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## Governor praises agencies for high tech strides

By Donna Micklus

### Applauds DAS e-gov services at recent news conference

After a tour of the state's \$12 million Data Center site at the Department of Information Technology, Governor John G. Rowland held a May news conference to laud the technological strides state agencies have made.

"Six years ago the state did not have a website. Today, more than 60 agencies in the executive branch are online," the Governor said.

"In April of this year, 8.1 million page views were recorded and users downloaded 1.5 million documents from the state website," he added.

Several state agencies drew high praise from Governor Rowland for current online services as well as for those under development.

Rowland cited DAS' *CT GovCenter* e-procurement program among those on the cutting edge.

The program enables state agencies, municipalities, and schools to post bids and buy off state contracts, saving them hundreds of thousands of dollars on everything from janitorial supplies to bulletproof vests.



Governor John G. Rowland is joined at a May news conference by DOIT Chief Information Officer Rock Regan and DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters.

## ERP Winners

Take a bow!

**Extra Mile/Customer Service**  
J. Carlos Velez

**Remarkable Innovation**  
Diane Preble

**Team Excellence**  
Property Management Team:  
Fred Ondevilla  
Dan Sadowski  
Peter Varhol  
Virgilio Santos  
Alphonso Deramus

Please see Governor, p.6

Please see Photos, p.2

# Congratulations



**Carlos**



**Diane**

***You guys are awesome!***

## **DAS Times**

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Barbara A. Waters  
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Donna J. Micklus  
Editor

*Contributions are welcome but may be  
edited for space and clarity.*

Visit our website at  
[www.das.state.ct.us](http://www.das.state.ct.us)



**(L to R) Alphonso, Dan, Virgilio,  
Fred, and Peter**

**Watch for the  
full story on  
the Awards  
Ceremony in  
the July issue.**

Susan Zalewa Tupper from Community Health Charities applauded **Patti Kokonowski** for her “exemplary work with the Lunch & Learn Seminars.”

Toby Bates from the Office of the State Comptroller complimented **Sandee Sharr** for *What’s News*. “Great product!” Toby also commended **Tina Costanzo** for “how helpful she has been with the diversity contract.”

Julie Ahlstrin thanked **Andrea Keilty** for registering the First Responders MRT group for the blood borne pathogen class on short notice.

Mike Felix praised **Donna Micklus** and the **Communications Office** for the May issue of the *DAS Times*. “I have heard many compliments about the issue already, and people have only had it 15 minutes!”

Kudos to **Dan Donahue** from Dave Lynn for how quickly he arranged to get locks installed on the gates in the reception area of Human Resources.

Cheryl Sawina thanked the **DAS employees** who participated in the Komen CT Race for the Cure on May 12. “Thank you for taking the time to contribute to a great cause and show true team spirit.”

Andrea Keilty thanked **Cathy Bysiewicz-Cluen** and Frank Rudewicz for their efforts in putting together the Workplace Violence Prevention event *Assessing the Danger*. “The event was relevant, practical, well-organized, and well-attended - a huge success.”

Director Gloria Ellal from the Canterbury Elementary School commended **Tony Ferreira** for his helpfulness. “I

am the new director of food services and his advice will come in handy.”

Food Service Coordinator Joseph Rogers from Lake Grove Durham applauded **Tony Ferreira** for his assistance with damaged goods from a USDA shipment. “I am very grateful for his assertiveness. He truly took the bull by the horns for us!”

Toni Alphonse praised **Linda Hubeny** and the **MIS staff** for their quick response to technical problems with her APS training class. “You and your staff responded quickly to my SOS and as usual, you all came through!”

Stamford Mayor Dannel Malloy thanked **Don Casella** for participating in the inaugural session of their Small Business Initiative. “The presentation of your organization and programs was an important component of the overall event.”

CHRO Executive Director Cynthia Watts-Elder congratulated **Sandee Sharr** and **John McKay** for *What’s News*. “I loved the format and it’s written in plain English. You and your staff have done a terrific job!”

Susan Fabian from the Office of the State Comptroller complimented **Sandee Sharr** for *What’s News*. “This newsletter is great, which given the editor, is not surprising.”

Sonia Greenhagen commended **Sandee Sharr** for *What’s News*.

“I found the cases and rulings to be very interesting and I look forward to the next issue!”

