



## Aspiring Leaders Kicks Off

By Nina Ritson

On Thursday, March 31, 36 managers from 22 agencies, including education, executive and judicial branches, gathered in the DOT Training Room to begin ten sessions of the Aspiring Leaders Executive Development Program, a manager training program which seeks to help build skills



Commissioner DeFronzo addresses the Aspiring Leaders class in Newington

in specific competencies that are necessary to be a successful manager. The program includes speakers who will give their perspectives on leadership, ethics, motivating others, and their personal philosophies.

Peggy Zabawar, who administers the program, greeted registered attendees and explained, “DAS provides training for state employees including managers. We run the New Manager Orientation Program, and the half-day Manager Briefings, but until now there really hadn’t been any managerial skill-building training in a long time. The CT Executive Management (CEM) program, was a very well-received and respected program in its time, which ended over 15 years ago, which provided managerial training over the course of many months. It also was quite expensive by comparison to the types of budget constraints agencies have today. Since CEM ended years ago, the state has struggled to find a cost-effective way to train government managers in what they

need to know to be effective leaders. Most of the private sector training, and education-government collaborations are very costly. And some are tailored more to the profit making industry than government. So with state agency collaborators from the CT Training and Development Network, CTDN, we designed Aspiring Leaders to meet this need.”

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On this opening day of the 2011 Aspiring Leaders, the guest speaker was DAS Commissioner Donald DeFronzo, who shared how many and varied experiences and roles in state government shaped him into the respected leader he is today. His down to earth stories touched on the spectrum of his diverse career.

“In the early 1980’s I was a union president and just ten years later I was the mayor of New Britain – sitting on the other side of the table of organized labor in the 1990’s. So it is important to know that a good leader is someone who helps get things done through the use of other resources and people – to be able to do a lot with little. To identify in others the skills and abilities they have and motivate them to

achieve the objectives of the agency. You are the interface between elected officials and the institution of government, the success of an administration depends on this.” DeFronzo drew from within and went on to say, “This is an important time in the history of this state. It is a time to redefine rolls, redefine your voice to effect change in our systems.”

He also identified skill sets that all good leaders have:

- Human relations skills  
empathy and discipline
- Technical skills in your field of choice and know the trade!
- Conceptual skills - long-term planning and policy issues

“Good managers are perceived as leaders in an organization – having

credibility with rank and file employees and with their superiors. You’ve earned the respect of the people in your agency. You must have a willingness to take risks, but take responsibility for those risks, and encourage folks to think outside the box.”

Aspiring Leaders is divided into 14 competencies, managers will see this list of competencies at the beginning of each module, where we will pick out the one, or group of them, that are addressed by the training. On this day they worked on Strategic Planning. Some of the modules will incorporate multiple competencies, and some competencies can best be developed by listening to and thinking about what the speakers have to say about their ideas on leadership and their personal philosophies.

## Have a Suggestion? Let's Hear It!

DAS has launched its first online **DAS Suggestion Box** this month.

DAS Commissioner DeFronzo is looking for input from employees regarding ways to cut costs and save money for DAS and the state. Below is a link to the new online DAS Suggestion Box. Employees are encouraged to make suggestions, large or small – any way to save the agency money.

<http://das-intra/suggestionbox/>

If your suggestion is used by DAS or the state your reward is the option to park in a Commissioner’s spot here at the State Office Building for a week - you know, the ones right next to the building. “If your suggestion is implemented, we’ll also do an article in the DAS Times and see if we can get your photo taken with the Commissioner,” said DAS Communications John McKay.

Remember, the theme is about cost-saving measures for DAS and the state. If you’re still a paper and pen person, you can also send your suggestions via interdepartmental mail to DAS’ Rick Lopes, Room 411 in the State Office Building. **Let’s hear it!**

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

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# Commissioner DeFronzo on "The Hour"

By John McKay

On Friday, April 15, DAS Commissioner DeFronzo sat down for an interview on "THE HOUR with Jim Pellegrino" which is produced by the Central Connecticut State University Media Technology Department.

THE HOUR is a one-hour talk format program, shot in-studio, live to tape each month. The show features a variety of guests from the worlds of business, education, politics, medicine, human interest and entrepreneurial success stories. The goal of the program is to provide a lively, informative and entertaining time for the viewers and the guests.

And informative it was. Commissioner DeFronzo answered an array of questions from host Jim Pellegrino on the state budget, the consolidation of state agencies, and what Governor Malloy sees as Commissioner DeFronzo's role in reshaping state government.



