

DAS Times

A Newsletter of The Department of Administrative Services



ISSUE 167 MAY 2008

In the Spotlight. ■ ■ By Cathy Daly and Martin Anderson

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Lina Simonu



Lina Simonu with DAS colleagues Cathy Daly and Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson

On Monday, May 12, Lina Simonu of DAS' Core-CT team was honored to receive the Eastern Region International Personnel Managers' Association – Human Resources Specialist of the Year Award at the Eastern Region Conference in Hyannis, Massachusetts.

The award recognizes and encourages innovation and high standards in the day-to-day work of public HR management. It provides individual peers recognition for applying HR management procedures to gain the confidence of management and employees at all levels, instilling understanding of proper management techniques for users of HR services; and resolving complex personnel management issues.

Lina was nominated for her work on the Core-CT project which started out as a 6-8 week assignment to evaluate proposals and has turned into an 8-year commitment to the State's first integrated Enterprise Resource Planning

(ERP) system. Lina has been a key player on the HRMS team since the beginning – from product selection to testing, configuration, troubleshooting, training, answering help-desk calls and developing improved functionality.

To quote the nomination letter, "Ms. Simonu is the consummate professional, ever supportive and patient to whatever needs arise. It is because of her tireless effort to support so many Human Resources professionals to make this new integrated computer system work that we honor her with this nomination."

Rick Miarecki, Doug Belli

Rick Miarecki and Doug Belli were among the honorees at an awards ceremony on May 14 for their work on The Data At Rest Encryption (D.A.R.E.) Workgroup, an interagency team which evaluated and selected the Encryption product.

In all, more than 100 agency employees from 29 agencies were recognized for their role in the State's accelerated laptop encryption initiative.



Rick Miarecki with Commissioner Brenda Sisco

The initiative, led by the Department of Information Technology and executed by IT professionals statewide, resulted in the successful encryption of more than 6,000 laptop computers in just six weeks.

Held at Manchester Community College, the ceremony also featured congratulations from Governor M. Jodi Rell.

"This was an unprecedented enterprise IT security mobilization involving collaboration between IT professionals throughout the executive branch," the Governor said.

Awardees also received certificates signed by Governor Rell and Chief Information Officer Diane S. Wallace.

Martin Anderson on Behalf of Sandra Biloan

The Connecticut IPMA for Human Resources nominated Sandra G. Biloan to receive the prestigious Eastern Region Charles H. Cushman Award for significant and lasting contributions to personnel management and administration. Biloan's last position, before retiring from the state in 1991, was as Director of Personnel and Labor Relations at DAS.

On May 12, DAS Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson was asked to come to

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All Done in Great Taste

Nina Ritson

“Welcome aboard!” came the call from the cruise directors on Wednesday, May 14 as they threw open the hatches of the Fifth Floor North Mechanical Room.

Once again it was time to “mangia” for the 7th Annual TASTE OF DAS titled “Cruise Around the World.”

Boarding ship on the S.S. DAS Smorgasbord, a DAS badge was your passport to this culinary adventure.

As in the past seven years, the Diversity Council, with Captain Carlos Kebe and Ship’s Mate Donna Camillone at the helm, joined forces with DAS employees (and their many cooking talents) to bring this favorite event by DAS employees, for DAS employees.

“Food was great” said Pauline Mahoney. Co-worker Michelle Fournier had this to say, “Oh, I love the food - great break in the day.”

“Thank you to everyone who participated in the Taste of DAS. A special thank you to all the people who generously brought in all of the delicious food. You all are truly the people who make the Taste of DAS a success!” said Donna Camillone who was very pleased with the turnout.

So it was “comida sin preparacion ni cumplidos” (“*potluck*” in Spanish), and what a wonderful variety of dishes there were at this spread.

The buffet started off with curried shrimp



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M. Jodi Rell Governor

Brenda L. Sisco Commissioner

Donna J. Micklus Editor

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“I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree...”

By Nina Ritson

Joyce Kilmer wrote that poem in 1913, but its words are timeless.

Against a backdrop of just-blooming trees and wielding ‘gold-plated’ shovels, several Commissioners and agency officials, including DAS Commissioner Brenda Sisco, gathered on the lawn of the State Office Building Friday, April 25 to break ground and plant white oak trees for Arbor Day.

