

A fair to remember

By John McKay

They were a little nervous. The Human Resources Business Center had spent a month planning their first ever Law Enforcement Career Fair.

What if nobody showed up? “We were hoping for 300 people to come through the door,” said HRBC’s Dr. Pam Libby.

Her office had rented a few conference rooms at the Institute of Industrial and Engineering Technology in downtown New Britain for their Saturday affair. They had a dozen state agencies setting up booths, readying their videos and presentations for the legions of interested candidates that were hopefully going to show.

At day’s end, 600 people interested in becoming a member of Connecticut’s protection services had come through the doors.

The number doubled their most optimistic predictions.

Fair participants included: Central Connecticut State University; the Departments of Children and Families, Correction, Environmental Protection, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Motor Vehicles, and Public Safety; and the University of Connecticut police.

Please see Fair, page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 **Fair enough**
by John McKay
- 2 **Baez, Sears honored**
by Donna Micklus
- 3 **Kudos**
by Cindy Duberek
- 4 **Survey results**
by Dr. Martin Anderson
- 4 **Batter up for new ERP round**
by Mike Mansfield
- 5 **Up Close with Michael Owsianko**
by Mike Mansfield
- 6 **HR Learning Center marks debut**
by John McKay
- 6 **Mazzola speaks to Botswana delegation**
by John McKay
- 7 **DAS legislative package**
by Mike Mansfield
- 7 **Print Shop produces!**
by Mike Mansfield
- 8 **Short stuff**

Baez, Sears honored at Governor’s Service Award Ceremony



Jose Baez and Dan Sears, both of MIS, are shown with Governor John G. Rowland at the March 10 Governor’s Service Award ceremony at the State Capitol. Baez and Sears were recognized along with 40 other state employees from eight agencies for providing outstanding customer service.

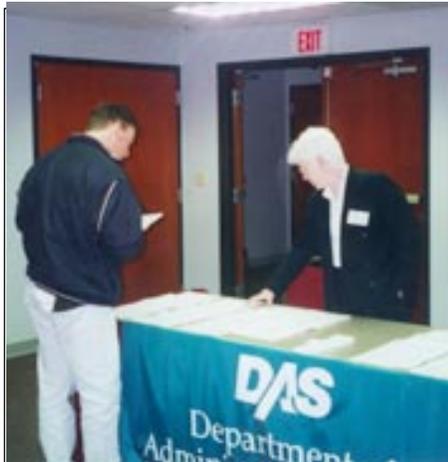
Story on page 2

Fair, cont. from page 1

Department of Environmental Protection's Diane Ragali said, "We thought the fair was well attended, which says a lot for the advertising of the event."

She added that there was a diverse population from all over the state, not just the Greater Hartford area.

"The location was geographically central and the facility was excellent, with room to make your



HR's Dr. Pam Libby talks with an interested visitor to the DAS booth at the recent Career Fair.

display as big or as small as you wanted without feeling crowded. It was especially helpful to have DAS' Don Jordan there to assist applicants with determining their qualifications up front," Ragali said.

Major John Leonard from the Department of Public Safety also had high praise for DAS.

"The fair was well planned, well publicized, and as a result well

attended. There was a steady flow of people at the fair, and the facilities were great. DAS is to be commended for its effort to do new and innovative events like

"DAS is to be commended for its efforts to do new and innovative events like this..."

**Major John Leonard,
Department of Public Safety**

this while still keeping an eye on handling the arrangements economically."

"I'm so pleased with the outcome," said Libby.

"Especially because the other agencies said that they felt the Career Fair was a big success. That makes us all feel like we did a great job and a great service," Libby added.



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

Baez, Sears honored for A-one customer service

By Donna Micklus

It has become one of the most talked about ceremonies in state government.

There were cameras everywhere. Families were beaming with pride among the overflowing crowds. Children, dressed to the nines, were on their best behavior. And the heroes of the day were honored by their governor, commissioner, and colleagues...and then given the rest of the day off.

It happens four times annually as Governor John G. Rowland hosts the Governor's Service Award "Customers Count" program.

Now in its fifth year, hundreds of state employees have been recognized by their peers and their customers for providing outstanding service to the taxpayers of Connecticut.

"You represent the best in public service," the Governor said as he thanked the 43 honorees at the March 10 event at the State Capitol. Governor Rowland then recounted how he and DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters developed the program in 1995 to recognize special achievements, but never imagined it would reach such popularity.

DAS' Jose Baez and Dan Sears of SLC's Management Information Solutions were both award recipients. Baez, a DP technical analyst, and Sears, a DP manager, were honored for the outstanding technical support they consistently provide DAS employees.