When asked, Commissioner DeFronzo explained that there are four areas of improvement for DAS to focus on including: Customer Service, policy improvements, statutory changes and technology improvements. He went on to explain some upcoming events at DAS including Reverse Auctions and Online Bidding improvements for DAS Procurement.

"I see some tremendous opportunities for improvement both at an agency level and state level in regards to what we have planned for DAS," said Commissioner DeFronzo. "I'm really looking forward to the possibilities of where we can take this agency."

## HATSOFF

by Cindy Rusczyk

The following message was sent to **all DAS employees** from Ira Henowitz at the Department of Public Works: "On behalf of the entire DPW Diversity Leadership

Council, I'd like to thank all of you who helped out and supported last Thursday's Bake & Book Fundraiser. We raised over \$500 which is really quite wonderful. We plan to donate that money to **AmeriCares** in their efforts to provide critical relief aid in Japan."

Linda Bruner of Bruner Consulting Associates, Inc. commended **Pam**

**McCormick** after receiving their Supplier Diversity Certification. "I can't thank you enough for all the hard work that you did to help me with the process of being certified. I strongly feel that our company should go through the process to be viable, especially since we are a corporation registered in the State of Connecticut. Again, I really appreciate all of the help that you gave me."

# OPEN *for* BUSINESS

By John McKay

For months now, Governor Malloy has said, “Connecticut is open for business.”

Eager to help him prove his point, DAS is in the early stages of hosting an all day business matchmaker event on June 23 at the University of Hartford. The purpose of a matchmaking event is to match qualified small businesses with federal and state prime contractors to increase business opportunities.

During this event, small businesses will have opportunities to meet for brief appointments with prime government contractors, Federal and State agencies.

As you can imagine, DAS Supplier Diversity Program Manager Meg Yetishefsky is involved. “It’s a tremendous opportunity to get our state certified supplier diversity customers matched to vendors,” she said. “Strategic Services’ Rick

Lopes and I are coordinating with the University of Hartford, Center for Professional Development, Connecticut Procurement Technical Assistance Program, US General Services Administration and the US Small

Government agencies, national businesses, and government prime contractors are looking for qualified, quality firms from which they can buy the products and services they need to fulfill government procurements and help meet small business and minority business set aside requirements.

“A matchmaker has two purposes,” said Lopes. “It provides the small business the opportunity to sit face-to-face with large prime contractors, so that they can educate the contractor about the goods and/or services they provide in an effort to gain new business opportunities/partnerships. It also provides the prime contractors with the opportunity to meet small businesses they might not have otherwise met which will help them increase their subcontracting pool and product offerings.”

There will also be available training classes for small businesses on how to do business with the state and federal government.



*Meg Yetishefsky of Supplier Diversity and Rick Lopes of Strategic Services*

Business Administration to make this event happen.”

# DAS Makes Moves Towards A More Business-Friendly Agency

By John McKay

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has undertaken an aggressive effort to modify its business practices in the area of contracting and contractor prequalification requirements and procedures. Much has been said about the need to make Connecticut's contracting system more business friendly at all levels. Governor Malloy has directed DAS to take steps to streamline agency processes and procedures, to eliminate unneeded bureaucracy and administrative duplication and to implement the use of technological solutions to increase customer access and utilization and state employee productivity.

Similarly, the Legislature has demonstrated strong interest in improving contracting procedures and in easing bureaucratic requirements on state businesses, and particularly on small businesses, which may be discouraged from competing for state contracts.

Towards addressing these directives and concerns the DAS assembled two focus groups comprised of agency customers, business association representatives and state agency program administrators. One session addressed contracting

procedures and requirements while the second session reviewed the requirements and procedures associated with the contractor prequalification program. Each session focused on four areas of discussion and potential improvement: Customer Service, Administrative Protocols, Statutory Requirements and Technology Changes.

Some major advances already in the works include: Applications for Supplier Diversity and Construction Contractor Prequalification which can already be submitted online.

As of March 1, 2011 applicants to the Supplier Diversity Program can electronically upload their required documentation.

By late May applicants to the Construction Contractor Prequalification program will be able to upload their required documents online.

Reverse Auction capability will be available to DAS by the end of April 2011.

Online bidding, not previously expected until 2013, will likely be implemented by DAS by the end of September 2011.

E-bid notification is under study for implementation as soon as practical.

These steps would lessen purely administrative requirements, decrease costs to Connecticut contractors and lead to improved state employee productivity.

