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## Lt. Gov. visits DAS

By Donna Micklus and Heather Cavanaugh

There was a special caller from the Capitol in the halls of DAS.

On Wednesday, September 15, Lt. Governor Jodi Rell visited DAS offices and talked with employees. Accompanied by Commissioner Barbara Waters, Deputy Commissioner Alan Mazzola, Communications Director Donna Micklus and Communications Account Manager Heather Cavanaugh, the Lt. Governor said that it's important to her to walk around, meet people, and learn a little about everybody's job.

"I want to thank you for all the work you do," Rell told HR employees in G-1 as she wended her way through the many work stations, intent on personally meeting every-



HR staff enjoy the photo op with Lt. Governor Jodi Rell.

one in the unit. "We don't tell you often enough how much we appreciate you," she said.

In Procurement, Rell thanked the staff for "keeping us on the straight and narrow" and remarked on how doing business with the state has become so much more customer-friendly over the past four years.

*Please see Lt. Governor, page 2*

## The spirit of 'mahalo' hits the mainland

By Mike Mansfield

The kickoff of the second DAS Employee Recognition campaign of 1999 - the last of the millennium - generated a tidal wave of excitement at DAS facilities at a Polynesian beach party held Monday morning, September 20.

This time, the campaign is called "Mahalo," a Hawaiian word with several meanings, all of which are in some way related to thanks and great gratitude. Employee Recognition Committee members felt the correlation was ideal.

"This award is not just about recognition, it's about publicly thanking someone who has done something special," remarked Committee Chairman Steve Soklow, surveying the festivities. "This theme not only reinforces the spirit of community at DAS, it makes for a heck of a party!"

Dozens of employees from throughout the agency were greeted with leis as they arrived at kickoff ceremonies in Room G-38 of the State Office Building and at the Financial Services Center facility in Newington. As they washed down macadamia nuts, coconut cookies, and fresh

*Please see Mahalo, page 2*

## Lt. Governor, cont. from page 1

Known for always having bountiful snacks, the Procurement staff invited the Lt. Governor back when they celebrate ethnic day, promising her an array of Epicurean delights.

On the second floor in the FSC Business Office, Rell

saw some familiar faces as she was welcomed by Jim McKenna, Jean Michael, Dan Donahue, and Fran Montanaro. FSC staff oversee all administrative functions of the Governor's and Lt. Governor's offices. Rell was also



Employees in Payroll/Personnel chat with Lt. Governor Jodi Rell and Commissioner Waters.

interested in the new grants administration program. "I know of a nonprofit who could use your help," she told Reuben Jonathan

Lusack and asked for his business card. Other FSC staff made their way around cartons overflowing with office supplies in anticipation of the upcoming

move to the fifth floor, to thank the Lt. Governor for her visit.

HR, SLC, Federal Foods, and Property Distribution staff were eagerly awaiting Rell's arrival to their offices, but she was delayed a few moments when she was introduced to Paul Greco in the hallway en route and remarked that his name sounded familiar.

"Maybe it's from reading about all the great things we do in the

DAS Times," Greco offered.

Once in Room 406, Rell lost no time in getting to the point. "OK, where's payroll, we love you guys!" No argument there. But Rell also had an opportunity to talk to Jerry Santostefano and Tony Ferreira who briefed her on the Food Distribution Program. "I want to hear more. I'll be back," Rell said as she was reminded of her tight schedule.

After a stop in Alan Mazzola's office to meet Bettye Bishop, MIS' Sue Miller and the Communications staff, it was up to the newly renovated space on the fifth floor with the commissioner's senior team.

Rell said she had hoped to have an opportunity to meet with all DAS staff in the State Office Building, but needed to cut her visit short to attend a briefing by Governor Rowland on the encroaching path of Hurricane Floyd.

"I'm coming back," she repeated, "I want to do more than just breeze through. I want a chance to talk to everyone."

Perhaps HR's Edra Osgood best summed up employees' reactions. "She was very nice and down to earth. When she spoke to us, she made it very personal. We all felt very comfortable and that she really cared about what we do."



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Contributions are welcome but may be edited for space and clarity.

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## Mahalo, cont. from page 1

pineapple with Kona blend coffee and tropical island juices, committee members distributed information about the awards, now in their fifth cycle.

While the event took place on the last day of summer, attendees seemed intent on not letting the sun set on the season or on their enjoyment of the event.

Nominations for the Employee Recognition Award will be accepted through November 9.



Commissioner Waters gets in the spirit and wins the hula hoop contest!

