



Governor Rell names Yelmini, Ficeto to lead DAS

Inside this Issue

By Donna Micklus and John McKay

The first question just has to be, *So, how's it going so far?* "My first few weeks have been good," was the response of DAS' new Commissioner, Linda J. Yelmini, in her first *DAS Times* interview since taking over the agency reins on January 1.

"My transition has been pretty easy because of my previous experience in state government, and by the fact that I already knew a few people here at DAS," Yelmini stated. She has been making the rounds introducing herself to employees and said, "everyone's been very nice in welcoming me here."

Yelmini served as Director of the Office of Labor Relations from 1997. As the state's top labor lawyer, she was the Governor's representative for collective bargaining matters with state employees. Prior to that she served as Assistant Director of Labor Relations from 1990 to 1997.

In announcing the appointment, Governor Rell said Yelmini "brings to the job a great talent for working with people and the ability to get things done."

Though in her new job less than a month, Yelmini has hit the ground running and is already focusing on long and short-term goals. When asked about where she sees the agency in the next two years, she explained that she would like DAS to offer more centralized services to smaller agencies, assisting them in their needs and efforts.

"We want to see them succeed, and we'll do what we can to help," she added.

What's on the up-close radar screen for DAS?

"I think ethics in state contracts will be a major focus of the Governor, and DAS will support her efforts in making state contracts open and fair to everyone," Yelmini said.



Linda J. Yelmini

On a personal note in talking about her interests, she said, "I love sewing, quilting and embroidery. I have a great sewing machine that can be programmed to do all sorts of different types of sewing, and I really love it."

Some of her works adorn the walls of her office, and next time we might even tell you about the gilded sneaker bookends on her desk!

DAS also has a new Deputy Commissioner, Anna M. Ficeto.

"I'm still getting a feel for the agency," said Ficeto who has been on the job since



Anna M. Ficeto

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Laurie Melesko



Team Excellence: Brian Saczawa, Paul Felix, Kathleen Sobieski, Karen Rakowski, Catherine Abadom, Shirley Drueschler, Tracie Knapsack, Lorraine Thibeault, Jean Michael, Patty Fazzino, Jerry Lynn, Deborah Jeanfaivre, Melissa Colonese, Norma Villanueva, Loretta Miller, Diane Preble, Isaac Eze, Catherine Stankoski



Going the Extra Mile: Kathy Sobieski, Catherine Abadom, Deborah Jeanfaivre



Going the Extra Mile:
John Pacholski and Joann Bellamo



Going the Extra Mile:
Laurel Young

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Linda J. Yelmini
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Capitol Notes: The 2005 Legislative Session

By Nina Ritson and Donna Micklus



of legislative business will be the confirmation hearings on the new commissioner, Linda J. Yelmini. Keilty said the public hearing to consider the commissioner's confirmation, which will occur in front of the Legislative and Executive Nominations Committee, will most likely happen sometime in mid-February.

DAS' own legislative package is a varied one.

One proposal protects the integrity of the procurement process by exempting from Freedom of Information Act disclosure vendor responses to Requests for Proposals and

records or files made in connection with an award process.

"DAS strongly believes that disclosing this information before a contract is awarded would greatly compromise DAS'

ability to negotiate the best contract value for taxpayers," Keilty said.

Another proposal would remove provisions that bottleneck or do not add value to the contractor prequalification process.

FSC's Abbie Wotkyns would like to see a bill become law that would maximize state revenue.

This bill would establish an intercept process by which insurance companies who pay out settlements would be required to cross-reference a state website that lists debtors to the state. The state debt would be paid prior to the debtor's receipt of personal injury or workers' compen-

sation insurance monies.

It is still very early in the session, but already Keilty has seen bills coming in from other representatives that could impact the business at DAS.

As she read down the list, she pointed to a bill that requires DAS to implement ethics training statewide.

There are also a handful of small business set-aside proposals listed already – for example, a bill that would give preference to employers who hire people coming off public assistance, and another that gives preference to microenterprises, or employers with less than 10 employees and annual gross revenue of less than \$500,000.

In addition to these proposals, Keilty says the important bills to watch will be the ethics and contract reform proposals that she expects will come out of the Governor's Office, the Office of the Attorney General, and from individual lawmakers, all of whom may have different solutions to what they see as similar problems faced by the state.

Keilty went on to explain that many more proposals will be coming up over the next few weeks.

"It is the work of the legislators to mull through them all, combine similar proposals, compromise and then decide what should be considered by the full legislature," she explained.

Lawmakers have a lot of work to do over the next few months – as does the DAS Legislative Liaison!

