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In the spotlight

By Heather Cavanaugh

They came in droves to find out about DAS services at this year's Connecticut Conference of Municipalities' annual conference.

Every year, DAS seems to shine a bit brighter, no longer obscured in the shadows of private industry's big business.

DAS was front and center with a myriad of information about the services it can provide to municipalities, schools, and state agencies.

Agency representatives were on hand to talk with curious attendees about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), procurement, and surplus property. Many were interested in the e-commerce system, OrderLink, which is quickly catching on across the state.

E-Partner Vince McMahon explained the varied services and added that he will be conducting follow-up visits to towns to get them on board with electronic commerce.

"The interest was overwhelming," said McMahon. "I believe towns are really impressed with what DAS has to offer."

"Towns are dying to use the system," said Peter Smith of Digital Commerce Corporation.



(L. to R.) DAS' Kenn Stephenson, Vince McMahon, and Kathleen Sullivan represent the agency at the annual Connecticut Conference of Municipalities conference on October 4 in Cromwell.

Jeffrey Smith of Mansfield uses state contracts and is excited about the possibilities of using the OrderLink system.

"I think we're going to try it," said Joe Dolan of Wilton after viewing the system.

"We've ordered off of DAS contracts in the past. It can be quite intimidating, but this looks much easier."

Maureen Costigan from Procurement Services also saw interest from conference goers.

"People are really impressed with our website and how easy it is to use," Costigan said.

Kenn Stephenson of the Surplus Property Distribution Unit fielded many inquiries about the kinds of surplus property that are available.

Please see Spotlight on pg. 2

Spotlight on DAS, *cont. from p.1*

“Many towns have received property from us in the past, but it is our goal to have all 169 towns utilize both the state and the federal property distribution programs on a regular basis,” he said. A presentation was looped to continuously display various equipment and vehicles that towns and state agencies have received through DAS.

Towns were also curious about the Americans with Disabilities Act training that is available through DAS.

“I spoke with a mayor who had moved into a new town hall. He asked about compliance issues and what they needed to do to make accommodations,” said Kathleen Sullivan.

DAS proved once again to be an invaluable resource for entities across the state. Many connections and contacts were made at CCM to help get even more people on board using DAS’ better, cheaper, and quicker services.



DAS Times

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edited for space and clarity.*

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

Commissioner Kristine D. Ragaglia from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) applauded **Bill Skyrme** for his collaboration with their development staff on a web resource directory for DCF employees and said, "Bill was a key factor in bringing this important project to fruition."

Personnel Manager G. Scott Bell from the Department of Mental Retardation commended **Michelle Burns** for the quick response to their website posting and said, "Less than 48 hours would certainly have been acceptable but less than 48 minutes is simply amazing. Customer service at DAS is obviously in action!"

Maurice McInerney from the American Institute for Research (AIR) commended **Suzanne Liquerman** for participating on the AIR Evaluation of the Rehabilitation Services Administration Pre-Service Training Program Proposal and said, "We strongly value your expertise in the field of vocational rehabilitation and are pleased that you are able to serve on this panel."

Allan Williams from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) praised **David Swenson** for being an excellent contact for grants management and said, "I expect positive outcomes from our cooperative projects with DAS." **Linda Loschiavo** and **Cindy Milardo** also received praise from Allan Williams for being "wonderful to work with...cooperative, friendly, and truly capable professionals."

Laurie Melesko and Lori Coleman thanked **John McKay** for the professional posters he designed for the Orderlink workshop and said, "He is a perfect example of the team effort that is prevalent within DAS."

Dan Donahue praised **Kevin Backman** and **Chris Roberts** for the

"outstanding" job of vacating the Newington facilities over the past few weeks and said, "If we had not had those two guys it would have cost a fortune to vacate the property."

Director William D. Merico Jr. from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services commended **Paul Greco** for assisting his office with a problematic service contract and said, "Except for some minor items all issues have been corrected. Thank you for your help in this matter."

Diane Colangelo from the Department of Public Works thanked **Mike Owsianko** for his assistance over the past three months with her payroll questions and problems and said, "I feel it necessary to acknowledge Mike's ability and willingness to assist coworkers, whether in the same agency or a different one."

Susan Mazzoccoli from the Boards of Firearms Permit Examiners applauded **Lydia Rosario** for training her on how to use online ordering with Orderlink and said, "The ability to have comparison shopping and access to all vendors will help tremendously with my budget."

Isaac Eze praised **David Tufano** for responding so quickly to his vehicle breakdown and said, "It surely was true evidence of effective teamwork, spirit, and efficient business operation. Keep up the good work!"

Many thanks to **Marilyn Lafontaine** from Shari Grzyb for typing and formatting the Tuition Reimbursement Manual as revisions were being made. "Your

willingness to take on this task and to provide us with such a professional product is appreciated!"

