



Black Heritage Celebration



Snowmageddon



Minority Business Enterprise Forum

APRIL 2013

DAS TIMES



State Purchases Buildings

by Nina Ritson

For the first time in many years, the State is making a substantial new investment in office space for its agencies.

“I am about to announce the world’s worst kept secret,” the Governor began with a chuckle, “One and a half years ago my administration approached Commissioner Don DeFronzo to discuss cheaper ways to run state government. In particular, we reviewed leases to find cost-effective alternatives to renovating older buildings. We needed to find alternative ways to continue to provide state services, but cheaper, and more efficiently to save taxpayer money. We have decided to purchase two Hartford buildings and relocate employees into those buildings to save an anticipated \$200,000,000, adjusted for inflation over the next 20 years. This will also result in a positive impact - \$11,000,000 in the downtown area with 100,000 visits per year to the new state office complexes.” The Governor continued by thanking the Hartford legislative delegation for their patience as they worked through this, and thanked Lt.

Governor Wyman for her guidance and advice in the matter as she understands the needs of the state workforce.

He then introduced Commissioner Don DeFronzo who noted that this effort was largely due to the hard work and a unique

Continued next page

Above: Governor Dannel Malloy announces the “worst kept secret.”
Right: Commissioner Don DeFronzo describes the work to be done.



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Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Donald J. DeFronzo
Commissioner

Jeffrey Beckham
Staff Counsel/
Director of Communications

partnership between DAS, Office of Policy and Management, Department of Construction Services, the Attorney General's Office, and the State Properties Review Board. "This has been a long project – about 18 months in the making. The two buildings we are talking about will total over 900,000 gross sq.ft. or 750,000 net usable sq.ft. of office space. The state currently maintains about 140 leases in the central Connecticut area. We anticipate that 20 leases can be collapsed into these buildings in addition to moving employees from other buildings that are too expensive to maintain. Between 3,100 and 3,300 employees will be moved downtown," Commissioner DeFronzo explained, "This is a good investment for the State of Connecticut. There will be savings and we are taking advantage of the current real estate market."



Above: Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, Ben Barnes answers questions at the press conference.

The Governor then introduced Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra, who said, "We have been working with the State of Connecticut for two years to build a more vibrant City of Hartford. This is one of many conversations we have had. It is

important to bring housing to Hartford, and keeping workers downtown is important, too. In the end, it is not about a simple balance sheet, but about many things for the city. We are having discussions about many things right now – moving the UConn West Hartford campus to Hartford is one of them. And we will compare to ensure that we continue the resurgence of downtown Hartford."

Following Mayor Segarra, the Governor welcomed a brief question and answer period. Questions arose about the employees now working at 25 Sigourney Street, which currently houses the Department of Social Services and the Department of Revenue Services. Another reporter asked how they would be handling the IT equipment at the BEST office building in East Hartford.

Ben Barnes, Secretary of OPM responded to the question about the elimination of the PILOT program (Payment in Lieu of Tax) and how this would relate to the State purchase of a building in Hartford which is currently generating tax revenue from its private owner.

There is work to be done on both buildings and recently bonding for the purchase and a large portion of the work was approved. Although the closing occurred on 55 Farmington April 3, the current time line to prepare the buildings for occupation is 18 to 24 months, but the Governor noted that he anticipated that at this time next year, employees will begin moving into their new offices at 55 Farmington Avenue.

Snowmageddon

by Nina Ritson

“It was not a fit night out for man or beast!” may have been an iconic statement by Yukon Cornelius in the children’s animation classic “Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer”, but would easily describe the snow event that began Friday, February 8 and ended Sunday, February 10 when an epic snowstorm that earned two names, Charlotte and Nemo, slammed into New England leaving three to four feet of snow across the entire state with winds exceeding 50 mph.