The online ballot is accessed through the DAS Central button on Lotus Notes. Awards will be distributed in the categories of "Going the Extra Mile," "Team Excellence," "Remarkable Innovation," and "Customer

Service" at a special Mahalo Luau at the Solomon Welles House in Wethersfield on November 18.

Janice A. Snyder from the Department of Transportation praised **Celeste Cashman** for working diligently on their needs for equipment and said, "I appreciate her continued support, pleasant attitude, efficient and well-executed bids. She keeps our operation running smoothly."

Toby Bates from the Office of the State Comptroller expressed his thanks to **Toni Alphonse** and **Suzanne Kaswan** "for their support with my sometimes demanding requests, and they have found creative ways to solve my problems."

Susan Mazzoccoli from the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners commended **Debbie Atkinson, Kevin Backman, Juliet Colebrook, Mary Daly, Dan Donahue, Mike Felix, Alice Hall, Sue Lizee, Jerry Lynn, Patti Maneggia, Jim McKenna, Jean Michael, Fran Montanaro, Tracie Morelli, Fred Ondevilla, Edra Osgood, Karen Rakowski, Dan Sadowski, and Peter Varhol** for making her challenging transition to state service a pleasant one with their "professional, courteous, and efficient manner. All requests have been treated with resourcefulness and competence."

Town Manager Lee C. Erdmann from the Town of Wethersfield praised **Roy Dion** and **Kenn Stephenson** for the cleanup and improvements made to the State and Federal Property Center.

**Donna Micklus** and the **Communications Staff** received praise from Sue Miller for the

newly published *DAS Style Guide*. "It was so well-done, so user-friendly, and so very needed!"

Special thanks to **Tony Ferreira** from Nancy L. Carrington of the Connecticut Food Bank for touring their distribution outlets. "He was knowledgeable, thoughtful, and fun to work with."

Elizabeth Shailor from New Haven Public Schools thanked **Roger Mansfield** for his work on their drain cleaning contract.

Commissioner Peter O'Meara applauded **Henry Jovanelly** and the **FSC Newington staff** for helping the Department of Mental Retardation staff achieve their 1999 fiscal year Medicaid billing in excess of \$500 million.

Edra Osgood thanked **Janet Knopf** of MIS for her help in building an Access database for her In-Service Training Program. "With Janet's help and technical knowledge, I can now pull various reports together in a matter of minutes," said Osgood. "Thanks!"

Roy Dion praised **Joyce Chin** for "demonstrating the professionalism and resourcefulness that are everything we are striving to achieve in DAS."

Jim Watson from the Department of Economic and Community Development expressed his thanks to **Heather Cavanaugh** for her work on their agency newsletter, the *DECD Agenda*, and said, "I've gotten a lot of compliments on the layout and the look of it."

Commissioner Barbara Waters commended **Roy Dion, Jim Passier**, and the **Procurement Staff** for the Legislation Program Review's report on the procurement program, stating that "since

*Hats Off*

By Cindy Duberek

the report's release, recommendations have been implemented. DAS, in fact, has satisfactorily addressed each area cited for improvement within its purview. Way to go guys!"

Purchasing Officer Don Knybel from the Department of Revenue Services applauded **Linda Kobylenski** for her timely processing of bidding forms. "Her patience, accuracy, cooperation, and hard work is appreciated."

Janice Snyder from the Department of Transportation commended **Susan Thomas** for all of her help with the salt extension contract and for doing a "terrific job."

Dan Donahue, "an English major and lifetime student of language and usage," thanked **Donna Micklus** and the **Communications Staff** for publishing the *DAS Style Guide* calling it "a wonderful reference tool."

## ***FSC recoups millions for Connecticut schools***

The Financial Services Center (FSC) has found a way to give back to Connecticut's schools. It's called the School-Based Child Health Care Program.

"The program can mean \$50,000 to \$2 million per year to go back into their budget," said FSC Manager Henry Jovanelly.

Schools are mandated to provide services to special needs students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Services may include physical, speech, or occupational therapy, nursing, and counseling – any service that is deemed necessary to help



the child meet his or her educational goals. The US Senate agreed that Medicaid could be used to defray costs if the service was prescribed in the student's Individualized Treatment Plan.

"The schools aren't accustomed to this medical billing environment," said Jovanelly.

"We specialize in that kind of billing. We are able to help them get money back for these services provided to students, and paid with a combination of local and state funds." DAS is helping the local school districts document services, submit claims, and process payments to the Medicaid program.

