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Gov. Rell Officially Opens E-85 Pump

By Donna Micklus

As members of the media, agency officials and staff shivered in the cold, Governor M. Jodi Rell paid another visit to DAS to cut the ribbon on a new E-85 ethanol pump at the State of Connecticut's busiest garage on Buckingham Street in Hartford.

The 10,000-gallon underground tank at the DAS garage was previously filled with unleaded gasoline.

"Our state's 'OneThing' campaign urges everyone in the state to do one thing, every day, to help save energy and keep our state a little greener," Governor Rell said at the February 21 event.

"At the state level, we can lead the way for the rest of the country by reducing the amount of petroleum that will be used in our state fleet vehicles. That is a goal we can easily achieve by putting E-85 into our state fleet vehicles that can burn E-85."

Currently, E-85 is pumped at four state garage locations: The Newington and Danbury Department of Transportation garages were the first sites; the Norwich Department of Administration (DAS) garage was just converted to E-85 several weeks ago; and now the Hartford DAS garage has converted one of its two 10,000-gallon tanks to E-85.

Last year, 282,457 gallons of fuel were pumped at the Hartford garage. Citing its long-term benefits to the environment and the push for energy independence, the Governor said, "The conversion to E-85 at our busiest fuel station will bring about a great reduction in the amount of petroleum we dispense into our state vehicles. "We have now doubled the capacity of state facilities to accept and dispense E-85. In doing so, we can also reduce the cost of this



Governor M. Jodi Rell is ably assisted by Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson as they cut the ribbon on the new E-85 pump.

fuel to state agencies as distributors adjust to the greater volume we move through our tanks. Over the long term, the price will drop, more and more state vehicles will be using it and the environment

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Black Heritage Month at the SOB



Nate Jenkins and Postmaster Judith Martin unveil the Charles W. Chestnutt stamp

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Chinese Delegation Picks HR's Brains

By Nina Ritson



Susan Pawloski-Burke and Francine Dew share their HR wisdom

Appearing more like the U.N. than a state agency, DAS once again hosted human resources peers from the other side of the world. Last week, 12 delegates from the Shaanxi Province of the People's Republic of China (PRC) came to Connecticut for an overview of the state's merit system. They are human resources professionals visiting the U.S. via the U.S.-China Business Center of Central Connecticut State University, which conducts training programs for Chinese government officials.

Commissioner Brenda Sisco opened the event with an overview of DAS and its role in state government. The delegates also learned about labor issues in the early U.S. up to the present day, covering the history of labor relations, patronage and cronyism, the formation of labor unions, and the 1977 law in Connecticut that brought bargaining units to state employees.

Susan Pawloski-Burke gave a detailed presentation of this timeline in labor history, while Francine Dew talked about the laws of equal opportunity employment that protect workers from unfair hiring practices and discrimination.

Paul Bodenhofer, a Labor Relations Specialist from Office of Labor Relations, reviewed the negotiations of labor contracts and employees' rights contained therein.

The delegates asked questions about the hierarchy of employment and pay scales, and how unions negotiate those pay scales. They also were interested in the laws concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act and its effect on hiring practices.

Grateful for the opportunity to gain insight into Connecticut government, they presented Sisco, Dew, and Pawloski-Burke with gifts reflecting the culture and art of the PRC.

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will benefit. This is sound public policy and we will continue to lead by example," she said.

There are currently 4,228 vehicles in the state fleet. Of that number 1,717 can run on E-85. There are 281 hybrid vehicles in the fleet. The types of vehicles that can run on E-85 include passenger vehicles, minivans, vans and sport utility vehicles.

"Today, we continue to move Connecticut in the right direction," Governor Rell said. "Steadily we are moving toward better conservation policies, better environmental policies and better public health policies. It's a win-win scenario: We are saving energy while making our state that much more energy independent."

"We think we have done the prudent and right thing in introducing this E-85 fuel to two of our DAS locations to compliment the existing two DOT facilities. The drivers of E-85 flex fuel state vehicles understand the benefits of using a renewable resource instead of 100% petroleum-based fuel. I have seen the drivers of E-85 vehicles pull up to this new pump at Buckingham and show excitement over what they were dispensing into their vehicle for the first time. State employees want to do their one thing to reduce the use of energy," said Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson.

"We are putting our money where our mouth is, and I want to thank DOT and OPM for providing the funding and making this possible," Governor Rell said. She then smiled at those in attendance and said, "Now get out of the cold and thanks for coming!"

