



Government's Partner in
Achieving Results
Mollie Anderson, Director

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Customer Focus is a bi-monthly update for Iowa state agencies from the Department of Administrative Services. For more information, please visit our website at <http://das.iowa.gov/>.

Contact the editor at Laura.Riordan@iowa.gov. We encourage your feedback.

Customer Focus

A service update newsletter for valued DAS customers

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2

MARCH/APRIL 2007

DAS website — redesigned & better than ever!

Searching the DAS website just got a lot easier.

Over the last several months, DAS has been working to redesign our website to not only give it a fresh, clean, new look, but also to keep our website users in mind by adding several ways to find information on the site. The new site was unveiled this week. The DAS website address has not changed; it is <http://das.iowa.gov>.

In addition to searching for information and programs based on the overseeing enterprise (General Services, Human Services, Information Technology or State Accounting), users can now also find information through an alphabetical index or a search box; links to each are at the top of every page. Website users will also notice a new "QUICK LINKS" option, with an arrow that drops down a menu of items commonly searched for across the site, such as boards and commissions, customer councils, ca-

reers with the state, FAQs, a link to eDAS, and much more.

Many commonly sought links have also been placed right on the DAS home page — things like procurement, print, information security, fleet and mail, employee benefits and wellness, and Capitol Complex events can now be accessed directly from the home page.

While the home page URL (<http://das.iowa.gov>) has not changed, please note that some of pages you had bookmarked or frequently visit may have moved in an effort to better organize the site.

We are eager for our customers and the public to try out the new site and let us know what you think (look for the "Site Suggestions" link at the bottom of the page). There is even more we want to do to develop the website as a useful resource for you, so expect additional improvements in the future!



DAS - GOVERNMENT'S PARTNER
IN ACHIEVING RESULTS

New banner on the DAS website

Collective Bargaining agreements reached

Negotiations for the collective bargaining agreements between the State of Iowa and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the State Police Officers Council (SPOC), and Iowa United Professionals (IUP) have been completed and ratified for the 2007-2009 fiscal years. All three were voluntary agreements and were reached on a timely basis.

The new contracts go into effect July 1, 2007.

AFSCME contract-covered employees were recognized with pay increases to take place

over the course of the new two-year contract. AFSCME represents approximately 12,800 state employees in blue collar, clerical, patient care, professional, security and technical job classifications. The agreement provides for 3-percent across-the-board pay increases on both July 1, 2007, and July 1, 2008, and maintains the current employer-provided health insurance programs.

(Continued on page 2)

Capitol Shuttle service extended through April 27

A positive response by riders has prompted Legislative officials and the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) to agree to an extension of the trial service provided by the Capitol shuttle, the free shuttle service to the Capitol Building.

Shuttle service began on Monday, January 29, 2007, for a six-week pilot; state officials have agreed to extend this service through Friday, April 27, 2007. The shuttle will remain on the same schedule, running continuously from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The trolley is wheelchair- and handicap-accessible, and there is no cost to ride. It takes approximately 10 minutes for the trolley to drive one loop, so riders never have to wait for long.

The shuttle picks up and drops off riders from three locations: the parking ramp at the northwest corner of the East Grand and Pennsylvania intersection; the State Historical Building from the southwest corner of East Locust and East Seventh/Pennsylvania; and the west entrance of the Capitol. Shuttle stops are marked with special signage indicating that spot is a "Capitol Shuttle Stop."

The cost of the shuttle is being paid for by the Iowa state legislature. The link to the informational flyer and map is located at: http://das.iowa.gov/images/pdf/Shuttle_flyer_extended.pdf.

Collective bargaining, continued

(Continued from page 1)

The State Police Officers Council (SPOC) ratified an agreement effective July 1, 2007, for law enforcement employees of the departments of Public Safety and Natural Resources. The agreement increases the maximum salary allowed by 6.5 percent, which allows employees at the current maximum pay levels to be eligible for step increases; 2 percent across-the-board increases will occur on July 1, 2007 and July 1, 2008. SPOC and the state agreed to modify current health insurance cost containment measures, thereby limiting the amount of insurance premium increases.

Acquiring across-the-board pay increases of 1 percent and 3 percent on July 1, 2007, and July 1, 2008, respectively, the Iowa United Professionals (IUP) approved the new agreement for 2007-2009 in February. The agreement also increases the maximum salary allowed for each classification by 1.45 percent on July 1, 2007. IUP represents approximately 2,600 state employees working in sciences and social services classifications.

SPAM? A lot!

