

DAS Times

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 **NASPO '99 an "incredible success"**
by Michael Mansfield
- 1 **Set-Aside Program officially moved to DAS**
by Michael Mansfield
- 2 **New Fleet uniforms a big hit**
by Michael Mansfield
- 3 **Hats off to DAS employees**
by Cindy Duberek
- 3 **As seen on TV**
by Heather Cavanaugh
- 4 **Victories!**
by John McKay and Michael Mansfield
- 5 **Up Close**
by John McKay
- 6 **Ergonomically correct**
by John McKay
- 7 **DAS represented at GSA (again!)**
by Heather Cavanaugh
- 7 **Look how far we've come - Surplus**
by Michael Mansfield
- 8 **Short takes**
by John McKay and Michael Mansfield

Procurement hosts NASPO Conference

Conference draws full house, rave reviews

By Michael Mansfield

DAS Procurement Services faced a colossal task: Host and coordinate the National Association of State Purchasing Officers' (NASPO) 1999 Northeast Regional Conference. They could have aimed low and ensured a degree of success. Instead, they aimed for the stars, and succeeded in creating a conference that so greatly surpassed even the most ambitious hopes.



DAS' Linda Kobylenski, Teresa Dupont, and Eva Merriman at the NASPO kickoff dinner.

Within days of the show's announcement, all available openings had been quickly

See *NASPO '99*, page 2

Peter Smith Receives Governor's Service Award



DAS Procurement Services' Peter Smith receives the Governor's Service Award from Governor John G. Rowland in an August 20 presentation at the Capitol. (Story on page 7).

Rowland signs Set-Aside bill Program officially moved to DAS

By Michael Mansfield

Connecticut's Set-Aside Program, for years under the auspices of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), has been formally transferred to DAS.

DAS had been successfully administering

See *Set-Aside*, page 6

NASPO '99, cont. from page 1

sold out to delegates from New York, Massachusetts, Delaware, Vermont, Maine, and Pennsylvania among others. They spent July 28 through 30 immersed in both the finer points of modern state purchasing and the fine grandeur of Water's Edge Resort on the shore of Long Island Sound in Westbrook, the host facility.



Connecticut stands at the forefront of many of the progressive concepts discussed, and DAS personnel lent their insights and experience in lectures covering topics from e-commerce to the use of purchasing cards. Among the guest speakers were State Comptroller Nancy Wyman, who gave a well-received speech on the state's role in advancing these cutting-edge technologies; the always

affable Commissioner Dr. Henry Lee; and even a stress management expert named James Ayotte.

"I'm extremely pleased and proud with the way the event went," said Procurement Manager Jim Passier. "Everything from the spouses' trips to the gift packs - the group really pulled it together and made something special. We're still receiving positive words and praise from the attendees."



PHOTOS - Far left: Dr. Henry Lee with DAS' Sue Thomas, center top: Nancy Wyman addressing delegates, above: a full house



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NEW UNIFORMS SUIT FLEET TO A "T"

By Michael Mansfield

Ever since DAS Fleet Operations personnel began wearing their new navy blue uniforms in June (in response to a suggestion a Fleet employee made to Commissioner Waters), response has been overwhelmingly positive. Not only does it make it a lot easier to figure out what to wear to work, but DAS is footing the bill for the 11 uniform sets and pair of boots distributed to each staff member, and continually covers laundering, pressing, and replacement as needed. DAS Fleet customers have offered their comments on the new look, and their reaction has been 100-percent affirmative, using words like "very professional-looking," and "classy."



Hartford's Larry Gore in his new duds.

Jodi Ann Hinman from The Alliance for Economic Growth praised the welcome addition of the DAS Grant's Unit and **David Swenson** and **Reuben Jonathan-Lusack** for their expertise.

Captain John A. Leonard from the Department of Public Safety commended **Dr. Donald Jordan** for developing and administering a valid, reliable, and defensible trooper trainee examination in a very short period of time.



Thanks a million to **Chris Smith, Jose Baez, and Rick Miarecki** from Joann McAllister for getting Procurement Services up and operational since their computer upgrade. "Once again, MIS proved to be true professionals in their area of expertise."

