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DAS hosts diversity summit

By John McKay

Diversity. It's an issue that comes up almost everyday in the news, in business, and in the workplace.

Public Act 99-180 *An Act Concerning Diversity Training for State Employees* mandates diversity training. But how is that to be accomplished?

DAS invited agency heads and diversity coordinators to the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center in Wethersfield on June 15 to meet the six DAS-approved diversity training vendors.

The six vendors are: The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; Bari-Ellen Roberts, Inc. and Associates; Dreamcatchers, L.L.C.; the Human Resources Consortium for State Agency Diversity Training; Life Skills Associates; Rosario & Associates; and National Multicultural Institute. The vendors are grouped onto one contract administered by DAS, allowing state agencies to pick which vendor is best for their needs and

training.

"It's a matter of choice," said DAS Business Advisory Group Director Janis Nome who is overseeing the project.

"Giving agencies different choices and price ranges to choose from is something the agencies wanted from the get-go," Nome explained.

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IT Managers DOIT in stride

By John McKay



L to R: Paul Slovinski, Bill Skyrme, Dan Sears, Sandra Bzdyra

Technically they now collect their paychecks from DOIT. But Sandra Bzdyra, Dan Sears, Bill Skyrme, and Paul Slovinski would probably agree that in their hearts, they're still DAS employees.

Effective July 1, as part of DOIT's initiative to lay the foundation for a stronger state infrastructure, several DAS information technology managers are now considered DOIT employees.

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Jim Passier makes e-comm look easy

By Donna Micklus

Online buying's a boom or bust proposition

Hidden costs, real top growth of states' e-procurement efforts

By Donna Micklus
March 1, 2004

It would seem that procurement would be very easy, simple and straightforward. It is, in fact, a much more complex proposition than it appears to be.

That's why state procurement officials do not and have not been able to fully embrace e-procurement. In fact, many states have not even begun to explore the possibilities of e-procurement. But Massachusetts, the only state to have a statewide e-procurement system, has a lot to tell us about the challenges and opportunities of e-procurement.

Massachusetts' success is a result of a combination of factors, including a strong commitment to e-procurement and a focus on the user experience.

One of the key factors in Massachusetts' success is its focus on the user experience. The state's e-procurement system is designed to be easy to use and efficient.

Another key factor is the state's commitment to e-procurement. Massachusetts has been a leader in this area for many years.

Finally, Massachusetts' success is also a result of its focus on the user experience. The state's e-procurement system is designed to be easy to use and efficient.

These factors have helped Massachusetts to become a leader in e-procurement. Other states can learn from its example.

For more information on e-procurement, visit our website at www.das.state.ct.us.

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Relishing his role as the cover story, Jim Passier tells his successful e-comm tale.

It kind of reminds you of *Time Magazine's* Man of the Year.

But it's DAS'

Procurement Manager Jim Passier making the July cover of the national publication, *Government Computer News, State and Local*.

Connecticut and Pennsylvania are featured as states that have saved money and cut costs through online procurement systems.

Passier said Connecticut saved "a couple of hundred thousand a year" by putting its contracts and procurement systems online.

"We're not a big state, so that's a lot of taxpayer money saved," he said. Most of the savings came from reduced advertising, printing, binding, and postage costs he explained.

Massachusetts, on the other hand, saw its e-mall fizzle partially because of a dearth of buyers. The idea was to save money by including buyers from five states to buy in bulk. Idaho, New York, Texas, and Utah teamed up with Massachusetts to offer purchasing and requisition services through a single Web portal. However, that concept only works if enough people shop. Only 20 transactions were recorded in eight months of operation.

"The reason we didn't participate in Massachusetts' e-mall pilot was because we have a strong commitment to small businesses here in Connecticut," Passier said. "The e-mall just didn't offer a lot of support for small business."

Diversity workshop introduces vendors to state agencies

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The meeting opened with remarks from Representative Kenneth P. Green on the importance of diversity training in the state workforce, followed by DAS Procurement's own Cindy Milardo who gave an overview on how to use the contract and answered questions from the audience.

The vendors were then given approximately 10 minutes each to explain the benefits and different services and styles they would be able to offer state agencies.

Afterwards agencies mixed and mingled with vendors to further discuss training and vendor availability.

DAS' first step will be to establish a Diversity Council comprised of representatives from each of the business centers. The council will provide leadership on diversity initiatives within DAS, including the selection of a diversity training program for DAS employees.

By law, every state employee must receive at least three hours of diversity training. This training is designed to help employees develop the skills that are necessary to work productively in a diverse environment.

DAS Times

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Commanding Officer Colonel John F. Bardelli from the Department of Public Safety applauded **Dr. Pam Libby** and the **HRBC Staff** for their continued assistance in their recruiting and promotional programs with the CT State Police and said, "I would like to extend my appreciation for their prompt, professional, and courteous actions in making the CT State Police one of the leading agencies in the law enforcement community."