The *DAS Times* will keep you posted!

"The people of Connecticut expect much from us, and we should expect much from ourselves. Join me in making Connecticut stronger. Join me in being bold. Join me in seeing things through different eyes. For this is our moment. This is our time."

Excerpt from Governor M. Jodi Rell's
State of the State Address
January 5, 2005

With those words, the 2005 legislative session began its six-month long challenge. While predictions for what lies ahead may be premature, clear themes have already emerged.

DAS Legislative Liaison Andrea Frankl Keilty says, "It is about change - the focus of this session will be on Governor Rell's widespread proposals for ethics reform and contracting reform."

How will these changes affect DAS?

Actually, DAS has already seen some changes of its own over the last month, and one of the first orders

Doug Rinaldi commended **Nina Ritson** for the forms and brochures that she designed for Workers' Compensation. "I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for all your effort associated with their production. You are a pleasure to work with."

Kudos to **Vin Lombardo** from UCONN and Keane, Inc. for sharing DAS/HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Security Procedures. "Thanks for sharing and getting these to me so quickly - much faster than I'd hoped for. They will provide just the sorts of examples that I'd hoped for."

Kerry DiMatteo extended her thanks to **Cindy Milardo** and **Maureen Blackburn** "for taking the time to do a supplement for the Bank One contract and for getting it up on the web. You have no idea how much I appreciate your help and assistance!! THANK YOU!!!"

Kudos to **Paul Felix** from Angela Armstrong and Carol Ferro from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for a detailed DMHAS Revenue Report. "Great job Paul! Thank you very much. It is much appreciated."

Commissioner Darlene Dunbar from the Department of Children and Families praised the DAS Annual Report produced by the **DAS Communications Office**: "I have to tell you again that I am consistently impressed with DAS' professionalism—the packaging and use of technology for the Annual Report CD ROM is impressive and just brings class to every product you all produce; way to go!"

Jean Michael commended **Sue Turko** "for the super job that you did setting up 12 interviews back to back

and also bringing back the final three in such a short time frame. The way that you set up the appointments made the interview process flow very smoothly. Your professionalism, efficiency, and timeliness were greatly appreciated. Thank you again Sue!"

Kudos to **Lori Thibeault** and **Melissa Colonese** from Mike Felix for their help on completing this year's Tax Exempt Certificate Project. "I appreciate your help with this cumbersome task. Thanks again to both of you!"

Governor M. Jodi Rell announced a \$2 million state grant to demolish the Meriden Hub at a midday news conference. Adam Liegeot from the Governor's Office commended **Nina Ritson** for her contribution to the ceremony and wrote: "Governor Rell delivered the money, but Mrs. Ritson delivered the 'big check' in the nick of time. Thanks, Nina!"

Director Kerry L. Flaherty from the Office of Emergency Management applauded **Donna Micklus** "for participating in Connecticut's federally evaluated Millstone Power Station exercise. Donna's support of the Press Desk as part of the Governor's Emergency Communications Team was a major factor in being able to successfully carry out the Joint Information Center functions. She contributed significantly to the success of the exercise..."

Astread Ferron-Poole from the Department of Social Services requested assistance from DAS to answer some questions regarding CoreCT and conveyed her thanks to **Cathy Daly**. "I can't begin to tell you how very helpful it was to have **Lina Simonu** and **Nick Visone** attend our HR staff meeting. They are so knowledgeable and were a big help

in helping us understand better how Core is supposed to work. On behalf of all of HR we are grateful for their assistance and thank you for your support as well."

A message from Carol Wilson to the Supplier Diversity/Business Connections Team: "I want to take a moment to congratulate **Meg Yetishefsky** and her entire **Business Connections Team**. Today we were able to help celebrate the success of her efforts in administering the Supplier Diversity Program, and her team's success in working individually with each and every one of these small and minority business owners. As we witnessed Proconci Services, LLC have their business dreams come to fruition at the Adriaen's Landing Project, the positive results of this team's efforts were apparent

hats off

By **Cindy Rusczyk**

and clearly had a direct influence on this company's success (thank you Reuben for personally working with this Minority Supplier). This was a huge day for the Business Connections team! Way to go!"

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz commended the **Business CONNECTIONS Team**. "Thank you for providing DAS staff to assist us in producing a successful Business Showcase in New Haven. We are grateful for their help in making the Showcases successful. **Meg Yetishefsky** and her staff have played an integral role by making the

continued on next page

products and services of DAS available at all of our business events. The support from DAS has been invaluable and we must continue these joint outreach efforts for the benefit of the people of Connecticut.”

