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Waters looks forward to four more years

By Donna Micklus

Bureaucracy to business. Public service excellence. Business planning. Customer service. Training. Teamwork. Technology. Transforming the way we work. Bureaus to business centers. Business to business online. Ecommerce. Positioned for the future.

Sound familiar? They are just some of the goals and initiatives that are the hallmarks of Commissioner Barbara Waters' first four years as DAS Commissioner.

Waters was reappointed by Governor John G. Rowland and confirmed by a unanimous vote of the House on January 28.

"I am proud and thrilled to serve as the Commissioner of DAS for the next four years," Waters said after learning of her House confirmation.

"As a career state employee, I think you all know how much DAS means to me, and I'm truly honored to continue the exciting work that has brought us to where we are today."

Please see Commissioner on Page 7

DAS welcomes newcomers

Commissioner Barbara Waters welcomed new employees to DAS during a breakfast Tuesday, February 16. The newcomers used the opportunity to mingle with more seasoned DAS personnel.

"You see people in the halls and say hello, but don't really know where they're from," said Antoinette Alphonse, a new employee with HRBC. "After this breakfast, I don't feel like an outsider anymore."



Commissioner Barbara Waters, Steve Dygus (center) and Mike Barletta (right) greet new employees at a welcome breakfast on February 16.

Customers have an appetite for seminars

By Dana Citarella

Usually, advances in technology are accompanied by a decrease in personal attention.

This is not the case for DAS Procurement Services, who presented an informal luncheon to acquaint vendors with new technology and give them a taste (so to speak!) of the future.

In the seminar, entitled "Food for Thought," members of the Procurement Learning Center informed vendors of recent changes in their procedures, including converting to Internet-based operations and electronic commerce.

"This process will eliminate a lot of the paper we generate," said

Carol Wilson. "It's quicker, without losing the personal touch."

Over 30 vendors attended the seminar, which was the third of its kind hosted by the business center.

"The interest that this program generated is unbelievable," said Jay Churchill. "You could immediately see the vendors' interest when the speakers started talking about the specific programs."

The vendors responded enthusiastically to the seminar, and were excited by the idea of becoming part of the latest technology.

"I think this is an unbelievable opportunity," said vendor Micky Gorin of Gerber Outerwear. "It's blowing me away. It's so progressive and equalizing."



Procurement's Vince McMahon talks with vendors during the luncheon held at DAS' Procurement Learning Center.

The title "Food for Thought" originated from the fact that Churchill and many of the vendors who attended deal with the food industry.

"It was an opportunity for the vendors to open up to us and learn from us," Wilson said.



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

A (web) site for sore eyes

By Dana Citarella

HRBC has a whole new look. At least, their website does.

HR's Business Rules team of Bill Skyrme, Lisa Chasse, Christine Mansolf, Anne Pomeroy-Dixon, Lori Kolakowski, Marsha Liburdi, Toni Alphonse and Desi Harris spent the last month revising their website to make it more user-friendly and attractive.

"Our goal is to try to convince HR directors that it would be to their benefit to get PC LANs and Internet access for their HR professionals," Chasse said.

The site contains information such as contact lists, business rules, contracts, official memos, and exam information. Chasse

said being able to find all this information in one place makes research much easier.

The team also condensed much of the information on the home page, making it easier on the eyes. Instead of having to scroll down many crowded screens, users of the page can now just click on links to files.

"If there's too much information on one page, people tend to lose interest and get lost," Chasse said.

HRBC has received much positive feedback on the site so far, including recognition by the International Personnel Managers Association.

Chasse said the team will continue to update the site and add new resources as necessary. The site is located at:
www.das.state.ct.us/HR/Hrhome.htm.

Catherine A. Nemphos from the American Red Cross commended **Nancy Jones** for the generous contribution of time and enthusiasm in organizing the blood drive held in December. "Thank you for aiding such a worthwhile cause."

Commissioner Barbara Waters thanked **Suzanne Liquerman** and **Pedro Valentin** for assisting Sandra Sharr with a CHRO case, providing evidence and answering interrogatories "and for being excellent witnesses before the Commission."

