



Happy
Halloween!

SOLD! To the Lowest Bidder?

Inside this issue

By John McKay

It's Hess, now it's Pepco, now Hess is back in the lead...and down the stretch...it's Direct Energy with the win! It's like the photo finish at a horse race. Energy companies Hess, Direct Energy and Pepco were neck in neck to the wire to see who had the lowest bid on electricity for the State of Connecticut.

Real time, online, reverse auctions are the latest cost-saving efforts being taken by the state to insulate Connecticut's Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches from the fluctuating cost of electricity.

The state has been able to combine the purchasing power of several entities to purchase electricity starting back in October 2007 at substantial savings.

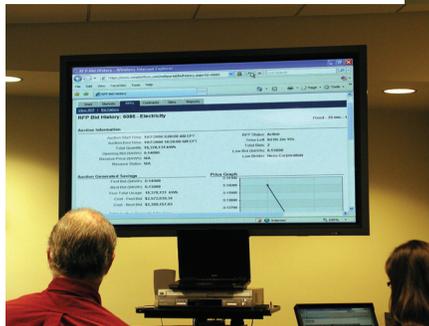
"We did this last year and the savings have surpassed expectations," said DAS Procurement's Paul Greco.

"There are several factors working in our favor to purchase electricity at such low rates and insulate ourselves, most notably the economy," he explained.

Similar to last year, there is an added "green" component. Each grouping can contain a certain percentage of green energy, meaning that part of the electricity is generated using green technology like solar or wind.

The State of Connecticut's first electricity auction last fall resulted in even greater savings since the market run-up started several months ago. The Constitution State anticipated over \$12 million in annualized savings at the close of its 2007 electricity auction. Since then, unprecedented spikes in the commodities markets have resulted in an additional savings of \$6 million!

The auction shielded taxpayers from price



Don Casella, Amy Gagnon and Paul Greco watch neck and neck reverse auction bids online

spikes by locking in competitive rates over a fixed timeframe. The additional \$6 million saved from last fall's auction exemplifies how the auction process helps avoid costs otherwise passed on to citizens. The auction platform also allowed the state to purchase green power at little to no premium, garnering Connecticut recognition from the EPA as one of the nation's top green-power purchasers.

"There is defiantly a change in the green component when you talk price," said Greco.

"With the green market tightening up, we expect to pay a little more if we want a contract to be 5, 10, or 25 percent green. At the end of the day, we get to weigh the differences and choose which electricity contract best suits the state."

In May 2008 a similar auction was held for natural gas. Although the discount was not applied to the actual cost of natural gas, it was used to reduce the cost of transportation and delivery of the product. "The savings are worth the effort," said Greco. The savings we realize here will also insulate us should the price of natural gas skyrocket."

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In the Spotlight: New Haven Fleet Garage By John McKay

New Haven in the fall usually conjures up visions of Yale football games and area fairs.

But it was more of a business/open communications call to the New Haven Fleet Garage staff on Thursday, October 9 for Commissioner Brenda Sisco, Deputy Commission Martin Anderson, Fleet Director Frank Sanzo and Fleet Assistant Director Jim Palmer.

“It’s great to get down there and see these guys face-to-face,” said Commissioner Sisco. The commissioners’ visit is part of an ongoing tour of the fleet garages throughout the state.

“We like to visit each garage every couple of months to say ‘hi’ and let them know we appreciate everything they do,” Anderson said.

“Plus we have real informal conversations about what their concerns are for their garage and how we can address those issues,” he added.

“I’m always amazed at how much work goes on down there with cars and trucks coming in for service, the quick turnaround time, and getting them back on the road. They know their jobs and do them really, really well,” Sisco said.

Kudos to the New Haven Fleet Garage Staff: **Dave Marsh, Bob Negri, Dave Demott, Russ Winters, Ed Foley, Tom Caneschi, Joe Paglia, Mike Dickinson, Mike Saucier, Steve McGirr, and Joe Gullage.**

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M. Jodi Rell Governor

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Governor Rell Announces Deficit Mitigation Plan

(excerpted from news release)

DAS Collections Services, Fleet have presence in new plan

Governor M. Jodi Rell last week announced her plan to eliminate Connecticut's 2009 fiscal year budget shortfall with a combination of spending cuts, new revenue owed Connecticut by the federal government, a tax amnesty program, the cancellation of the start of new state programs and by continuing to bring efficiencies to state government.