Above: The team works feverishly to maintain the stairs of the State Office Building

Below: View from the steps of the Bushnell

Reminiscent of the great storm Larry of 1978, this storm brought the state to an absolute halt. Roads were not plowed for days, DOT trucks struggled to clear highways and main arteries as they pushed tons of snow around abandoned cars. With hurricane force winds the snow became blinding in a short period of time and caused massive drifts. Early on Friday, Governor Malloy warned drivers to stay off the road – the storm would hit fast and hard when it came. With that he shut down state government except for essential employees and asked all residents of Connecticut to hunker down and stay home. And most folks complied.

But, what about those essential employees? At DAS, that meant the team headed by Lou Bombaci: Mike Agnes, Jerry Bouchard, Quincy Cole, Gary Faraci, Richie Martin, and Anthony Smith, who braved out the storm that weekend shoveling the walkways, steps and pathways of the state office buildings and working with contractors to clear the parking lots and roads. “Ray Philbrick was prepared and immediately had cots and blankets for us to use at the Trades shop,” Lou described the Friday onset of the storm, “After it got going, the snow came down four to five inches per hour and we were working as quickly as we could to keep up with it. Do you know how many steps are on the Bushnell side of the State Office Building?”

Lou praised the members of his team who camped out at work for the duration, “These guys are great to work with! They work so very hard too! They are dedicated people who volunteered to do this job!”

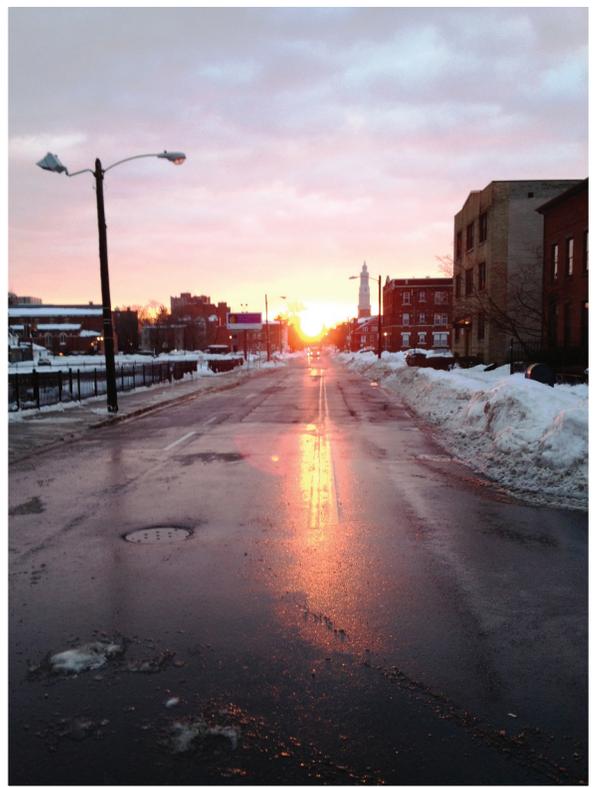
“When it became clear that the snowstorm was winning we decided to grab a few hours of sleep and a bite to eat. We all camped at the Trades shop and ate leftover grinders. One of our contractors was so kind to bring us pizza! Also, the Dunkin Donuts on Washington Street stayed open throughout the storm.” After sleeping for a couple hours the team woke up to 3 feet of snow and gusting, blowing winds that caused monumental snowdrifts – and unplowed roads. “No streets in the Capitol area of Hartford were plowed. The state hires contractors to plow the lots, but what we did was all the hand work - with shovels and snow blowers. Although the city owns the sidewalks – we have to maintain them. We also take care of 92 Farmington Avenue, Sheldon Street, 129

Lafayette and 309 Buckingham. In addition we took a ride up to the Connecticut building at the Big E to clear the entrance. We were able to check the roof and check for leaks inside. A couple years ago we had a problem at that building. But 165 Capitol Avenue is our priority!” Lou said. “It was something to see throughout the weekend and beyond. Hartford roads in the Capitol area finally got plowed out on Tuesday, which was the holiday for state employees. But until then there were quite a few people who ventured out on the roads and ultimately got stuck. We had to help out a police cruiser that got stuck in front of the horse statue on Washington Street.”