DAS has worked with the Department of Social Services, the lead agency for the School-Based Child Health Care Program, to make the program easier for schools to participate.

"The paper process was unbelievable. The schools were documenting thousands of services that could never be billed. We met with our customers to find ways to make it easier," said Jovanelly. Forms were cut to less than half, and a process was built to identify Medicaid-eligible students, so documentation is done only for the services that can be paid.

"Right now we're meeting with school districts to explain the program and what the roles of DAS, DSS, and the schools are to make this a successful expansion of the programs. We want them to know that

we're in this to make it work for the schools and the taxpayers," Jovanelly said, explaining that the larger urban schools have the most to gain because of the extent of their students' Medicaid eligibility.

Recent legislative changes to state laws have also made the program more attractive to the schools. There was a 10-percent increase in money paid to the towns on paid claims.

Since July, six new schools have signed on. Jovanelly said that he expects another seven school districts to join in by December. Last year, DAS recouped over \$22 million through this program and more is expected for this year.

## ***MIS to the rescue (again!)***

Ever try to guess how many small and minority-owned businesses exist in Connecticut?

Want to try and track them?

This was the dilemma facing the Business CONNections unit. One of the major difficulties encountered was the collection and administration of all the data.

"You would not believe the amount of paperwork that accompanies this information-gathering process," said Business CONNections Director Carlos Velez. "Let alone when this information is needed to be assembled for reporting purposes, there were times when it just couldn't be done."

Each vendor applying for certification is required to submit information on annual sales totals, affiliated vendors, tax returns, and contact information.

To lighten the load, Management Information Solutions (MIS) staff Dan Sears and Scott Benson made huge modifications to the Set-Aside application process to automatically track Set-Aside information.

Vendor notices are now generated automatically, and broken down by category: reminders, pending certification, pending recertification, and ineligible for certification.

"On top of that, we can now generate very specific information," said Velez. "With MIS' help, we were freed from this paper tiger and can focus more on our Set-Aside customers."

"During our initial meetings, I asked Dan if what I needed the system to do could be done. His response: 'It can always be done.'

"That made me feel incredible confidence in MIS and the product they supplied us."

# It's a jungle out there!

By Heather Cavanaugh

Christine Brunell and her husband, Danny, took a walk on the wild side. This past spring, they went on a two-week excursion to southern Africa.

"We wanted to go on vacation to a place where things look very different from the United States. And we were excited to see all of the animals there," Brunell said.

They took a 16-hour flight to Johannesburg, South Africa. This leg of the trip proved to be enlightening as they saw the poverty-stricken city.

"There is a lot of crime because of the poverty," Brunell explained. Ironically, the underside of the city is filled with gold which is mined from its many catacombs. From Johannesburg, they went to Zimbabwe where they went on a river ride down the Zambezi River and witnessed crocodiles (right next to the boat!), hippos, and giraffe.

Zimbabwe is also home to one of the seven natural wonders of the world – Victoria Falls. Brunell was not prepared to try the treacherous water rafting or the bungee jumping that is available there.

The longest leg of the trip was in Botswana where the couple stayed at a safari lodge which bordered a game reserve. This is where they "roughed it." The lodge had no electricity and during

the African winter, it became as low as 40 degrees in the morning.

"I always waited until later in the day to take a shower when it was a more bearable 70 degrees," Brunell said.

Visitors to the lodge had a daily regiment. "We would wake up to the beating of drums every morning," she explained. The rest of the day included wonderful meals, game watches, and conversations with other travelers.

"There were people from all over the world. Although not everyone spoke English, it was obvious that we all shared the same excitement to be there," Brunell said.

She recalled some of the most memorable times on the game drives.

"Lions would walk right next to our truck. One looked me right in the eye," Brunell said, explaining that the animals

are not interested in people as long as they stay in the Land Rover. They must have learned not to fear the professional guides."



Adventurers Chris and Danny Brunell

"The reserve is a huge part of the country where the animals are protected from poachers," she explained, adding that there are over 40,000 elephants on the reserve.

Most of the animals on the terrain are grazers, so onlookers were able to see them close up.



Photographing these giraffe was a tall order for Brunell.



"Cameras were constantly clicking along with the 'oohs' and 'aahs.'" Christine and her husband took more than 20 rolls of film!

"My favorite part of the trip was seeing the lions," she said. "Every time we saw them it was truly amazing." The pair plans to do a lot more traveling upon retirement.