Connecticut’s Arbor Day, first officially celebrated on April 29, 1887, was founded by Kent native Birdsey Grant Northrop (1817 – 1898). Northrop, a Yale graduate, clergyman, educator, and state official, was recognized during his lifetime as a leader in forestry education and tree appreciation.

Master of Ceremonies, Raeanne V. Curtis, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, opened the ceremony saying, “Trees tell us a story in our lives about ourselves.”

Commissioner Gina McCarthy, Department of Environmental Protection, spoke on the Governor’s behalf. “We have Richard Nixon to thank for three things....well for several things actually.... he created the EPA, he established Earth Day, and he declared Arbor Day as the last Friday in April,” she said.

Curtis, Sisco and McCarthy joined with Commissioner F. Philip Prelli, Department of Agriculture; Commissioner Jerry Farrell, Jr., Department of Consumer Protection; Commissioner Dr. Mark K. McQuillan, State Department of Education; Stanley T. Babiarz, Executive Director, State



DAS Commissioner Brenda Sisco joins commissioners and other officials at the tree planting ceremony on Arbor Day

Properties Review Board; Karen Netherton, Manager, Judicial Selection; and Albert Ilg, Chair, Contracting Standards Board to break ground and plant the first of five white oaks, the Connecticut state tree, that were provided by the Connecticut National Guard.

An elm tree was also planted on the opposite side of the State Office Building. This sapling is an offspring of The Survivor Tree, a 90-

year-old American elm that survived the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City.

Survivor Tree saplings have been planted all across the nation by Oklahoma City residents and survivors of the bombing.

“It is a way to focus people’s attention on our country’s future by planting trees connected to our history. Propagating the offspring of this tree brings history alive for all of us, educates us, and inspires hope and healing through the lessons learned from those impacted by these events,” said Sisco.

Arbor Day is dedicated to recognizing the importance of trees in our neighborhoods, towns, cities, and daily life.

Organizations and individuals throughout the world use this day as an occasion to plant trees and to hold ceremonies celebrating the contributions made by such masterpieces of nature. And, as spring is a time of rebirth, it was also appropriate that a tree be planted to replace the familiar enormous lumbering oak that succumbed to disease last summer.

“It is a way to focus people’s attention on our country’s future by planting trees connected to our history.”

—Commissioner Brenda Sisco

Commissioner Brenda Sisco thanked all the DAS committee members who organized this year's Seventh Annual State of Connecticut Nurse of the Year Awards Ceremony. "I know it's not an easy task, but you make the final product so professional and enjoyable to everyone who attends," said Sisco. DAS committee members include: **Francine Dew – chairperson, Michael Cosgrove, Lisa DeLayo, Carla Kushin, John McKay, Donna Micklus, Ellen Morris, Scott Nattinger, Rita Rose, Cindy Rusczyk, and Heather Tweeddale.**

hats off

By *Cindy Rusczyk*

Commissioner Sisco also thanked everyone who brought in a dish for the Seventh Annual Taste of DAS. "Like we always say, 'By DAS For DAS' and that's just what everyone did with their participation. Special thanks to the DAS Diversity Committee members who worked so hard to organize the event: **Carlos Kebe, Donna Camillone, Cathy Abadam, Peggy Zabawar, Deborah Peterson, Quincy Cole, Juliet Colebrook, and Glenda Rollins.**"

Don Casella thanked **Ann Simeone** "for taking the initiative to schedule training with the Department of Labor on Standard and Prevailing Wage. This is one of the more intricate parts of the job that we have not received formal training on since 2002."

Carol Wilson also commended **Ann Simeone** saying, "Ann, thanks for putting this together and running with this critical training for our procurement staff."

Diane Preble applauded **Dan Sadowski** "for the quick service in repairing Loretta Miller's keyboard tray!"

Shari Grzyb praised **Dana Soderlund** "for her diligence in keeping information and several links on the DAS HR page accurate and up-to-date. Great job, Dana!"

Don Casella notified Carol Wilson of the "great improvement that **Steven Beaulieu** made in the existing queries in EPM. He added the field that shows the number of items actually purchased. I ran the query for promotional supplies and it shows, for instance, that 1,000 pens were purchased for \$100. Before all we knew was that \$100 worth of pens were purchased. I would think this would be useful for putting together catalogs and especially 'A-lists'."