Director of Equal Opportunity Assurance Robert C. Jackson Jr. from the Department of Correction wrote to Martin Anderson regarding the assistance he received from **Steve Soklow**. “I want to inform you of the tremendous amount of support and assistance we have received from your employee, Steve Soklow, relative to CORE Affirmative Action reports. Steve has been very helpful to us in acquiring the necessary information to complete this year’s Affirmative Action Plan. Thank you.”

Congratulations to **Lawrence Gore** from Carol Wilson for “your induction to Phi Theta Kappa. Your hard work has definitely paid off in your educational pursuits. This is a huge honor for you! Congratulations and keep me posted on future accomplishments!”

Ed Kane commended **Jose Baez** for “the excellent support you gave Fleet when our network went down in Norwich. Your diagnosis was right on and the problem was resolved immediately. We are lucky to have a person with your knowledge and professionalism in DAS. Thank you.”

Isabelle McKinney thanked **John McKay** for his assistance with the *Sweet Taste of DAS* on November 18. “I cannot say thank you enough for all the help and advice that you always give, especially when I need it most. Again, you helped us to look good! Thanks much!!

HR’s Kathleen Kabara said, “Thank you to all our wonderful **DAS train-**

ers who took time out of their busy schedules to make the HR learning Center Open House on November 19 a success. The open house generated business and interest in DAS’ HRLC, and I thank you for all your help.”

Maureen Friedman praised **Alex Caceres** from the DAS Print Shop who “was a great help with our printing needs for CT \$hops 2004. It didn’t matter if it was postcards, posters, name badges or any other printed material, Alex would get the job done quickly and professionally. I don’t know what we would have done without him.”

Communications Director Dan Tapper from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor sent the following message to the DAS Communications Office: “I just wanted to drop a note to you to tell you how much help **Alex Caceres** in the DAS Print Shop was to our office this week. I gave him an incredibly rushed job...on Tuesday morning – 100 collated, stapled color booklets detailing the Lt. Governor’s Mental Health plan – with very little notice, yet he was able to get the job done with time to spare. Alex was a pleasure to work with and I cannot thank him enough for handling a tough job with such class and ability.”

Commissioners, *cont. from p. 1*

January 3. “I was in DPW before so I’m putting names and faces together while learning more and more about DAS. Everyone’s been really helpful and friendly in my transition.”

While at DPW, Ficeto was the Director of Communications, Legislation, and Regulations. Before that, from 1996 to 2003, she served as Legislative and Administrative Manager for the Department of Consumer Protection. She also spent five years as an Associate Attorney in a private law firm.

When asked about her areas of concentration in DAS, Ficeto said, “Right now I see it being Procurement and Fleet. I have a contract background that I think can help our Procurement office in tweaking some contract language, and I feel being proactive in these situations is better than being reactive to outside influences.”

She also said she wants to utilize to the greatest extent possible the DAS website for customer services, and to implement recommendations from Governor Rell’s Contracting Reform Task Force.

With two small children, she acknowledges that her free time is limited, but when asked what she likes to do for fun she says traveling to a warmer climate suits her just fine.

“My husband is an accountant so anytime after April 15 we like to take a quick trip. We’ve been to Orlando, Florida and the Bahamas – anywhere it’s nice and warm. It’s great to get out of the cold for a while,” she said.

As temperatures outside hover around 8 degrees, DAS extends a warm welcome to Commissioner Yelmini and Deputy Commissioner Ficeto!

It was a literally a banner day for small business

By John McKay

When Wilmer Valverde's three-person company was certified as a small, minority-owned business by DAS, it meant he could finally compete with much larger companies for construction contracts. But for three years, success proved elusive.

So when he applied for a contract with the state's largest construction project - the \$230 million Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford - he told the general contractor he didn't expect a call back. He was sure his company, Proconci Services of Ansonia, would be rejected for being too small for the job.

He was wrong. In November, Valverde and his seven-person company raised a banner of gratitude at the convention center, where he's installing metal panels with an artist's passion, 100 feet in the air. A native of Columbia, Valverde said raising the banner was one of his proudest moments.

"Every dream is possible with the right people and the right help,"

Valverde said. "DAS, the Regional Business Alliance, Hunt-Gilbane, the Waterford Group – they all grabbed my hand and they never let go. I feel like everything I've been working for all these years has finally come together."

From DAS' point of view, Valverde's success is something to raise a banner about.

