



Redeploying To Tackle the "BIG 8"

By Donna Micklus

Following Commissioner Barbara Waters' testimony before the Appropriations Committee earlier in the month, she returned to the LOB last week to field questions from members of the subcommittee about DAS' "Big 8" priorities.

"Many of the inquiries involved our Fleet Study, Workers' Comp, and CoreCT initiatives, which are all areas we have identified as cost reduction opportunities," Waters said.

"Our primary focus for the next several years must be the state budget. DAS is fast-tracking eight initiatives that we feel will have the most significant fiscal impact."

"I think that by the concerns legislators expressed, we are right on target with our "Big 8" projects for the coming year...the challenge now lies in crafting the best redeployment of staff to get the job done," she added.

In addition to losing 39 employees to layoffs, The Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) will have an impact on DAS.

"Since there are 101 employees at DAS that are eligible, we need to have some contingency plans in place. And frankly, we just don't have that many options other than some programmatic and staff changes. We are in an emergency situation and we have to take immediate and bold steps," Waters explained.

"Many of these changes have already been announced, but we are continuing to meet and make the hard decisions around these priorities and reassignments. However, I want to stress that because we still don't know the total fallout in terms of employees we lose to ERIP...and may not for

another month or so, these changes should be considered temporary solutions...not necessarily the best solutions...and we will continue to reassess staffing and our organizational structure in the coming months," she added.

Implementation has already begun for some of the operational changes announced last week:

- ◆ *The Print Shop will move under the Communications Office*
- ◆ *Mail and Courier will move under Property Management in FSC*
- ◆ *Federal Food Distribution and Surplus Property Distribution programs will move under Procurement Services*
- ◆ *Fleet Operations will move under Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola*
- ◆ *Internal Audit will be reassigned between FSC and Fed Foods*

We have tried our best to match the talents of our staff with the priorities at hand. I know times of change can be hard, but we do important work and we do it well. Let's continue to work together to keep moving forward," Waters said.

big8

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- Develop and deploy systems, means and methods to reduce the costs of Workers' Compensation in state government
- Reduce expenses and cost outlays for print, mail, and courier

- Reduce the size of the fleet along with fleet-associated costs
- Make purchases for state government in ways that save more money
- Develop new collections strategies and projects to bring in more revenue
- Conduct HR Strategic Management to deal with

- layoffs and early retirements
- Staff up to meet the requirements of CoreCT
- Be more effective in the management of and costs of our assets

Aggressive and creative use of our website will be the central underpinning of all of these objectives.

Quick Response From DAS Helps Hartford School System

By John McKay

Hartford asked and DAS was there. At the request of the Hartford Public Schools, DAS Procurement Services went to work and secured a contract with Edsmart, Inc., a company that provides information gathering and reporting services for schools.

E-Partner Lydia Rosario in Procurement Services made it all happen.

"DAS quickly drafted and negotiated a contract that was acceptable to everyone involved," Rosario said.

Within a mere two weeks the contract, *Information Gathering Services to Monitor & Track Educational Data* was available for use by the Hartford Board of Education!

The contractual service that Edsmart, Inc. provides allows school districts to

track student information such as special education and student performance data, student test data from state or national standardized tests and local testing data.

"This information can be a great tool for school improvement initiatives," Rosario explained.

In fact, other Connecticut school districts are already using Edsmart, Inc.

Rosario reported that DAS was also able to certify Edsmart as a Connecticut Small Business Enterprise through its supplier diversity program.

"It was a win for everyone involved," she said.

The contract is in effect until April 30, 2008 and is available for use by any school system in the state.

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

In a letter to **Commissioner Barbara Waters**, Governor John G. Rowland wrote: "Thank you for making **Diane Donato** and **Sandee Sharr** available to my staff during the last few months...in helping to prepare the Affirmative Action Plan for the Office of the Governor. Their courtesy and responsiveness to our needs were outstanding."

Pat Kurowski of the Housatonic Community College complimented **Teresa Dupont** on the WIN newsletter. "I find the WIN newsletter a wonderful educational tool to help me get better at a job I love."

Fleet Operations' Steve Dygus thanked **Kevin Backman, David Marsh, Bill Larose, David Tufano, Michael Lopez, Al Aeschlimann, Richard Yeske, Craig Giomblanco, Jimmy Civitello, and Russell Winters** "for coming in early to clean off vehicles and plow us out after the major snowstorm. The amount of the snowfall made this definitely above and beyond the normal call of duty. Your extra effort was definitely appreciated by me, the rest of the Fleet staff and our customers. Thanks again."

