



USDA Awards \$670,000 Grant to DAS Food Distribution Program

By Donna Micklus

They say timing is everything. And given the severity of the economic climate, this timing couldn't have been better.

Food Distribution Program (FDP) Director Linda Hubeny explained that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing \$3.1 million to state agencies nationwide to help them cover costs of implementing a new on-line ordering system called Web Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) which is not compatible with states' existing systems.

USDA officially notified Hubeny last week that DAS was one of the major grant recipients.

Hubeny, who wrote the grant application said she devoted more than 80 hours to it and was proud to see those efforts rewarded.

"The Northeast states received one-third of the \$3.1 million, and Connecticut received \$670,000, the most in the Northeast," she said. "I'm so pleased that our DAS program was able to successfully comply with Governor Rell's directive to save the state money by identifying alternate sources of income," Hubeny added.

WBSCM will go-live on January 1, 2010, and all states must have their new applications up

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And the Awards Go To...

By John McKay

The Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council awarded Meg Yetishefsky and the Supplier Diversity program the 2009 Advocate of the Year at a ceremony at the Aqua Turf in Southington on April 30.

"I was both surprised and proud at the same time," said Yetishefsky. "I was surprised to win because of the level of competition. We were up against some pretty big names like Aetna, United Technologies, Raytheon, and MIT."

DAS Commissioner Brenda Sisco said, "I'm so proud of Meg and her staff for receiving this award. It goes to show that state government can compete with anyone. Congratulations!" The Supplier Diversity team also received citations from both State Treasurer Denise Nappier and Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz.

And the accolades kept coming. On May 20, Supplier Diversity was honored at a *Woman in*

Leadership luncheon which recognizes exemplary women for their accomplishments and contributions to corporations, civic and professional organizations in the community.



Meg Yetishefsky and her team proudly show their award: Stan Kenton, Joanne Cusano, Marisol Rivera, Lori Coleman, Heather Berte (not pictured Maureen Blackburn and Ruthie Hatten).

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The 8th Annual "Taste of DAS"

By Nina Ritson

Calorie Counting Not Permitted at Popular Event

It was a white tail event...make that a white *table* event.

Banquet displays were swathed in white cloth on Thursday, May 20, as the Diversity Council gathered once again to prepare for their signature annual event – The (now famous) Taste of DAS.

President of the Council, Carlos Kebe, was grateful to the Council members for all their hard work. "Once again our Taste of DAS was a feast of flavors and delights. The recipe for this successful event included equal parts of preparation, participation and pride of culture and traditions."

This year's highlight – The Fast Pass!! Yep, those folks bringing in dishes were rewarded with a ticket that catapulted them to the front of the serving line.

"The implementation of the 'Fast Pass' was our Gastronomic Incentive Program, and the Diversity Council welcomes comments and suggestions for future Taste events," added Kebe.

So what were they serving up this year? How about some Creamy Fried Confetti Corn, Fried Catfish Nuggets, Jamaican Beef Patties, or Pernil, Flan and Pastelon, Curried Chicken, Mushrooms Alfresca, Antipasto, Sausage and Peppers, Pasta and Meatballs, Empanandas, Mandle Bread, Mizeria and Rugalach, and Vietnamese Rolls.

"Great event! Excellent job by the committee and everyone who participated! In light of the CTFit awareness perhaps they would like to do a healthy 'Taste' with fruits and veggies and exchange healthy cooking alternatives for a better living," said Franky Rivera.



Diversity Council Members L to R: Juliet Colebrook, John McKay, President Carlos Kebe, Cathy Abadom, Joanne Cusano, Glenda Rollins, Deb Peterson and Donna Camillone pose with the DAS "Logo Cake."

Even if you were a little squeamish about trying out new food, there were plenty of American favorites to choose from like Texas salsa and corn chips, shrimp cocktail, pizza, wings, cold cut platter, quiche and barbecue chicken.

"I have a wicked sweet tooth so I was happy to see a variety of desserts. The Oreo pie was the best, although I also enjoyed the Blueberry Furlough cake. The room looked festive and the Committee members were most gracious!" said Aimee Cunningham.