Kudos to **Rayna Pickman** from Ray Fulcher of FAR for discovering a federal withholding payment problem and for quickly remedying the situation. Thanks also go to Pickman from James McKenna and Jerry Lynn for discovering the Title XIX payments coding problem. "Thank you for being on top of your game."

Heather Cavanaugh was praised by Devin Marquez for the "excellent work" she did with the 1998 Employee Recognition Committee.

Paul Felix of FAR applauded **Donna Micklus** and the **Communications Staff** for the January issue of the DAS Times for being "informative, totally upbeat on human interest, and just the best issue ever. Thanks for giving us an exceptional product."

Commissioner Barbara Waters thanked **Eva Merriman** for going out of her way to assist Chris Shay of Connecticut Uniform by providing him with needed information.

Angella Bentley from the Connecticut Lottery Corporation commended **Pedro Valentin** for helping her transfer to the Dept. of Veterans

Affairs. "Pedro demonstrated professionalism...his tolerance and vigor helped me to get through the trying times."

A note of thanks to **Donna Micklus** and the **Communications Staff** from Commissioner Barbara Waters "for sharing your expertise with your colleagues. We appreciate all that you do. Keep up the good work."

Deputy Commissioner Michael P. Starkowski of the Dept. of Social Services praised **Henry Jovanelly** for his help with the School-Based Child Health RFP Evaluation Team. "On behalf of the DSS staff, thank you for a job well done."

Special thanks go to **Mike Mansfield** from Jay Churchill for the great "Food for Thought" brochure.

Richard Andisio appreciated **Carol Smith's** exemplary service while employed in the Assessment and Staffing Services section. "She will certainly be missed."

Martin C. Zito from the Dept. of Mental Retardation congratulated **Donna Micklus** and the **Communications Staff** for the "great job on the DAS Annual Report!"

Congratulations to **Commissioner Barbara Waters** from Albert J. Solnit, Commissioner of the Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services "on the superb accomplishments of your department in the past year, and the wonderful presentation of it in your annual report. Encore!"

Ms. Franki Arquette from Akwesasne Construction Co., Inc. was impressed with the Internet "online vendor registration being so simple, easily accessible, and the return notification from **Bill Skyrme** being surprisingly prompt. Thank you for making my business with the state a non-stressful experience."

Kudos to **Martin Anderson** from Martha J. Watson, human resources director from the Minnesota Dept. of Human Services, on her visit to the DAS' HR Internet survey. "It's a WAY cool survey and I did pass the word

Hats Off

By Cindy Duberek

about it on to my colleagues throughout MN state government. I was very impressed with it."

Roy Dion praised **Joann McAllister** for her efforts on the Crown Victoria contract for municipalities and for saving them money having the cars delivered to their job sites free of charge. "Well done!"

Jim Craig, president of Craig Communications, thanked **Pete Smith** for the "helpful information and great attitude" he received from him with questions on the state's website locating contract award information.

Surveys - fast, fun, and cheap

How do you know if something is going to work? How do you know if other organizations are doing the same things you are?

You ask.

The Human Resources Business Center has developed an HR Best Practices survey to gain insight into what other organizations are offering their employees in terms of balancing work and family, i.e., telecommuting and onsite day care.

The conventional way of distributing surveys is long and tedious. To whom do you send it? How many do you have printed? What about mailing costs?

"The way we do it," said Dr. Martin Anderson of



SLC, "you don't even have to lick a stamp."

Anderson, with the help of DAS Webmaster Bill Skyrme, has arranged for the survey to be online. The entire questionnaire can be done in just a few minutes with a few quick clicks of a mouse button. "Fast, fun and cheap," added Anderson. Additionally, all the data collected from the survey is automatically tallied and compiled as each survey is completed. "A real time saver," said Anderson.

The people asked to take this survey are members of listservs. Listserv is short for list service and is an electronic mailing list of people who share similar ideas, interests, or professions. Listservs send people information using their email address.