Hauling the plowed snow away began on Tuesday at midnight and the trucks worked through the night to remove the mountains of snow in preparation of the return of employees early Wednesday morning. They also took this time to check the roof of the State Office building to make sure the weight of the snow was not a structural threat. But the high winds worked in their favor and blew the snow away from the center of the roof areas.

In appreciation of their dedication for meeting the challenges of the storm Lou and his team were recognized for their contributions by Commissioner DeFronzo and Deputy Commissioner Anderson on Tuesday, March 5 at a special continental breakfast reception.

As for the snow that was carted away – it was brought to the Farmer’s Market in the south end of Hartford and is piled high on several acres at this printing. It may very possibly still be there when we publish the summer issue of the DAS Times.



Gary Faraci virtually disappeared in the snow piled high in the back parking lot of the State Office Building.

*Above: For several days the snow was not plowed from the streets of Hartford
Below: View down Buckingham Street on the first day back to work after the storm.*

Labeled “Ask Martin Anything” Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson hosted a casual question and answer session for 165 Capitol DAS employees on March 26.

“I simply wanted to reach out to employees and address any questions and dispel any rumors out there amongst employees,” said Anderson. “With DAS’ recent purchase of two office buildings in Hartford, some employees thought they may be moving to another building, and some simply wanted to know the game plan for the recent purchase.”

In summary, state-leased buildings will be the first to move into the newly acquired state-owned buildings so the state can reduce its overhead in leasing costs. An overall building study will be completed in the spring on 165 Capitol Avenue to give a clear picture of what needs to be done to the building to bring it into the 21st century.

There were questions about the legislature moving DAS’ Statewide HR to OPM. The answer part of what’s been proposed is the revamping of Chapter 67 of the State Personnel Act. The legislation assigns statewide HR responsibilities (exams, classification work, personnel business rules, etc.) to the Office of Policy and Management. The proposal also includes changes to the exam process and modifications to other State Personnel Act provisions. This proposal is currently being considered by the legislative Appropriations Committee, and should be brought before the full legislature later this spring.

Another topic covered was the consolidation of DCS into DAS: As part of the Governor’s budget, he has proposed legislation to consolidate DCS into DAS. The proposal also provides the Department of Education (SDE) and the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) with their own authority to handle building construction (for the Technical high schools and the State University system), and transfers some DCS project management staff

Ask Martin

by John McKay



Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson invites questions at the first Ask Martin Anything informational session.

to DOE and BOR to handle that work. Like the Statewide HR proposal, this legislation is currently being considered by the legislative Appropriations Committee, and should be brought before the full legislature later this spring.

A transcript of questions asked, as well as questions emailed in ahead of the meeting, was sent out to employees a few days after the Q & A session in an infogram.

Black Heritage Month Celebration by Nina Ritson



The 12th Annual Black Heritage Month Celebration was celebrated this year on Friday, February 15. This year's event was again hosted by the State Department of Education (SDE) and sponsored by all the agencies of the State Office Building, but took place in Room 310 at the State Capitol. This celebration was the unveiling of the Black History stamp - a portrait of Rosa Parks, whose act of civil disobedience in 1955 inspired the modern civil rights movement. Rosa Parks was the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1999 and upon her death she was the 31st person, the first American who had not been a U.S. government official, and the first woman to lay in state in the rotunda in Washington, D.C. An estimated 50,000 people viewed the casket there, and the event was broadcast on television on October 31, 2005.



The festivities began with two special speakers, Governor Dannel Malloy and Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman. "Connecticut played a leading role for civil rights and woman's rights as they were firmly for the 13th amendment." Governor Malloy said, "Rosa Parks and my dad were the same age. They would be 100 today. Rosa Parks is about courage." He went on to say, "Civil rights is now greatly expanded - but Connecticut clearly is a leader recognizing equality. How proud I am to be an employee of the State of Connecticut - giving me the opportunity to work with each of you."