Meg Yetishfsky, DAS Director of Small and Minority Business Program, says growing Connecticut's economy through companies like Proconci Services is a major focus of the state's small



The new Connecticut Convention Center, a pillar of Adriaen's Landing, sports a banner thanking DAS' Business CONNections for helping small businesses.

business initiative.

"The convention center is doing a great job," she said.

"The project is a good example of how the integration of small/minority businesses can be successfully achieved."

Yetishfsky went on to say, "More than a third of the contracts awarded for the

Connecticut Convention Center have gone to small businesses, including minority and female-owned firms. That means 35% of the \$171 million in contracts, or \$59.2 million, has gone to small business firms."

"Hunt/Gilbane recognizes that small and minority businesses are an integral part of all construction projects," said Patrick Delany, Hunt/Gilbane's purchasing agent for the project. "The DAS Set Aside program really helps to identify and reach out to those businesses."

The State of Connecticut Minority and Small Contractors' Set-Aside Program was established for the purpose of assuring that Connecticut small and small minority-owned businesses have an opportunity to bid on a portion of the state's purchases. Under the program, 25% of state-funded purchases are set aside for small businesses. In addition, 25% of that amount is reserved for small businesses that are minority/women-owned.



DAS is proud of its role in helping small business get state contracts, such as the Connecticut Convention Center.

DAS Hosts Single Portal Site

By Donna Micklus

The DAS website is now home to the state's new State Contracting Portal. On December 13, Governor M. Jodi Rell issued Executive Order No. 3 which directs all state agencies to post bids, requests for proposals, and resulting contracts and agreements on the Internet-accessible site.

Jim Passier, who sits on the Contract Reform Task Force initiated by Governor Rell in July, said the new single portal is in response to one of the Task Force's principle recommendations.

"By creating a single location for all state contracts, we're offering the same 24/7 access to all state contracting opportunities. Vendors now have one-stop shopping and taxpayers have access to an open and transparent contracting process," Passier said.

The Executive Order also directs DAS to include in the portal prominent features to encourage the active recruitment and participation of small businesses, including women- and minority-owned businesses.

"I want to make sure that small businesses have total access to state contract information," Governor Rell said. These businesses are vital to Connecticut's economy and it's important that we provide them with an equal opportunity to compete for state contracts."

Over 30 state agencies and municipalities have already posted contracts on the portal. Passier also emphasized that DAS has held training sessions to make the posting process as seamless as possible.

DAS Commission Linda Yelmini said that DAS must periodically report to the Governor's Office the progress of state agencies in meeting the mandates of Executive Order No. 3. "This is about creating a level playing field with the highest legal and ethical standards and values," Yelmini said.



IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR!

By John McKay

The Employee Recognition Program (ERP) wrapped up the year at the festively decorated Solomon Wells House in Wethersfield. Winners were guests of honor at a celebratory luncheon hosted by the committee.

"The program continues to generate a lot of positive feedback from employees," said ERP program coordinator Cheryl Cepelak. "We've been doing it now for six years and it just keeps getting better and better."

The Winners!

The Team Excellence Award went to the FSC Business Office

for their hard work and dedication, not only on a daily basis, but especially at the close of each fiscal year:

Catherine Abadom, Juliet Colebrook, Melissa Colonese, Shirley Drueschler, Isaac Eze, Patty Fazzino, Michael Felix, Deborah Jeanfaivre, Tracie Knapsack, Jean Michael, Loretta Miller, Diane Preble, Christopher Roberts, Karen Rakowski, Catherine Stankoski, Brian Saczawa, Kathleen Sobieski, Lorraine Thibeault, Norma Villanueva.

For Customer Service, it was Laurie Melesko, a member of the Procurement team, who always goes above and beyond any task presented to her. Her nomination stated that she is "organized, efficient, and pleasant and will never let you down."

For the Going the Extra Mile category, there were a few winners:

Catherine Abadom, Deborah Jeanfaivre and Kathleen Sobieski, were double winners for their hard work and their refusal to accept the

old standard of "this is the way we've always done it." They consistently work to improve services and relationships with customer agencies.

Joann Bellamo and John Pacholski also received the Going the Extra Mile award for their commitment to the implementation of the Core-CT system over the past few years.

Laurel Young, a member of the FSC Collections team, also won the Going the Extra Mile award. Her nominator stated "...she goes about her job quietly, but always in an exemplary manner. She strives daily to complete each and every duty with efficiency and decorum. Laurel genuinely cares and is always ready to help."

Congrats to all...way to go!

DAS Helps Strike Out Kidney Disease

By Nina Ritson

The air is frigid, the skies are foreboding, and spring is months away. So what is there to do on a Saturday night in the doldrums of February? Strap on those two-tone leather shoes and go bowling – for a cause!