(excerpts from Governor's Office news release)

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In celebration of Black Heritage Month at the SOB

By Donna Micklus and Nina Ritson

On a cold and snowy Friday on February 22, the agencies of the State Office Building once again came together to present Black Heritage Month 2008. Mistress of Ceremonies, Holly Hart of the Department of Public Works, welcomed everyone and opened the morning with a Moment of Silence for our fallen soldiers in Iraq. She then introduced the agency commissioners who host the event each year.

Raeanne Curtis, Commissioner of Public Works opened the speaking program. “We all need to remember the long journey that has brought us here today. And what an impact the African-American people have had in shaping our culture.”

In her remarks, DAS Commissioner Brenda Sisco said, “It is a privilege to be here with you today as we commemorate African-Americans who have indeed changed the world.” She paid tribute to this year’s honoree, Charles W. Chestnutt, and also to Dr. Carter Woodson who began the tradition of celebrating Black History Day in 1926. “The halls of history are filled with such heroes; we celebrate their lives and their legacies as we pay tribute to Black Heritage Month and the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all of us.”

Phil Prelli, Commissioner of Agriculture said, “I am always impressed when I receive the material for this event – and I am honored to be here.”

DCP Commissioner Gerald Farrell added his observance. “We all live in our own cocoon – in our cars, in our own worlds, rarely varying from routine. An event like this helps us walk in the shoes of others.”

Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan added, “...I am the newcomer here, but want to

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DAS Commissioner Brenda Sisco



Guest speaker Steve Perry



Education Commissioner Mark McQuillan

thank the committee for this very important collaboration of agencies.”

Next, Summer Martin of the troupe “Dance-Like-David,” paid tribute to Charles W. Chestnutt with a poetic refrain on the choices black children have today. “This is the story of the little boy left fatherless...” she began and, “...this is a promise of hope to a black girl who cannot decide if she wants to be a scientist, ...and this is the dedication for building a nation of dreams instead of building railroads....we will progress! This is the celebration of the African-American.”

Her inspiring message was followed by this year’s stamp dedication to Chestnutt by U.S. Postmaster Judith Martin and DAS Black Heritage Month Committee Chair Nate Jenkins. Martin reflected on the works of Chestnutt by saying, “A great man is a human document.”

The tempo quickly changed as the spirited “Dance-Like-David” took center stage. Even at their young ages this group choreographed several impressive, interpretative routines within their performance –with arching and synchrony, and with energy and body elasticity that would put most adults in traction!

This presentation closed with the motivational words of Steve Perry, a man and role model who has accomplished so much in his young life. As an author, educator and principal of the Capital Preparatory Magnet School in Hartford, he is very much in touch with African-American youth. And as an educator he believes strongly that parents must ask themselves, “Are we either ‘friend or foe?’

“We all bear responsibility – by hiding hurt. We have low expectations and consequently internal/external racism is deeply ingrained. Listen to the music of our youth that is degrading our community. We are the consumers, and we need to take responsibility so that our children are not consuming hate. When we acknowledge our own commitment we can see the power in our community.”

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The Dance-Like-David ensemble electrified the room



Did you know?

Pitchers and catchers report to spring training this month. Valentine's Day is this month. It's Black Heritage Month.

Put them all together and you get: Valentine's Day is also the birthday of Joe Black, a contemporary (and road trip roommate) of Jackie Robinson, and the first black pitcher to win a World Series game. He pitched for the Brooklyn Dodgers, beating the Yankees 4-2 in Game 1 of the 1952 World Series.

(Thanks to Matt Shea for this bit of info!)

Perry went on to say, "You need to think about what you are doing to make this community a productive community. It is not a job - it is a life commitment. Are we friend or foe?"

Following the speaking program, folks headed down to the 1st Floor for a mouth-watering buffet lunch of macaroni and cheese, collard greens, candied yams, rice, brown rice and peas, baked and fried chicken, cornbread, potato salad, sweet potato pie, lemonade, strawberry filled cake, plain cake, veggie platter, Connecticut grown apples and apple juice. It was not a day for counting snowflakes or calories, for even though the snow was flying, few were deterred.

"Inspirational, contemplative, educational, proud, impressive, moving and simply awesome" were just some of the words of employees asked to describe the events of the day.

**Special thanks to the DAS
Black Heritage Month
Committee:**
Chair, Nate Jenkins
Raymond Bailey
Laura Guilmartin
Rita Rose
Natalie Shipman
Rosemary Woods

See you next year!



There was no shortage of cultural crafts and cuisine!