With the Governor's departure Lt. Governor Wyman addressed the crowd. "I had the honor of seeing the first African-American president sworn in for a second time. Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King have allowed us to have the great president we have today. As we build upon what our ancestors have done we have a lot more to do - all children deserve a good education and all people deserve healthcare."

Following the Lt. Governor, DAS' Mary Taylor led everyone singing the Negro National Anthem, followed by Lt. Governor Wyman and Mark Rask, Acting U.S. Postmaster, unveiling the Rosa Parks black history stamp.

Sarah Barzee, Chief Talent Officer of the SDE presented a special tribute to the victims of Sandy Hook School. Assisted by SDE's Angela Barry, a bell rang as Dr. Barzee read all 26 names of the victims, one by one. Commander Len Glasser of Statewide Security led the Moment of Silence for all fallen soldiers.

The audience then heard from Commissioner Reviczky of the Department of Agriculture, Commissioner Rubenstein of the



Above: Governor Dannel Malloy

Middle: Deputy Commissioner Martin Anderson speaks for Commissioner Don DeFronzo who was not able to attend

Bottom: Cake celebrating the 12th Annual Black History Celebration

Department of Consumer Protection, and DAS Deputy Commissioner Anderson and Deputy Commissioner Salemi of the Department of Construction Services (DCS). Dr. Anderson commended the new space for the event and said, “At DAS we always strive through policies to ensure equality of opportunity. As a member of the baby boom growing up in the south I have seen the changes and there is clearly more work to be done.” He then said that February was the selected month for Black History because of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln’s birthdays are in February.

Dr. Brazee, who was speaking in the absence of SDE Commissioner Prior, spoke for the Commissioner by saying, “We refuse to yield, and will work tirelessly to eradicate achievement gaps. We ask that you help us make this vision a reality.” With that she read the official proclamation from Governor Malloy.

The audience was then entertained by two performances called *The Journeys*. James Mitchell depicted a man named York who served in the Lewis and Clark Expedition alongside his master only to be returned to his status as a slave after his service, and Levy Gillespie told the story of Carter G. Woodson. DAS’ Mary Taylor wrote a dramatization in which she portrayed Rosa Parks joined by Barbara Brown, Liston Filyaw, Michele McGinley, Candace Madison, Doris Rolon, Diane Sanderson, Owen Walsh and Tanya Washington. The play depicted the actual day Rosa Parks would not give up her seat on that bus in Montgomery, Alabama on December 1, 1955.

The keynote speaker for this year’s event was the Honorable Vanessa L. Bryant, whose friendship with SDE’s Ronald C. Harris goes back 38 years when Vanessa was a young law student new to Hartford. She went door to door when she first arrived working off the list provided to her by the school trying to find housing for the school year, but was repeatedly told there was no rent available for her.

Vanessa gave a documented view of the years following Rosa Park’s day on the bus and the importance of that day, in relation to the events and changes in the law that bring us closer to equality today.

This year’s program closed with a presentation to the key speaker and one to SDE’s Angela Barry who works so hard each year to make this event special. Afterward, everyone was invited to a luncheon served in the main lobby of the first floor of the State Office Building.



Above: Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman and Mark Rask unveil the Rosa Parks Stamp

Middle: Deputy Commissioner Salemi speaks to the crowd

Bottom: Framed artworks for sale by one of the vendors

Minority Business Enterprise Forum by Nina Ritson

DAS Procurement has a complicated and challenging job managing state contracting. Part of their task is to educate the public to help them better understand how to do business with the state. As part of its continuing efforts, DAS Procurement hosted its second Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Informational Forum at the Legislative Office Building on Monday, March 11.

