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The DOT Reorg: The DAS Factor

By John McKay

Earlier this year Governor M. Jodi Rell called for a top-to-bottom evaluation of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to determine where improvements could be made.

In an April 2007 press release Governor Rell said, "There is far too much at stake. Transportation is critical to our economic future. I have said we need a 21st century transportation system to meet the needs of our 21st century economy. We also need a 21st century Department of Transportation to manage our investments. Business as usual or 'the way we've always done it' isn't good enough anymore."

As part of the evaluation, Governor Rell asked Commissioner Anne Gnazzo to participate on the DOT Reform Commission. In addition, she was asked to serve on the subcommittee addressing how employees feel about DOT and their varying opinions of the organization and its culture.

Anyone who has been with DAS for a few years remembers when DAS distributed its Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS). Both online and via paper ballots, employees could anonymously answer a series of questions about all facets of DAS.

"The OAS survey was the perfect tool to use for this situation," said Gnazzo. "There were definitely going to be some hurdles to overcome, but I felt confident that we could get it done."

DAS' OAS guru Dr. Martin Anderson and his staff were tasked with developing the DOT survey questions, creating the online application, as well as distributing and recording all of the paper ballots.

"One of the more unique situations was that DOT has a majority of employees who are not office workers," said Anderson. "Surveyors, machinists, and maintenance workers were going to have to use the paper ballots and that

information would have to be manually entered into our database."

Over the three-day period that the survey was available to employees, DOT had a 63 percent response rate. "On a good day, I was expecting maybe 50 percent," said Anderson. "This 63 percent tells me that people are interested in their organization and its future."

Anderson said he was pleased with the survey info and that he had a clear demo-

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People Magazine fought hard, but the DAS Times landed the exclusive scoop on the Wedding of the Century!



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Cathy and Roy's Wedding Story

By Cathy Daly

The day before the wedding brought monsoon rains to the entire northeast, which was worrisome as many of our guests were traveling by car and stuck in standstill traffic on I-95.

Our wedding was at the Saybrook Point Inn in Old Saybrook. I'd planned everything to the minute with obsessive precision, but the weather made everyone, including the priest, late for the rehearsal. Despite the chaotic arrivals, we proceeded with the rehearsal and the priest started naming the special guests of the day, naming my mother and Roy's by their maiden names and identifying my six siblings as Roy's and Roy's two sisters as mine. This, after four sessions with us to plan the ceremony! Father Dennis also couldn't remember which readings we had decided on for several points in the ceremony so at that point, I started to hyperventilate! Fortunately, I had taken detailed notes and we were able to straighten out the family connections and names along with the readings in plenty of time for the ceremony.

We had a lovely rehearsal dinner at Dock and Dine where we hosted 30 family members and friends who had traveled from far and wide to attend the wedding. It was a nice way to ease into the festivities of the weekend and gave us a chance to visit with everyone. Weddings are not a time for making meaningful connections with your guests. You're lucky if you can get around to all the tables before the reception ends. Roy's family is spread across the country...his relatives came from California, New Mexico, Colorado, Iowa, Pennsylvania, New York and New Hampshire. For them, the event

was truly a family reunion!

The day of the wedding we awoke to breaking clouds, the monsoon of the day before blown out to sea and patches of blue asserting themselves across the sky. The temperature was moderate and breezy, so we quickly made the decision to hold part of the festivities outdoors. Saybrook Point Inn is at the mouth of the Connecticut River and has a terrace that overlooks a marina, and we thought what a great location for the ceremony and cocktail reception.

I overcame my prenuptial jitters when I walked into the dining room which looked magical with the tables beautifully set, floral centerpieces in shades of mauve and burgundy and Godiva chocolate table favors in their gold boxes gracing each place setting. The cake sat off to the side, a beautiful creation with fresh flowers cascading over the three layers. The effect was breathtaking!