HRBC's Sonia Greenhagen expressed her gratitude to **Lisa Chasse** for all of her help in the Telecommuting Pilot Program. "She's a life saver," said Greenhagen.

Kudos to **Linda Kobylenski** from Rose Brown of Clerical Plus for clearing up matters with a contract for transcription services for CT Mental Health and for getting the contract up and running.

Michael Owsianko from HRBC's payroll unit thanked **Alna Bolden, Cheryl Catania, Mary Daly, Debby Hearl, David Krayeski, Dixie Larned, David Lynn, Patti Maneggia, Edra Osgood, Gail Robbins, and Lina Simonu** for making his transition from another state agency to DAS a smooth and effortless one.

Betsy Galian and the **Food Distribution Staff** were commended by Paul Schaefer of the I. Shechtel Co., Inc. and Jeffrey Cotton of Cotton & Cotton Food Brokers for their top-notch service with the commodity processing business and for ensuring its success.

Roy Dion applauded the **Procurement Staff** for their outstanding job with the NASPO conference and for making it an unqualified success. "On a scale of one to 10, the outcome was a 15. You are all great!"

Deputy Commissioner Maria M. Houser from the Department of Correction praised **Dr. Donald Jordan** for making revisions on

the correction officer exam and for coordinating the testing. "Only with Don's guidance, dogmatic approach, and dedication to details was this possible."

Ann Breward from the Department of Public Utility Control thanked **Dr. Pamela Libby** for providing an extended posting period on an examination which assisted all applicants, internal and external.

Raymond Fulcher praised **Mark Grzymajlo** for the DRS Intercept-Access Application that he provided, reducing the time previously needed for manual posting and record-keeping. "You did a great job!"

The **Communications Office** received praise from Maureen Costigan for the newly published *DAS Style Guide*. "It is the best informational handout that I have ever gotten from DAS and I am sure that you will help a lot of people with this booklet," said Costigan.

DAS on TV

By Heather Cavanaugh

On July 29 at the State Office Building it was lights, camera...pulse?

Television crews and DAS First Responders were on hand for a demonstration of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The Archdiocese of Hartford heard of the partnership between the Red Cross and State of Connecticut and thought it was a great program to highlight on its public access show *Crossroads*.

DAS, along with other state agencies, has purchased AEDs to use at worksites.

"We signed an agreement with the Red Cross last fall because the safety of our employees is number one," said Commissioner Barbara Waters. Already, employees from most areas of DAS have undergone extensive training by the Red Cross on how to handle emergency situations and operate machinery such as the AED.

"These mechanisms are important to have in areas where a lot of people congregate," said Red Cross Director of Communication Lori Owen. "It's also very easy to use."

Program Coordinator John Wilkerson explained that since the agreement was signed, he has made several presentations to other state agencies to get them on board. "Right now we are working with the Departments of Education, Consumer Protection, and Public Works," Wilkerson said. Members from

See *AED*, page 6

The whole enchilada

By Michael Mansfield

It wasn't a surprise visit by Ed McMahon or the Publisher's Clearing House van. The man with the check in his hand was Steve Stathopoulos, chief of Food Distribution Programs in the Northeast region for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The purpose of his visit to Commissioner Waters' office August 3 was to put a resounding and very happy end to an effort initiated in 1997 by handing the DAS Food Distribution Program (FDP) \$473,200.

"I know how hard you worked for this," he said to the large group gathered to celebrate this milestone. "You put your heads together and brainstormed with your customers. Now, Connecticut's is one of the finest systems I've ever seen."

He was talking about CAFS, the Connecticut Automated Food System. DAS Food Distribution Program Manager Doris Vieira said CAFS was designed in direct response to customer feedback from school lunch directors who had expressed dissatisfaction with the service, timeliness, and manner in which food commodities were ordered and delivered.

"This directive required our program to create a state-run automation system that generates monthly order forms to school districts and receives, adjusts, and inputs data from school customers," Vieira said. CAFS allows the FDP to offer a more fair and equitable distribution of commodities, prepare billing reports, generate and distribute order forms, and quickly prepare federal reports in compliance with all requirements. Also, CAFS will soon be integrated with a new, expanded FDP website. The resulting system drew huge praise from Vieira, who applauded the tireless effort of FAR Director Vince Lombardo and the MIS group in setting up the system, saying, "We would not be here today celebrating this without them."