"I've tapped into a few listservs that specialize in human resources and employment, and have asked them to take the survey," said Anderson. The responses have been good and we can keep the survey going as long as necessary. Since this interview, Anderson has received responses from as far away as Africa. "That just shows that we aren't limiting ourselves geographically," said Martin "This is a worldwide survey."

ShopKey replaces volumes

If you were to stack 13 million pages of automotive technical information one on top of the other, that pile would extend all the way from DAS Fleet Operations headquarters in Hartford...to somewhere else really far away.

Granted, it's a bit difficult to get a handle on the sheer magnitude of just what 13 million pages of motor vehicle repair information looks like. But think about how many different makes and models of domestic cars, light trucks, and foreign cars have been produced since 1975. Then consider how many parts those cars have and how many things can go wrong with them. Then, multiply that by the number of years each vehicle has been in production. Well, you get the point...the amount of information is almost infinite.

Thanks to new software called ShopKey, all that data now resides on a CD-ROM, and at the fingertips of DAS Fleet Operations personnel.

"Without a good set of manuals, you're sunk," said Ed Kane, of Norwich Fleet. "The trick is to find the one you need - maybe it's under your buddy's bench. Maybe someone is using it for a wheel chock, or maybe we never had it in the first place."

ShopKey is a sort of solution to finding the solutions. Unlike the phone-book-sized volumes of the past, it can't be lost; it covers nearly every facet of the vehicles, providing all the information to multiple users at the same time; it helps write estimates and even locate parts; and since it's updated every three months, can contain the latest technical service bulletins, recall information, and part numbers.

One of ShopKey's most useful features allows users to customize their own manual of sorts, featuring just the information they want. Users can zoom in on a specific part of an intricate wiring diagram, then print it out to take back to their bench. Frequently addressed problems can be compiled into a mechanic's personal repair manual, and tips can be exchanged among mechanics by affixing a sort of electronic post-it note to an entry. The pages even contain Internet-style hyperlinks to other related information and a search mechanism.

"Now all we have to do is make sure nobody uses the keyboard for a wheel chock!" Kane joked.

Shifting gears with Marty Melanson

Marty Melanson of Fleet Operations in Wethersfield lives life on the fast track.

From April to October, he and his wife of 20 years spend nearly every weekend at the Lebanon Valley Dragway in Lebanon, New York. Although his wife is not a racer herself, she enjoys spectatorship enough to have traded in her street car to purchase Marty's race car for him, a 1966 Chevy II called *Mary's 2*.

"She'd probably still go even if I stayed home," he joked.



Marty Melanson (left) with wife Mary pose with racing partners and Mary's namesake, a Chevy II, at the Lebanon Valley Dragway in New York.

The track serves as a makeshift home to them throughout the summer months. They camp in a trailer on the weekends on the track premises and leave the car there throughout the week to avoid towing it home.

"I am able to combine my two favorite activities every weekend from spring to fall - camping and racing," he said.

The Lebanon track is the closest track to Connecticut that holds National Hot Rod Association

(NHRA) sponsored races. Melanson competes in the Super Pro Eliminator class. *Mary's 2* can go 130 mph in a quarter mile in under 10 seconds. His best recorded time for the quarter mile was 10.09 seconds at 133 mph.

"You basically go as fast as you can afford to go," said Melanson. Although he enjoys the thrill of the speed, his passion for competition is what "revs him up" along with the family atmosphere at the track.

"It's just a bunch of ordinary working folks having a great time."

For the past 14 years, he has worked with the same two racing partners. "We always seek each others' advice and help

with working on our cars," he explained.

Melanson's hobby is supported by Moore Brothers' Auto Body in Portland, Jed's Auto Parts in Middletown, and PMR Performance in Berlin. These area businesses sponsor Melanson by providing machine work, paint, tires, and auto parts.

In the winter, Melanson is able to shift gears and spend some



Marty Melanson

quiet time working in his home garage.

"I do most of the assembly work on the car myself," Melanson said. Every year the motor and transmission are rebuilt and the tires are replaced.