“We are hoping you can take away something from this session – this meeting actually was hatched from the MBE forum we offered in New Haven last fall,” said Commissioner DeFronzo as he opened the forum. “We are here in recognition of our shared responsibilities and to address many things happening that may affect small and minority-owned businesses, bills in the legislature trying to affect the program, significant movement for change in the program, and opportunities for people.”

Co-sponsor Commissioner Redeker of DOT also addressed the crowd of about 80 people, “Something I have learned from my two years in government – two powerful words: information and partnerships. We partner with our contractors,” he said.

The group then heard presentations from members of the team at DAS Procurement, Director Carol Wilson, Supplier Diversity Manager Meg Yetishefsky, Prequalification Manager Carlos Velez, and Kevin Kopetz, Head Counsel at DCS. They also heard from Debra Goss the Manager of Contract Compliance at the Department of Transportation. UConn was represented by Matt Larsen, UConn Director of Procurement and Veronica Cook, Director of Supplier Diversity, and UConn Health Center’s Lori Acomb, UConn Health Center Procurement Director and Nicole Smith, UConn Health Center Supplier Diversity Director.



*Above: Commissioner DeFronzo addresses a large crowd
Below: Carol Wilson, Director of Procurement*



Above: Kevin Kopetz, Agency Legal Director

Below: Meg Yetishefsky, Supplier Diversity Program Manager

Meg Yetishefsky gave an in depth talk on the guidelines to becoming certified as a small business or minority-owned business with the State, while Carlos Velez reviewed the guidelines, the legislative history and some statistics about Construction Contractor Prequalification. “Because this was designed like Turbo Tax, we are very pleased to say the beauty of an electronic program is there is no back log!” he said. “We then are able to review a contractor for their skills, integrity, safety records, financials and personnel.”

Attending were staff from the agencies that best represent minority populations in CT; Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, and Commission of Human Rights and Opportunities.

Following the presentations there was a question and answer time and discussion that attendees actively participated in. Richard H. Strauss, Executive Director, CASE, who has been hired by the state to conduct a disparity study, was on hand to answer questions as well. The study will look at participation of MBEs in the local economy and state contracting. Some legislative reps also attended with questions for the team. Various contractors spoke and some were newly informed about the contracting process and the difference between state and federal expectations.

Commissioner DeFronzo, although pleased with the participation, recognized that there still is some frustration for small business owners trying to do business with the state. He said, “We are trying to simplify the process – but still protect the integrity of the program.”

People are talking..... by Cindy Rusczyk

On February 13, Michelle Burns commended **Commissioner DeFronzo** and wanted to “express my appreciation for all the hard work that had to be done over the weekend to clean our parking lot. It must have taken the crew the entire weekend to clear and remove all the snow so that our lot was completely clear this morning. I expected to come in this morning to see hills of snow at the back of the parking lot, limiting the number of parking spots. To my very pleasant surprise the lot was completely clear and no spaces were lost. Please extend my sincere thanks **to the crew** responsible for clearing the lot. I truly appreciate the time they lost with their families to insure the lot was clear for our return to work today.”

Project Manager Robert Hammersley from Diversified Technology Consultants, Inc. commended Program Director **Meg Yetishefsky** “for all your help and assistance in providing DTC with this certification. I also would like to thank you for your patience and willingness to listen to us explain how DTC’s management is structured as well as how and why a WBE certification and recognition is important to our industry. As a former state employee now in the private sector, I believe that you are a credit to your agency and to all state employees. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the gratitude we have for the time and effort of **Stan Kenton** in this process. Again, thank you.”

Branch Chief Miranda E. Miranda from the Community Nutrition Program’s Northeast Regional Office applauded **Linda Hubeny** “for hosting us last week. I found the training extremely valuable to the state of Vermont and to me. Thank you for putting such a productive agenda together; all the discussions we had were very helpful. It was great to have Annemarie from the New York State Food Distribution Program there too and **Dan Sadowski** also did a terrific job training us on WBSCM! Thank you for coordinating the trips to the Hartford Public School Warehouse and to Sysco; it’s nice to see our programs in action. Thank you Linda for the great work you do for the State of CT and for being such a great partner to us! I’m looking forward to continuing our work together. Please let me know if there’s something I can assist you with.”