Are you sick of spam? Does it seem like you are receiving more spam than ever before? Do you wonder how good our anti-spam filter is?

Let's get the bad news out of the way first: spam is expected to increase even more in 2007. Can there be any good news with such a gloomy prediction? The DAS-ITE messaging team has been keeping statistics on the effectiveness of our Sophos anti-spam/anti-virus product for our 13,500 Sophos customers. We have numbers per agency, we have numbers overall, and we even have numbers on how many spam messages you drop into our "Spam Mail" folder.

For the month of January 2007, we stopped 42,321 viruses from the internet before they entered your inbox. But that is nothing

compared to the **17,813,448** spam messages that never reached you? Out of 20,372,562 inbound messages, *over 87 percent were viruses or spam.*

Here's a summary:

Total Messages:	20,372,562
Total Allowed:	2,559,114
Total Blocked:	17,813,448
% Blocked:	87%

Out of the 2,559,114 messages that were delivered to your inbox, you moved 7,251 of those into the Spam Mail folder. We're pretty sure there were more spam messages than that. How can you help? When spam reaches your mailbox, please move it to the Spam Mail folder under Public Folders. We send this information to

our vendor, and it helps improve your spam protection.

For more information:

An interesting and *live* link where you can watch our mail activity:

<https://webmail.iowa.gov/stats/cgi-bin/mailgraph.cgi>.

Manage your spam quarantine yourself:

<https://webmail.iowa.gov/spam/>.

An FAQ for using the link above. It also gives a short explanation of why spam is so difficult to stop:

<http://das.ite.iowa.gov/docs/infrastructure/WebdigestFAQ.pdf>

An FAQ on the digests that are sent out daily:

<http://das.ite.iowa.gov/docs/infrastructure/DigestFAQ.pdf>.

Downtime notices for computer systems expanded

Subscribers to DAS-ITE's Notify listserv are accustomed to seeing advance notice of scheduled mainframe outages and changes. Beginning April 5, that service will be expanded to include notices related to distributed platforms as well.

This service improvement is an initiative by a DAS-ITE workgroup formed to evaluate all aspects of the computing environment change control process. One of its goals is to enhance customer service by providing meaningful notice of planned outages and significant changes to systems. Including distributed platforms in the weekly notice is a first step in achieving that goal.

To subscribe to the service, send a blank e-mail to: join-notify@lists.ia.gov. The e-mailed notice containing a summary of upcoming changes is usually sent out Thursday afternoons.

In this initial step, the notices will contain a summary of all scheduled changes. Details will continue to be provided by individual system administrators.

Please contact Kevin Miller (242-5941, Kevin.Miller@iowa.gov) with questions about this initiative.

Dependent Eligibility Verification study

DAS-HRE is serious about its responsibility to serve employees and retirees by holding down health care costs. One way is to perform audits to identify errors, overpayments/underpayments and to make improvements in processes. During the last few months, DAS-HRE has publicized the audit, "The Dependent Eligibility Verification Study."

This study is being done in order to confirm that all persons who are covered by a state of Iowa group health plan are eligible for coverage. We are taking these steps in an effort to hold down costs for our employees and the taxpayers of the state.

Why is this important? Because our analysis of claims data and other information has led us to believe that we need to contact approximately 785 current employees (approximately 3 percent of all contracts that we oversee) for further information to substantiate that certain dependents on employee plans should in fact be on these plans. Because we initially publicized the study during the benefits enrollment period, many employees have already taken steps to verify their dependents' eligibility, and in some cases remove dependents that are not eligible. Employees who receive inquiries in the mail from DAS-HRE may contact Ed Holland (Ed.Holland@iowa.gov/515-242-6143) or Rose Baughman (Rose.Baughman@iowa.gov/515-281-8989) for more information.

Reminder: Snow removal policy

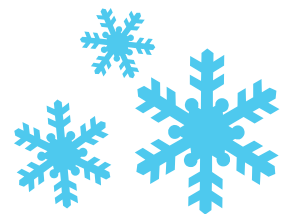
The first day of spring may be here, but Iowans know better than to count on that as a no-more-snow guarantee. Here is a review of DAS' snow removal policy ... just in case.

DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS:

- Sidewalks, steps, and drives will be kept clear. Sand and salt will be applied where necessary. High-traffic areas and Americans with Disabilities Act routes are priorities.
- The standard for snow removal on paved parking lots is 1".
- The standard for snow removal on gravel parking lots is 2".
- Snow removal staff will remain on Complex at the end of the shift if there is more than 2" of snow forecasted.