The plan requires no new taxes, no employee layoffs and it leaves the state's \$1.4 billion budget reserve fund (Rainy Day Fund) intact. The Governor also announced that she is calling the legislature into session on November 24 to adopt her plan.

"Connecticut government must live within its means," Governor Rell said. "Spending cuts are never easy -- but we live in a time of great uncertainty. These difficult financial times demand that we reduce spending this year rather than increase taxes, for we know that raising taxes is the worst thing we could do for families and businesses in the middle of a recession.

A cornerstone of Governor Rell's plan to mitigate the projected deficit involves identifying revenue due to the state under current law. A settle-

ment will result in additional federal revenue due from reimbursable costs incurred in the operation of the Department of Developmental Services. The Governor is also proposing a Tax Amnesty program that is expected to generate a minimum of \$40 million.

In addition to new revenues, the Governor's plan calls for expanding the abandoned property program to include unclaimed beverage container deposits.

The plan also calls for further spending cuts including: delaying several new initiatives; changes in the State's Fleet Vehicle Procurement program; applying reductions to several programs which were funded by prior year surpluses (carry-forwards); returning funds in the Governor's Contingency Fund; identifying areas where appropriations could lapse; and pushing all agencies to become more vigilant in identifying areas where further cutbacks can be achieved.

For the current 2009 fiscal year, the Governor has already ordered two rounds of budget cuts -- the first, a cut of \$150 million and most recently, a cut of \$34 million.

"My plan to eliminate the remaining 2009 deficit does not require new taxes. It does not require tapping the Rainy Day Fund. It does not require layoffs of state employees," the Governor said.

"It does not impose new burdens on the hard-pressed taxpayers and businesses of our state, who continue to cope with the fallout of a national economic downturn."

Government's highest priority must be to safeguard its residents -- and that includes the financial health and welfare of Connecticut families.

The DAS Factors in the Plan

DAS Collection Services

DAS Collection Services in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Social Services (DSS) and Office of Policy and Management (OPM) have been vigorously working over the past year to maximize federal revenue for programs and services eligible for federal financial participation funds under Medicaid. The joint efforts of these state agencies have resulted in a retroactive billing and cost settlement that will bring in \$157 million in revenue.

"I would like to applaud and thank our colleagues at DSS, OPM and DAS for their continued efforts in obtaining this revenue," said DDS Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara. "This teamwork between state agencies is outstanding."

DAS Fleet Operations

Governor Rell proposes a delay in the purchase of Fleet vehicles for a savings of \$1.2 million.

Carla Kushin recently had the opportunity to have **Melissa Colone-Scutt** help her “with a telephone issue. She was efficient and understanding; she treated me just the way she would have wanted to be treated in the same situation. It was such a pleasure to get such great service. Thanks Melissa for a wonderful job!”

hats off

By Cindy Rusczyk

Amanda Anduaga-Roberson from the SmART Unit commended **John McKay** for “his contribution in making the participation of the SmART Equal Employment Opportunity Unit a success at the DOL Career Fair on September 26, displaying vision and creativity to potential candidates with the development of the temporary State Employment Information Board. I wish to extend my personal thanks to **Donna Micklus** for her support and advocacy, in contributing valuable resources to Equal Employment and Diversity initiatives.”

Carolyn Underwood extended her appreciation to **Mary Gugliemino** “for her hard work with one of my more ‘persistent’ employees who was questioning and questioning her longevity payments and Mary offered to assist with the calculation of her employment. It was a cumbersome task for Mary to undertake, but she offered gra-

ciously. She is truly an asset to our division and I am lucky to have her as one of my peers.”

David Tufano from Fleet Operations applauded “**Norman Townley, Steve Phillips** and **Mark Stanton** for cleaning out the loft over the parts room. Nice job guys!”

Catherine A. Kennelly from the Department of Public Health sent the following message to Commissioner Sisco regarding **Nancy Jones** and **Sandra Guerra**: “I was attending a hearing and needed some additional exhibits along with several copies of each document. When we asked if we could have them faxed to your office, they responded affirmatively without hesitation and gave us your fax number. Then they assisted with making the copies so that we could proceed with the hearing. I sincerely appreciate their professionalism and their realization that we all serve the same employer. They certainly enabled us to complete our hearing in one day.”