"I am so proud of Jose and Dan," said Waters. "Their depth of knowledge and friendly attitude always generate grateful thank-you's from everyone they work with. And they never fail to respond with a smile and an 'I'll be right there' answer to any problem," Waters added.

Deputy Commissioner Jean Zurbrigen from the Department of Labor congratulated **Suzanne Liquerman** on her recent statewide recognition and said, "You have the unique quality of making important things happen, all the while making those around you truly feel as if they are the achievers. We're lucky to have you."

Assistant Commissioner Lovie D. Bourne from the Department of Children and Families commended **Larry King** for the excellent customer service he provided with the printing of their recent survey. She also applauded **Dr. Donald Jordan** for his invaluable assistance regarding their diversity and discrimination survey.

Eileen Howe from W.W.Grainger Inc. applauded **Peter Smith** and the rest of the **Procurement Team** for their participation with the Grainger open houses over the past weeks and said, "Having your team set up booths, greet customers, and interact with both Grainger staff and customers, was just the best!"

Joel Cogen, President of the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency expressed his appreciation to **Bernie Blumenthal, Dan Donahue,** and **Jim Neil** for clarifying contract language for bid specifications that will benefit local housing authorities throughout Connecticut.

President Robert T. Sullivan from IKON Office Solutions praised **Lydia Rosario** for her hard work and assistance helping their company to partner with Creative Copies, small, minority business in the State of Connecticut.

Kudos to **Michael Owsianko** from Marsha Liburdi for mailing her paycheck promptly to Florida while she

was on vacation. "Your customer service was greatly appreciated!"

Eileen Howe from W.W. Grainger Inc. praised **Mike Mansfield** for drawing a version of the new purchasing cards for the front section of the State of Connecticut Grainger catalogue.

Dan Donahue expressed his thanks to **Kevin Backman, Marty Melanson, Jim Potrya, Steve Rollins, Peter Varhol,** and **Tom Yuhás** for quickly arranging the return and pickup of four new trucks used in CDL training.

Paul Felix extended his appreciation to **Pamela Young** for volunteering her time to the Outpatient Team during a time-sensitive project. "What a team player and tremendous help."

Dave Lynn applauded the **FSC Business Office Team** for their great information session on basic office procedures. "The seminar was successful in teaching about your operation and at the same time enjoyable and entertaining."

Special thanks from Paul Felix to **Rich Affinito, Heddy Bogacki, Dave Elwell, Marisol Feliciano, Mike Holroyd, Bob LaPointe, Peg Martin, Mark Martinez, Brenda Minter, Vicky Rasmussen, Mary Ann Scotti, Carla Seymer, Marc Stango,** and **Mary Ellen Vincent** for their great work on the file conversion project in preparation for the move to the SOB.

Commissioner Barbara Waters congratulated **Jim McKenna, V. Jean Michael, Jerry Lynn,**

Diane Preble, Arlene Watson, Don Chaffee, Dan Sadowski, and **Kevin Backman** for their great P-Card presentation and said, "It is very difficult to be innovative in the business office

Hats Off

By Cindy Duberek

environment, but you certainly made it look easy!"

Abbie Wotkyns thanked **Sue Cieniewicz** and **Dick Omohundro** for the fast, neat, and professional looking listings they produced for the re-jacketing process they are starting on such short notice.

Catherine Daly applauded **Steve Soklow** and the **Print Shop Team** for the timely turnaround of the Governor's Service Award program and said, "What a difference in the quality and service. You and your team should be proud!"

Andrea Frankl Keilty sent a special thanks to **Kathleen Sullivan** and **Isabelle McKinney** for making sure that all the logistics for the HR Learning Center kickoff were handled so the event went off without a hitch. Many thanks to the rest of the HR Learning Center team: **Sandra Sharr, Diane Mazar Roberts, Suzanne Liquerman, Cathy Bysiewicz-Cluen, Toni Alphonse, John McKay,** and **Janis Nome.** Everyone did such a great job!

DAS Survey 2000 : Special Report

By Dr. Martin Anderson

This news is good news. The 2000 DAS Employee Survey shows DAS means business.

“Contrasting the DAS 2000 results with the DAS 1997 employee survey results, we have improved in all categories—sometimes markedly so,” said Strategic Leadership Center’s Dr. Martin Anderson.

The first 98 questions covered 14 dimensions. They included diversity, customer orientation, innovation, leadership and quality, job security, and work environment/quality of work life.