Diane Mazar-Roberts and **Sandra Sharr** were applauded by Debbie Atkinson for a "truly exceptional job" in developing the FMLA training course and manual and said, "They have managed to take a complicated law with many facets to it and make it understandable."

Vin Lombardo extended his thanks to the **MIS Team** for their quick response and for going the extra mile by staying late and coming in early to address the HBIS problem. "Everyone on your staff was very aware of the critical timing to close our fiscal year. Thank you all. Your hard work saved us," Lombardo said.

Kudos to **Bob Cosgrove** and the **APS Team** from Lina Simonu and David Lynn for all of their help and hard work on converting DAS to one agency code.

Patsy McLaughlin thanked **Lorraine Lombardi** for her assistance with one of her DAS projects and said, "Lorraine coordinated the project with **Dan Sears** and **Don Chaffee** which resulted in a very professional report. My thanks to each one for the time they gave and for a great job."

Henry Jovanelly praised the **FSC Collections III Team** for the great efforts made in the final Medicaid claim in this fiscal year and said, "This cycle will certainly set a record with over \$86 million claims in a single cycle and our claims in the entire month of June will be around \$112 million!"

Margaret G. Peterson commended **Ray Bailey** for his support and the backing from the **SEBAC Unit** over the past two years and said, "You have made it possible for me to move on with my life. My family and I are very excited about my new teaching position."

Executive Director John A. Lancaster from the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities commended **Kathleen Sullivan** for her outstanding support and work that was done with the CT Business Leadership Network including composing, word processing, and editing of a resource guide for Connecticut employers. "We appreciate her fine work."

Trial Court Administrator/Chief Clerk Michael Kokoszka from the Middlesex Judicial District thanked **Suzanne Liquerman** for her ADA presentation in Middletown and said, "I am hearing rave reviews and I am certain from the feedback that your efforts made a significant impression."

Hats Off

By Cindy Duberek

Governor John G. Rowland sent letters of appreciation to **Martin Anderson, Cheryl Catania, Cathy Daly, Steve Dygus, David Kraveski, Susan Lizee, Alan Mazzola, Donna Micklus, Dan Sears,** and **Amy Torre** for providing outstanding service and critical assistance to the Board of Education and Services to the Blind.

The Governor wrote: "Your dedication to your work reflects the highest standards of professionalism. Our valued state employees provide a firm foundation for the progress and accomplishments of state government. All too often, a superior effort goes unrecognized. Therefore, I am always happy when I hear of the exceptional performance of our state employees. Please know that you are a valuable asset to the State of Connecticut, and that I appreciate all of your hard work."



FSC's fiscal feat

By Heather Cavanaugh

Who wants to be a millionaire? FSC does. The Financial Services Center yet again managed to collect a record-breaking amount of revenue for the taxpayers of the State of Connecticut. The amount breaks last year's \$654 million record, which was \$100 million beyond projections.

"The surpassing of last year's record is quite an accomplishment," said FSC Director Vin Lombardo. Working hard on the right initiatives and expanding the business offset the fact that we did not get rate increases and DMHAS was not able to provide their attendance information for billing."

Victories

This feat was a collective effort.

Teams whose fiscal years ended early pitched in to help those in a last-minute crunch, for example, billing for people in DMR residential facilities and day programs.

"At the end of our fiscal year we were trying to get all the attendance we could for DMR billing," said Team Leader Jo-Ann Figueiredo. "DMR was sending them everyday in stacks. Other units pitched in to process them and we took in \$56 million in one two-week cycle. We couldn't believe the volume," she said.

Henry Jovanelly gave kudos to the staff for their "efforts at crunch time that demonstrated why FSC is the place to do business."

"As they say, winning is a team sport. This big win was definitely due to the great efforts of everyone that makes up the Collections team. The Business Office also supported this new record. When the enthusiasm of a team comes together, the results are spectacular," said Lombardo.

Cutting to the chase

By John McKay

The protection services physical fitness test is looking less time-consuming to applicants. The Department of Administrative Services' Human Resources Business Center has streamlined the tests to encompass one day, with one test applicable for multiple jobs.

In the past, if applicants applied for a job as a Correction Officer in the Department of Correction (DOC) and as a State Police Trooper Trainee in the Department of Public Safety, they would have to take the same physical assessment test twice, on two separate days.

"Talk about saving time and money," said Human Resources Business Center Assessment Director Dr. Pamela Libby. "We wrapped up testing for five different state agencies in nine days. Previously this took weeks."

DAS' HRBC office painstakingly went through the application lists and picked out the multiple job applications. Even with today's computer technology, this was the only way to assure that multiple applicants need only appear once for their physical fitness assessment test.

Another serious problem was staffing. In the past, it was mostly DAS employees who monitored the test procedure, which meant paying employees overtime.

"It worked out great this time," said Libby. "There was a good mix of monitors from several agencies including the Department of Environmental Protection, who had an interest because of the Conservation Enforcement Officer applicants, and other agencies who hire Protection Services trainees. It's really wonderful to see agencies working together for a common goal. Sometimes we can get very separated from one another even though we're working towards the same objective."