Linda Hubeny also commended **Dan Sadowski** “for everything you do. Our program wouldn’t be the great success it is and a model for other states without your hard work and dedication!”

Tracie Knapsack sent the following message to **Erin Choquette**: “As you are aware, we were approved by the State Library to dispose some of our agency records that were on retention schedules. Yesterday morning Shred-It was here to pick-up the boxes. We had a total of 261 that were located in several parts of the building with the majority in the basement. **Don Poulin** arranged for three of his staff to help me gather and move the 261 boxes to the loading dock where Shred-It picked them up. I want to give a BIG thanks to **Mike Agnes, Jeff Lewis and Dave Smith** for their help. They were awesome, great to work with and I could not have done it without them. Thanks Erin for your help as well in getting this done!”

Kudos also to **Tracie Knapsack** from Erin Choquette – “Thank you for coordinating the Shred-It pick up of all the boxes and working with Facilities to get all of those boxes. I swear the building feels lighter. Don – please pass along my thanks to **Mike, Jeff and Dave**, as well.”

Linda LoSchiavo thanked **John McKay** for all of his help with the Daffodil Days fundraiser. “I just wanted to thank you again for sending out my emails and printing the stuff I needed. The final total raised was \$2,016. Thanks!!”

Pauline Mahoney wanted to tell Nina Ritson how pleased she is working with the **DAS Printshop**. “The guys are great to work with – I feel like I am always bringing work to them at the last minute – and **Mike Guimond** is very helpful with the electronic files. I really enjoy working with them!”

Alicia Nunez wrote, “I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the entire EEO SMART unit to express our thanks for all the assistance and cooperation provided to us by **Suzanne Giansanti and Stan Kenton**. Both have assisted the unit with SBE/MBE concerns,

Continued next page

People are talking..... *continued*

and willingly generated reports that we have needed for our SmART agencies. Their assistance has allowed me to do my job better, and I sincerely appreciate all that they have done.”

Both Suzanne and Stan are a credit to DAS, and state service as a whole. You (we) are lucky to have them.”

Kathy Sweetman, Controller, Civitillo Masonry, Inc. wrote to **Meg Yetishefsky**, “On behalf of Civitillo Masonry, Inc., I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to **you and your staff** for expediting our Supplier Diversity renewal. Your office is always a pleasure to work with and we greatly appreciate your effort and hard work.”

Marla Shiller, EEO Manager at the Department of Labor wrote to Andrea Keilty, “I wanted to take the time to let you know that, much to my relief, CHRO’s 2010/2012 Affirmative Action Plan has been approved. I had my doubts when I first received it, and I could not have gotten through it without the very generous and diligent assistance of **Alicia Nunez**. Not only did she help me wade through CHRO’s documents and records, but she also shared her knowledge of certain skills (i.e. how to obtain CORE information) that will assist me with DOL’s plan. In spite of the fact that she was as busy with other duties as I was, she always made the time to answer my questions and provide me with whatever documents and assistance I needed. She is really an asset to DAS. Thank you for allowing her to work with me.”

The American Cancer Society’s Daffodil Days Is a Huge Success!



The DAS Daffodil Days fund raiser for the American Cancer Society was another success this year. Organized by DAS Procurement’s Linda LoSchiavo, the event raised \$2,016.

“It’s an important cause that affects many people in our state,” said LoSchiavo. “I want to thank Julie Bernosky at 101 East River Drive for helping coordinate the donations at BEST and Linda Dutkiewicz for helping sort out the orders and for handing out the flower orders when I wasn’t available,” added Linda.