Claire Nurse from CleanRite Solutions thanked **Marisol Rivera** "for all of your assistance, patience, and kindness in helping me receive the Supplier Diversity Certificate. I was so confused as to what information was needed. At times, I was technically lost in making the changes you requested. But, whenever I called on you, you were so kind and patient in assisting me. I truly appreciate your kindheartedness. Thank you again."

Tammy Talbot from the Department of Environmental Protection commended **Paul Greco** "for the rapid turnaround on the RFP for Environmental Design and Impact Evaluations for Endure Events and Off-Road Vehicle uses. I appreciate it. I'll get back to you with names of reviewers. Thanks!"

Deputy Commissioner Jonathan Holmes from the Department of Public Works (DPW) applauded **Ada Rivera** for her special handling of a

supplement to a contract for DPW. Thank you, Ada!"

Director Meg Yetishefsky of the Supplier Diversity Program praised the Supplier Diversity staff of **Margaret Blackburn, Joanne Cusano, Stanley Kenton, Elizabeth Lindee, Gregg Nome, JoAnne Rella and Marisol Rivera** "for all of your hard work on the processing of certifications. We are all doing a great job in working to get the applications processed. Keep up the good work! I appreciate it, but more importantly the companies appreciate it!"

President Lena M. Rose of Rose and Sons, LLC commended **Meg Yetishefsky** on her "quick reply, which is greatly appreciated and very consistent with all of your previous efforts to assist our company whenever we've had questions. My son spoke with Gregg Nome who filled him in on our status, and did an absolute fine job advising us of our current certification and things to follow up on. Once again, 'thank you' for the great professional service and prompt attention. Your department has been a pleasure to work with."

Tina Costanzo applauded **Patrick DeConti** "for his work on this difficult bid for a patrol vessel. Pat worked with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) on fine-tuning specifications for the purchase of this patrol vessel so that this would not be restrictive. He held several high-level meetings with DPS which he managed successfully. His knowledge of his commodities is evident and respected in his dealings with this demanding agency that requires many specialty items that affect people's lives. When responses came in, he negotiated with the successful vendor and was able to exceed expectations for cost and delivery. We're actually one

Continued on next page

month ahead of schedule on this one. Pat exemplifies the title of Contract Specialist and his leadership skills have been influential in gaining respect and credibility with customer agencies. Great job, Patrick!

Kathleen Anderson from the Core-CT Financials Team thanked **Laurie Melesko** for loading certain contracts with either new items or updated pricing. “Wow – you are really cooking, Laurie! Thanks for getting this large volume reviewed, researched, revised, approved and loaded. Great job!”

Kathleen Anderson also praised **Michael Owsianko** and **John Winschel** for the “fantastic job of cleaning up the C&C Janitorial contract. As Michael indicated, it was a tedious and very detailed process. Thank you gentlemen for your tenacity in getting this accomplished. The catalog is improving in leaps and bounds!”

Linda Silviis from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services thanked **Celeste Cashman** “for all of your hard work in getting our requested contracts in place!”

Katherine Foley from Liberty Landscapes, LLC thanked **Marisol Rivera** on her Supplier Diversity Certification. “Thank you very much for all of your help today. I know you didn’t have to do this. I want you to know that I very much appreciate all your work and effort today. The program really works!”

Mary Sweetland from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services sent the following message to **Carol Wilson** regarding the new online Procurement Manual: “Carol, all I can say is WOW!! The new manual is a terrific resource for my staff and myself. It’s so easy to use, everything is in one place and it’s

so complete. Kudos to you and your **Procurement Staff** for creating such a great tool for us!! (And paperless too). Take care!”

Carol Wilson also commented on the positive feedback received from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, thanking **Melissa Christensen**. “Melissa, as I stated this morning, this would not have been possible without your efforts. Nice work!”

Assistant Manager of Employment Services Renee Boggis from UConn thanked **Susan Pawloski-Burke** and **Francine Dew** “for presenting the ‘Navigating the State Exam System’ workshop at UConn. You did an excellent job explaining the merit system and the exam process as well as engaging the audience with good examples and a wonderful sense of

humor! I hope you both enjoyed your visit to UConn! Again, we appreciate your making the time to come out to UConn, and we look forward to working with you again in the future.”