AFTER HOURS:

- If a significant amount of snow is forecast, staff will monitor and dispatch appropriately.
- During the heating season, when snow is possible, Capitol Complex Maintenance is a 24x7 operation. The employee on duty will monitor the weather and call staff in for snow removal if necessary.
- Reminder – if you are leaving your car overnight, please park your car on the outer edges of lots.



If you have questions or problems related to snow removal, please contact DAS Customer Service at 242-5120.

Spring ahead with SAFETY in mind

Are you one of those people who eagerly await working outside in the yard? Or, perhaps you are one of those who dread the thought of all the yard work that has to be done? Either way, there are ways to help ensure your spring spruce-up is disaster-free.

- Limber up. Yard chores may seem easy, but they involve muscles you probably haven't used in a while.
- Always wear protective clothing when you handle pesticides and fertilizers.
- More than 60,000 people are treated in emergency rooms each year for lawnmower injuries.
 - Rake before you mow to prevent any stones and loose debris from launching into the air.
 - Never operate a mower in your bare feet and avoid wearing loose clothing.
 - Never start a mower indoors.
 - When refueling your mower, make sure the engine is off and cool. Don't spill gasoline on a hot engine — and don't smoke while pouring gasoline.
 - Never leave your mower operational while unattended.
 - Don't use electrical mowers on wet grass.
 - Protect your hearing, wear appropriate ear plugs or other hearing protection
- At least 55,000 people each year sustain injuries from trimmers, lawn edgers, pruners and power saws.
 - Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before using the tools.
 - Inspect the product for damage and don't use it if there are problems.
 - Use proper eye protection.
 - Make sure blade guards are in place on all cutting equipment.
 - Don't let tools get wet unless they are labeled "immersible."
 - Unplug all tools when not in use.
 - Make sure the tool is in the "off" position before you plug it in.
 - Store gasoline-powered equipment away from anything that uses a pilot light.
- Make sure you use the right saw for the task, and always wait for the saw blade to stop before pulling away from a cut to avoid kickback.
- When pruning trees, be careful not to let metal ladders or trimmers contact overhead wires.
- Before you do any "hands on" weed removal, make sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak and similar toxic plants. Find out ahead of time how to treat the rashes they cause to reduce the irritation.
- Always call **IOWA One Call (1-800-292-8989)** before you dig, whether you are putting up a fence, basketball hoop, planting trees or shrubs, installing a pool, or digging for any other reason.

Recall Notifications

The following recalls have been issued. Do you have any of these products in your home or office?

Product: Maytag and Jenn-Air brand dishwashers — under-counter or portable plastic tub dishwashers sold from July 1997 through June 2001. Visit this website for further description & affected serial numbers: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07094.html>.

Hazard: Liquid rinse-aid can leak from its dispenser and come into contact with the dishwasher's internal wiring which can short-circuit and ignite, posing a fire hazard.

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop using these dishwashers, disconnect the electric supply by shutting off the fuse or circuit breaker controlling it and inform all users of the dishwasher about the risk of fire. Contact Maytag for either a free in-home repair, or a \$75 cash back reimbursement following the purchase of a new Maytag, Jenn-Air, Whirlpool or KitchenAid dishwasher. Consumers should not return the dishwasher to the retailer where it was purchased, as retailers are not prepared to take units back.

Consumer Contact: For more information, contact Maytag Corporation at (800) 675-0535 anytime, or visit the firm's Web site at www.repair.maytag.com

Product: Lithium-ion extended-life batteries used in ThinkPad notebook computers, sold with new ThinkPads or as optional or replacement batteries for the following ThinkPad notebook models: R Series (R60 and R60e), T Series (T60 and T60p) and Z Series (Z60m, Z61e, Z61m, and Z61p). The recalled 9-cell batteries have the following part number, which can be found on the battery label: FRU P/N 92P1131. They were sold nationwide between November 2005 and February 2007.

Hazard: If the battery in the laptop is struck forcefully on the corner, such as from a direct fall to the ground, the battery pack can overheat and pose a fire hazard to users. This is not an internal battery cell defect.

Remedy: Consumers should stop using the recalled batteries and contact Lenovo for additional information and to receive a free replacement battery. Consumers should use only ThinkPad batteries obtained from either Lenovo or an authorized reseller.

Consumer Contact: Customers should contact Lenovo at (800) 426-7378 anytime, or log on to www.lenovo.com/batteryprogram to determine if the battery is part of the recall and to order a replacement battery.