Isabelle McKinney sang the praises of **Dan Donahue, Fred Ondevilla, Peter Varhol and Dan Sadowski**. "What a great unit!! I am most grateful because you all made my move day get off to a pleasant start. The professionalism shown to me yesterday by all of you made me feel welcome on the fifth floor — and you even stopped by in the afternoon to make sure that my needs were taken care of. All I can say is THANKS!"

Carroll B. Skoglund, Jr., Director of Marketing for VERTEX, Inc., was another one of **Mark Carroza's** happy customers. "I want to thank

you for your quick response and turnaround for our recertification. Your enthusiasm, attention to detail, knowledge and customer care was of the highest caliber. Thank you again."

Marcia Smith-Glasper of DPW extended her appreciation to **Commissioner Barbara Waters** and **DAS** for the support and contributions given to help make DPW's diversity initiative a success. She also commended the **DAS Communications Office** for their "superb skill and assistance."

Linda LoSchiavo and Carol Wilson thanked **Carlos Velez** and **Bernie Blumenthal** for sharing their time and information regarding contract insurance requirements. "Bernie explained what each requirement was, the reason, and if dollar amounts were satisfactory. The information will be extremely helpful to everyone in Procurement."

Isabelle McKinney appreciated the efforts of **Nina Ritson**. "Nina, great job! It was a pleasure collaborating with you on the two *DAS Times* articles. Thanks again!"

Kudos from Mayme Casady to **Donna Micklus, John McKay, Nina Ritson, and Cindy Rusczyk** of the **Communications Office**. "I just read the February *DAS Times* and truly appreciate your professional skills....I loved the way you dressed up the article on **Rob Zalucki** I submitted, and it really is a masterpiece as printed. I don't know if you are appreciated by everyone...but having worked with you all, I am so impressed with your department. You all just jump into a project and the finished item is a piece of art...and you make it look so easy and effortless...that's only done by the 'masters.'"

Patricia Morrissey Hearn writes: "I just wanted someone to know what a treasure you have in your employee **Lori Riley**, Reimbursement Analyst. Over the past year and a half she has gone above and beyond the call of duty by speaking to me on separate occasions, explaining, clarifying with extraordinary patience and compassion, the statutes involved in our case. Her insight, candor, service and just plain honesty have been so refreshing in a world of "non service". I hope you realize what a credit to DAS she is."

John A. Makiaris, Purchasing Agent for the Town of Glastonbury, complimented **Lydia Rosario** on her recent presentation to the Town Manager's Staff Meeting. "The presentation and handouts were exceptional and you generated many good questions by the staff. I have

hats off

By **Donna Micklus**

personally received many complimentary remarks concerning your presentation."

Andy Bingham, a recent visitor to the DAS website congratulated **Bill Skyrme**. "I work with states all over the country. You guys have the best system by far. Congrats!" Commissioner Waters echoed those words to **Bill Skyrme**: "I could not be more delighted.....once again, we're best in class and we owe it all to you....THANKS!"

Isabelle McKinney shared the following: "What a pleasant surprise! **Donna Camillone** of MIS was impressed with the Diversity Council's

continued on next page

Reduce State Vehicles

By John McKay

With over 4000 state vehicles and the accompanying 8000 two-month reports being evaluated, the team is looking for a 20 percent reduction of the state's Fleet of automobiles – that's approximately 800 vehicles.

"There are a number of very

effective measures we can take here," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

As part of the budget-tightening Fleet reduction effort, DAS cancelled this year's new car buy, saving the state \$13 million.

"We can eliminate the vehicles that cost more to repair, and keep other vehicles from our fleet that are in better condition. We can study driving patterns and how some cars may be overused while other vehicles may be being underutilized. It's simply making the whole system more efficient in both function and cost," Waters explained.

Waters said that DAS is also working with the Governor's Office and sister agencies to determine which commissioners' vehicles can also be turned in.

Does this mean getting a state car

for legitimate reasons will be difficult?

Of course not.

There are still many options for employees

who require a state car, such as periodic loaners, local fleet pools, and simple reimbursement for business miles.

"The savings and streamlining of the state's fleet is really the bottom line of this survey," said Waters. "And we think there can be substantial savings."