Procurement’s **Jill Belisle** was commended for her great work at a national procurement conference in New Orleans. Walt Atkins, a Senior Account Executive with Meredith-Webb Printing, said, in front of a nationwide gathering of state procurement officials, that he had great customer service from Jill and DAS. Procurement Director Carol Wilson said, “It was great to see Connecticut and DAS get that kind of recognition especially in that particular venue.”

Marita DeMatteo from Jehan Mechanical, LLC sent the following message to Carol Wilson: “Carol, I have had the opportunity and pleasure of working with three of your employees over the last week to get certified by DAS for both the Prequalification Program and the Supplier Diversity Program. **Meg Yetishefsky**, **Peter Hunter** and **Lynn Peccerillo** each went above and beyond to help us through both the application processes and getting us certified in record short time. I cannot tell you how impressed I am with each of them in terms of knowledge, professionalism...and personality! They did it all and made it a pleasant experience also! Special kudos...and many thanks to Meg. She truly is outstanding!”

Rob Zalucki commended **John Pacholski** “for his help with a recent FOI request for a trash hauling spend report. John immediately dropped what he was doing in order to get us this time-sensitive information as quickly as possible. It took a considerable amount of work to extract four years worth of spend data from Core and put into a comprehensive report. Thanks again for your help John!”

Steven Beaulieu of the Core-CT Financials Team praised **Cindy Milaro** for her updates on the Catalog Management Consolidated Weekly Status Report. “I appreciate the support of the team leaders and the entire contracting staff. I think it is evident that identified issues are being researched and resolved in a timely manner.”

Susanne Hawkins sent the following message to Carol Wilson and Tina Costanzo; “I just wanted to let you both know how much I appreciate **Lori Coleman**, **Arlene Watson**,



The New Faces of Fleet Operations

By Donna Micklus and John McKay



Frank Sanzo
Director of Fleet
Operations



Jim Palmer
Assistant Director
of Fleet Operations

Frank Sanzo, DAS' new Director of Fleet Operations, comes to us from Newington where he was the Highway Superintendent in charge of the town's fleet of vehicles.

A Newington native and a seasoned fleet veteran, Sanzo has worked for the town since 1978, starting out as an Equipment Mechanic. In 1996 he was promoted to Supervisor/Fleet Manager and Superintendent in 2001.

So, after more than thirty years, why the change?

"I came to a point in my life where I realized that there is more to life than the Town of Newington, and I wanted to do something different."

Adding to his decision was a change in his responsibilities. "We did road reconstruction, snow plowing and leaf collection. Over the past year, we were given the added responsibilities of sanitation, recycling and landfill. It bothered me that I was being pulled away from Fleet."

Sanzo said he learned about the DAS Fleet job when he saw it advertised in the newspaper. He hesitated about applying for the position, and explained that it was his wife who urged him on.

After a month on the job, Sanzo said he welcomes both the opportunities and the challenges Fleet presents. "My goal is to get my arms around Fleet Operations and determine how we can make it run more efficiently. Right now we are focusing on Governor Rell's initiative of a ten percent across-the-board reduction in fuel use, so we're spending a lot of time meeting with all the agencies."

His goals on a personal level are equally as practical. "My wife and I have three kids in college right now, and my goal is to get through three graduations!"

Sanzo said he likes nothing better than spending time with family. "My wife is from Montreal, so we enjoy visiting there as often as we can. Family time is very important to me."

Welcome to DAS...your second family!

New Assistant Director Jim Palmer brings a busload of experience.

His previous position was with First Student School Bus Company, the nation's largest school bus transportation company with over 60,000 school buses across the country.

"She was right, because I always would have wondered."

He was offered the DAS position two days prior to retirement eligibility with the Town of Newington. Talk about timing!

"As the Regional Maintenance Manager, I supervised all 16 shops in Connecticut and traveled all over the state to help keep everything running smoothly," said Palmer.

He also said he plans to visit the state fleet garages as much as possible to support the efforts of the Fleet's experienced maintenance staff.

Palmer's resume also includes three years with DATTCO school buses as their Director of Vehicle Services, six years with Guida's Diary as their Director of Transportation, and two as Customer Service and Fleet Operations Director of the Easy Street rideshare program, along with 16 years at the Hartford Courant, the last eight as Manager of Transportation and Distribution.

"Easy Street does a lot of business with the state and while working there the thought entered my head that maybe working for the state would be something in my future – and here I am today," said Palmer.