Note: In September 2006, Lenovo conducted a recall of batteries manufactured by another firm for a different problem.

To see this recall on CPSC's web site, including pictures of the recalled product, please go to: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07118.html>.

Information provided by Cindy Houlson, the Employee Safety Program Coordinator in the Department of Administrative Services. Cindy can be reached at 515-281-0181 or Cynthia.Houlson@iowa.gov.

Review! 'Benefits 101' presentations available to state agencies

Benefit Education is a service provided by DAS-HRE, where a benefits staff member comes to your location and presents information on benefits to your employees. This service assists employees in understanding both their benefits and the value of those benefits.

During the recent enrollment and change period, Jim Pierson from DAS-HRE made 37 presentations to 600 employees. Of the employees that attended a presentation and completed an evaluation, 94% indicated that the session was helpful in their understanding of benefits and 90% rated the presentation either very good or excellent.

While benefit education is vital during the enrollment and change period, it is not solely a once-a-year activity. Because benefits play a critical role in the lives of employees and their families by assisting in health needs, future financial security, retirement and more, benefit education is an on-going function that provides and reinforces information, and sends a strong message on the value of the benefits provided by the state.

2007 Benefits Overview

Jim Pierson is available to present an overview of 2007 benefits. The presentation is a general summary and highlights of the following benefits:

- ⇒ Medical
- ⇒ Dental
- ⇒ Life insurance
- ⇒ Accidental death & dismemberment insurance
- ⇒ Long term disability insurance
- ⇒ Flexible spending accounts
- ⇒ Deferred compensation (for more detailed and in-depth information on deferred compensation, see below)

The overview presentation, including time for questions and answers, is approximately one hour. A presentation can cover all the above listed benefits or just one or two specific benefits.

Contact Jim at 515-281-5509 or e-mail him at Jim.Pierson@iowa.gov if you are interested in having him make presentations on 2007 benefits at your location.

Deferred Compensation

Robbie Stoecker is available to present sessions on deferred compensation. In a recent survey, almost 70% of respondents answered deferred compensation in response to the question, "Which future benefit presentations would be of interest to you?"

Currently, Robbie presents two programs on deferred compensation:

- ⇒ Deferred compensation updates (enrollment, changes, basic investment information and distributions)
- ⇒ Deferred compensation distribution options (taxable and non-taxable distribution options at retirement)

Both presentations are approximately an hour in length.

Contact Robbie at 515-242-6846 or e-mail her at Robbie.Stoecker@iowa.gov, if you are interested in having her make a presentation on deferred compensation at your location.

Additional Information

Jim and Robbie are available for stand-alone meetings or as a part of staff meetings. There can be more than one session presented at a location if it is necessary to maintain staffing levels to meet the needs of your customers. The presentations also can be edited if time is limited.

When you make a request for a presentation, try to have at least 5 – 10 employees for the presentation in the Des Moines area and 15 – 20 total employees for multiple sessions in one location outside of the Des Moines area. It is not cost effective to travel to a location for a stand alone presentation for a small number of employees. We can make presentations to small groups outside the Des Moines area as part of a circuit of state offices. You may want to contact other offices in your area to determine if enough interest exists for us to make multiple presentations at different locations.

Future Presentations

Based on employee feedback, a presentation on retiree medical and life insurance options will be available shortly. We will send you an announcement of this presentation when it is ready.

If there is a topic that is of specific interest to your employees, please contact us to inquire about a benefit presentation tailored for your needs.

News in Brief

Maintenance changes

Capitol Complex Maintenance is working on the replacement of our standard liquid hand soaps with 70% bio-based hand soaps. These products are composed in part of biological/renewable domestic agriculture materials. Bio-based products reduce our dependence on foreign oil and reduce upstream pollution generated from the extraction and processing of crude oil. In addition, bio-based products are generally non-toxic and offer health benefits to our customers. The Capitol Complex currently has approximately 500 single-unit soap systems and we use approximately 2.2 million milliliters

(559 gallons) of hand soap each year. As a result of this change we are also saving \$1.37 per 1,000 ml, or \$3,063 each year. Customers will also notice that the new soap unit will have the DAS logo on them, which will be imprinted on each unit at no charge.

(twice a year), so as to put less of a burden on our customers. Your feedback is very much appreciated. If you receive a survey, please take a few minutes to tell us what's working well and what we can improve to serve you better.