And a worthy cause it is. The brainchild of Ray Bailey and Kathleen Kabara, the “bowl-a-thon” to raise money for the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) will be held on Saturday, February 6, at Silver Lane Bowling in East Hartford. By all accounts, it will be fun to play, fun to watch, fun to share good food and sing a little karaoke!

How did this come about?

Four months ago Bailey, a Kidney Kaptain for the NKF of Connecticut and kidney transplant recipient himself, was reminiscing with one of his former UMASS fraternity brothers.

“Back then even at the age of 19, we were able to pull together a bowl-a-thon to raise money for inner city schools in Springfield. Then it hit

me...I could do a bowl-a-thon to raise money for the NKF.” He sought approval from the DAS sponsors and they said, “Run with it!”

With the seed planted and growing, he now needed to enlist a little help.

“Kathleen is great to bounce things off of – just give it to her and walk away. She will bounce it up against the wall – see what sticks – and all of a sudden you have an organized plan!” Bailey said. He was full of praise for Kabara’s ability to pull together a highly successful event on the spot.

“This is a great opportunity for families to get together, for kids to learn something about charity - a feel-good thing!” Kabara responded. Together, their efforts have already brought in 50 bowlers and over \$600 in contributions.

The giving doesn’t stop there.

In addition to enlisting bowlers, Kabara and Bailey signed up 51 people who gave blood at the American Red Cross Blood Drive on the



Kathleen Kabara and Ray Bailey organize DAS bowl-a-thon

January 28th at the SOB.

Anyone who can’t make the bowling event but would like to make a contribution, please contact Ray Bailey at 713-5212, Kathleen Kabara at 713-5231, or the National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut directly at 1-800 441-1280 or info@kidneyct.org.

And please remember, blood is in precious low supply right now - if you would like to give blood, contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE-LIFE or bloodct@usa.redcross.org for an upcoming drive in your area.



Do you recognize this man? He’s famous!

Dr. Martin Anderson’s article, “The Metrics of Workforce Planning,” was published in the Winter 2004 Issue of *Public Personnel Management*. Here’s the site address:

http://www.das.state.ct.us/HR/WorkForce/MA_Workforce_Planning.pdf

The Many Meanings of Diversity



...our strength is in our differences

By Maureen Friedman

When we celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. in January, we are reminded of Dr. King's struggle to end segregation and how he appreciated the diversity of the world. Regardless of our race, culture or lifestyle, we know that "all men are created equal" and that each of us, through our words and deeds, can make a difference in our sphere of influence. We can choose to embrace diversity or push it away.

Many great men and women through the ages have contemplated the meaning and the importance of diversity and have left us with profound words to reflect upon. Here are some of their quotes along with the name of the person credited with saying them.

Jean de La Fontaine (French poet, 1621-1695)

"Beware, as long as you live, of judging people by appearances."

Abraham Lincoln (16th U.S. President, 1809-1865)

"Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."

Max Lerner (Russian-born American teacher, 1902-1992)

"In the end, as any successful teacher will tell you, you can only teach the things that you are. If we practice racism then it is racism we teach."

Lillian Hellman (U.S. playwright, 1905-1984)

"No one can argue any longer about the rights of women. It's like arguing about earthquakes."

John F. Kennedy (U.S. president, 1917-1963)

"If a free society cannot help the many that are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Martin Luther King, Jr. (U.S. clergyman and civil rights leader, 1929-1968)

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

"We must learn together as brothers or perish together as fools."

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Audre Lorde (U.S. poet, 1934-1992)

"Battling racism and battling heterosexism and battling apartheid share the same urgency inside me as battling cancer."

June Jordan (U.S. poet, journalist, activist, 1937-)

"If we even tolerate any oppression of gay and lesbian Americans, if we join those who would intrude upon the choices of our hearts, then who among us shall be free?"

The Reverend Jesse Jackson (U.S. minister and civil rights activist, 1941-)

"His foreparents came to America in immigrant ships. My foreparents came to America in slave ships. But whatever the original ships, we are both in the same boat tonight."

Debra Kent (U.S. writer, 1948-)

"Though people with disabilities have become more vocal in recent years, we still constitute a very small minority. Yet the Beautiful People - the slender, fair and perfect ones - form a minority that may be even smaller."

Thanks to the Multicultural Pavilion website for providing these quotes. If you are interested in reading more quotes about diversity or other information about multicultural education, jot down this web address and check it out from your home computer: <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/index.html>.

The Diversity Council wishes everyone a happy, healthy and diverse new year!!