Jerry Santostefano, who accepted a position at the Connecticut Lottery, left the following message: "I want to thank the

Hats Off

By Cindy Duberek

individuals it has been my pleasure to meet and work with at DAS. I want to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the MIS staff and their dedication put forth in programming and troubleshooting the Federal Food Program's computer program. Special thanks to **Joe Mikulski** for his friendship and training, to **Sue Miller** for just being there when I needed her, to the wonderful DAS HR staff, to **Donna Micklus** for the kindness she has always shown to me, and finally to **DAS** for giving me my start with the state...I am grateful. Best wishes to all."

Lisa Godin from the Department of Information Technology thanked **Lina Simonu** for the "great" retirement seminar that she conducted and said, "I learned a lot of information I wasn't aware of before. Thanks, Lina!"

Executive Director Joe Cooper from the Hope of Liberia Charity Foundation, Inc. applauded **Tony Ferriera** for providing "information and food to the fullest" to reach the hungry individuals and families the foundation serves. "I called him the 'Famous Tony,' he's good at the job!"

Strength in diversity

By John McKay

Diversity in the workplace is frequently discussed, but what does it take to develop an organizational culture that promotes respect, awareness, and understanding of

its membership annually to allow everyone interested in becoming a member the opportunity to do so.

One of the charges of the Council was choosing a vendor to provide training to DAS employees on diversity. On October 16, Council members announced they had selected LifeSkills as the DAS diversity trainer/vendor.

“The goal of the training is to give employees a framework in which to discuss

diversity issues and to develop the skills to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences that employees bring to the workplace,” said Janis Nome.

“Diversity” will be considered in its broadest terms, including age, demographics, gender, race, sexual orientation, education, language, disability, and life-style, so all employees should feel included in this effort.

One of the first actions of the Council is to participate in the *Walk as One* walk-a-thon for the National Conference for Community and Justice, an organization dedicated to building an inclusive society that celebrates diversity and invests in its youth and communities.

“This is just one of many activities that we hope to sponsor to encourage involvement and create enthusiasm,” said Joyce Chin, a Council member. “We’re looking to build upon our differences, recognizing that our strength is in our diversity.”

Victories

By John McKay

similarities and differences?

A DAS Diversity Council has been established to tackle this important issue.

The Council is a volunteer, employee-run body that will rotate

Diversity Council Mission Statement

To enrich our organizational culture through an awareness, understanding and promotion of our similarities and differences, realizing that our strength is in our diversity.

Diversity Council Members

Cindy Milardo	713-5084	Daniel Duggan	713-5330
Isabelle McKinney	713-5100	Debbie Atkinson	713-5266
Reuben Lusack	713-5230	Joyce Chin	713-5254
Belinda Hall	566-5940	Brenda Samuels-Woods	713-5196
Christopher Fons	713-5393	Carl Passanisi	713-5151
Diane Donato	713-5268	Lydia Rosarib	713-5087

A real team player

By John McKay

Tony Smith should be from Tennessee – home of the volunteers.

After spending 19 years with the Fleet garage on Huyshope Avenue in Hartford, Tony, “Smitty” to his friends, volunteered to work at the Buckingham Street gas station to address some customer service issues.

“As long as I could continue taking my mechanical classes, I was up for the challenge,” said Smith. Not only did he improve customer service relations at the station, Tony also trained customers on using the new automated gas pumps.

“First we had the gas cards and then we introduced the gas keys. As with any new technology advancements, there is always that time when customers need to be taught how to use them,” he said.



Tony “Smitty” Smith (left) shows buddy Jeff Terry from the Department of Public Utility Control how to operate the new automated gas pump.

the Giants, for the past seven years. For the past three years, the team has made it to the championship game.

The team consists of kids 8 to 14 years old who so far have a 3-1-1 record.

“We’re working to get there (the championship game) this year as well,” said Smith.

“It’s a great experience and I look forward to working with the kids every year.”

Smith proudly states that he also coached quarterback and son, Anthony Smith Jr., to one of their championship games.

Smith’s son, now a senior at Wethersfield High School and also a star basketball player, will be attending Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven to pursue a degree in architecture.

“Can you tell how proud I am of him?” asks Smith with the pride of a father’s smile on his face.

Another rewarding aspect of Smith’s life is his volunteer work with Wethersfield’s Park and Recreation youth program five nights a week. He helps kids in every phase of daily activity—from homework to hoop shots.

As a committee member, Smith and his son also enjoy snowboarding with the Wethersfield Ski Club.

The club plans winter field trips to Vermont where Smith’s son introduced him to the sport.

“This is my third year snowboarding, and it gets better every time,” he said.

When asked about working at DAS, Smith said he really enjoys his work.

“I must admit I miss the guys down at the Huyshope garage – Jose Rivera, Eddie Flores, Tom Yuhas, Steve Dygus and all those guys, but the public relations aspect of my job is a lot of fun as well.”

Up Close

Smith explained that customers now keep the gas keys on their key rings and have easier access to using the pumps.