"I like the challenge of working on and tuning the car to make consistent quarter-mile passes," he added.

Melanson has been in state service since 1985 when he began in the New Haven Fleet garage



and subsequently worked in the Central Warehouse. Melanson has fine-tuned his repair knowledge as he has worked as a Qualified Craft Worker in Fleet Wethersfield for the past four years.

Customers give thumbs up to online ordering

By John McKay

“Our customers are calling us to say how impressed they are,” beamed Doris Vieira, describing the online food distribution system developed by her office and made a reality by Management Information Solutions (MIS).

“And we couldn’t have come this far without the amazing efforts of MIS!”

As of January 1, a federal mandate by the US Department of Agriculture made the DAS Food Distribution Program (FDP) responsible for organizing and processing customers’ monthly orders from the contract warehouse. According to Vieira, the system they inherited at the beginning of the year was inefficient and disorganized, leading to customer dissatisfaction with the ordering process.

Vieira and her team felt that if they could administer the ordering process more closely, they could have a greater influence on customer satisfaction. With the help of DAS’ MIS, the Food Distribution Program was able to streamline the system and impact the ordering process.

More advancements are in store for FDP. The office is in the process of developing an online ordering system for all program customers, and this spring will pilot the program with five school customers. Customers will save time in completing their order forms, orders to the warehouse will be more accurate, mailing costs will decrease, and the phone will stop ringing with customers calling in corrections.

“When I mentioned this pilot program to one of my customers,” said Vieira, “he joked, ‘Doris, if you can do that, I’ll never have to go into work again. I’ll be able to do everything from home. Let’s do it!’ ”

When asked about the project, Vincent Lombardo, director of MIS said, “What was challenging about the project was the size and effort needed to build the applications in-house to replace the warehouse systems, and the short time period in which it had to be done.” Rick Miarecki and his team—especially Donna Camillone— and staff were pulled from other MIS projects and put in long days and weekends to meet the deadline. This development team was supported by the FDP office and SLC in a great cross-functional effort.

From desktop to deal !!

By Mike Mansfield

DAS Procurement Services’ new online bid registry could be the simplest, most effective means yet of bringing the state and its suppliers together.

Here’s how it works: Vendors go to the DAS Procurement web page and fill out an online registration form providing information about their company and the commodity codes that match the products or services they offer. The form is then easily emailed directly to the Procurement Services office of DAS.

“The vendor, by registering its presence and interest in any forthcoming bids or RFPs, has, in effect, asked the state to consider buying its products,” said DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters.

“This will enable us to discontinue sending unsolicited paper bid documents and contract award notices to vendors,” said Jim Passier, manager of Procurement Services.

When the time comes to purchase a commodity, DAS Procurement Services will send those prequalified vendors an electronic bid notification via email, informing them that the state will soon be shopping for products in their line of business and inviting the vendor to submit a bid.

“These bid notices are then stored on the site,” said Waters, “enabling users to reference and search the database for all bids.”

This was a capability that was at the heart of the decision to move forward into online bidding, she said.

As Procurement Services prepares to go paperless in 1999, advances such as this will continue to play a tremendous role in the effort to make state business transactions as user-friendly as possible.

Commissioner,

cont. from Page 1



Commissioner Barbara Waters cuts the first slice of her celebratory cake as employees throughout the agency stopped by to congratulate her on her confirmation by the House.

Waters said the next four years would see an even greater emphasis on the online presence of the agency's diverse services, the full implementation of electronic commerce, an increase in our customer base among municipalities, more education and marketing of DAS programs, and more bundling of services to other state agencies.

"I think we have some of the most talented and dedicated people in state government...they are our strongest resource and make anything possible," Waters said.

"After 25 years in state service, I still say DAS employees are the best."

New business is inside-out

By Heather Cavanaugh

Sharing resources makes good business sense. "We call it 'inside outsourcing,' sharing our resources with other state agencies to gain economies of scale," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

"By inside outsourcing, we are using state workers more efficiently," she added.

