Waterbury Board

of Alderman, she is constantly utilizing those skills.

The board is a local government body, much like a city council, that works with the mayor to ensure taxpayers are provided the services they need and government runs without interruption in the city.

"It takes a lot of time and energy," she noted. Lewis sits on many committees within the board such as public safety, personnel, and economic development. Most of her free time is spent attending meetings or functions related to the board.

At DAS, Lewis employs her interpersonal skills to help the customers of the Food Distribution Program. She is often problem solving for customers while



Deborah Lewis

Up Close

handling internal writing and communication needs.

Lewis attempts to escape her flurry of activities by traveling with her boyfriend, Bruce. His job in Washington D.C. takes him to far lands such as Japan, where last year the pair vacationed. Lewis sometimes accompanies him on business trips or travels to Washington to visit on weekends.

Lewis' personality, style, and zest for life exhibit that true star quality she has always dreamed of having.

DAS gets Expo-sure

By Mike Mansfield

The DAS traveling road show continued last month with a stop at the Corporate Express Expo Millennium trade convention at the Radisson Conference Center in Cromwell. Procurement Services staff was there to meet and greet the over 300 Expo-goers and

proudly display the Business CONNecTions program, website, and new e-commerce system.

"I've only received positive feedback," said Maureen Costigan of Procurement Services. "People saw how easy Orderlink is to use and learned that it goes so far beyond just the Corporate Express contract."

Participants from state agencies, towns, cities, and school boards were given the chance to demo the Procurement website and the state's newly launched e-commerce system, Orderlink by Digital Commerce Corp., which some onlookers called "astounding" for its user-friendliness.

Despite the state's blanket-type contract with Corporate Express covering the full range of office needs, DAS Procurement Services has gone to great lengths to ensure smaller vendors will not be left out of the loop. Buyers may still choose to purchase from a selection of other small businesses that have been awarded a contract for certain commodities. This flexibility gives buyers the option of purchasing products from, for example, minority-owned vendors or suppliers from a specific



DAS staff at the December Corporate Express Expo in Cromwell.

geographical region. DAS' Business CONNecTions Unit was there to explain such opportunities for small businesses and show them how this information can be accessed. "It's important that those businesses are able to compete," said Costigan.

Seventeen vendors were on hand to display items ranging from pens and notebooks to ergonomic office furniture, all of which are available on the Orderlink system.

"The DAS presentation was extremely impressive. Agencies as well as municipalities were eager to find out about our services. It was rewarding to hear them saying 'thank you' over and over again for listening to their needs, and for developing products that accommodate those needs," said Lydia Rosario, who helped to represent DAS at the Expo.

"There were three winners here: DAS, because we were able to showcase our partnership with Corporate Express, Digital Commerce for displaying the potential of Orderlink, and Corporate Express for announcing the new paper contract," said Costigan. Attendees also came out ahead, as they left with a new understanding of state purchasing and the possibilities of buying all office supplies online.

Satisfaction guaranteed

By John McKay

January was officially Employee Satisfaction Month at DAS.

Beginning on January 18, the Strategic Leadership Center sponsored a DAS employee satisfaction survey.

"Very useful information and results come out of these surveys," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

"When we did the Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) in 1997 some very valuable programs were born. The First Responder program, CareerPower, and the Employee Recognition Program were all products that started from OAS results," Waters added.

The DAS employee satisfaction survey could be taken by employees in one of two ways: on-line via Lotus Notes from their desktops or using a paper booklet.

"We strongly encouraged employees to take the on-line version for ease, anonymity, and convenience," said SLC's Dr. Martin Anderson who is administering and evaluating the survey, and will be comparing results with the '97 OAS survey.

As with the OAS survey, Anderson emphasized that employee anonymity is guaranteed both on-line and in paper formats. He also explained that the Lotus Notes and paper surveys are identical.

Anderson said that fifty-seven percent of employees took the survey last time.

"My goal is 70% for Y2K," said Anderson.

The Brazil connection By John McKay

What could government officials from Brazil possibly learn from Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services?

Plenty.

SLC's Cathy Daly and Dr. Martin Anderson traveled to Albany, New York to explain DAS' quality management in state government to a delegation of Brazilian officials. The seminar was sponsored by the State University of New York's Empire State College.

The DAS Business Plan was one of the tools Daly focused on.

"We were able to show them our business plan, tell them how and why we put it together, and demonstrate how employees have access to the plan through DAS Central," said Daly.