Paul Felix of the Business Office “would like to thank **Virgilio Santos** and **Peter Varhol** for going the extra mile. With all of the agencies we serve it was an extremely busy budget season this year. Virgilio and Peter were very accommodating, getting information where it needed to be at a moments notice. Thanks guys!”

Meg Yetishefsky sent the following words of praise to Don Casella regarding **Jim Gotta**: “I just wanted to extend a thank you to Jim.

Yesterday Jim stayed well past his scheduled work day to assist me with a SBE vendor issue on a contract. Thanks again, Jim!”

Don Casella also said, “Jim is ALWAYS willing to go the extra mile to help someone out. Thanks for recognizing this!”

Cindy Rusczyk in the Communications Office sent a “long overdue kudo to **Steve Soklow** for regularly supplying information requested through the Freedom of Information Act. We get so many requests that require data generated through CoreCT, and Steve is always there to provide a timely and accurate response. Thanks, Steve, your efforts are always appreciated!”

Nina Ritson in the Communications Office extended a “huge thank” you to **Mike Guimond, Roy Wynne, Alex Caceres** and **Matt Costa** of the DAS Print Shop for their rapid turnaround on jobs she sends over. In particular, she was very grateful for the recent Workers’ Comp manual, which had difficulty processing to proof because of the huge graphic files. They were able to quickly resolve the printing issues and produce the final book well before its deadline. “Well done!”

Watch for “**The Commish’s Corner**” every other month in the DAS Times... coming in November!

DAS Offers Training for Execs

By Donna Micklus, Martin Anderson and Peggy Zabawar

Earlier this month, DAS ran the first of 15 training classes for commissioners and other appointed officials, including Governor Rell and her staff, in Diversity, Sexual Harassment Prevention and Workplace Violence Prevention.

All state employees are required by statute or executive order to take certain classes such as these, but Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson saw a particular need to make the courses available specifically for appointed officials.

“About two years ago, it was evident that there were plenty of newly appointed officials that would need to be accommodated with training in these areas. Given how busy they are and the demands upon their time, my thought was to deliver these classes specifically for them and tailored specifically to them,” Anderson explained.

“We scheduled some tentative dates and then notified all newly appointed officials of the need for and availability of the classes. In no time, the sessions were filled,” he said.

Anderson also said that he wanted to keep the class size small, about six to ten persons, to focus discussions on the role of agency leadership in creating the proper environment around these topics, along with the opportunity to share incidents and solutions to problems that have already arisen at their agencies.

So, what’s the reaction so far?

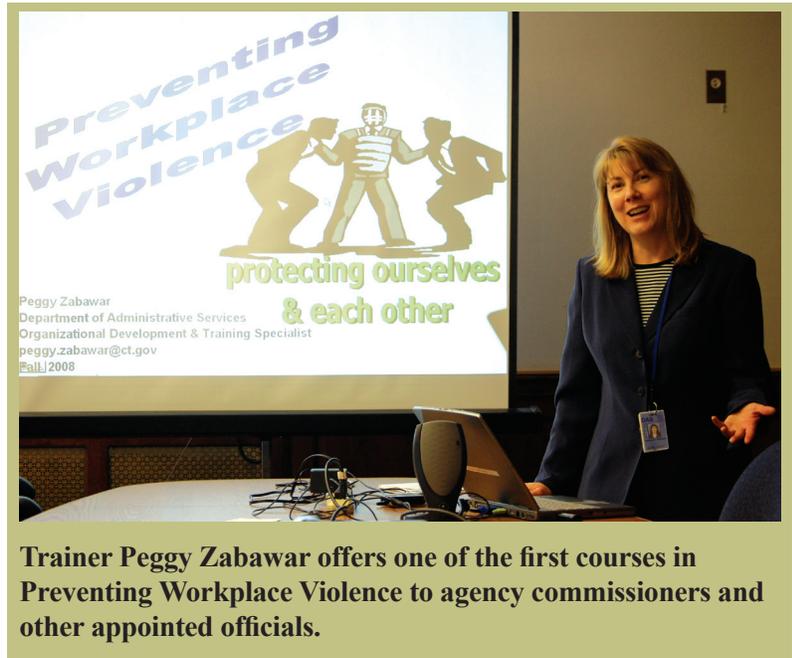
In a word, “fantastic!” said Trainer Peggy Zabawar of DAS Strategic Services, who also runs the DAS Learning Center.