The collective sense of accomplishment was well-warranted. DAS had applied for a chunk of the available State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds more than 11 times larger than they'd ever been granted in the past. Vieira based her \$473,200 request on implementation cost and equipment figures drawn up with the assistance of Lombardo, who provided the MIS financial data and justification.

"Our goal was to build a modern, effective, and efficient automated system that provides the highest level of customer satisfaction. With the commitment and dedication of both the FDP and the MIS staff, we did it!" Vieira enthused. "By moving in this positive direction, we received tremendous support from USDA with the program's re-engineering process. Now, we're being called a 'national model.'"

The most they had ever received is \$40,000. They requested \$473,200. They got it.

SLC on CD

By John McKay

The hits just keep on coming

New CDs from DAS Procurement Services contain their best hits from the '80s and '90s, and the convenience is music to their ears.

MIS' Matt Shea has been diligently transferring Procurement's paper contracts to CD.

"These CDs hold just about everything you'd need to know about the contract," said Shea. From contract numbers, dates, and bid closings to contract supplements, vendor information and vendor CHRO information.

All the information associated with the contracts can get fairly lengthy. Bid proposals, standard terms, and conditions can add up to pages and pages and files and files of information.

"What we found in the past was that a lot of the information was scattered



and there was no one central location to find all this information," said Shea.

With Shea's help, one contract will be designated to one CD for convenience and ease. Another benefit is portability. CDs can be passed around from person to person and from computer to computer without exposure to DAS' mainframe computer and systems. "It's all-in-one, completely comprehensive, and easy to use," said Shea.

Got her motor *running*

Mild or wild? HRBC's Lina Simonu's hobby may surprise you

Was she born to be wild? Probably. HRBC's Lina Simonu has some really fun hobbies. "My husband David and I love our Harley Davidson motorcycles. It's such a great pastime," she said.

Simonu has a Sportster motorcycle, one of the smallest motorcycles Harley Davidson makes, and because of her small stature, that's fine with her. "It's got a lot of chrome on it though," added Simonu, "and it's really sharp looking with the black paint." Her husband has a Fat Boy Harley Davidson motorcycle. "People who know anything about motorcycles really drool over his."

The Simonus enjoy putting the motorcycle into their enclosed trailer and driving up to northern Maine and northern Vermont where they have family. There, they go for long bike rides through rolling hills and winding roads, checking out old barns, and



HRBC's Lina Simonu

covered bridges.

In addition to riding for fun, about four years ago Simonu and her husband got into racing sprint cars.

"They're smaller cars and look like souped-up dune buggies," she said. "But they go very fast." She won her first race in New York on a very bumpy all-terrain track.

"For the longest time, I was the only woman racer," she said, "and winning my first race was great. I'll never forget that feeling." She also went on to win other races, but the Simonus felt that the racing schedule and maintenance of the sprint cars became too time-consuming, so they decided to retire from the sprint car tour.

"Riding our motorcycles is seasonal, and we can do it when we want without any time constraints," she added. When winter comes, the Simonus drive their own snowmobiles and have "friendly" races between each other and their friends. "My husband and I love to race each other on our snowmobiles." She added, "He's got more power in his sled, but I have quickness and agility in mine," she added.

When they're not racing to the finish line, the Simonus enjoy landscaping and gardening at their home in Mansfield. They've put in a one-third-acre pond with a gazebo



Lina Simonu and her Sportster motorcycle.

nearby, and are continuously planting, fertilizing, and tending to their yard.

"People tell me I live in a park," she joked. "There are certain days when I get home,

Up Close
By John McKay

and it's so beautiful and relaxing that I think to myself, 'Yup, I do.'"

Simonu is a Personnel Officer 2 and has been in state service for 22 years. She started off with the Department of Mental Retardation in Mansfield, and has worked at the Board of Education Services for the Blind as well as the Departments of Correction, Education, and now Administrative Services. She said she enjoys moving around and learning about the different aspects of government. It seems she's always on the ready, set, go.

Ergo, Ergonomics

By John McKay

It's better than taking two aspirin. DAS, in conjunction with the ErgoCenter at the University of Connecticut Health Center, will launch a workplace ergonomics program for all of DAS. "I'm really excited about this program," said DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters. "Anything that benefits DAS employees - you bet I'm all for it."