I was very nervous walking down the aisle with all eyes on me, but there was something about looking around at 75 people who know and love me and were delighted to be witnessing this joyous occasion that calmed me right down. Then, I got to the front where the man I love was standing, also looking at me with love and I knew I'd be fine. My voice broke with emotion when pronouncing the marriage vows and our priest continued to be a bit forgetful, but it was a beautiful ceremony. Together we lit a unity candle, and our respec-



tive sisters lit the individual taper candles - amazingly, all three of the candles stayed lit throughout the entire day - we took that as a sign of good fortune.

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After the ceremony, the guests enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres and the cocktails, while we were surrounded by our photographer and the paparazzi. Sadly, we missed the entire cocktail hour due to the photos but we heard the food was outstanding.

We entered the dining room to cheers and took the dance floor to have our first dance to the wonderful Etta James tune, "At Last." The song choice got quite a chuckle from the crowd. The reception proceeded with superb food and the cake which was both beautiful AND delicious. It was chocolate with a raspberry mousse filling. We opted for a duo of piano player and vocalist, who also received rave reviews.

At one point during the reception, I turned to Roy and said, "This is the happiest day of my life, and I'm enjoying every minute of it!" He agreed.

Roy's parents and my Dad have passed on, so we honored them by placing their photos on easels on the table that held the place cards. I would have loved to have had my Daddy walk me down the aisle, but I know he was very much present that whole day.

The day ended much too quickly, and it was off to our honeymoon to Vermont and Quebec. We had spectacular weather, wonderful food and lots of time to replay our dream-come-true wedding day.



Commissioner Thomas R. Sullivan from the Department of Insurance sent the following message to Commissioner Gnazzo regarding **Andrea Yurcak**: "Andrea has been extremely helpful to the Insurance Department

asset to us throughout this entire process and I thank you and Andrea's supervisors for allowing us to use her as a resource. If the Insurance Department is ever in a position to help your agency, please do not hesitate to call me."

company representative come in to do the job it would have taken weeks. Jose had it up and running in about half a day," said John McKay. "Great job!"

hats off

By *Cindy Rusczyk*

as we undertake an initiative to redefine our agency's mission and purpose; develop a set of core values, beliefs and principles, and work to adopt a system of accountability at the Insurance Department. Over the last few months, Andrea has worked closely with Department staff as a facilitator. She has led several staff meetings designed to spur discussion about the Department's shared vision and mission and has been a tremendous

Customer Marc Anthony sent the following message to **Meg Yetishefsky** regarding the service that he received from the Supplier Diversity Division: "I just wanted to say thank you for your help and for your staff's help. **Marisol Rivera** started me on a great track as far as helping me with an application, and **Gregg Nome** was helpful beyond the call of duty. I just want to say thanks again and I applaud the help I received. I appreciate how they helped expedite the application."

The Communications Office enthusiastically thanks **Jose Baez** "for his expertise in setting up the office's new printer. If we had the local

Michael Clark from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) wanted to acknowledge and thank **Andrea Yurcak** "for all of your support as DVA's HR Analyst – in our continued effort to move the agency forward and maximize the utilization of our human resources, your role and continued support is appreciated."

The Perfect Storm? Governor Rell Conducts Winter Storm Exercise

By Donna Micklus

Mark Twain once said that everyone talks about the weather but no one ever does anything about it.

"Maybe we can't change the weather, but we certainly can prepare for it," said John McKay of the DAS Communications Office.

McKay was one of a number of high level employees and officials who took part in an exercise conducted by Governor M. Jodi Rell on November 20 designed to test the response of major Connecticut state agencies in the event of a significant winter storm.

How ironic the exercise was held as Connecticut saw its first snowfall of the season!

"Effective training really can make a difference. That was one of the valuable lessons we learned from Hurricane Katrina. We saw during that difficult period of time that preparedness can never be over-emphasized," the Governor said.

"The exercise was designed to simulate a serious winter storm that

had crippled Pennsylvania last year, so there were a lot of new scenarios generated. I was really impressed with how much work the State Police, Transportation and the utility

companies do *before* the first snowflake hits the ground. After participating in the exercise I feel very confident that the State of Connecticut can handle anything Mother Nature throws at us," McKay said.