Anderson highlighted DAS' accomplishments in benchmarking, the DAS project tracker, SLC's business planning process, and measurement tools; all of which help identify customers' needs, ensure customer satisfaction, and



DAS' Dr. Martin Anderson addresses a Brazilian delegation in Albany, New York. Anderson and SLC Director Cathy Daly were invited to make a presentation on quality management in state government.

monitor performance.

"The Brazilian delegation seemed very impressed with our information," said Anderson.

"They asked some very good questions and really had a firm grasp of why we do all of these things."

What was it like speaking through a translator?

"It was interesting," said Daly. "We spoke into a microphone and a person in the back of the room translated our words into Portuguese for the delegates. The translators kept up and nothing appeared to get lost in the translation," she said.

New Learning Center debuts

By John McKay

Everybody will know what everybody else knows.

That's the theory behind the new HRBC initiative of the Employment Learning Center.

"What we're trying to accomplish is a broad, in-depth education of every human resource professional," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

"We want every HR professional knowledgeable in every aspect in human resources. Having specialists in certain areas will become almost obsolete because of the Employment

HR strategy

By John McKay

DAS is planning ahead. In an effort to identify factors that will contribute to the future state workforce, SLC's Dr. Martin Anderson and his staff are assembling the first human resource strategic plan for Connecticut.

"There are so many resources and variables that need to be identified," said Anderson, "including anticipating the future needs of the state, how to recruit perspective employees, and keep them here in Connecticut. What we're looking to do is formulate a HR blueprint for the future that also shows where we were and where we want to go," added Anderson.

Until now, there hasn't been a human resource report issued that identified these specific needs.

To do this, Anderson and his staff have been meeting with customers for the past six months soliciting input and feedback. They've also gathered data from a number of state sources, but aren't limiting themselves to Connecticut, identifying what other states and countries are doing to anticipate future human resource needs.

"We're also looking closely at other progressive states as well as Canada," said Anderson. "We're always looking for original 'out of the box' thinking."

Anderson said this isn't just a one-time report.

"We hope to continue to chart the progress of Connecticut's workforce as it grows and changes with the new wants and needs of the state."

Learning Center."

Courses will cover applications and legal ramifications of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Federal and Medical Leave Act, and sexual harassment.

A March open house is scheduled to announce the curriculum calendar and training programs that will be available for human resource professionals statewide.

All the news that fits, we print

By Heather Cavanaugh, John McKay, and Mike Mansfield

Good news!

Meg Yetishefsky of Business CONNECTIONS blazed a media trail over the past few months. Yetishefsky was mentioned in CBIA's magazine and also publicly lauded by the *Hartford Courant's* Business Leader of the Year, George Scott, for her outstanding service and dedication. She may be outdoing Carlos Velez with all of this press coverage! Thanks, Meg, for making DAS proud.

Short takes

State service at its finest

Joann McAllister of Procurement Services is taking care of business. Because of her negotiations with the Long Lane School, they will now utilize the DAS linen rental contract rather than build their own laundry facility.

McAllister has also been involved in the reflectorized license plate project with DOC and DMV. She took a tough stance on the pricing of the reflectorized sheeting and improved material pricing by \$500,000 over two years. She also succeeded in eliminating some miscellaneous set up charges as well.

Her hard work has saved taxpayers nearly \$600,000. Should we crown her yet?

DAS Affirmative Action plan approved

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) has approved DAS' Affirmative Action Plan.

"This has been a tremendous undertaking by the Business Advisory Group, our Human Resources Business Center, and DAS personnel," said Commissioner Barbara Waters. "I would like to say thank you to everyone who contributed to the plan's successful approval."

The Affirmative Action Plan is a comprehensive look at DAS and its employment processes and opportunities. The plan illustrates DAS' workforce diversity, hiring and promotion procedures, and the career mobility services.

Bringing home the diploma

A note of personal achievement and congratulations to Don Casella of FSC who graduated from the University of Hartford on December 16, 1999. Don was awarded a master's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance. He is currently a Reimbursement Analyst in the Recovery Unit of FSC in Newington. Don was lauded at a surprise party given in his honor by his Recovery Unit colleagues.

ERP Committee looking for fresh faces

Following an extremely well-received 1999 campaign, the DAS Employee Recognition Program Committee is reconstituting itself for calendar year 2000. Bylaws prohibit membership for more than two years, so half the team is turning over. To round out the group and ensure equal representation from all areas of the agency, they are looking for one rep each from SLC, FSC, BE, and HR. Creative, energetic folks interested in being part of the team are encouraged to contact Nancy Jones at 713-5044 or via Lotus Notes.