To satisfy that sweet tooth were Apple Crisp, Strawberry Supreme Cake, Lemon Bundt, Kakor, Hazelnut Cookies, Polvorones, Italian Cookies and

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The DAS Times is published monthly by the Department of Administrative Services Communications Office 165 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106

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Kay Wade of the Core-CT Scheduling Front End Team sent a note of praise to **David Pellet** “to thank you for another successful class equipment set-up. Not only did you set up the projector and all the room’s computers for today’s class, you also set up the room for our last-minute mini-dry run training class on Monday. I always appreciate how quickly and thoroughly you do your job. “

Raffaella Cannatelli from Yankee Aluminum praised **Lori Coleman** “for all you did for me to get my certificate. After all the effort I do not qualify for the contract, but I will get a partial under the MBE. Thanks so much again and again. You’re the best!”

HATS OFF!

By Cindy Rusczyk

Bill McLeod from Greater Bridgeport SCORE commended **Mark Carroza** as one of the presenters on *Doing Business with the State*, recommending his presentation to another business. “Mark Carroza talked extensively about the minority and women-owned business provisions of the state and local regulations and how to qualify for these provisions and meet the requirements. After the session that we had in late February, it seems to me that your membership could benefit from a presentation on this information. This was one of the elements identified in the brainstorming session that we did with your membership. I mentioned to Mark the information that I had on MBA-CJV and he was enthusiastic about having a conversation with you, and he would be willing to come to make a

presentation to your membership if you desire it.”

Peggy Hetherington from Hetherington Consulting, LLC thanked **Meg Yetishefsky** for her Supplier Diversity Certification. “Thank you so much Meg! I think this will really make a difference for me.”

Director Cathie McCullough of the USDA Food Distribution Division announced a new web-based processing training tool that was developed in collaboration between the Food Distribution Division, the Northeast Regional Office and the State of Connecticut. “A special thank you goes out to **Linda Hubeny** from the State of Connecticut and others from the Northeast Region for their tireless efforts in the development and design of this project.”

V. Jean Michael also congratulated **Linda Hubeny** “on receiving special thanks for your efforts in the development and design of the web-based system.”

Commissioner Brenda Sisco recognized the efforts of **Alicia Nunez** and **Tim Geary**. “I received a very nice note from Commissioner Thomas of the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) acknowledging your outstanding efforts and hard work on their Affirmative Action Plan. Commissioner Thomas noted DEMHS’ plan was approved unanimously by the entire commission and notes that it was due to the hard work and dedication from both of you in compiling the information and completing the document.

Of course, he did not tell me anything I don’t already know. It’s employees like both of you that make DAS the well respected and committed agency it is!! Whether we are

supporting other agencies and their needs or assisting state employees or members of the public, DAS continues to live up to its reputation of providing assistance and service with utmost professionalism. Thanks for all you do!!!!

Commissioner Sisco and Deputy Commissioner Anderson, along with everyone at DAS, send major kudos to the members of the **Diversity Council** for their hard work coordinating the “Taste of DAS,” and to all who contributed by preparing an array of wonderful dishes. “Events like the Taste don’t just happen,” said Sisco. “They are the result of planning, time, effort and inspiring leadership on the part of the Diversity Council.” A huge thank you to:

Carlos Kebe, Cathy Abadom, John McKay, Glenda Rollins, Juliet Colebrook, Rosemary Woods, Donna Camillone, Deb Peterson, Joann Cusano, Eileen Morin, Peggy Zabawar, Johnette Tolliver, and Irena Baj-Wright.

Janet DelGreco Olson sent the following to **Joe Giliberto**: “I would personally like to thank you and the following people who helped me with this year’s bituminous contracts: **Peter Hunter, Lynn Peccerillo, Melissa Christensen and Arlene Watson.** What a relief it was for me to know that with the help of these great co-workers DAS would be able to expedite these contracts to ConnDOT quickly and efficiently to get the roadwork projects underway. Thank you all again for pitching in and doing such a great job with these time-sensitive contracts!”