McKay explained that he played a role in the Governor's press office, generating press releases that explained every step Connecticut was taking during the storm including letting all the media outlets know about certain traffic issues, power outages and shelter availability.



During the theoretical major winter storm, the Governor ordered interstate highways shut down and local emergency management officials kept in touch with state agencies through newly acquired radio systems, including the State

Police emergency radio network.

"And whether we are talking about a nor'easter or a nuclear drill, we know that developing our disaster preparedness and response capability can literally save lives. In times of an emergency, good information and good communications are critical – and that is exactly what is being tested today. It is important to have good plans in place and it is important to test those plans.

"If we fail to plan, we plan to fail," Governor Rell concluded.

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graphic picture of DOT. "Along with some supporting interviews from DOT staff, the data results match up with what we expected to find," said Anderson.

He was then asked to present his information to the reform commission and highlight some of the major concerns of the employees.

"According to our survey, DOT employees are satisfied with pay and benefits but would like to see more strategic planning and innovation in their organization," added Anderson.

The final results will be reported to the Governor in early December and recommendations will follow.

Don't Miss the DAS Holiday Party!

DAS HOLIDAY PARTY
 Friday, November 30, 2007
 12 noon - 4 pm
 THE CHOWDER POT RESTAURANT
 Hartford, CT

\$25 PER PERSON

EPA Recognizes Connecticut as One of Nation's Top Green Power Purchasers

By Donna Micklus

(with excerpts from Governor Rell's news release)

The color of the state flag may be blue but Connecticut is green through and through.



The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) applauded Connecticut's efforts to protect the environment by committing to use green power sources.

Connecticut's purchase of green power resources is in support of Governor Rell's Energy Vision for a Cleaner, Greener State, which set a goal of increasing the percentage of clean, renewable energy consumed by state government from all sources to 20 percent by the year 2020.

"I pledged to lead our state toward a green energy future and Connecticut will continue to lead by example with clean, renewable energy purchases," Governor Rell said.

"We have demonstrated that we can be environmentally responsible and fiscally responsible at the same time. Connecticut's recent energy contracts achieved historic levels of green power and were accompanied by huge cost savings — a true win-win for our environment and our taxpayers," the Governor added.

The State of Connecticut is the first New England state to join EPA's Green Power Partnership and the second behind Pennsylvania as the largest national purchaser of green power among state government partners.

Governor Rell recently announced that the state has increased its annual voluntary purchase of green power to nearly 84 million kilowatt-hours (kWh), representing nearly 12 percent of the state's total annual electricity usage.

"Green power" is defined as electricity that is generated from environmentally preferable renewable resources, such as solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, biomass, and low-impact hydro.

These resources generate electricity with zero anthropogenic (caused by humans) carbon dioxide emissions and offer a superior environmental profile to conventional power generation. In addition, buying green power helps support the development of new renewable energy capacity nationwide.

DAS Commissioner Anne Gnazzo said that recently the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and DAS Procurement Services, with the assistance of World Energy Solutions, Inc., of Worcester, MA, conducted an open, online "reverse

auction" to procure power for state buildings.

"The auction process placed qualified bidders in competition with one another. The lowest bid at the close of the auction won the contract award. This process allowed the state to drive down its costs by using competition to its advantage," Gnazzo said.

"The DAS Procurement Division is committed to establishing environmentally preferable purchasing opportunities for the state agencies. Through our contracts we continually focus how we can make products and services available that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. The

"I pledged to lead our state toward a green energy future, and Connecticut will continue to lead by example with clean, renewable energy purchases."

- Governor M. Jodi Rell

recently executed electricity contract exemplifies such efforts with its increase in the use of renewable power," said Procurement Services Director Carol Wilson.

Around and About



The 2006-2007 Digest of Administrative Reports published by the DAS Communications Office is now on the DAS website.