He went on to say that's he's excited to be here at DAS and feels he can really make a difference.

"In private business it's all about profit, and customer service can easily take a back seat. With the state, I see some real opportunities to improve our services and improve the overall Fleet experience. I'm eager to take my professional experiences and apply them to the state's fleet and work towards making it an even better system."

P-Card Reaps \$202,000 Reward By John McKay

“I’ve always wondered what a bank teller would do if you walked in with one of these checks,” said DAS’ Carlos Velez. Commissioner Sisco laughed and suggested he should try it.

Either way you look at it, it was a big check both physically and fiscally.

Every year the DAS P-Card program receives a rebate check from JPMorgan Chase based on the percentage of spending through the program.

Comptroller Nancy Wyman and her staff, DAS Procurement Director Carol Wilson, P-Card gurus Kerry DiMatteo and Carlos Velez, along with several other state agency representatives, celebrated the ceremonial deposit at the Office of the State Comptroller on April 16.

Commissioner Sisco said, “We’re thrilled to see that our efforts resulted in this addition to the state’s general fund. And obviously it’s working – in 2006 the rebate check was approximately \$136,000, in 2007 it was \$157,000 and this year it’s \$202,000.

Sisco went on to say, “Each year we continue to find new and innovative ways of saving money for the state, and in turn, for the taxpayers.”



DAS’ Carol Wilson, Kerry DiMatteo and Carlos Velez join Commissioner Brenda Sisco, Comptroller Nancy Wyman and representatives of JP Morgan Chase at the rebate check presentation ceremony.

MORE GREAT KUDOS !

Eva Merriman, Melissa Christensen, and Maureen Blackburn.

I am working on two large furniture RFPs and Lori, Arlene, Eva and Melissa were given a huge project to load, verify and update address information for approximately 100 manufacturers and 50 dealers on Core and Access. Maureen is also helping with these RFPs by making address labels and files for the awarded manufacturers and email lists so maybe I can save a lot of paper when the contract gets posted. They are all so wonderful and helpful and I am so grateful to be working with such a great group!”

Peggy Zabawar expressed her appreciation to the CT Fit Committee of **Deputy Commissioner Martin**

Anderson, Catherine Abadom, Kathy Bruni, Jim Gotta, William Hauschulz, Lois Johnson, Nancy Jones, Loretta Miller, Eugene Nichols, Nina Ritson, Ann Simeone, Lorraine Thibeault and Carolyn Underwood “for the tremendous level of cooperation, and collaboration that it took to plan, coordinate and hold this event today!! We had tremendous participation as you could see, and 50 people registered for the program. That is more than double the participation that we had for the last one, and it was due to your hard work in building this program, developing materials, and setting up a truly spectacular kick off event. Thank you again for all your individual contributions - together we put on quite a great event! “

Board of Education and Services for the Blind Executive Director Brian Sigman thanked **Marie Rosales** of

the Business Office “for doing an incredible job in providing financial information.”

Jeanne Milstein sent the following to Commissioner Brenda Sisco:”I just wanted to let you know how satisfied the Office of the Child Advocate is with the services that we received from **Fiscal Services**. Under the leadership of **Jean Michael**, we receive professional, courteous and timely services. In particular, we work extremely closely with **Paul Felix**, ‘our budget guy.’ I can’t say enough good things about him. He is a problem solver, always nice and goes beyond what is expected. Frankly, that is the culture of our team at DAS. You are very lucky to have such a fine group of people, and in particular, Paul.”

DAS Hosts 7th Annual State Nurse of the Year Awards

By Donna Micklus

Eighteen of Connecticut's 1,400 state nurses were on center stage on May 12 at the State Capitol as finalists for the 2008 State Nurse of the Year Awards Ceremony. They were selected based on nominations submitted by co-workers, supervisors, and patients.

Hosted by DAS, the event is held annually to coincide with National Nurses Week which begins on May 6 and ends fittingly on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale.

In her opening remarks, Commissioner Brenda Sisco said, "The State of Connecticut Nurse of the Year Award is a unique way to recognize the dedicated service of nurses in state government. It raises the visibility of the value of the profession and highlights the distinctive types of nursing one can practice in government."