Nine DAS employees have been trained by the ErgoCenter on how to identify problems and suggest possible alternatives.

"We don't claim to have all the answers," said SLC's Steve Soklow, a trained member of the Ergonomics team, "but if we don't, we know where to get them." The committee members will participate in two four-hour training sessions in identifying potential risks and improper office configurations.

"We're going to send out a survey to employees and that will give us an idea of some of the problems we're looking for," said Lina Simonu, committee chairperson. The survey will help identify cumulative trauma disorders like carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis.

The study is not limited to office employees. It will cover every section of DAS, including Fleet garages and Print, Mail & Courier services. When completed, the project will result in major improvements in office ergonomics and increase the comfort and wellness of DAS employees.

Nick Warren from UConn's ErgoCenter said, "It's a great initiative being undertaken by DAS. When I first run into these situations where employees have backaches or their wrists hurt, they have no one to address these issues. This shows that DAS really cares about its employees and their well-being."

AED, cont. from page 3

these agencies also participated in the taping where responders were paired to practice CPR techniques and use of the AED.

"I think it's extremely important to have trained individuals that can respond to emergencies," said First Responder John McKay. "If we can help just one person, it's all worth it."

Representing DAS at the taping were Mark Carroza, Linda Kobylenski, John McKay, and Donna Wadhams.



Linda Kobylenski demonstrates the AED with partner Mark Carroza.

The *Crossroads* episode will air some time in September on channel UPN 20 WTX television.

Set-Aside, cont. from page 1



From L to R: Jim Passier, Roy Dion, CHRO Executive Director Cynthia Watts-Elder, Joann McAllister, Gov. John Rowland, Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola, J. Carlos Velez, Vince Musumeci, and Lt. Gov. Jodi Rell.

the program with exceptional and unprecedented results for the last two years under the management of J. Carlos Velez and his Business CONNections unit. But until the official enactment of Public Act No. 99-233 in a bill signing ceremony in Governor John G. Rowland's office July 22, the Set-Aside program still technically fell under the responsibility of DECD.

DAS personnel joined with representatives from DECD and the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities at the ceremony.

"We are very excited," concurred Velez, "We look forward to continued progress and success with our partners in the state's business community."

Look how far we've come:

Surplus

New virtual warehouse an astronomical success

By Michael Mansfield

To compare the way things were done just three years ago at the State Property Distribution Center to the way they are handled now is like comparing a Model T to a Ferrari. What once involved up to a year of phone calls and on-site visits, a warehouse of storage space, and a small forest worth of paperwork now never takes longer than four weeks and fits on a fiber optic cable.

Just three short years ago, the "virtual warehouse," was a key objective in the 1996 Business Plan. At that time, all state surplus property was catalogued, stored, and transferred manually.

Manager Kenn Stephenson remembered the logistical demands well. "We had tens of thousands of 3" x 5" index cards of all surplus property," he explained. "Just to get rid of a chair, an agency would fill out a request for disposal form in triplicate and mail it to our office where we would affix a control number, mail it back to them, and call each other to coordinate a time when we could go view the property." He paused to take a breath. "Then, we would go inspect it and call them back to tell them if and when they could drop off the merchandise, and *then* we would begin the transfer process."

This routinely took three to six months, after which the surplus merchandise was put on the floor of the warehouse's retail store. There, it could take up space for another six months until it was either bought and reused or ultimately scrapped. The file cabinets that stored the index cards and transfer papers were literally bursting.

"We knew we had to do something differently," Stephenson said. He

brainstormed with Janis Nome and Jim Potyra to come up with a plan. The result was an electronic database to replace the index cards and new, easy-to-use online forms. When they piloted the program the very next year to five of the state's largest agencies, they had created a virtual warehouse so big and powerful they closed the real one.

"We trained all the agencies on our new system," Stephenson recalled. "We have further revised and improved that original program and launched a newer version in 1998. Since then, we have not had a single problem. It's operating *flawlessly*."