Stephen Dygus thanked **Jon Hykes** for supplying his personal computer server to Graham Jones to help him patch and fix the Fleet Operations server. “Your interest

## Hats Off

By Cindy Rusczyk

and assistance helped keep our downtime to a minimum.”

Thomas Ciccalone from the Dept. of Economic and Community Development complimented **Tina Costanzo** for the new media and public relations contract. “This is fantastic and was certainly well-received by the Commissioner’s Office here. Good going to you and DAS.”

Connie Castro from the Office of the State Comptroller praised the **FSC Accounting Unit** for its processing of vendor payments for customer agencies. “The quarterly review of your documents had little or no areas of noncompliance; your agency has been exceptional in the processing of claims this quarter.”

Sonia Greenhagen thanked **Dan Sadowski** for “putting her new storage cabinet together for her so quickly and flawlessly.”

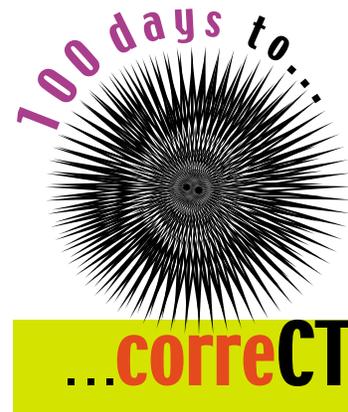
*Please see Kudos on p.7*

# The *first* hundred days



At the 100 day mark, DAS employees tout accomplishments.

See special insert in this issue.



## Victories

### MIS...again

By John McKay

By now DAS employees shouldn't be that surprised by the technological magic the MIS staff performs. Yet they always seem to exceed expectations.

Case in point. FSC's Recovery Unit can't shower MIS with enough accolades for their recent feat.

In a nutshell, the Recovery Unit retrieves money for the state via legal claims.

Until recently, the Recovery Unit was barred from collecting from certain types of lawsuits because necessary claim data was not available.

The state contracted with William Mercer, Inc. to gather all the medical claim data. Then a process had to be established to get that information to the Recovery Unit in a format appropriate for legal claims and quickly enough to meet statutory deadlines.

Enter MIS to partner with William Mercer, Inc. Sue Cieniewicz met with Mercer's Diane Vrenios and came up with an incredibly easy-to-use database for the Recovery Unit, allowing them to produce detailed reports in a fraction of the time.

"Sue was simply amazing!" said Vrenios.

"She took the lead at developing a file format and was eager to meet our needs. It was a pleasure to work with Sue and find an IT department that is both efficient

and accommodating. I believe that this is one project that was truly a win-win proposition for all of us."

"Working with the Recovery Unit and Diane of William M. Mercer was a pleasure," said Cieniewicz.

"They are able to communicate their goals and objectives clearly which allows me to define and implement requirements more efficiently. This is an excellent example of a team effort and good communication skills. The whole turnaround time was about a month which is indicative of how smoothly the whole process went, Cieniewicz added."

# From the SUBlime to MIS

**M**IS' Rick Miarecki did what lots of folks do in May...he attended a graduation.

But, as you will read, his was a little unique.

The U. S. Navy's Submarine School in Groton invited veterans of the Submarine Force to return to the Base for the graduation ceremony for the latest group of sub-bound sailors.

Miarecki was among the veterans attending along with retired DAS employee, Carl Mercier.

Miarecki served on board submarines from 1972 to 1975, stationed in Charles-

ton, South Carolina, and Holy Lock, Scotland.

the 'chow hall' which was just the right atmosphere for reminiscing about the 'good/bad' old days!"

On a serious note, Miarecki explained that the invitation was the result of a deliberate effort on the part of the Navy to preserve and foster a sense of continuity from one generation of submarine sailors to the next.

"As veterans of the Submarine service, we are grateful for this opportunity and we are proud that the Navy is working to preserve the traditions of the Submarine Force," Miarecki said.



**Submariner Rick Miarecki in younger (pre ERP) years.**



## Up Close

ton, South Carolina, and Holy Lock, Scotland.

"The group included World War II, Korean War, Vietnam era and Cold War veterans all of whom were looking forward to seeing how the current generation of sailors prepares to become submarine sailors," Miarecki said.

After the ceremony, the group was given an intense tour of the training facility which included the "diving and driving" trainer, escape training, and a walk through all of the basic occupational schools that train sailors for the special skills needed to operate a modern submarine.