Commissioner Sisco delivers welcoming remarks

Sisco explained that the awards format was changed last year to honor both direct care nurses and well as administrators/educators in the nursing field, allowing for two Nurse of the Year Award winners.

The guest speaker was Dr. Anne Bavier, Dean of the University of Connecticut School of Nursing.

Cynthia Adams of Capitol Community College was named Educator/Administrator Nurse of the Year and Donna Bucha-

non from UConn Health Services' John Dempsey Hospital was named Direct Care Nurse of the Year.

All eighteen nominees received an official citation from Lt. Governor Michael Fedele. The winners were presented with a proclamation signed by Governor M. Jodi Rell.

"I commend your perseverance and dedication to public service and nursing. Your commitment and drive are an inspiration to all of Connecticut's residents and a testament to your strength and determination. You are a fine representative of the State of Connecticut, and it is an honor to join with your family and friends in recognizing and rejoicing in this achievement," said the Governor.



Commissioner Sisco and Guest Speaker Dean Anne Bavier are joined by Nurse of the Year Committee members. DAS members include Francine Dew, Chairperson, Michael Cosgrove, Lisa DeLayo, Carla Kushin, John McKay, Donna Micklus, Ellen Morris, Scott Nattinger, Rita Rose, Cindy Rusczyk, and Heather Tweeddale.

Anderson, cont. from P.1

accept the award, posthumously, on behalf of Biloon who died in June of last year.

Sandra was the key individual who contributed many significant components of the State's personnel and labor relations statutes, systems and policies including the first-in-the-nation family medical leave, the Management Advisory Council, incentive pay plans for managers, the Employee Review Board, the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee, in conjunction with fully implementing collective bargaining for state employees for the first time and creating the Office of Labor Relations.

Anderson took time to eulogize Biloon at the awards conference luncheon and spoke about his time working for her as DAS Chief Personnel Psychologist, and their professional collaborations that followed until shortly before her death. He credits her and what she represented personally and professionally as a key reason for leaving the state government of Oklahoma to come work for the state of Connecticut.

Anderson hopes to have Room 401 in the State Office Building, Sandra's former office and currently a library and conference room, dedicated to her memory. Her Cushman award will be displayed there.

DAS at the State Capitol

By Andrea Frankl Keilty

What happened during the 2008 Legislative Session?



2008 was a short session for the Connecticut legislature; a year generally reserved for budget and programmatic tweaks, not any large-scale initiatives.

With that in mind, DAS did not propose any changes to our laws this year. Instead, our agency's goals were to support some minor fixes to a few of our statutes, and to avoid legislation that would have required DAS to start new programs or provide additional services without additional resources.

DAS was largely successful in achieving these goals.

A detailed legislative report of all bills affecting DAS will be forthcoming. In the meantime, below are some highlights of how DAS fared at the State Capitol this session.

Procurement. DAS Procurement Services supported a few changes to the contracting statutes to promote efficiency, achieve greater purchasing

savings for the state, and to clarify a law already on the books relating to the state's purchase of green cleaning products.

The first bill we supported and helped draft gives DAS and other contracting agencies the authority to use online reverse auctions, a new technique to award contracts for goods and supplies. Reverse auctions are online bidding events in which multiple vendors compete for business, with the primary objective of driving purchase prices downward. In the fall of 2007, DAS and the Office of Policy & Management successfully executed an online reverse auction to purchase electricity, which saved the state approximately \$18 million in energy costs and increased the state's use of "clean and green" renewable power. DAS is now able to use this innovative procurement method for all contracts for goods and supplies, as long as we determine that the use of a reverse auction is advantageous to the agency and will ensure a competitive contract award. See [Public Act 08-141](#).

DAS also supported a fix to the "Green Cleaning Product" bill that passed last year. The 2007 legislation required that all cleaning products used in state buildings meet "green" environmental standards approved by DAS and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This year, product manufacturers pointed out that no "green" environmental standards even exist for certain cleaning products needed in state buildings, such as products used in restaurant and food establishments. DAS, DEP, product manufacturers and legislators got together and agreed upon language to fix this gap in the 2007 law. The fix ensures that the law is workable for all state buildings and facilities, but does not

in any way compromise the state's high standards for green, environmentally responsible products. See Section 501, [Amendment A to SB 615](#).