“All of these are important to measure among employees in any business-oriented organization,” SLC Director Catherine Daly explained. “Most of the dimensions match nicely with the Baldrige National Quality Award criteria.”

Batter up!



By Mike Mansfield

Spring training is in full swing and the winning season is about to begin. The DAS Employee Recognition Award Committee will throw out the proverbial first pitch on the sixth round of awards on Monday, March 27.

The theme this time is, of course, baseball, baseball, baseball. The quest for the pennant begins with kickoff events in Room G-38 of the SOB, FSC Newington, Fleet garages and all off-site employee locations.

All-Star voting begins May 5, so begin thinking about who has stepped up to the plate and gone to bat for you lately... (you get the picture).

Attendees can look forward to a feast of peanuts and Cracker Jacks, compete in fastest pitch and three-strike contests, and participate in a wiffle ball derby. Winners of these events will receive prizes including special ERP baseball-shaped Post-It pads and stress relievers.

Committee members are looking forward to opening day, especially the rookies.

“We’ve got a lot of new faces on the committee and we’re really excited to get started. We want this one to be the biggest one yet,” said ERP chairperson Cheryl Sawina. “We’re looking to clobber this one out of the park.”

Awards will be given out at “The All-Star Break” – a barbecue luncheon to be held at the Solomon Welles House in Wethersfield in May. The nomination form is available on DAS Central.

Where did we show the biggest improvements?

“Work environment/quality of work life and balancing work and family/personal life,” said Anderson. Apparently, improvements in programs and work schedules plus leadership and supervisory behaviors and attitudes that support our employees’ attempts to balance work and family life buoyed the “favorability” rating 23% over 1997.

Similarly, the work environment/quality of work life favorability ratings advanced 18%.

Of importance to our customers, the customer orientation favorability rating increased 16%. Generally, customer orientation questions deal with how much emphasis leadership and management puts on the importance of the customer. This received the second highest rated after diversity for the DAS 2000 results.

Only the area of rewards and recognition lagged behind the others in terms of being below an overall 3 (average) rating. Although it advanced 8% in favorability, it continues to trail behind the other areas.

“Positive improvement in every dimension was not entirely expected but was certainly welcomed,” added DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters. There were 240 employees who took the time to participate in DAS 2000 with 148 of those taking the survey online over Lotus Notes.

Employees should be looking for announcements of focus groups and traveling presentations to explain the results and get feedback on workplace issues that should be transformed into initiatives for change. DAS is also interested in those practices that significantly improved ratings since DAS 1997.

SLC will post more detailed results on DAS Central for employees to review with one limitation: in order to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of responses of any single individual, group results with fewer than five persons in a group will not be posted.

“We hope to make conducting employee surveys a consistent practice and we are considering dubbing January as ‘Employee Satisfaction Month,’” said Anderson.

“We couldn’t have done this without the performance measurement and HR strategic planning groups in SLC and the communications coordinators and business center representatives who helped make this such a success,” concluded Anderson.

Ed. note: The monthly “Victories” column will return in the April issue.

Where the heart is

By Mike Mansfield

Those fortunate enough to remember the neighborhood five and dime stores will forever lament their loss.

With aisles brimming with “stuff,” the traditional general store was a mini agora of sights and scents that doubled as a political soapbox and the place to buy a box of soap.

Today’s mega-corporations have all but rendered them obsolete.

Michael Owsianko, a payroll clerk in HR, remembers the five and dime in his hometown of Forestville, Connecticut quite well. After all, he literally grew up in it.

His family ran Frank’s Stationery and Variety on Central Street for 41 years, purveyors of everything from greeting cards to Sweet Tarts.

“We used to joke that Forestville was the capital of Bristol,” Owsianko said laughing. “They called my dad ‘the mayor of Forestville.’”

Owsianko was born and raised in Forestville. He worked in his dad’s shop from his early teens on, developing a love for the area that has kept him and his family there to this day. He played basketball there, and went on to coach high school basketball there, too.

“When my freshmen became seniors, they won the state championship,” he recalled proudly.

He even went to college at nearby Tunxis. When it came time to start his own life, he never considered starting it anywhere else. Living in Forestville enabled him to do what he loved to do most: continue working at the store.

The store had a great run, right up until the business was sold in 1993. At that time, the family owned the entire block, including the 108-year-old building that had become their second home.

Built during the late 19th century Frank’s Stationery and Variety building

certainly held local historical significance, but it was the history inside its walls that made it price-



Michael Owsianko

less. The decision to sell was a difficult one.