Joe Giliberto added: “I too want to thank Arlene, Melissa, Lynn and Peter for their help. Great job!”

COOP Plans Revisited

By John McKay

In light of the recent H1N1 (or swine flu) virus, DAS officials met in mid May to revisit emergency planning for DAS.

Commissioner Brenda Sisco and Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson reviewed important protocol and distribution information for the team as well as addressed a few items that came to light during the early stages of the outbreak.

"It's important to have a plan in place to continue operations," said Commissioner Sisco.

"We had a 'dress rehearsal' with the H1N1 virus and it's critical that our plan be continually revised and up-

dated to meet any challenge thrown our way," she added

DAS division directors were asked to review their individual responsibilities and strategies regarding the DAS Continuation of Operations Plan along with updating contact lists and critical documents.

"It's the old adage, 'Hope for the best, but be prepared for anything,'" added Sisco.



P-Card Purchases Drop Dramatically

By John McKay

The "P" in P-Card also stands for plummet as the month-to-month spending has taken a continual sharp dip.

"Agencies are getting the message to only purchase what is absolutely essential," said P-Card Program Administrator Kerry DiMatteo.

"In March 2009 the total P-Card purchases fell \$84,289 from the previous month and was down \$168,848 in April."

In a memorandum sent in early May, Governor Rell directed state agency officials to review all P-Card credit cards assignments within their respective departments and to immediately cancel any card that has not been used within the last six months.

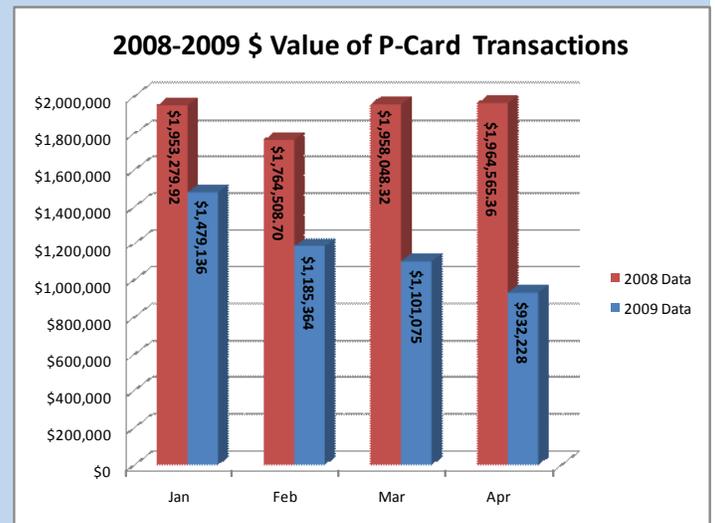
In addition, Governor Rell told the agency heads to suspend any cards "not deemed absolutely and immediately essential to accomplish the mission of your agency."

"It's important to note that not every state employee has a credit card," said DiMatteo.

"Agencies were issued P-Cards if they had a real business need for the card.

Now with tighter budgets across the state and across the country, we need to really focus on the critical business needs of agencies, and see where P-Cards should be retained."

Along with retrieving little-used credit cards, the card itself saves taxpayers money. By using a credit card, the one-time payment and tracking of spending can save the state \$40-\$100 per transaction versus issuing a purchase order.



"It's all about using the right payment tool efficiently," said DiMatteo.

She explained that the P-Card program also reviews each P-Card transaction to monitor state spending and contract compliance. "We're doing our job to ensure agencies are practicing 'smart spending'," said DiMatteo.

UP CLOSE

With Salvina Romano

By Nina Ritson

“When I was working at Public Health (DPH) I heard that everyone smiles at DAS – and yes, they really do, they are happy here!”

Salvina Romano, who had been with DPH since 1983, was very happy to make the move to the DAS Payroll unit in July 2006.

“I love working here doing payroll. I have a good supervisor and nice people to work with. We are all like a big family – we respect each other and we help each other.”