Finding new ways to save money is the DAS mantra for this year.

So for several weeks, a dedicated team of DAS employees from four different business centers have been driving through piles and piles of mileage reports as part of a new Fleet reduction survey.

"The Governor asked DAS to conduct a thorough review of state fleet operations vehicles. That means we'll be going agency by agency, vehicle by vehicle," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

"We're evaluating the overall usage and miles that all state vehicles incur and where there is an opportunity for reduction and savings," said Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola who now oversees Fleet Operations.

accomplishments, so she thought we deserved a nomination for the *Hartford Courant's* annual "Diversity Makes A Difference" Tapestry Award. Donna's inspiration and research along with **Sandee Sharr's** expert editorial skills resulted in the submission of a professional package!"

ues to increase. "It takes a lot of effort by **Meg Yetishefsky** and **everyone in Business CONNections** to make this happen, and it helps both agencies and Procurement meet our set-aside goals. Great job!"

John Pacholski praised **Chris Smith** "for all his help in setting up Lotus Notes for Betty Johnson, Maureen Blackburn, Rob Zalucki and myself as we

moved to East Hartford to work on the CoreCT Project. He fielded many calls per day from us as we set up our personal e-mailboxes and four other unit e-mailboxes. Each call was dealt with in a friendly, courteous manner and a with sense of urgency. I want to publicly thank Chris and let him know that his help was appreciated very much."

J. Bruce Boisture of Edsmart commended **Lydia Rosario** for the "very substantial assistance that she contributed recently in support of the Hartford school system to retain our firm to provide data warehousing and reporting services. She explained how to proceed, and negotiated and structured the appropriate contract. Lydia also explained the advantages of certification as a small business enterprise. **Mark Carroza** reviewed our application promptly, advised us about additional information that he needed and acted with dispatch to approve our completed application."

More Kudos... We Rock!

Rob King at CoreCT thanked **Nina Ritson** for designing the April CoreCT payroll stuffer on such short notice. "This is very quick progress. Thanks for moving business so quickly. You're the best!"

According to Jim Passier, the number of certified suppliers contin-

TOP DOG

By **Mayme Casady**

Sometimes you really can over achieve.

Rebecca, a nine-week-old black Labrador pup that arrived on Valentine's Day 2000 to stay with foster parents Paul and Ellen Felix, is an example of how hard work, and discipline can turn a little puppy into a top dog.

Felix and his wife Ellen, along with sons Zachary and Joey accepted the job of training a seeing-eye dog.

up close

With a preference for Labs over the typical German Shepherds, Ellen had asked a local veterinarian how to contact the Guiding Eyes for the Blind (GEB). GEB is a non-profit organization that breeds and supplies guide dogs to blind people at no charge. Within a week, the Felix's had Rebecca.

There was a lot more than house-breaking to deal with.

"You have to equate it with the need for 'better manners.' She had to be trained never to steal food off the table, not to jump onto furniture, or greet guests, and never go through the garbage. We'd put a hot dog on the floor and she would have to ignore it. We trained her not to react to decoys; these dogs require a tremendous amount of supervision," said Felix.

The job of teaching obedience and socialization skills included the exposure to traffic, sidewalks, stairs, stores, libraries, and malls.

Rebecca even went to church with the Felixes as they gradually added more stimuli to her world.

She was subsequently confronted with an umbrella opening fast, people making quick movements and even the sound of gunshots that eventually had no effect on her at all.

Rebecca and Ellen would go to classes in Granby twice a month where the pup was tested for confidence and stability.

Apparently the Felixes did too good of a job with Rebecca.

After 21-months with them, Rebecca was chosen as a brood (female for breeding) for GEB. Today, Rebecca lives with a foster family in Carmel, N.Y., and has had two litters of pups.

Her life is much different than it might have been; while awaiting her litter she spent a lot of time at GEB headquarters in Yorktown Heights, N.Y. and has specials walks, a clean kennel, and a life of privilege. She is part of the elite class of dogs there chosen to pass on her genetics.

Ellen explained that because of close breeding and the desire for a calm, confident personality in the lineage, Rebecca was considered an ideal candidate for a brood.

Since these dogs are raised to guide blind people around city streets they have to be confident guide dogs. That is the challenge. Seven-week-old puppies are given three tests before going on to their 21-month adoption.

Puppies that are too hyper or may have an undesirable quality are automatically released from the program; however, 60 percent of the dogs bred for the program do become guide dogs.