Special thanks to Linda for taking on this project and making a difference in the fight against cancer!

Blood Drive

DAS Blood Drive coordinator Teresa Dupont was excited to announce that the DAS/Red Cross blood drive hosted on February 21 reached the goal of 44 pints. “Employees consistently step up to the plate to donate here at DAS,” said Dupont.

“I also want to thank all the employees who donated either their time or brought in food for the blood donors. We wouldn’t be as successful at this as we are without your help. Thanks again.”

Looking forward, our next DAS Blood Drive is **Wednesday, May 29** from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m in Room G-38. If you haven’t yet done so and would like to schedule an appointment, or if you’d like to donate refreshments for the donors, please contact DAS Blood Drive coordinator Teresa Dupont at Teresa.Dupont@ct.gov.

Copart Car Auction

by John McKay

DAS Surplus Vehicle Auctions went online February 26, 2013, meaning state surplus vehicles are now offered for sale to the public through an internet auction website (copart.com). By making use of this marketing technology, the State expects to streamline the surplus property disposition process, increase opportunities for bidders all over the world to obtain surplus State property and increase revenue to the State.

The Department of Administrative Services, State Property Distribution Program is the legally authorized agent for the disposition of all State surplus property, other than real estate. Until now State agencies have used a manual, physical process involving transport and storage of surplus property prior to disposition.

As an agency decides that it no longer has use for a particular item of property, the DAS Surplus Property unit will offer the item to other State agencies, municipalities and non-profit organizations. Those entities have 14 days to claim the item prior to its being offered for sale to the public. Items not claimed by those entities during that 14-day period are then offered for sale to the public.

For surplus automobiles, trucks and heavy equipment, this has been done by way of auctions conducted periodically at a central location, advertised in advance. This process has been inefficient and time consuming.

In the new online system bidders will log onto the auction website and will have a period of time prior to the auction date to review information about available vehicles. Bidders will have the opportunity, if they choose, to come to the central storage

yard in New Britain to examine the vehicles and kick the tires. At noon on auction day, the vehicles will then be offered one at a time on the website through the virtual auction which happens in real time over the course of a couple of hours. Anyone logged into the website can observe the bids as they come in and make a bid by clicking on the appropriate button indicating a bid amount. The amounts change as the bidding increases. When bidding ceases for each item, the item will “time out” and the highest bid will get the vehicle.



The State's auction vendor will then handle the transaction with the successful bidder and transfer ownership.

The successful bidders will be responsible for collecting their vehicle from the central storage yard. The State's vendor has been selling surplus vehicles in this manner for almost a decade after using the traditional in-person auction method for many years prior. By reaching a substantially larger market, the State expects to significantly increase its revenue from these sales. In this difficult era for the State budget, the DAS Surplus Property unit is proud to bring forward this welcome advance for the State and its taxpayers.

DAS Commissioner DeFronzo commented further, "Together, with fully automated online bidding for state contracts, the use of reverse auction technology and conversion to online application and certification procedures, the use of online surplus auctions is another step in the DAS modernization program."

All Hands Survey

Shortly after the All Hands Event held in January at Central Connecticut State University, DAS employees were asked to respond to a Survey Monkey survey so that their feedback, thoughts and responses to the event could be heard.

“First of all I want to thank everyone for taking the time to come to the event and especially for taking the time to respond to the survey,” said Peggy Zabawar of Strategic Services, “normally, you can expect a 10 % return on a survey - but we got 50%!”

“The majority of the feedback was very positive - some voiced concerns - and we appreciate all responses because your feedback helps us design programs and communicate better with everyone. 50% tells us one very important thing -- DAS employees ARE engaged and looking for opportunities to contribute!”