“Our first two groups gave perfect evaluations for both Diversity and Workplace Violence Prevention. And they were very interactive and engaged participants. Many said that they appreciated the convenience of the selection of classes, and being able to meet their peers from other agencies,” Zabawar continued.

“We used the DAS Learning Center to manage registration and attendance, and can now maintain the records of participation on our database for future reference by agencies or individuals,” added Zabawar.

Who have been some of the participants so far?

According to Zabawar, “a sampling of our guests” include: Jerry Farrell, Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection, Kathryn duPree, Deputy Commissioner of Developmental Services, Stacie Mawson, Executive Director of the Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Joseph Marie, the newly appointed Commissioner of the



Trainer Peggy Zabawar offers one of the first courses in Preventing Workplace Violence to agency commissioners and other appointed officials.

Department of Transportation, Gina McCarthy, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, Wayne Sandford, Deputy Commissioner of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and our own, Brenda Sisco, Commissioner of DAS.

Zabawar said there are four Sexual Harassment Prevention classes, seven Workplace Violence Prevention classes, and four Diversity classes scheduled from October to December 2008. Andrea Keilty and Erin Choquette are each teaching two of the Sexual Harassment Prevention classes, and Zabawar will be doing all the Workplace Violence Prevention and Diversity classes.

“We are hoping that the breadth of this initiative has reached so many people in so many agencies that we have effectively met this need for the foreseeable future,” Zabawar explained.

Expect the Unexpected at Surplus Property Auctions!

By Donna Micklus

Cool kayaks! How about those mountain bikes! Anyone in the market for Nike running shoes?

Okay, so guess where I'm shopping. What's that?

Cabela's you say? L.L. Bean? Not even close.

Try the DAS Property Distribution Center in Wethersfield as J. Carlos Velez and staff prepared for a surplus property auction on October 18.

Velez pointed out tons of items that would go on the block...everything from let's call them unique orange plastic chairs, to the latest in I-pods and Bluetooths (Bluteeth?).

The Surplus staff oversees the DAS E-Surplus system, which manages all surplus goods from state entities as well as confiscated and found items, which we'll talk about later.

How does it work? Velez's thorough explanation of a rather complicated process actually made perfect sense.

First of all, state agencies can't just throw stuff away...they have to ask approval through the e-system. Jim Potyra in Property Distribution then decides. If he thinks the item can be sold at auction, he gives a thumbs down to their request. If, on the other hand, he agrees that it's worthless, he issues a scrap ticket, at which point the item *must* be tossed out.

Velez said that once something is listed on the e-surplus system,



(L) J. Carlos Velez stands next to aeronautic testing equipment surplussed from one of the vocational technical schools.



(Below L) Kayaks confiscated by Judicial. (Below) An old gum ball machine from who knows where?



state agencies have 14 days to decide if they want it. If they do, they simply claim it online. On the eighth day, all surplussed goods are available for purchase by municipalities. They pay \$50 for the first item and \$15 for any additional items, regardless of what they are. Good deal!

After 14 days? "They had their chance," said Velez.

DAS has contracted with Clearinghouse Auction Galleries in Wethersfield to then sell the items at public auction. Clearinghouse has 14 days to screen the goods to determine if they are actually saleable.

"But we have the ultimate authority to make that determination," Velez said.

Not-for-profits, largely churches, schools and fire departments, also figure into the mix. They will make a 'wish list' of things they want on the e-system. "They'll say, if it doesn't go to auction, we want it," Velez said.

We totally expected to see file cabinets, computers, and office furniture, but the bikes, kayaks, outboard motors, swords, expensive leather jackets, and sophisti-

See Surplus on next page

Surplus auction, *cont.*

cated electronic equipment came as somewhat of a surprise.

“Most of those particular things are found items that come from police departments or are confiscated by Judicial in drug raids or are stolen goods,” Velez said.

In all, there were 387 “lots” or bundles of items that must be sold together, representing literally thousands and thousands of pieces.