If a dog goes all the way through the 21-month training and is not considered for the program, the foster family gets first choice to keep the dog.

If they decline, the dog may be released to the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents and used for bomb sniffing and arson.

Ellen has since gone to Yorktown Heights, N.Y. to see Rebecca's pups. She said Rebecca still knows who she is and let her pick up her pups.

Does Rebecca still have those "better manners?"

Ellen puts it in context, "There is the wiggle world and there is the real world, now Rebecca can relax a little more."

Ellen is now a trainer with the program and works twice a month in Granby with guide dogs.

Every third month there is a "home swap," of puppies and Paul jokes, "We always get the ones with the

Rebecca (top) and her babies



behavioral problems."

Felix reflects: "It takes loads of time, like a project that's living with you. You are working at it 24 hours a day. It's a long hard road to be this accurate. When it's done it is very rewarding. It's a great personal satisfaction."

Ed. note: Special thanks to Mayme Casady for her contributions to the DAS Times.

Big Solutions for Small Businesses

By John McKay

We do a lot more than just certify small business,” said Business CONNecTions director Meg Yetishefsky.

And she’s so right.

Over the past year and a half, Business CONNecTions has taken serious marketing initiatives to get the word out on the program and “Make the Connection” with small businesses in ways otherwise not thought of.

Business CONNecTions was highlighted in the October/November issue of *CT Business* magazine, Yetishefsky was just interviewed for the next *New Haven Business Journal*, and Business CONNecTions was recently mentioned in a television advertisement supplied by the Permanent Council on the Status of Women.

But free media can’t do it all, and Yetishefsky knows that.

“The Secretary of State’s office hosts several workshops a year across Connecticut to get the word out on what the state can do to help small business,” she said.

It’s March, and the Business CONNecTions team has already been to three of these workshops.

“They’re great for getting new business and letting people know how we can help them. We expect to go to a lot more of these,” said Yetishefsky.

“We know our program is working on many different levels,” said Yetishefsky.

At a Connecticut Inner City Entrepreneurship Awards banquet hosted by the Department of Economic and

Community Development in March, four out of the ten recipients were clients of Business CONNecTions. The award celebrated the fastest growing companies located within Connecticut’s inner cities.

“I know Business CONNecTions had a bit to do with their success,” added Yetishefsky.

The Div2000.com Multicultural e-Business Solution seminar in February gave the Business CONNecTions team a unique opportunity to not only showcase their own talents, but also meet their private sector counterparts who are doing the same thing for their companies.

“I kept bouncing ideas off of this guy from Coca-Cola on how they manage their program and he gave me a lot of insight,” said Yetishefsky.

“I was proud to hear many people say that they were surprised by how advanced our program was.”

The newest member of the Business CONNecTions team is Mark Carroza. Previously in DAS’ Procurement office, Mark’s finance and contract background is already paying off.

“I’ve been able to work with other state agencies to help them achieve their small business set-aside goals.”



L to R: The Business CONNecTions Team of Mark Carroza, Lawrence Gore, Meg Yetishefsky, Reuben Jonathan-Lusack and Lynn Peccerillo

Many state agencies have statutory regulations directing at least some of their contracts to small businesses.

“They realize now they have someone to call to help make fiscal decisions on meeting their goals,” said Carroza.

“We’ve really been concentrating on the “connection” part of our business,” said Yetishefsky.

“Finding different ways of solving small business problems and getting them more work. Connecting them to the solution. Before, clients used to say ‘No we can’t do that,’ now we ask ‘Why?’ Each issue is different, but there’s no reason why we can’t succeed.”

“It’s very gratifying,” said Business CONNecTions’ Reuben Jonathan-Lusack. “You see a small business just getting by with what they’re doing. Then you get them enrolled in our program and see them flourish with all the new business they get.”

victories

CoreCT

What DASers Are Helping To Make It Happen ?

By Donna Micklus
and Cathy Daly

Hailed as one of the most ambitious undertakings in Connecticut state government, the CoreCT project will replace the state's 'core' financial and administrative computer systems.

All of them.

That means central and agency accounting, purchasing, accounts payable, assets, inventory, payroll, time and attendance, workers' compensation, personnel, and other business systems will be merged into a single data base.

"It's a tremendous investment of time, money and people, but the potential is really staggering," said DAS' **Cathy Daly**, one of the project directors who has been on loan to CoreCT since August of 2001.