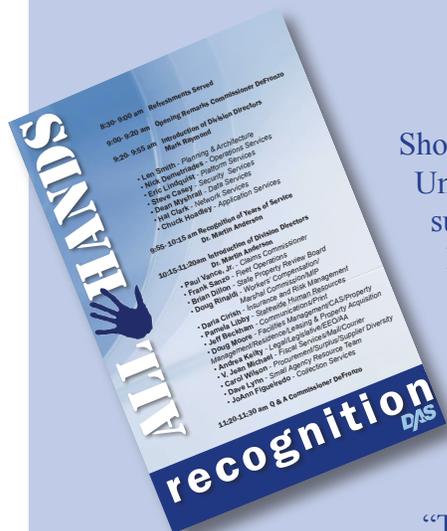
“Out of 548 DAS employees, 425 employees attended the event. Of this, 231 responded to the survey. Jason Crisco of Strategic Services said, “ Many have simply watched the event on line if they were unable to attend the meeting that day.”

Peggy added, “More than 50% of respondents valued getting feedback and appreciation from the Commissioner, and learning about the different DAS divisions. 69% said the All Hands meeting met or exceeded their needs, and 71% said that DAS met the goals of having staff learn about the reorganized agency and its functions, and recognize staff contributions. Timing of the event was well planned, going only 15 minutes over the allotted time. Many acknowledged that it was one of the coldest days of the year, and when planning something for the future, we may look for warmer weather.”

It was also noted that since longevity ceremonies have become a thing of the past it was nice to see employees acknowledged for their years of service. There was a big round of applause as Deputy Commissioner Anderson asked those with 35+ years of service to stand and be recognized.

In case you missed the event, below is a link to the January “All Hands Meeting” held at Central Connecticut State University on January 23. It is suggested that you use Microsoft Internet Explorer to view the video. Any technical issues in viewing the presentation should be directed to your local Help Desk.

<http://www.ct.gov/best/cwp/view.asp?a=4421&q=519378>



Important Notice for All Tier II and Tier IIA Employees

To all DAS employees: If you are a SERS Tier II or SERS Tier IIA or Hybrid Retirement Plan who was employed prior to July 1, 2011 and are still actively employed the opportunity described below should only be considered if you will not reach your Normal Retirement Date prior to July 1, 2022, you anticipate retiring on or after July 1, 2022 and would like to retain the current Normal Retirement Date (NRD) after that date.

Beginning July 1, 2022 the Normal Retirement Date will be raised to age 63 with 25 years of service or age 65 with 10 years of service. It is raised for anyone employed on or after July 1, 2022, that had not previously attained their Normal Retirement Date. The higher normal retirement ages apply only to years of service worked on or after 7/1/2011. This communication explains an opportunity for eligible members to make a one-time irrevocable option to retain a normal retirement date of age 60 with 25 years of service or age 62 with 10 years of service. Choosing this option will require an additional contribution on a continual basis beginning the first full pay period following 7/1/2013 through separation from service or until you reach the new retirement age.

You are eligible for this one-time irrevocable opportunity if you are a current, active member of the above groups and were employed prior to July 1, 2011 and will not reach your Normal Retirement Date until July 1, 2022 or after.

All employees who will not have already attained their Normal Retirement Date by July 1, 2022 are required to complete the attached Option to Retain Grandfathered Normal Retirement Date for the State Employees Retirement System form (CO-1094) in order to opt in or waive this opportunity. The forms must be completed and signed prior to July 1, 2013 and returned to your Human Resources Office.

You may click the following link to access the online calculator to estimate the bi-weekly cost to maintain current retirement age: <http://www.osc.ct.gov/2013memos/retirement/disclaimer.htm>.

Should you need assistance in completing the form, please contact your authorized Human Resources Officer. Once the Comptroller's Office receives your paperwork for this, the election cannot be revoked for any reason.

Comings.....

New Employee
Scott Przygocki
Property Management



....and Goings

From left to right:
Sandra Donagher/BEST - March 1
Diana Briganti/BEST – April 1
Harold L. Clark, BEST – April 1
Dale M. Greenwood - April 1
Doreene Nadler – April 1