Bursting with energy and very fit, Romano laughs when she says, “I was made in Italy! I came to America from Sicily, but my sister and brothers are still there. I came to marry my husband who was also from Italy. Some things don’t always turn out as planned, but life goes on and so did I!”

Romano lives in Wallingford where she raised her son, Tony (now 25), who is a police officer living in Florida with his wife. “He is just like me, he loves challenges”, she says. Tony joined the police force after the armed services and a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

“He is a good son, a tough guy with a big heart.”

Romano has many passions, but she says she really enjoys the art of language.

“I have always been a reader, and with a sister who is an artist I found my art in the garden and in language.”

Romano speaks her native Italian and English fluently – but is passionate about learning the French language. She is also passionate about writing poetry. Her poems have been published – many in her local newspaper, The Record-Journal.

With glowing skin and sitting very fit and trim, she clearly lives by the doctrine of good health and lots of exercise.



“After work I go to the gym and do cardio three days a week and then run on the other days. I used to run with my yellow lab, Max. I do miss him. He was a good friend, and I learned to think like a dog without looking like one!”

Although Max gave Romano nine good years, she says it was very hard to put him down, and harder to learn to run alone.

“Pets, just like running, friends, and even family, are a commitment. And when you have a pet you commit yourself for the next ten years or so to follow through with him until the end.”

She is not ready to jump out and buy another dog, however.

“Now that he has gone, I am a woman of leisure – I am actually enjoying my time for the first time in my life. I do as I please and do not have to rush home to serve a meal or something. When I do something I commit to it 100 percent!”

Romano’s outlook on life is as refreshing as it is optimistic.

“I believe in people. Every one of us has potential – we need to build other people up – not put them down. Find the positive side of everyone. Personally, I never give up. If there is a will there is a way, and I will work until I find that way! And remember to take no one for granted. The coworker you say good-bye every night might not be there the next morning to say hello. Accept people for who they are – but before you do this, you must learn to accept yourself! You will live longer if you do!”

One of Romano’s favorite sayings comes from Eleanor Roosevelt: ‘You must do the thing you think you cannot do.’

She added, “I try to put this into practice into my life.”

Love Cannot Be Shaken

*The hurricane Charley has come to destroy
What people have built with sweat and blood,
He has blown houses down,
Leaving only dirt and mud.
People are digging through the ruins,
Hoping to find loved ones.
A little girl is crying ‘Mommy, I want my doll’.
It seems like everyone has lost
something or somebody,
But there is one thing that no calamity
in the world
Can destroy or sweep away:
Love stays!
I see strangers helping strangers,
They are exchanging food, water, and smiles,
They don’t need to know each other,
Because love has no boundaries.
Love never fails.*

Salvina Romano

News from Fleet



All the Best!

While the complete list of DAS folks opting for the Retirement Incentive Program has yet to be announced, there are some Fleet employees who have made their intentions known.

After 28 years of working in Fleet Operations, Carol Biernacki has decided to hang up her Fleet Vehicle-Control hat so that she can retire and spend more time with her family. One of Carol's new activities will be helping to care for three of her six grandchildren a few days each week. For some people this might not quite be the retirement dream, but considering her high energy level and organizational skills, we are certain that Carol will have those kids under control at all times!

Joining Carol on the road to retirement are Shop Supervisor Bob Chausse and Parts Supervisor Norm Townley from the Wethersfield maintenance location.

Bob has been with Fleet Operations for all of his 30 years of state employment, starting as a skilled maintainer, and then becoming a QCW before being promoted to a supervisor 15 years ago. Besides Wethersfield, he has spent time work-

ing in the Hartford, Norwich, New Haven and Seymour locations. Bob is looking forward to extra rounds of golf, catching up on his list of around-the-house jobs, and possibly spending some additional time in a warm weather climate.

Norm began his career with the state 35 years ago as a toll collector. After a couple of years he went to work as a Material Storage Supervisor for DOT, working in both East Haven and Seymour. About two years later, the opportunity to work in a similar capacity for DAS was presented and he became part of the DAS fleet maintenance team.

sands of miles overdue for service are in the rearview mirror! By using the same login button and sign-on process that is required to access the monthly mileage updates, ATA's can also access a report called – Overdue for Maintenance. All vehicles within an agency that are overdue by Fleet's established parameters (six-months or 6,000 miles) will be clearly identified on this new report.