DAS Customer Satisfaction Survey

DAS is constantly striving to respond to our customers' evolving needs. One important way we do that is through our Customer Satisfaction Survey. Previously, the survey was sent out every quarter (four times a year) to gather input. We are now transitioning into conducting the survey every six months

Proposed Postage Rates Increases

Although it has yet to be finalized by the U.S. Postal Service, it seems certain that postage rates will be increasing soon. DAS Mail Services is distributing information to agencies about the new prices and how to keep your mailing costs down.

Departments will not be billed for Hiring Practices review

In late January state departments received an e-mail from DAS Director Mollie Anderson, updating agencies on the progress of the Hiring Practices work group, which is examining the state's hiring and promotional practices.

At the time of that update, it was anticipated that each executive branch agency would need to be billed for the costs related to this review. However, DAS has re-examined the budget for the DAS-Human Resources Enterprise and are now concluding that resources will be sufficient to cover the costs of this review without administering a supplemental billing.

Thanks again to all departments for your cooperation as this important review proceeds. Please contact Nancy Berggren (281-3351 / Nancy.Berggren@iowa.gov) if you have questions about the review.

Iowa Labs wins Recycling Excellence award

*Certificate of Recognition
For Recycling Excellence*

Awarded to

Iowa Labs

For their outstanding achievement in recycling for 2006.

2006 Recycling Results
5.91 Paper Tons

Resources Conserved:

100	Trees
41,370	Gallons of Water
355	lbs of Air Pollution
24,231	kW Hours of Electricity
20	cu yd of Landfill Space

MidAmerica RECYCLING

The Iowa Laboratory Facility in Ankeny, Iowa, is the recipient of a "Recycling Excellence" award from MidAmerica Recycling. In 2006, the Iowa Labs recycled 5.91 tons of paper, which is the equivalent of conserving 100 trees; 41,370 gallons of water; preventing 355 pounds of air pollution; and saving 24,231 kilowatt hours of electricity and 20 cubic yards of landfill space.

The recycling program at the Iowa Laboratory Facility and the Capitol Complex is operated by the Department of Administrative Services.

Meeting Dates to Remember

Customer Councils

General Services

Monday, March 26 (rescheduled from March 9), 9-11 a.m.
 Friday, April 13, 9-11 a.m.
 Hoover Level A, Conf. Rm. 7

Human Resources

Wednesday, April 4, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, May 2, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
 Hoover Bldg, Level A, Conf. Rm. 5

1/3

Thursday, April 12, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
 Hoover Bldg, Level B, Conf. Rms 2&3

Technology

Tuesday, April 10, 1-3 p.m.
 Tuesday, May 8, 1-3 p.m.
 Hoover Bldg, Level A, Conf. Rm. 7

For Customer Council
 information:

http://das.iowa.gov/customer_councils/index.html or contact [Laura Riordan](#)
 at 515-242-5038.

Technology Governance Board

Thursday, April 12, 3-5 p.m.
 Thursday, May 10, 3-5 p.m.
 Hoover Bldg, Level A, Conf. Rm. 6

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Vertical Infrastructure Committee

Thursday, April 12, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Location TBD

Capitol Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 18, 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Hoover Bldg, Level A, Conf. Rooms 7 & 8



Five individuals from Cohort 4 of the Iowa Certified Public Manager (CPM) program recently received the George C. Askew Award. **Marcy Cable**, City of Des Moines; **Patricia Harmeyer**, formerly with Department of Administrative Services; **Kanan Kappelman**, Department of Economic Development; **Jane Mild**, Department of Natural Resources; and **Roxanne Petersen**, Polk County were recognized by the American Academy of Certified Public Managers for their exemplary work in the group project completed as part of the CPM program. Projects eligible for the Askew Award demonstrate outstanding use of CPM principles, utilize an innovative approach to finding a solution, and reveal an improvement in quality and cost savings as a result of the project?

Their project, *City of Des Moines? Improving Rental Inspection Processes – Team Inspectors*, explored the duplicative nature of the City of Des Moines housing inspection process. They proposed recommendations for a streamlined inspection process, eliminating duplicative inspections where possible, reducing the number of missed inspection appoints, showing a greater respect for its customers and building a strong working relationship with city counterparts.

The nationally accredited Iowa CPM program is a 17-month curriculum designed to develop Iowa's public leaders through an educational experience based on the highest professional, educational, and ethical standards. To learn more about participating in CPM, please visit <http://das.hre.iowa.gov/cpm.htm> or call (515) 281-5456.

Applications for CPM Cohort 8 are currently being accepted. The cohort will begin on July 10, 2007 and all interested participants should apply by May 1st.