The line wrapped around the Fifth Floor South and into the corridor as DAS employees, as well as employees from all agencies at 165 Capitol Avenue, waited (and cringed) for their flu shot. John McKay bravely takes the needle with the anticipation of a "fluess" winter season.



Turkey Drive Brings Home the Bacon! Mike-What-a-Good Sport-Felix and Jerry Lynn with Foodshare representatives outside the State Office Building on November 19. Through their efforts, 254 turkeys and \$1,027 in cash/check donations were collected!



DAS volunteers and donors join American Red Cross staff at the recent Blood Drive.



...our strength is in our differences

With the Holidays now here, and all the baking that goes with the season, now may be a great time to test out some new recipes. Here are some more memorable ones from the Taste of DAS and the Sweet Taste of DAS. So lace up your apron and ENJOY!

Zucchini Squares (Unk.)

6 cups zucchini, sliced
 1 cup Bisquick
 ½ cup chopped onion
 4 oz can mushrooms
 1 Tbsp parsley
 ½ tsp salt & pepper
 1½ tsp chopped garlic
 ½ cup canola oil
 4 or 5 eggs
 1 tsp season salt
 ½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded
 ½ cup cheddar/jack
 ½ tsp oregano
 ½ tsp marjoram
 ¼ - ½ tsp red hot pepper flakes

Mix all together and put in lightly greased 13 x 9 pan.
 Bake 350° for 35 minutes.

Pecan Sandies (USA)

1 cup margarine
 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 2 tsp vanilla
 2 tsp water
 2 cups flour
 1 cup chopped pecans
 Confectionary sugar for topping

Soften margarine and blend in sugar. Add flour and mix well. Add chopped pecans and mix. Chill for 3 hours. Roll into balls and bake 325° for 20 minutes. Cool, and roll in confectionary sugar.

Oriental Cookies (Unk.)

1 bag butterscotch morsels or chocolate morsels, melted
 3 oz can chow mein noodles
 3 oz peanuts
 Mix together, and drop on wax paper. Freeze.

Brasadela (Italian coffee cake)

4 cups flour
 ¾ cup sugar
 4 tsp baking powder
 2 eggs blended (save 1 Tbsp for top of cake)
 ½ cup milk
 ½ tsp salt
 ½ cup butter or oleo
 1 tsp lemon extract or orange extract

Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Blend in butter or oleo. Add eggs and sugar and blend. Add milk, extract and flour mixture. Refrigerate ½ hour. Remove and roll dough on lightly floured board into a rope around 24" long. Make ring and place on greased baking sheet. Brush top with egg and sprinkle with sugar. Bake 350° for 25 - 35 minutes.

More on next page!

**Jambalaya Bread Pudding
(New Orleans)**

- 1½ feet French bread
- 1 qt milk
- 3 jumbo eggs, beaten
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 Tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins
- 3 Tbsp butter

Break up bread and soak in milk 1 hour in large mixing bowl.

Add eggs, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and raisins. Mix well. Dot bottom of large baking dish with butter. Pour pudding mix into dish. Preheat oven to 375°. Bake 50 minutes - one hour.

Topping: Rum Sauce

- 2 Tbsp butter, melted
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tsp cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp rum

Melt butter in small sauce pan. Remove from heat and add other ingredients. Return to heat. Cook while stirring until thick & bubbly. Pour over pudding after pudding finishes baking.

Flan (Latin America)

- 2 cups milk
- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 6 eggs
- 3 Tbsp or more sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 or 2 cinnamon sticks

To make the caramel, put the sugar and a few drops of water in a pot and let it cook on high heat until it turns to caramel; put it in a baking pan and let it cool. Bring the milk with the cinnamon sticks to a boil and then let it cool. Once the milk is at room temperature, mix it in a blender with the rest of the ingredients and put it in the baking pan with the caramel (the caramel should be hard). Place the baking pan in a bigger pan with water (approx. 1/3) and put it in a 300° oven for about an hour.



And, of course, low-cal!