(excerpted from Inroads)



After over 30 years with DAS Fleet Operations, Norm is looking forward to some traveling and lowering his golf handicap!

New Fleet Tool

Fleet has a new tool to help Agency Transportation Administrators (ATA) manage their vehicles - it's called Overdue Mileage reports. The days of learning that a vehicle has somehow become months and/or thou-

Watch for our complete coverage of "The Class of 2009" as DAS honors all its retirees



Connecticut Food Distribution Program

Cont. from P. 1

and running by then. Hubeny said that the FDP will use the grant money to offset DAS personnel salaries for application development and training administered to the 235 school food service directors in Connecticut.

And in other FDP news....

DAS is one of three sponsors and developers of a web-based training tool designed to provide new federal, state and local staff with

a comprehensive introduction to the USDA food commodity processing program.

According to Hubeny, who was one of the principals in the development of the online training, "The commodity processing program has expanded and evolved greatly over the past several years and more controls have been added to protect federal, state, and local government interests. With these advances, accompanied by regular staff turnover, it became evident that training opportunities have not kept pace with program growth."

Hubeny explained that the training tool, which was two years in development, was a collaborative effort among DAS, and the Food Distribution Division and the Northeast Regional Office of USDA. She

said that the training is not only a resource to provide new staff with a comprehensive introduction to processing, but it is also valuable for veteran staff to use as a reference to address complexities they are confronted with when monitoring and reconciling commodities diverted for processing.

The training tool is located on the USDA website at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/ppt-slides/ProcessingTraining/ProcandReconTraining.htm> It was unveiled in May at the American Commodity Distribution Association national conference.

"A special thank you goes out to Linda Hubeny from the State of Connecticut for her tireless efforts in the development and design of this project," said Cathie McCullough, a USDA director.



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Polish Cookies, Babka, Banana Pudding, Shortbread and Scones. Ingredients in the Blueberry Furlough Cake included one furlough day and all the makings of a great holiday weekend! The DAS Vanilla Cake, made by Madeline Vargas, was a work of art complete with the DAS logo!

"I just tasted so many wonderful dishes! I look forward to this event every year, to try some new foods, and to look for some old favorites that I have had there in the past. I'm never disappointed - it's all delicious!" said Melissa Colonese-Scutt.

Commissioner Brenda Sisco commended the Diversity team saying, "Thank you to the Diversity Council members who put this together, and thanks to all the employees who participated. It's a great event that celebrates so many different aspects of everyone who works here, and I look forward to it every year."



See pages 9-10 for great pix !

Take a Hike!

By Nina Ritson

The May 5 kickoff of the CTFIT walking program, **Capitol Ave. to the Capitol**, was a big step in the right direction!

This new program, in cooperation with the American Heart Association (AHA), runs seven days a week from May 11 until July 5. The program includes the usual mile recordings and weekly reporting, but has a new, added feature. Now, walkers are aided by technology with access to www.walkjogrun.net, a map that measures route distances for any route a walker wishes to take.

Peggy Zabawar thanked CTFIT team members for all their help preparing for the event, as the kick off was largely attended by DAS folks anxious to shake those winter pounds. People could weigh in and have their blood pressure screened. Weight trainer

James Gary was on hand to take body fat analysis readings. In his boisterous energized way, James encouraged the program to all participants saying, "It is not about what you weigh, but about how you feel! Do you feel as though you are in optimum shape?"

The AHA presented a short film that reemphasized the truths about cardiovascular health, heart attack and stroke. Did you know that for every hour of brisk activity you gain two hours of life expectancy? So be good to yourself and hit the pavement!

Team captains are ready to record the miles and see which team gets to Washington, D.C. first!



CTFIT

DIVERSITY

...our strength is in our differences

Pix from the "Taste of DAS"



The 8th Annual!





See you in the Fall for the "Sweet Taste!"