As helpful as the new technology is for DAS, the benefits to user agencies are perhaps even greater. When users

**The system
is operating
"flawlessly"**

log on, they receive an up-to-the minute status report of

all pending requests for merchandise they either wish to receive or scrap. They can search for items instantly, see a digital photo of the property, and claim it online. The program even logs the dollar value of the transfer for accounting purposes.

"We even made a video tutorial they can click on that walks them through the process. And we have a button that will give them a road map with directions to where the item is located so they can go pick it up," Stephenson said. Today, the database has over 60,000 entries, and all surplus goods move through the system from start to finish in under 28 days. Stephenson says he'll soon be targeting municipalities, with a goal of moving state surplus property from those who no longer need it to those who do, maximizing its usage and extending its life in service to Connecticut's taxpayers.

Smith Wins GSA

by Heather Cavanaugh

The halls of the State Capitol once again echoed with praise for outstanding customer service by a DAS employee.

This time, the well-deserving recipient of the Governor's Service Award was Peter Smith, a contract specialist with Procurement Services. Smith was recognized by ADT Security's Bill Lombardi for his diligence, dedication, and professionalism. Clients say he has consistently earned their respect by making sure they receive the quality service they deserve, often making personal visits to agencies to clarify state contracts.

"I am honored to receive this award. And it's even more meaningful because it came from one of our customers," Smith said.

He, along with 31 other state employees were honored by Governor John G. Rowland at a ceremony and reception held on August 20. In applauding the hard work of these employees, Governor Rowland said, "We established this award two years ago to recognize and highlight all of the great things that happen in our agencies."

After presenting the prestigious award certificates and pins, Governor Rowland concluded the ceremony by giving honorees the ultimate prize - the day off! "If you eat fast, you can probably all get out of here by 10:00," he joked.

All the news that fits, we print



Print, Mail & Courier moves

On Friday, August 6, DAS Print, Mail & Courier moved to its new home at 18-20 Trinity Street in Hartford. The entrance to the new facility is on the south side of the building at the end of the ramp.

All phone numbers will remain the same: Printing - Patty Gallucci at (860) 566-4718, Mail Service - Phil McDermott at (860) 566-4400, Courier Service - Lee Cusano at (860) 566-4400, and Director Ed Urbansky at (860) 566-1053.

Short Takes

By John McKay and Michael Mansfield

Auto station automation

On August 4, the fueling station on Buckingham Street in Hartford was converted to an automated self-serve facility. Pumps in Norwich were retrofitted with automation equipment that day as well.

To use the new automated fuel system, customers must have a fuel key - the fuel credit card will no longer be accepted. The key, called a Fuelmaster Prokee by its manufacturer, is a simple way to move the fueling and payment process along more quickly while simultaneously collecting important vehicle data.

Here's how it works: The user inserts the key into the pump and enters the vehicle's odometer reading. This information prompts the next question, "Did you check your oil?" If oil is to be added, the machine logs how many quarts.

Responses to these simple questions will help DAS Fleet create a database containing a number of performance, efficiency, and maintenance characteristics for its many different vehicles and vehicle types.

Picnic rescheduled for September

The rescheduled DAS Picnic is just a few weeks away. This year's event will begin at noon on Friday, September 17, at the Winding Trails Park in Farmington.

Tickets are \$16, and can be purchased through any of the following people: Patti Maneggia (860) 713-5179, Carl Passanisi (860) 713-5151, Ed Urbansky (860) 566-1053, Pam Young (860) 666-7503, and Marisol Feliciano (860) 666-7554.

(Soviet) Georgia on their minds

It wasn't a meeting of the United Nations, but it was a very interesting meeting of two countries. On August 2, HRBC's Jeanne Gray, Sue Lizee, Peter Rozantes, and Mary Sullivan met with a Georgian delegation from the World Affairs Council of West Hartford to exchange ideas on human resources ideas and concepts.

Since gaining independence from the former Soviet Union, Georgia is striving to build a professional civil service. This group of delegates is charged with the task of learning about the United States' civil service system and applying what is relevant to their own country.

Lizee went on to highlight some of Connecticut's more successful human resources initiatives and explained some of the trial and error practices learned by human resources professionals. He also identified a number of successful HR campaigns from other states and how Connecticut incorporated and modified them to fit their parameters.

One of the delegates said, "Their advice and information were extremely helpful and we will definitely use this information and seek his advice in the future."