CoreCT will eliminate much of the needless complication of daily tasks for business office and human resources employees. There will be a single point of entry for transactions and approvals, as well as the ability to do reports and queries right from the user's desktop.

"We will have the ability to do 'strategic reporting' by running reports from the system that will give us all the info we need to make decisions on procurement, and human resources," Daly explained.

Daly said the project has three major components: financials, procurement, and human resources/payroll.

Co-located with DOIT's offices in East Hartford, Daly is in good company with a number of DAS folks with expertise in those functions that have joined CoreCT's ranks:

Lina Simonu, Human Resources Management System lead (HRMS), **Patty Kokonowski**, **Nick Visone**, and **Shari Grzyb** are on the HRMS team, **Cathy Bysiewicz-Cluen**, Change Management/Training Team Lead, **Anne Pomeroy Dixon**, Agency Readiness Coordinator, **Michael Clark**, Agency Readiness Coordinator, **Mary Yabrosky**, EPM Data Warehouse team, **Janet Knopf**, EPM Data Warehouse team, **Kathleen Sullivan** and **Linda Shackett-Blue** will be supporting the registration process for CoreCT training. **Michelle Burns** will be doing training in the new HR system.

Procurement staff joining the project, at least through July 31, are: **Joann Bellamo**, **John Pacholski**, **Rob Zalucki**, **Maureen Blackburn**, **Maureen Friedman**, and **Teresa Dupont**.

"How better to show our commitment for this project than by making the valuable contribution of our staff?" said DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters.

The training effort is scheduled to start the first week in April with overview classes, followed in mid-April by hands-on classroom training where users will learn how the system works. Daly said that 2,000 financial users will be attending training starting next week.

There will be a practice environment (called a sandbox) and learning labs for people to keep their skills sharp before the system goes live.

"CoreCT will perform very differently from the way we do our business today. Although it may take

some time to get used to the new system, we have an extensive training program ready to help users through the conversion," Daly said.

"We are confident that, with everyone continuing to work together, CoreCT will prove to be the right road for our state to take into the future," Daly said.

The CoreCT Implementation Plan is Divided into Four Separate Parts

Human Resources Management System (HRMS) Phases 1 and 2, and Financials Phases 1 and 2.

HRMS Phase 1 implementation began in January 2002 and will be complete in October 2003.

HRMS Phase 2 implementation will begin in September 2003 and will be complete in July 2004.

Financials Phase 1 implementation began in March 2002 and will be complete in July 2003.

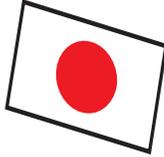
Financials Phase 2 implementation will begin in October 2003 and will be complete in January 2004.

Procurement is included in the Financial Phases.

DIVERSITY

Happenings

...our strength is in our differences



A Taste of DAS Diversity Luncheon Extravaganza

What's for lunch?? Prime those taste buds.

Italian, Portuguese, African, Russian, Mexican, German, Jamaican, Chinese, Swedish, Cajun, Irish, English. And they are just the entrees... there are tons of desserts, too!!

Where can you dine on such a diverse cuisine? The United Nations? Good guess. Wrong.

At the Taste of DAS Diversity Luncheon Extravaganza, Thursday, May 8 from 11:00 to 1:00 on the 5th floor, 165 Capitol Avenue.

Its fun -and the food is fantastic! What dish should you bring? Dig out that favorite family recipe or simply experiment!

The DAS Diversity Council welcomes contributions of dishes that represent our agency's rich, diverse origins and cultures. We all come from such unique backgrounds and carry with us history, stories and favorite foods that may have been in our families for decades, perhaps even generations.

So start leafing through that old recipe box, and share your favorite family recipe and family history with your coworkers in the DAS family.

What a great way to get together, sample delicious food, and learn a little more about the folks you work with everyday.

In preparation of this scrumptious event, please contact the following coordinators by **April 18** with the name of your dish and they will provide a recipe card for you to fill out for display. Let them know if a sterno pan will be needed to keep your food heated.

Coordinators

Ann Galbert	x5224
Laura McNelly	x5258
Sonji Fonseca	x5392
Bettye Bishop	x5105
Julie Bernosky	x5065
Mary Stubbs	x5100
Cathy Abadom	x5476
Jane Gore	x5144
Jose Rivera	566-2720
Carla Kushin	x5193
Dave Lynn	x5107