Another procurement-related bill that passed both the Senate and the House this year changes the procedure for awarding state contracts when the lowest bidder is an out-of-state business that receives preferential treatment when bidding on contracts in its home state. This bill was raised in the last days of the legislative session, was not shared with the Governor's Office or any of the affected agencies, and did not receive a public hearing. As a result, the language of the bill leaves many questions unanswered about how the new law should be implemented and whether it will in fact help or harm Connecticut companies. The Governor has yet to sign this bill, and it is still uncertain whether she will support it. See both [Amendment A](#) and [Amendment B to SB 679](#).

Procurement-related bills that did not survive the process this year include: a bill to establish a new Set-Aside category and goals for service-disabled veteran-owned businesses; a proposal to include municipalities in the state Set-Aside program administered by DAS; changes to the rules regarding the new non-discrimination certifications required for all state contracts; and a bill that would have required the State Contract Standards Board to start their legislatively-mandated work on October 1, 2008 instead of January 1, 2009.

Human Resources / SmART.

Similarly, very few human resources bills affecting DAS passed this legislative session. One bill that did pass gives permanent full-time state and quasi-public agency employees who are blind or physically disabled the

Continued on next page

option of using up to 15 days accumulated paid sick leave to take guide dog training. Prior to the passage of this bill, it was unclear whether employees were able to use sick leave for this purpose, or if they had to use vacation or personal leave time. See [Public Act 08-4](#).

The legislature passed another bill to clarify the benefit accrual rules as they relate to Department of Correction employees who work in certain teaching or professional positions. The new language grants these employees more time to use accumulated sick and vacation leave time when they return from service in the National Guard or military reserve. See [Public Act 08-15](#). The legislature also passed a bill that codifies the current practice of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to require that a criminal history check and a review of the DCF and DDS abuse and neglect registries be performed on each applicant seeking employment or a volunteer position with DMHAS. [Public Act 08-46](#).

Legislative efforts to change the roles and the organization of Equal Employment Opportunity personnel throughout the agencies failed, as did a bill that would have modified the telecommuting rules for state employees, a proposal that would have allowed state managers to unionize, and a bill that would have required DAS to study managerial pay compression throughout the state. Finally, notwithstanding employee optimism to the contrary, a Republican proposal in the final weeks of session to grant an Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) to state employees did not even reach debate.

Workers' Compensation. The vast majority of workers' compensation initiatives also failed this year. Bills proposing changes to the workers' compensation rules regarding

scar awards, discretionary benefits, and post-traumatic stress disorder all faltered early in the legislative session. Other proposals addressing how employees get medical treatment under the workers' compensation system, and expanding the number of state employees who would get "portal-to-portal" workers' compensation coverage and hazardous duty workers' compensation payments also did not survive.

Of the nearly twenty workers' compensation bills proposed by the legislature this year, only two bills passed: One establishes a rebuttable presumption under workers' compensation law for municipal firefighters, police, and constables who suffer a cardiac emergency while on duty ([Public Act 08-61](#)); another codifies existing practice of the Workers' Compensation Commission to provide an injured employee with a claim form within five business days after it receives the first report of injury. Neither of these bills will have much impact on DAS ([Public Act 08-3](#)).

Fleet / MIS / Business Office / Collections. DAS Fleet Administration, Management Information Systems, the Business Office and our Collections Unit escaped this session largely untouched.

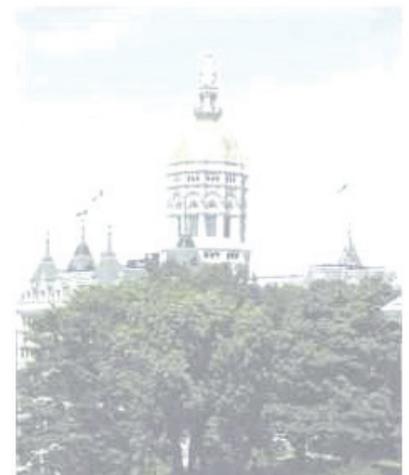
There were no legislative initiatives affecting DAS Fleet Administration this year. While a number of bills were introduced that would have affected how agencies and employees use state computers and personal information of our clients, none of those bills ultimately passed.

Legislation did pass that requires DAS to handle the business office functions of the Board of Accountancy (that Board previously fell under the Office of Policy and Management for administrative purposes only). See Section 1, [SB 26](#). Another bill that made minor changes to our collections practices also survived.