“The auction makes money for the state, but costs us nothing,” Velez explained. “Clearinghouse charges a 10% buyers premium, so if someone bids \$100 for something, that person actually pays \$110. DAS gets the \$100 and Clearinghouse gets the \$10.” Awfully clever in its simplicity.

Just when we thought we had seen it all, Velez showed us a ‘lot’ which he described as a “mish mash of stuff” that people had left behind at airports...everything from a stuffed animal, diaper bag and CD player to, of all things, a fully packed suitcase. Go figure. “Of course, we go through it all to make sure there is no sign of any personal ID’s,” he explained.

Velez then led us to a table laden with unopened cartons of toner cartridges.

“This is something we’re working on,” he said. “When our office needs toner cartridges we go ahead and order them. Who would think to look in the E-sur-

plus system where we could get them for nothing?”

Velez explained that it would be impractical to give everyone access to the system, but he is in the trial stages of working with



(L) The overhead view. Above are I pods with stereo equipment below.



MIS to develop a process that would be both efficient and clearly cost saving.

There were so many other curious pieces just too numerous to mention. Some, like the packed piece of luggage, made you wonder about the stories behind them. When the auction is over and an item leaves the grounds, the connection doesn’t necessarily end there. Velez said it can be frustrating that some bargain hunters don’t seem to grasp the “as is” concept.

“You wouldn’t believe the calls I get after people leave. Someone will call and say ‘I bought a digital camera but it doesn’t work,’” is just one example Velez cited.

“I can’t tell you how many times we announce to people that all items are sold AS IS!” Velez has instructed the auctioneer to

remind the public every 15 minutes during the auction that *as is* means *as is*. Plus, Velez said, there are signs posted in both English and Spanish all over the area, and it is also printed on the buyer’s receipt.

Does everything sell at the auction? Just about. “What doesn’t move is stored here and we try to sell it at the next one. Even if it goes for a dollar!” Velez laughed.

The auction indeed netted a lot of dollars...over \$37,000!

Oh, and in case you’re wondering...the two kayaks pictured sold for \$225 and \$240...and the entire “mish-mash” from airports went for \$70!

Meet Amanda Anduaga-Roberson

By Nina Ritson

“You want me to tell you about my life outside work?? Wow, is there such a thing?” laughs Amanda Anduaga-Roberson, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager for SmART.

A graduate of the Hartford College for Women (constituent college of the University of Hartford), Roberson launched her career in the UHart Admissions and Financial Aid office and then in Alumni Development. Today she is an active alum, participating in the University’s Alumnae Council of Women.

“I also sat on the board of the Permanent Commission for the Status of Women – seeking to educate and afford non-traditional employment opportunities for women such as welding, electrical, carpentry, and pipefitting.”

Amanda lives with her husband Dan, and her dog UConn, a Shiba Inu, which is the smallest of the Japanese Akita line. Don’t go thinking she is a snooty small-dog person, though. Little 17-inch tall, 30-pound UConn was a rescue that was abandoned and abused, and pound-for-pound she says he can pull her over!

“We took him in and have been working closely with an animal rehab therapist – he was quite frightened by his ordeal. I am very big on animal rescue.”

She confesses to being a dog person – but is *not* to be accused of canine/feline discrimination.



“I have a cat, Rascal, *another* rescue who for some reason is a kleptomaniac –he steals! He will steal post-it notes off of papers or tables and hide them – then they appear floating in his water bowl. He takes earrings – he even took a CVS bag and ran down the hallway with it in his mouth to go hide it.”

“My dog is the opposite of him– he has a great temperament but is very high energy– but so am I! So he fits my personality very well!”

Indicative of her pace, in 2005 she traveled Europe with two of her friends and visited ten cities in ten days, riding the Eurorail by night and showering in the ‘water closets’.

“We were able to see Munich, Salzburg, Vienna, Venice, Naples, Ebenau, Kaiserslauten, Trier

and St. Avold. Plus, we were in Rome on Good Friday!”

Roberson joined the state ten years ago and says it was her early years working in Higher Education at Charter Oak State College that formulated who she is in the field of Affirmative Action.

She went on to serve over three years with the Department of Environmental Protection and four with Department of Mental Retardation (DMR now called DDS).

