



Customer

Focus

*Service Updates for Valued DAS Customers
Volume 1, Issue 1*

October-November, 2004

Welcome, Readers...

DAS is working to improve customer service, save money, streamline, and use its resources in a more flexible way as we serve you. With this newsletter, we begin a bi-monthly bulletin to keep the department/agency management teams of state government better informed. We hope to consolidate most of the service update messages we send throughout the month and keep you updated about the work of the Customer Councils.

If yours is one of the many departments who participated in the second annual DAS customer satisfaction survey recently, we thank you for taking the time to give us this important feedback. We look forward to sharing survey results with you, and pledge to consider responses carefully as we work to determine benchmarks and set future priorities.

---Mollie Anderson, Director

Customer Council News

A central web location for current Customer Council information is now located at http://das.iowa.gov/customer_councils/index.html. For each Council, you will find member and officer lists, meeting schedules, agendas, meeting summaries and more. For more information, contact Linda Plazak, DAS Core, at 281-6124.

A new interim I/3 Interim Customer Council has been formed. Members, selected from other Councils, include John Baldwin (Corrections), Charlie Smithson (Ethics and Campaign Disclosure), Roger Stirlor (Education), Penny Westfall (Law Enforcement Academy), Steve Mosena (Human Services), Rich Jacobs (Revenue) and Carl Martin (AFSCME.) DAS participants will include Mollie Anderson, Calvin McKelvogue, Lori McClannahan, Sharon Sperry and Linda Plazak.

Councils support three-year member terms. Councils are reviewing a proposed rule change to set staggered three-year membership terms. Given the complex rate setting process and lead-time requirements, three-year terms make better use of knowledge requirements and allow members to remain on the Council during the period when rates they set are in force.

Good News

DAS-HRE Work Reduces Estimated Increase in Health Insurance Premium Expenses by \$6.8 Million
Careful renegotiation of the contract with Wellmark, the state's largest health insurance carrier, has lowered the amount of the increase projected for calendar 2005 premium expenses, a line item in the personnel services section of agency budgets. The state's portion of the total composite premium for all plans, including Wellmark, had been estimated at \$693.14 per month per employee. That amount included a 15 percent

DAS Customer Council Meetings

I/3 (Interim)

October 28, 9:00 a.m.
Hoover Level B, Conf. Rm. 3

Human Resources Enterprise
November 3, 1:30 p.m.
Grimes First Floor Conf. Rm.

General Services Enterprise
November 16, 1:30 p.m.
Hoover Level A, EMD Conf. Rm.

Information Technology Enterprise
November 18, 1:30 p.m.
Hoover Level B, Conf. Rm. 2

increase, in line with national experience. Following renegotiation, that estimate has dropped to \$672.30. The average employee cost will increase slightly from \$57.85 to \$59.16. For more information, contact Ed Holland, DAS-Human Resources Enterprise, at 242-6143.

DAS Negotiates Cost Avoidance of \$691,594 over Ten Years for Two Agencies

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) have signed new 10-year contracts to lease office space in Des Moines, with significant savings over their previous five-year agreements. A soft market and excess vacant downtown office space has created a buyers' market were contributing factors. The new contract is a win-win situation for state agencies, who can remain in their existing office space without the hassle or expense of relocation; and the property owner, who has a tenant for another ten years.

Barbara Bendon, who acts as the state's property manager with the DAS-General Services Enterprise (GSE), contacted Hubbell Realty approximately one year ago to discuss renegotiating rates for the state's space in the Riverpoint Business Park. DHS and DPH received two money-saving renewal options to consider. The first was a five-year renewal at a base rate of \$9.50 per square foot, less than their then-current \$9.75 per square foot base rate. The second option was a 10-year renewal with a built in escalation clause in the base rent at years 4 and 7. Both DHS and DPH selected the ten-year option at \$8.50 for years 1-3, \$9 for years 4-6, and \$9.50 for years 7-10, maximizing their savings. For more information, contact Barbara Bendon, DAS-GSE, at 281-8887.

New Quality Specialist is Troubleshooting in Your Building

The new face wearing a light blue Capitol Complex Maintenance (CCM) tee shirt in your building may be Rob Godfredsen, CCM's new quality specialist. Rob is going to every floor in each of the ten Capitol Complex buildings to find minor problems and repair them on the spot—sticking doors, loose lids, etc. Feel free to introduce yourself and let him know if he can do anything to assist you. You can always call report problems to the DAS-GSE Customer Service Center, at 242-5120.

Expect Cost Savings on Office Supplies

DAS-GSE leveraged the buying power of state government, the Iowa Biotech Association and Iowa State University to generate big savings in contracting with the winner of a recent office supplies RFP: Office Max, a Boise Company. State agencies can order online at lower prices and they can use state-authorized procurement cards ("p-cards") to expedite billing. (Remember, you can set spending limits for p-cards and detailed monthly credit card-style statements go directly to cardholders.) The expected savings for this year, based on re-purchase of the same items state agencies bought in FY 2004, is \$330,000. For more information about Office Max or to get a procurement card, contact Dave Kaili, DAS-GSE, at 281-4774.

Your agency will receive a 5 percent rebate on all Office Max purchases made before January 1, 2005.

Enjoy the Clean Monuments

Have you noticed monument restoration work around the Capitol Complex? Each year, DAS reserves \$50,000 of its annual major maintenance appropriation for repair and conservation of monuments around the state, including those on the Capitol Complex. Boy Scouts of America donated this miniature statue of Liberty to Iowans in 1950 as part of an annual service project during which Boy Scouts placed 200 statues in 39 states. Additional conservation work is currently underway on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument located in the gardens south of the Capitol Building. Restoration of the Statue of Liberty monument on East Twelfth Street, east of the Capitol, is complete. For more information, contact Dean Ibsen, DAS-GSE, at 281-6051.