Brunell began at DAS in 1980 when she worked as an investigator at Norwich Hospital. She is currently a team leader in the Recovery Unit of the Financial Services Center.

# Nutmeg winds "drill" DAS

## Simulated hurricane a real lesson in disaster preparedness

By Mike Mansfield

The calm, sunny day outside belied the stormy exercise that was going on inside.

DAS' Peter Smith and Dan Donahue were at the Hartford Armory, working with the Military Department on battling the 125 mph winds of a simulated Category 3/4 hurricane which had been dumping four inches of rain on the state each hour.

It was all part of the statewide "Nutmeg Winds" drill conducted by John Wiltse, director of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

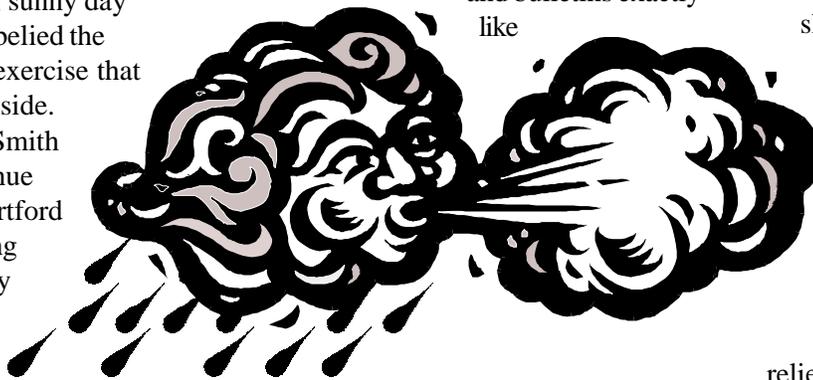
"OEM set up the drill as a learning experience and a teaching lesson," said Smith of the simulation. "It was a very real test to determine the state's ability to respond to situations like these."

"It was a valuable experience and it was great to see firsthand that Connecticut is as ready as it can be for a hurricane. We are all hopeful that the lessons learned will never have to be imple-

mented," said Donahue, DAS' primary emergency contact.

The DAS team was tasked with a number of activities, many of which, they said, would not have been immediately obvious in a time of actual crisis.

When the fictitious storm hit, Smith began to receive a flurry of weather advisories, press releases, and bulletins exactly like



those used in an actual emergency. Heightening the level of reality, Lieutenant Governor Jodi Rell participated as well, briefing a room full of local broadcasting students and regional disaster coordinators.

Participation went all the way up to the federal level, with the Department

tasks grew more challenging.

One minute, he thwarted a disaster by locating tanker trucks that could be used for storage after a water treatment facility failed. Shortly thereafter, a fuel tank rupture paralyzed New Haven Harbor.

The area's nuclear reactor had been shut down, but Smith needed to come up with a shipment of diesel fuel to help keep the reactor cool.

"I called an actual vendor to see if we could do this if we were put on the spot," Smith said.

He breathed a sigh of relief when he learned the vendor could get the fuel there quite easily. Easily, that is, if it could be delivered into the now fictitiously flooded New Haven Harbor.

Finally, Smith arranged a Department of Transportation escort to get the trucks to the nuclear facility.

Smith said he could see emergency preparedness become a more prominent factor in state purchasing.

"We may ask vendors if they would be interested in joining our emergency response team," he said. "Because in a crisis, our contracts don't matter anymore. It's our *contacts*. They're all we have. We need actual people who we can call at home and count on to pitch in."

**"...it was great to see firsthand that Connecticut is as ready as it can be for a hurricane. We are all hopeful that the lessons learned will never have to be implemented."**

- Dan Donahue

of Defense, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and FBI participating to ensure the highest level of accuracy and thoroughness.

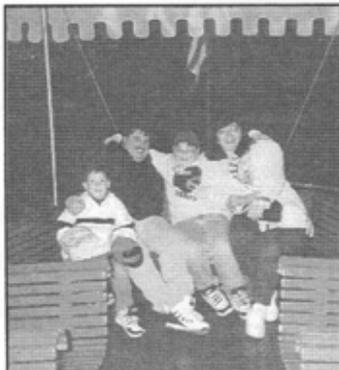
The staged requests for emergency supplies came to Smith first in a trickle, then in torrents.

"We needed blankets and dumpsters for the removal of storm debris," he said. Soon, however, the

# DAS celebrates Family Day



Sandra Bzdyra's family...and pups make 12.



Mary Daly and family are all aboard for a fun time.



Rocco Santostefano strikes a pose for Jerry's camera.