But when CVS and other chain stores began popping up nearby, the fate of the old store and thousands like it was sealed.

But many of the friendships the Owsianko family had forged over the years didn’t end there.

He was pleased to see one regular customer in particular stick around.

“I know it sounds like some storybook small town thing,” he said. “But I met the girl of my dreams there.” He was 16 years old when he met his wife-to-be, Cheryl.

“Her father used to stop in every day,” he said. “Sometimes she’d come in, too. We hit it off over the years and eventually went on our first date in 1990.”

They got married eight years ago.

Today, they have two children—a four-year-old named Allison, and Andrew who will be turning one next month – a dog named Scoop, and a house in Plantsville, eight

miles south of Forestville.

“But it’s really similar,” he said laughing. “Because Plantsville is really the capital of Southington!”

Owsianko joined DAS about a year ago, having worked previously at the Department of Mental Retardation.

“As soon as I came here I started getting on committees, it’s a good way to get to meet people in places like Fleet who I might not get to know otherwise.”

Then again, he handles paychecks, “so everyone wants to know me!” he joked, adding that he feels he’s “found a nice niche” with his coworkers at DAS.

Off the clock, Owsianko is a casual golfer (but a not-so-casual Red Sox fan.) “I’m friends with



the assistant general manager,” he said, “so I got to see three of the five championship games against the Yankees last fall.”

Of course, he keeps in close contact with his family – both his own relatives and their extended family of satisfied customers.

“I love working with the public,” he said.

“Ever since we sold the store, I’ve been working part time at a local package store to maintain that sense of community. I’d miss having that. This has been my life.”

Mazzola addresses African delegation

By John McKay

DAS' Human Resources Business Center is going international.

In February, the Institute of Public Service International (IPSI) invited Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola to speak to a delegation of human resources professionals from Botswana, Africa.

"The delegation had some really good questions, and I gained a lot of insight into how their government works," said Mazzola.

He explained the functions of HR including compensation and classification, agency liaisons, workers' compensation, and personnel and payroll.



"Professor" Mazzola discusses HR with the Botswana delegation.

IPSI is part of the Office of International Affairs, the focal point for international activities at the University of Connecticut.

IPSI's mission is to provide state-of-the-art management training to administrators and managers of public, private, and nonprofit organizations from Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.

"I think they were surprised to learn how much DAS does for Connecticut when I began to explain more about the other business centers," said Mazzola.

"They were very interested in Strategic Planning and our Financial Services Center, and seemed very impressed with the amount of work one single agency does for Connecticut."

The delegates heard reports from public and private human resources professionals and will take the information back to their respective governments for consideration and implementation into their own HR systems.

New HR Learning Center sparks enthusiasm

By John McKay

Well received, and well attended.

DAS kicked off its new initiative to train all state human resources professionals, managers and supervisors in a variety of topics.

Master of ceremonies Andrea Frankl Keilty of the Business Advisory Group welcomed the attendees and gave the opening introductions.

"We're really excited to get this program rolling," said Keilty.

"And we'll continue to add new courses as our customers communicate their needs to us."

The meeting was held at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center in Wethersfield and drew some 100 to 150 HR professionals.

Sandra Sharr and Diane Mazar

Roberts proudly unveiled the new Family and Medical Leave Act manual and described some of the training for FMLA included in the HR Learning Center curriculum. Toni Alponse spoke on APS and PARS training, and Suzanne Liquerman addressed the courses she will offer on the Americans with Disabilities Act. Dr. Ed Rybczyk and Frank Rudewicz spoke on additional state manager training at Central Connecticut State University and workplace violence prevention, respectively.

"Instead of different groups of state personnel having very specified knowledge of a few human resources subjects, it's our objective to have all



Attendees flock to the HR Learning Center display table at the program's kickoff event on March 9 at the Keeney Memorial Center in Wethersfield.

state personnel have a wealth of information on every human resources subject," said DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters.

Available at the kickoff were curriculum brochures, manuals, and samples of course materials for the HR Learning Center pilot classes. For a copy of the curriculum brochure and registration information, please contact Kathleen Sullivan at (860) 713-5231.

Purchasing tops 2000 agenda

By Mike Mansfield

As is often the case with short legislative sessions, things appear to be winding down as soon as they get started.

This year's session is three months as opposed to last year's five, thus the agenda items being debated now on Capitol Hill are fewer in number and somewhat lesser in scope.

"We did the major purchasing bills last year," said Janis Nome of the DAS Business Advisory Group, referring to an extremely successful 1999 in which all DAS' proposals were passed. "So this is sort of a cleanup session."