Employee Benefits Update

These are highlights only. Your agency's personnel assistant will have full information for all employees.

Annual Benefits Enrollment/Change Period Underway

From October 15 until November 15, 2004, state employees can enroll in or change health insurance benefits options, including reviewing health, dental and life insurance needs; changing health insurance carrier; and enrolling in dependent care or health flexible spending accounts. Changes will be effective January 1, 2005.

State Match Increases for Deferred Compensation Program

Non-contract, AFSCME, AFSCME Judicial and PPME employees are eligible for a match increase of up to \$50 per month in 2005. The State will deposit \$1 in an employee's match account for every \$2 the employee contributes to his or her 457 deferred compensation account, up to the selected limit. Employees who want to increase their payroll deductions to take advantage of the increase should contact their personnel assistants and complete a change form before December 15, 2004. The change will be effective January 1, 2005.

Automatic Payroll Deduction (ADP) Program to be Restarted

Watch for information about an automatic payroll deduction (APD) program for state employees to be restarted effective November 15, 2004. At that time, state employees will once again be able to make voluntary after-tax payments to insurance companies for coverages not sponsored or endorsed by the State. The benefit for state employees is the convenience and the potential for group discounts that vendors may offer. DAS-HRE will not provide any information about employees to vendors, and will not review or endorse vendor offerings. It is administering the program in response to a legislative mandate in H.F. 2262.

Qualified vendors, who will receive letters of introduction from DAS, may contact state agencies directly to ask for opportunities to meet with employees during break or lunch periods during the workday. For more information, contact Ed Holland, DAS-HRE, at 242-6143.

More News You Can Use

Accounting Update

We are continuing to work toward consolidating DAS billings for your convenience. Effective with the October, 2004, billing, office supply expenses will appear on your ITE invoice. Your agency should have received DAS utility billings for the months of July, August and September 2004. If you have questions, please consult the Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQ) update at <http://www.das.iowa.gov> or contact Denise Sturm, DAS Finance, at 281-6703.

Changes Coming in the State's Business Travel Policy

DAS-GSE is finalizing recommendations for changes in its policy for using the state's contracted travel agency. A proposal will be presented to the Executive Council at its November 8 meeting, followed by an announcement to state agencies of a revision in Accounting Policies and Procedures.

Enterprise Infrastructure and Personnel (EIP) Study Nears Finish Line

The Iowa General Assembly commissioned the EIP assessment to generate recommendations for improving IT effectiveness and efficiency and to encourage innovation. After months of input and analysis involving more than 130 people in 43 departments, the project team has developed three possible future designs for executive branch IT resources. In coming weeks, they will meet with stakeholders to refine details. The models range from full consolidation (mandated for consideration by legislators in House File 534,) to organizational improvements in the current structure. DAS expects to submit its report to the General Assembly by December 1, 2004. For more information, contact Lorrie Tritch, DAS-ITE, at 242-5898.

A Real Sidewalk Sale

Do you remember the old adage about making lemonade whenever someone hands you a lemon? The Capitol Complex Maintenance team has a new example. Cobbled bricks in the sidewalks around parking lot 16 (north of the Grimes Building) have damaged snow removal equipment and created hazards for pedestrians for many years. Recently, CCM replaced the bricks with more attractive cement walks that do not tear up snow blades. Prison workers tore up and cleaned the old bricks, which turned out to be antique street pavers imprinted with the words, "Flint Co." The bricks are stacked and waiting for buyers. For information, contact Tim Ryburn, DAS-GSE, at 281-3137.

Winter Weather Preparations Underway

While the fantastic fall weather continues (we hope), CCM teams working on preparations for winter that most of us never see. They are applying herbicides, mowing the 187-acre lawn, preparing air conditioners for cutover to heating, placing sand barrels and installing snow blades on the snow removal equipment.

Maintaining comfortable office temperatures can be a challenge at this time of year. Once the air conditioning system shut down for the season, we must use alternative methods to cool buildings if outside temperatures rise again. Our goal is to keep building temperatures within a 68 – 71 degree range during the heating season.

A new boiler will be keeping us warm this winter. One of the three central-loop boilers that heat the Capitol Complex was recently replaced at a cost of \$200,000 from Vertical Infrastructure Funds. Boilers last about 40 years. For more information, contact Tim Ryburn.

Peregrine Falcons at the Capitol Building

Peregrine falcons have a new nesting box home atop the northeast side of the Capitol roof near the concrete railing, thanks to a collaborative effort of the Neumann Brothers, Department of Natural Resources and the DAS. The last nesting of peregrine falcons seen in Iowa was in 1956; DDT poisoning led to their placement on the endangered species list in 1972. For more information, contact Dean Ibsen.

Use the Resources at Personnel Development Seminars (PDS)

The course catalog for training courses offered by the DAS-HRE's training arm, PDS, is now online at http://das.hre.iowa.gov/LearnAtPDS/catalog_welcome.htm. The new contractor for HRE-sponsored computer classes is Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC.) You can view the calendar of computer classes at http://das.hre.iowa.gov/pdfs/PDS/computer_classes_dmacc.pdf. For more information, contact Daryl Frey, DAS-HRE, at 281-5702.

Car Talk

If you use the DAS-GSE Motor Pool, expect to see cleaner cars. Customer input suggested that overall cleanliness could be improved, and the team has set this goal as a priority. And if you're looking for a used vehicle, mark your calendar to attend the annual fall vehicle auction on November 13, 2004 at the Vehicle Dispatch Center at 301 East Seventh Street in Des Moines. For more information, click here:

http://das.gse.iowa.gov/projects_products/auction.html or contact Dale Schroeder, DAS-GSE, at 281-7702.