Smith’s supervisor, Steve Dygus, couldn’t be more complimentary. “In the 20 years that Tony has been with Fleet Operations, I have rarely seen him without his friendly smile and good-natured personality. He has been a real asset at the gasoline station in helping our customers figure out the new automated pump system. He is another good example of what our agency is all about - service.”

Smith’s volunteerism segues easily from service to sports.

He has been a volunteer coach for the Wethersfield Eagles youth football team,

Customers share feedback at Procurement Open House

By Heather Cavanaugh

Just when you thought e-purchasing couldn't get any easier, it did.

Procurement Services staff continues to help users become more comfortable with OrderLink, the state's e-commerce system. On September 27, an OrderLink Open House was held at the Legislative Office Building.

"It was a huge success," said event planner Maureen Costigan.

Nearly 200 eager participants from state agencies and municipalities came to learn more about how to order the products they need at the cheapest prices.

The day consisted of several information sessions from basic training to a roundtable discussion of what users like about OrderLink and system enhancements they would like to see in the future.

"The feedback was fabulous," said Costigan.

"The candor was helpful because we need to hear about both the good and the bad to improve things. Some of the suggestions are in the process of being incorporated into the system."

Suggestions included a new multiple search capability and the ability to record account coding information in OrderLink.

The Digital Commerce Corporation displayed many new enhancements such as a new look; templates to allow users to customize their own order forms, and an improved order review screen.

Attendees were able to learn about other DAS services through "INFOstations" where information and representatives were available on the P-Card, Business CONNECTIONS, and Digital Commerce Corporation.



Procurement Services plans to host additional roundtable discussions and other informational sessions in the future.



Who will be next ?

Send in your nominations TODAY!

Making a career out of HRLC

Fall, Winter curriculum lists new course offerings

By John McKay

The HR Learning Center (HRLC) has kicked off its fall and winter course schedule with some new additions to the curriculum.

In addition to the already popular ADA, FMLA, Workplace Violence and Sexual Harassment Prevention classes, the HR Learning Center has introduced, among other courses, the Talent Management System.

The Talent Management System consists of four separate classes – CareerPower, CareerPower for Coaches, Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em, and Mentworking.

“The CareerPower program has been a big success,” said trainer Cheryl Sawina.

“We’ve trained almost half of the agency and wanted to keep the program moving so we’ve introduced new courses,” Sawina explained.

These courses empower employees to set realistic goals and strategies to improve their careers, and build coaching and mentoring relationships that help managers develop and retain valuable employees.

CareerPower reinforces the idea that an employee’s career is his or her own responsibility, and gives employees the tools to plan and implement a program for continuous professional development and growth.

CareerPower for Coaches helps managers and supervisors build a distinct set of skills so they can support employees and help them grow professionally and realize their career goals.

Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em increases employee retention by providing practical strategies that each manager can immediately implement while coaching and managing their employees.

Mentworking, a combination of mentoring and networking, fosters a climate where productive, ongoing, supportive relationships develop among employees at all

levels of the agency.

Because of the success of these courses, DAS will be extending CareerPower training to outside agencies.

“For a long time other agencies were very curious about CareerPower and how to get training. Now we can market to other agencies for all state employees,” said Sawina.

In addition to the Talent Management System classes, the HR Learning Center is offering a number of other new courses in its fall/winter brochure.

Two new workplace violence prevention courses have been added: Conducting Threat Assessments, and Conflict Management.

Lina Simonu has joined the HRLC trainers with her incredibly popular new course, Fundamentals of SERS - a training course for state human resources professionals on the State Employees Retirement System.

For more information, contact Andrea Frankl Keilty at 713-5267 or Kathleen Sullivan at 713-5231.

Check it out!

Live...local...late-breaking

\$cream!

Last month's ice cream social raised nearly \$500 for the Connecticut State Employee Campaign for Charitable Giving.

"The ice cream social continually does very well each year," said committee chairperson Nancy Jones. "Everyone really seems to enjoy it, so we'll continue it annually."

Special thanks to committee members: Kevin Backman, Karen Rakowski, Julie Bernosky, Melissa Colonese, David Elwell, Diane Fitzpatrick, Heather Tweeddale, Alex Caceres, and Laura Breux.



Tag \$ale!

This year's Tag Sale was a huge windfall. With nervous hopes of reaching \$300, the committee actually raised \$1,000 toward the December DAS holiday party.

"This was much more than we anticipated," said chairperson Lorraine Lombardi. Lombardi also organized a quick post-Tag Sale to sell remaining books the following week. All unsold items were donated to local charities.

A big thank you to all the employees who donated items and a special thanks goes to committee members: Cheryl Sawina, John McKay, Joan Donahue, Laura Breux, Natalie Shipman, Joyce Chin, Linda Shackett-Blue, Pamela Young, Lilka Vega, Marisol Feliciano, Catherine Kulas, Diane Fitzpatrick, and Arthur Paulette for all their help.