Specifically, when an individual owes money to the state, our Collections Unit may seek reimbursement of that debt by collecting money that the individual wins in a settlement or a lawsuit. The state is currently prohibited from collecting any money from a settlement or lawsuit in housing and employment discrimination cases. This year's legislation expands that prohibition to "public accommodation" or discrimination cases; namely, cases alleging that the individual, because of his or her disability, was denied full and equal access to goods, services, facilities, or privileges of any place of public accommodation. [Public Act 08-45](#). Since DAS rarely, if ever, collects reimbursement from these types of cases currently, this bill is not likely to have much impact on recoveries.

There is still a possibility that the legislature may reconvene in Special Session before the next session begins in January. However, because the Governor has indicated that she will not approve any bills that will cost the state additional money in Fiscal Year 2009, any Special Session called is likely to be very limited in scope.

Stay tuned!



More of the Great Taste!

with crabmeat, empanadas, eggplant parmesan, kielbasa and sauerkraut, pasta, fettuccini alfredo, ham, Jamaican beef and chicken patties, macaroni and cheese, stuffed shells, Italian combo miniatures, and General Tso's chicken from China, as well as butter and garlic breads and Greek salad.

"And although in Oklahoma buffalo really don't have wings, I thought I would bring some to the table," said Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson, in his typical quick wit.

"Great variety of foods, and everything was so good" said Lionel Corbin in between bites.

Up for the dessert offering was a whipped-banana pudding, platanitos from Puerto Rico, Mississippi mud cake, besitos de coco, lemon cake, sweet potato pie, peach blueberry pie, Swedish chocolate cookies, cheesecake, scones, the all time favorite raguolis and Dan Sears' award-winning display of "geek" food - all to be featured in the next issue of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine.

"Everything tasted great, the room looked great and you could really tell the hard work and effort that the committee put into this event," said Katie Mack as she enjoyed the chance to sit, relax and have lunch.

Kebe brought a more sober thought to the table. "As we were approaching the boarding hour for this event, we (the Council) were worried about the decrease in offerings from previous years and were thinking that we would not have enough food for the growing line of eager participants lined up

out in the hallway. It made me think just how fortunate WE are compared to the thousands and thousands of people affected by the natural disasters in both Myanmar (Burma) and in Western China, and people in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world facing higher and higher food costs and increasing shortages."

Of course, reading about all this food cannot compare to the first-hand sensory experience.

The Taste of DAS 2008 was a huge success, and the employees who made all this happen - even more so! It is our diversity that gives DAS its strength - and that isn't just potluck!



All Aboard!



DAS
CTFIT

KICKOFF

By Nina Ritson

“Air, food and water – the stuff of life – everything else pales.”

Guest speaker Bill Duesing, Executive Director of the Connecticut Chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, simplified the mystery of life sustenance at the CT FIT kickoff on Wednesday, April 23.

The North Mechanical Room was filled with nearly 75 DAS employees, ready and eager to register and commit, once again, to eight weeks of regular, documented exercise and healthy food choices following the USDA food pyramid.

“We are solar-powered beings – food is our energy and we must think about the energy content of our food. Each human needs the energy equivalent of one cup of gasoline or one 150 watt light bulb each day,” Duesing said. His talk focused on eating right and how over-processed fake food impacts our lives and our planet.

“Everyone should grow a garden – it is our most important relationship with the earth. Connecticut loses 20 acres of farmland per day,” he emphasized.

There are many ways to begin eating better – buying organically grown foods from local farm markets is one way. And better food is at our fingertips. Community gardens in Connecticut can grow a lot of food without a lot of work. There are many non-profit community farms in Connecticut.

He went on to compare a timeline of “what we eat” over the last two hundred years.

It was a startling but true fact when he said, “We used to eat a variety of



foods, but now our diets have narrowed to corn, soybean and sugar with tidbits of protein from time to time.”

Speaking of tidbits, here is some food for thought:

DID YOU KNOW that North America eats five times the rate we produce. Forty years ago we ate half of what we produced.

DID YOU KNOW that of the finest fertilizers you can buy, leaves fallen from the trees are far better for soil health – much better than packaged fertilizer.

According to Duesing, we all want to eat healthier and live better – but we need to make changes in how we think in order to make this happen.



“Everyone should grow a garden – it is our most important relationship with the earth.”