An added feature to this year's test procedure enabled applicants who had received their results to schedule the next stage of the exam. For example, applicants who passed the physical assessment test and were applying for a position with both State Police and the DOC, could meet with a representative from each agency to make the necessary test arrangements. "It's all about saving time and removing redundancy," said Libby.

Proud to be an American

By Heather Cavanaugh

America the Beautiful, Home of the Brave, the Land of Opportunity... sometimes it's easy to take that for granted.

But Angelika Scheffera is truly proud to be an American.

She originally came to the United States from Szczecin, Poland when she was just 11 years old. Her parents wanted to leave the then communist country. They first arrived in Chicago before moving to Hartford six months later.

"I'm so glad my parents took me here. There's no future in Poland now," Scheffera said. "You can graduate from the best university and still not get a job."

Scheffera says loves her job at DAS and is proud to say that she is the breadwinner of the family.

While she's at work, her 4-year-old son, Oscar, is home with dear old Dad.

"I love my two guys to death. My husband makes dinner and plays with Oscar all day long. It's great having him home. Oscar loves it."

Although Scheffera

doesn't travel back to Poland often, on her last trip five years ago she married her husband, Jacek. Coincidentally, they had met in Poland on her birthday.

Both Polish parents are attempting to teach young Oscar their native language, and Scheffera says that he is doing quite well.

"He learns fast, but he gets bored with it. He can speak both English and Polish and he even knows when to use each," she explained.

When spending time with her family, they often go out on her



Angelika Scheffera

parents' boat where Oscar likes to jet ski.

"He's nuts!" Scheffera joked about her multi-talented 4-year-old.

She admitted that she also liked to dabble in adventure at a young age. "I broke a lot of bones."

While she reflects fondly on her younger years in Poland, she is thrilled to be in the United States.

"My friends in Poland may not agree, but I love it here."

Up Close

Scheffera still lives in her American hometown of Middletown. She grew up there and attended the local college where she earned her associate's degree in computer science.

"At the time when I was in school, the computer business was booming. It seemed like a great field to go into," she commented.

Her computer skills are put to the test daily in MIS where she programs for commodity applications on the Food Distribution Program system.

DiPersio elected to regional post

By John McKay



Doug DiPersio

DAS' Federal Surplus Property Administrator Doug DiPersio was elected president of Area One of the National Asso-

ciation of State Agencies for Surplus Property (NASASP).

In his two years of state service, DiPersio immediately stepped up to the plate and got involved.

"I noticed that there wasn't a lot of representation from the New England area and thought this would be a good way to learn as much about federal surplus distribution in a short amount of time," said DiPersio.

NASASP maintains active leadership in establishing and promoting ways and means of acquiring and distributing equitably federal personal property to public agencies and other eligible entities.

"If someone has a problem but feels uncomfortable with raising the issue at our annual conference, I'm the man to make it known to other states that there is a problem," said DiPersio.

DOIT, cont. from page 1

"There is no indication that DOIT plans to move these managers to the East Hartford office," said DAS' MIS Director Rick Miarecki. "One thing that Rock Regan (Chief Information Officer for DOIT) has said all along is that things will remain the same for now, so there won't be any change in MIS services that DAS employees receive."

In a July press release Regan stated, "The lack of uniform standards across state government is the greatest impediment to interagency communication and statewide IT planning. By following the standards, each agency will continue to use

technology that suits their needs but that technology will no longer be incompatible with the agency across the street."

The state is also saving money by developing this IT standard internally instead of using a private vendor. DOIT's plan to standardize all IT programs across the state is viewed as an immense cost-saving undertaking. The plan has already begun to take shape with the inception of the Core Systems Project – the unification of all state payroll and time sheet databases.

"It'll take some time and IT things will be changing in the future, but for now they're all happy to stay right here at DAS," said Miarecki.

Boosting B.O.L.T.

By Mike Felix

The Business Office Leadership Team (B.O.L.T.) has developed an In House Recognition Program that began on July 1 in the Business Office. It will be an opportunity for the staff to show deserved appreciation and thanks to their coworkers. Jean Michael and Mike Felix spoke with employees explaining the concept and reasons for this pilot program and getting feedback and ideas.

The idea was greeted with enthusiastic support. In the beginning, Jean and Mike will serve as the committee to review nominations and ensure that the criteria for an award are being met. The nominator would then present a certificate of appreciation, achievement, or excellence to the recipient at one of their weekly open staff forums.

Once the program is underway, volunteers will serve on the review committee.

"The exciting agency-wide Employee Recognition Program has been so successful and rewarding for people that we hope this will be met with the same continued enthusiasm," said Michael. Jim McKenna added, "This should be a great opportunity for folks in the business office to acknowledge the input or assistance of a coworker, or to give special recognition for a job well done. Our employees are always giving extra effort, and this will be another way to show that it is appreciated. Hats off to Mike and Jean for taking the lead on this."