"That created an enormous interest as well as a flood of memories from our own experiences. We then ate lunch in



**As we know him today.**

# McAllister is tapped for key post

By Donna Micklus

**D**AS Procurement has revolutionized the way the state does business.

And, as the saying goes, 'you ain't seen nothin' yet.'

Joann McAllister, Assistant Manager of Procurement, has been selected to represent DAS on a statewide core team that will look at procurement processes and how they integrate into the ERP initiative.

At the time of this interview, contract negotiations with the selected proposer were currently underway, and McAllister said she expects work to begin as soon as a contract is awarded.

"I'll be working with a multi-agency team at DOIT to determine the procurement process work flows that exist. Then we will be matching those against the 'vanilla work flows' that the new software contains," McAllister said.

"The next step would then be preparing for the conference room pilot." She explained that experts would be brought in to actually run state data through the new software to identify gaps and solutions.

The result of the conference room pilot should be the state's new business processes.



**Procurement's Joann McAllister will represent DAS on a statewide core team tied to the ERP initiative.**

## Governor praises DAS *cont. from p.1*

"DAS is a national leader in e-procurement," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

"Not only have we topped the charts in customer service and ease of doing business, but we are expanding our partnerships with towns and schools to help them get the most for their dollar," Waters said.

"No wonder we're a recognized e-government model throughout the country," she added proudly.

While citing the progress made in long-term efforts to modernize the state's technology infrastructure, Rowland also cautioned that much more remains to be done.

"The digital divide remains our challenge, and will narrow as we continue to increase access to the Internet in schools, community centers and libraries," Rowland said.

"Our work is far from over, but I am confident in the progress being made now to meet present and future demand," the Governor concluded.

In addition to working with other state agencies to examine their procurement work flow processes, McAllister will also be heading up an internal team consisting of Jim Passier, Jim Neil, Tracie Knapsack, Janet Delgreco, and Cheryl Sawina.

"We'll be looking closely at our internal processes and see what we have to change here at DAS," she said.

"Jim Neil will have a key role toward the end of the process when we start making revisions that require legislative changes."

McAllister, who will be full-time on the project, said it is expected to take three years before it is completely up and running.

In the early stages, she will be dividing her days between DAS and DOIT.

But toward the end she will probably be at DOIT full time, training people from other agencies on use of the new system.

Just how much of a difference will the new program make? McAllister says it will be staggering.

"For example, we can now calculate total dollar amounts for agencies using our contracts, but we don't have the capacity to break down those amounts to see how much they are spending on given items," she explained.

The new system will track dollars so DAS can then benchmark and compare costs to other states.

"The Commissioner wants us to be the best in class. The incredible tools this program will provide will propel us into more of a visionary role, with an increasing amount of strategic purchasing coming forth from here," McAllister concluded.

# McKenna talks high finance By John McKay

Look out Alan Greenspan, you've got nothing on FSC's Jim McKenna. In May, McKenna gave human resources staff from the Department of Education a presentation on the intricacies of budgeting and finance in state government. "I had given a similar presentation to the Agency Personnel Managers Council not long ago. It must have been a success because Education called wanting the same thing but tailored a little more to their specific agency. It was easy to do," said McKenna.

His PowerPoint presentation covered topics such as: general fund vs. other funds; the differences between the Connecticut State Budget, the Governor's Budget, and Agency Budget Requests; the state budget cycle; appropriations; allotments; and the spending cap.

There was also discussion of the relationship between position counts and the budget, and how HR and financial staff benefit from a close working relationship.

John Coroso, Education's Director of Finance & Administration, was also on hand to help relate some of the details to his agency's specific requirements.

"I realize the topic can be a little dry," said McKenna, "But if I can provide a basic understanding of how the budget and financial administration of an agency works, it helps the HR people do their jobs."

McKenna explained that it also helps employees understand why only certain objectives might get funded, why positions can't be filled, or why there's sometimes money left over at the end of the fiscal year.



**FSC's Jim McKenna addressed human resources staff from the Department of Education on state budgeting and finance issues.**

"Discussion of the spending cap is always interesting, because it makes it a little easier to see why even when the state has a large surplus, agencies still are not allowed to spend money on needed projects or positions."

"It helped that he put these things into laymen's terms," said one participant. "We don't necessarily deal with financing on a day-to-day basis, so Jim was extremely helpful in helping us all understand the accounting of our agency a little bit better."