Settling into DAS she says, “I am really enjoying it here at SmART – I do like working for Steve and Brenda! I miss my old friends – but have met many new people.”

Welcome, Amanda!

Savor the Flavor !

Mark your calendars and count your calories... in anticipation of the “Sweet Taste of DAS” coming on November 6 !! Presented by the DAS Diversity Council.



Governor Rell: Close State Buildings on Week-ends, Conserve Energy at Night to Cut Costs

Excerpted from news release

Governor M. Jodi Rell recently announced she has directed state commissioners and agency heads to help reduce expenses and conserve energy by closing all state office buildings at night and during weekends and ensuring that lights are turned off and thermostats are turned down at night.

The State of Connecticut owns or leases hundreds of buildings throughout the state, from regional park offices to campus settings and agency headquarters.

Under Governor Rell's directive, beginning October 15 and continuing until further notice, all state offices – whether owned by the state or located in leased space – are to be closed on the weekends except for essential functions. Essential in this context includes activities associated with public safety, public health and emergency response.

In addition, state offices that only operate a single shift are to be shut down by 9 p.m. or earlier on weekdays. And agencies are to identify managers on each floor to ensure that internal lights are turned off after hours. Where possible, internal heating, ventilation and air conditioning thermostats are also to be set to lower, nighttime-only tempera-

tures and external lighting is to be reduced without compromising safety.

“When I was growing up, if I left the lights on in the room I was leaving, my father never failed to remind me that he didn't own any stock in the electric company!” Governor Rell said.

“We owe the taxpayers the same kind of thrift – especially in these extraordinarily difficult economic times. I am committed to making sure that state government lives within its means.

“As state agencies, we have an excellent opportunity to lead by example,” the Governor added.

“By taking these steps we are doing our ‘OneThing’ to reduce energy consumption and operating costs. The savings realized by these actions may not seem like much, taken individually. But in the long run they will be substantial.”

As an example, the Department of Public Works estimates that closing the State Office Building in Hartford on Saturdays will result in a savings of about \$150,000 a year.

Governor Rell advised com-



Governor M. Jodi Rell

missioners and agency heads to make sure the new measures are clearly communicated to all staff – including cleaning crews – to ensure maximum effectiveness. In buildings where the state leases space and

may not be able to control all aspects of operations, agency chiefs are asked to meet with building management to discuss how to implement as much of the Governor's policy as possible.

“In light of these tight financial times, every measure we take to save the state – and ultimately the taxpayer – is a measure worth pursuing,” the Governor said.

Since the spring, Governor Rell has taken a number of steps to reduce state spending. She has ordered more than \$175 million in two rounds of agency rescissions. She has also ordered a hiring freeze, imposed a ban on out-of-state travel paid for with state funds and directed agency heads to stop all non-essential spending.

Around and About

State Managers' Day, October 3, 2008, Aqua Turf



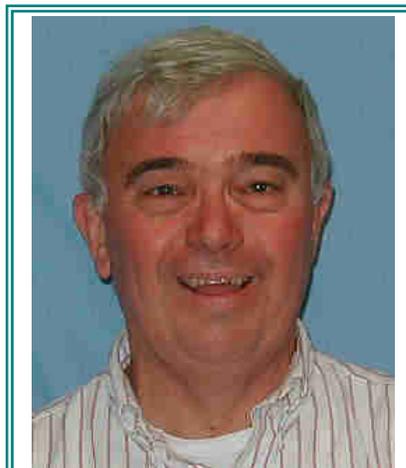
(L) DAS Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson offers opening remarks. (A) David Lynn and Lois Johnson are among DAS managers in attendance.

Campaign for Charitable Giving Hosts Book Fair



On October 9 the South Mechanical Room was once again a "bookstore on wheels" when Books are Fun came with cookbooks, travel books, children's books and toy kits – something for everyone. The Book Fair is always a success and the winner is the CT State Employee Campaign for Charitable Giving. Nancy Jones, chairperson of the event, was happy to say "The turnout was relatively good and we raised \$170 for the campaign!" If you missed it this time – they will be back in December just in time for holiday shopping!

Comings and Goings



Warmest wishes to Mike Hennegan on his retirement from Fleet Operations after 31 years of state service.



DAS bids a fond farewell to Gregg Nome who leaves DAS for a position with the Office of the Secretary of the State.