The Valentins have every reason to be proud of their new baby boy.



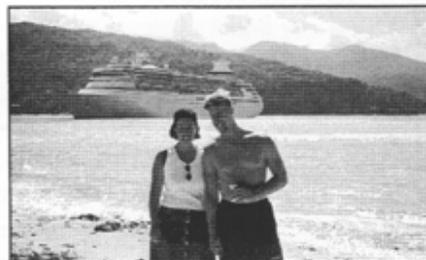
Tommy and Kim resemble their mom, Nina Ritson.



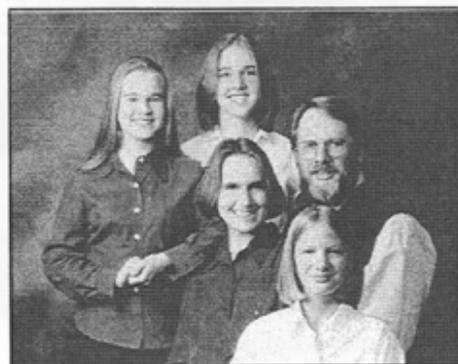
Bells were ringing for happy couple, Chris and Cheryl Welton Sawina.



Phil Karas as Merlin the Magician at the rudder of a raft full of family.



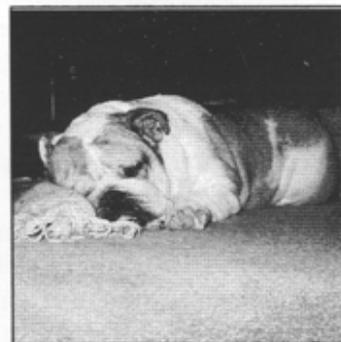
Heather Cavanaugh and her brother Jason tripping in the Caribbean.



In the Anderson family - Martin is clearly outnumbered.



Vin Lombardo and family sporting smiles and sartorial splendor.



A face only parents could love, Donna and Tom's bulldog, Tucker (Micklus-Ciccalone), is shown doing what he does best.



Anne Pomeroy Dixon poses with one big happy family.

# ***All the news that fits, we print***

By John McKay and Mike Mansfield

## **Business Planning for the millennium**

DAS' 1999 - 2000 Business Plan is now available through DAS Central.

The Business Plan contains updated agency benchmarks, the new organizational standards statement, business center plans, and goals.

## *Short takes*

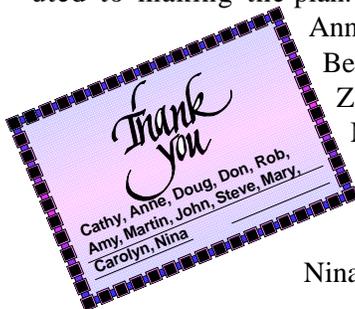
"Updating this plan just gets easier every year," said SLC's Cathy Daly.

"Now, all we have to do is update the text and voila, it's done!"

Look for an enhancement to this year's plan.

There's a link to DAS' new database that contains measures on all business center activity, along with some agencywide data.

A big thank you goes out to everyone who contributed to making the plan. They are: Cathy Daly, Anne Pomeroy Dixon, Doug Belli, Don Chaffee, Rob Zalucki, Amy Torre, Martin Anderson, John Wilkerson, Steve Soklow, Mary Yabrosky, Carolyn Koloseus, and Nina Ritson.



## **If it's September, it must be CSEC**



Watch for lots of new fundraisers for this year's Connecticut State Employees Campaign (CSEC) for Charitable Giving.

Making its debut is DAS' first employee cookbook, now available for pre-order. Cookbooks are \$10 and include delicious recipes submitted by DAS staff.

Some old favorite activities will be returning like the DAS Tea Cup auction and ice cream social. Remember, all proceeds go toward CSEC. Please contact SLC's Nancy Jones at (860) 713-5041 for more information.



## **DAS strutting its stuff at annual CCM Conference**

Once again, DAS will be exhibiting at the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Annual Convention and Exposition on October 5 at the Radisson Hotel and Convention Center in Cromwell.

DAS representatives will be promoting the agency's many services to the towns and municipalities of the state, including new Procurement innovations, the State and Federal Surplus Property Distribution Program, and, for the first time, Financial Services Center offerings such as the Grants Management Program.

At 11:00 that morning, DAS Procurement Manager Jim Passier will be giving a special breakout discussion and demonstration on electronic commerce, a program that promises to revolutionize the way the state and towns and cities do business.

The one-day conference runs from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.