"Right now, we are helping small agencies tremendously by bundling our services." Many business centers within DAS are involved in the resource sharing program.

The Human Resources Business Center is currently working with the Connecticut State University System, the Board of Firearms, and the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Information Technology.

"We are providing HR services in two areas," explained Human Resources Director Tina Lawson.

"We do organizational consulting which focuses on a particular project or need and is usually

durational and from a systems' process point of view," she added.

The other area of expertise they are offering is operational, offering basic human resources services such as personnel and payroll to smaller agencies.

"We can do it better, cheaper, and faster because our business is human resources," said Lawson, explaining that small agencies have greatly

benefited from this opportunity DAS has provided.

The Business Advisory Group (BAG) is working with a number of agencies on their Affirmative Action programs. Agencies such as Consumer Counsel, Banking, and the Treasurer's Office have received consultation and support from the attorneys in BAG.

Smaller agencies are receiving storage space at \$2 per foot as opposed to \$7 thanks to the new shared resources program. FAR's Warehouse Enterprises unit is helping three state agencies to store equipment and supplies at rates that would be unheard of at a commercial facility.

Also in FAR, the Business Office provides a full-range of fiscal and administrative support to smaller agencies, such as the Board of Firearms and Permits, to alleviate back loads of paperwork.

The Communications Office has extended their desktop publishing, public

relations, and graphic design support to the Departments of Economic and Community Development, Mental Retardation, and Social Services.

"Other agencies

without the same resources have seen what we've done, and have come to us looking for assistance," said Director of Communication Donna Micklus.

With the help of DAS, DSS has published its first annual report and newsletter, and DMR and DECD, their first newsletters.

"We've explored many opportunities and they are all going well," said Waters. "We hope to grow this business in the future."

Inside Outsourcing is one of the initiatives that Commissioner Barbara Waters has targeted for future growth.

All the news that fits, we print

By Dana Citarella

On the go

Many DAS employees have recently found new places to call home in the SOB. Despite a few delays, office relocations are finally complete.

On January 29, the Business Office moved the Budget Unit and the Accounts Payable Units from the fifth floor to the second floor in Rooms 202-220.

DAS Purchasing, the Master Insurance Program office, Grants Management and the Property Management Units moved from the fifth floor to Room 220 on February 5. Effective February 10, Carolyn Koloseus,

Steve Soklow and John Wilkerson of SLC moved into Room 415. Finally, the Communications office moved from Room 516 to 407 on February 11.

The annual "Take Our Kids to Work Day" falls on April 22 this year, and volunteers are needed to make sure it runs smoothly. The great success of last year's event paves the way for this year's to be just as enjoyable, if not more so.

"We are confident that this year's 'Take Our Kids to Work Day' will rival last year's unparalleled success," said Mike Mansfield. "Any suggestions for activities are more than welcome."

If you would like to chaperone the event or have any ideas for the day's activities, please call Heather Cavanaugh or Mike Mansfield at 713-5195.

Jamaica your flight?



Jennifer Bradley

The honeymoon was almost over - literally!

HRBC's Jennifer Bradley wasn't sure she was going to make her own wedding last week.

"My fiancée and I were scheduled to be married in Jamaica on Monday, February 15, but with the American Airlines pilots' strike in effect, we weren't going to make it."

Bradley's grandmother called the local news station citing her granddaughter as a great human interest story. She was right. Bradley was interviewed by Dennis House and Debra Kent of WFSB News, and soon after the interview aired, Air Jamaica called Bradley and gave her and her fiancée a free, non-stop flight for two to Jamaica.

"I was surprised and relieved at the same time," said Bradley. "My fiancée Steve couldn't believe our luck."

Anderson named to Child Development Committee

SLC's Dr. Martin Anderson was appointed by State Senate President Pro Tem Kevin Sullivan to the Capitol Child Development Center Advisory Committee. "I am confident that your experience and knowledge will be of great value to the Committee.

"I appreciate your willingness to make this commitment to public service," wrote Sullivan. Congratulations, Martin!

Short takes