McKenna has given his presentation about six times now, and he is always on the lookout for opportunities to share the wealth, or at least his "wealth" of knowledge of the state's budget process.

## **Kudos** *cont. from p. 3*

From Cathy Bysiewicz-Cluen, "Thanks so much to **John McKay** for helping me during the year. He has been very generous with his time and talent creating brochures for special events... they are always very unique and a big hit with our customers. Thanks for making us look so good!"

Mark Carroza applauded **Laurie Melesko** for getting the Bradley

Airport meeting and site inspection notice in the newspaper. "This is due to the hard-working and dedicated efforts of Laurie by redialing a constantly busy *Hartford Courant* phone line for over an hour!"

Stanley Staron from the City of Hartford commended **Jim Gotta** and **Celeste Cashman** for saving the city tremendous time and effort with the obtainable state contracts. "Absolutely a godsend! Also, in the blink of an eye, the state has done

contract amendments to include items we require. Thanks for making it so much easier."

David George from the Department of Environmental Protection applauded **Jim Gotta** for the Grounds Maintenance Equipment contract that was issued. "The choice of equipment and brands is very good, the overview pages are an excellent index, and the award pages are set up in a convenient format. Thanks again."

# Help is just around the corner

By Phil Karas and Donna Micklus

*(The following are excerpts from a story submitted to columnist Tom Condon of the Hartford Courant.)*

It was a pleasant, sunny noon hour when suddenly the driver of a pickup truck lost control and went barreling toward a group of employees gathered in front of the State Office Building.

The driver had gone into cardiac arrest, but fortunately the passenger was able to wrest control of the truck before anyone else was injured.

As fate would have it, Julie Ahlstrin, a DAS employee who was nearly hit, would give the driver back his life.

“His skin was blue, and he didn’t have a pulse,” said Ahlstrin, who is also an EMT.

With the help of her fellow First Responder Team members and nearby Bushnell Memorial construction workers, Ahlstrin was able to administer CPR.

Within minutes, the man was breathing and had a heartbeat.

Over the past two-plus years, members of the First Responder Team and the hand of fate have made the difference between life and death on more than one occasion.

They have given first aid at the scene of car accidents and to a young bicyclist who was hit by a van and thrown into a busy intersection.

Inside the SOB they have responded to diabetic reactions, chest pains, lacerations, falls, eye irritation, and shortness of breath.

Training is periodically held to maintain team members’ certification through the Red Cross.



First Responders get a first hand look at Hartford Hospital’s Life Star helicopter.

Earlier this year, program founder John Wilkerson left DAS, but fortunately, First Responders did not end with his departure.

None other than Julie Ahlstrin recently emerged as the team’s new leader. She was the lead contact with the Department of Public Health and UCONN Health Center’s Emergency Medical Coordinator and has extensive ambulance (EMT) experience.

## Assessing the danger

By Cathy Bysiewicz-Cluen and John McKay

Would you know how to respond to a possible workplace violence incident? What would you do?

For almost two years, DAS’ HR Learning Center has been sponsoring workshops on workplace violence prevention for supervisors and managers in all agencies, particularly focusing on human resource managers.

The workshops are a joint partnership between DAS and Frank E. Rudewicz of Decision

Strategies Fairfax International, a worldwide consulting firm specializing in workplace violence prevention for employers.

On May 24, *Assessing the Danger*, the grand finale of workshops, took place at the Keeney Center in Wethersfield. Over 130 managers attended the half-day panel discussion moderated by Rudewicz.

The highlight of the morning was a live case study featuring Deborah Freund, of the Department of Motor Vehicles, and Edward Burke with the DAS Human Resources Business Center.

Freund portrayed “Nancy,” a distressed employee exclaiming about the pressures of her job and

demands of her supervisor coupled with stress in her personal life.

Burke portrayed “Stanley,” her co-worker who offered helpful suggestions. Their series of vignettes led to a lively discussion on responding to and evaluating an employee who has emotionally lost control at work.

Burke said he thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of acting in a live scenario, and being part of a subject matter that deserves such needed attention.

“The most difficult part for me was to stay in character during the panel discussions surrounding our presentation because I would have loved to interact or comment on the issues. Plus -on the lighter side- it’s always great to get paid for one’s craft!” he said.