One of 1999's biggest Procurement-related triumphs for Nome and co-worker Joe Prevuznak – in addition to upping the dollar limit on the P-Card – involved multiple-criteria purchasing, which continues to be a hot topic this go-around as well.

DAS is promoting an act concerning environmentally preferred purchasing, which Nome said would allow the state to consider a product's ecological benefits in bidding.

"In evaluating an RFP, if a product or company is environmentally friendly, we'll be able to use that as criteria," she said, adding that doing so will require DAS to develop standards on an array of items including refurbished carpeting to refilled toner cartridges.

"When you look at the amount we purchase in a year, it can make a huge impact."

Also on the agenda this year are various bills involving both the regulation and expansion of e-commerce, third-party workers' compensation claims, and a few of what Nome called "technical" bills.

"We finally went through the statutes and eliminated references to things like 'Bureau of Collections Services,'" she said. "Everything will say 'DAS' now to reflect that we're all one big group."



DAS Print Shop pounds out Adriaen's Landing job

By Mike Mansfield

The DAS Print Shop was faced with a challenging task.

They had to print and bind 600,000 pages for Governor Rowland's press conference to formally present his plan for the Adriaen's Landing project in Hartford.

And they had just six days to complete the project.

The press conference was just a week away, and would be attended by hundreds of regional business and government leaders as well as most of the New England media.

In other words the deadline was immobile, and the end product had to be perfect.

"Frankly, I wasn't sure we could meet all the customer requirements," said DAS Business Enterprises Director Roy Dion, "but

Steve Soklow assured me they could do it. Well, they did it, and they did a great job."

Soklow, who has been working with the Print Shop to help implement new project management processes to enhance workflow efficiency, said the praise for the successful execution of this project should be directed at the workers.

"The book tripled in size about four days before it was due, but the Print Shop put in long nights and

weekends to turn the project out."

Bud Cohn and Kim Crowley of the Office of Policy and Management, the point people on the project, joined

Commissioner Barbara Waters and Print Shop staff at a luncheon to present the group with handsigned letters of gratitude from Governor Rowland.

In his letter, the governor

had high praise for the group's extra effort.

"This was a massive, time-sensitive project," he said.

"By producing it with state workers, you saved taxpayers dollars and demonstrated once again the quality of our workforce."



Commissioner Barbara Waters reads congratulatory letters from Governor Rowland as she and Roy Dion celebrate with Print Shop staff at a luncheon in their honor.

All the news that fits, we print

Spring into Power

CareerPower is readying its upcoming schedule of workshops. "We are excited to be gearing up for a new semester," said CareerPower facilitator Cheryl Sawina. "We're continuing with monthly CareerPower workshops and other add-on sessions."

On March 30 and April 27, CareerPower Workshops will be offered, the basic introduction that everyone is encouraged to attend. Watch for Infograms detailing other future classes and events.

Short takes

In the news....

Watch for an interview with DAS Property Distribution Manager Kenn Stephenson and Webmaster Bill Skyrme in the May issue of *The Public Purchaser* magazine.

Reporter Penny Lemov had seen various articles on Surplus' Virtual Warehouse program and is featuring DAS' cutting-edge practice in her next piece.

Stephenson provided the historical perspective for Lemov, contrasting today's streamlined surplus program with the old paper and time-intensive methods. Skyrme was able to fill in the color commentary on setting up the online system.

The Public Purchaser is published bimonthly for the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. by Congressional Quarterly.

Take Our Kids to Work

The fourth annual DAS Take Our Kids to Work Day is scheduled for Thursday, April 27. Participation in this event has grown each year, and organizers expect that 2000 will be no exception. The day's activities will likely include breakfast with the commissioner and a trip to the Governor's Office at the State Capitol before winding down around noon with a pizza luncheon to give individual business centers the opportunity to do something unique with their group if they wish.

Please contact coordinators Heather Cavanaugh and Mike Mansfield via e-mail or at (860) 713-5195 to register, to volunteer as a chaperone, or with any ideas on how to make the day more special.

Welcome new CC's



Patti Maneggia



Jose Rivera

The DAS Communications Office proudly welcomes two new Communication Coordinators to the team.

Patti Maneggia of HR will replace Cheryl Sawina (now a Communication Coordinator with Sue Miller in SLC). Patti handles personnel actions for the Office of the Commissioner and Human Resources Business Center.

Jose Rivera is a Qualified Craft Worker at the Hartford Fleet Garage. Jose will replace Anna Tara who has moved to MIS. Welcome to you both! We look forward to working with you.