Employees Honored at Performance Recognition

By Sarah Unsworth, Senior Account Analyst, Human Resources Division

The 2011 Performance Recognition Program (PRP) award ceremony was held on the morning of July 27th at the State House.

The PRP ceremony is a time to recognize and honor the successes and achievements of employees throughout the Commonwealth.

The morning began with an open reception of coffee and pastries in the Grand Staircase and Nurses Hall. The event then moved into the Great Hall for the awards ceremony.

Governor Deval Patrick presents Sergeant Robert Forsythe, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs with the Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Public Service

HRD Welcomes New Project Manager for ELIPSYS Replacement

By Amy Lynch, Senior Human Resources Advisor, Human Resources Division

The Human Resources Division (HRD) is pleased to welcome Mr. Jack Buba, Project Manager, of the ELIPSYS Replacement Project. Jack will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of a new system for managing Civil Service functions within HRD. Due to outdated technology and rising maintenance costs, the current system, known as ELIPSYS, will be replaced by NEOGOV.

Jack brings a wealth of knowledge to HRD with his managerial experience working for software service and software product companies. He spent the first 17 years of his career working on the Trident missile guidance system and the Trident Submarine Navigation System. Following his employment at Dynamics Research, Jack joined Cambridge Technology Partners (CTP).
As Project Manager, Jack’s focus is on accomplishing 2 main goals for the implementation of the NEOGOV system which include:

- Implementing a stable, supportable and usable system that will be used by the HRD, CSU, supported Commonwealth entities, applicants and employees;
- Improving the effectiveness of CS administrative functions while consolidating the ELIPSYS supporting administrative application into a single Software-as-a Service (SaaS) solution.

The NEOGOV application will shape the way HRD does business in the Commonwealth. It will streamline the Civil Service announcement, application, test scoring and list generation/certification process. It will virtually eliminate the paper based applications and the associated manual processing and will allow Appointing Authorities to request Civil Service certification lists online.

Even though Jack’s team is embarking on this exciting initiative, he is realistic about the challenges that lie ahead, “With any package implementation, the main issue seems to come down to assimilating the solution into the business. The users have a preconceived notion of what they do to get their jobs done and the package we will be implementing is written with its own view of the business process. In the case where there is a legacy system, (as is the case here with ELIPSYS) it usually has a big influence on the business process.

Jack suggests that when using a package solution, it is best when the users adopt processes that are very close to the processes the package developers had in mind when building the system. “Sticking to the ‘sweet spot’ of the package wherever possible pays huge dividends in the future. Most importantly, as new features are added to the package, it is important not to stray too far from the original intent of the package, so you can adopt these changes easily into your business. Keep in mind that suggestions for improvements are coming in to the vendor from all across the United States. Thus, we benefit from suggestions and improvements from people we have not even met.”

In his spare time, Jack enjoys varying pastimes. It is clear that his main priority is his family, “I am married to a wonderful woman, Kim, and have two children, Camilla (15) and Deanna (12). Believe it or not, my family and I are fans of professional bull riding. We attend the annual event in Worcester each year, though since it moved to Mohegan Sun, we have not attended. We do watch it on Versus Sunday evenings.” Jack also enjoys sailing, “I own my International One Design sailboat. It is a racing sailboat with no motor at all. Since starting a family, we are selling the racing boat and will eventually get a boat with a head and a galley (bathroom and kitchen).”

These days you can find Jack in his current residence of Marblehead, restoring a small motor boat that is about 100 years old. “I also do woodworking and general fix it stuff. My dad was a carpenter and growing up I worked with him most weekends on odd jobs (carpentry, plumbing, electrical etc.) So if you have any Ask This Old House type questions, feel free to contact me and I may have an answer.”

HRD is very lucky to have this “Jack of All Trades”.
**CHRO Commentary**

**Paul D. Dietl**

Chief Human Resources Officer

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**Shared Services Success**

As the future direction of HR in the nation moves toward leveraging technology via a Shared Services model, I am pleased that HRD and our partners are also following the national trends by working to develop a more efficient and productive workforce through our MassHR initiatives.

Over the next few months, HRD will partner with state agencies to develop solid strategies to promote efficiency and cost-effective measures, while at the same time allowing us to provide better HR services to the customers we serve.

The National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE), indicates that the trends in public sector HR include the creation of enterprise wide shared service centers to handle common transactional work which will prompt efficiency, standardization and cost reduction.

NASPE reports that over 30% of states who responded to their 2011 HR Architecture Survey, indicated that they have implemented Shared Services within the past 3-7 years. The NASPE also cites that Shared Services reduces cost by 20-40% on average and allows HR to reallocate time and resources more toward consultative and strategic work.

Although times are still fiscally challenging and agencies are forced to work with limited resources, our drive to improve performance and service delivery has remained constant. I am confident that with effective communication and change management strategies, our Shared Services implementation will be a valuable investment.

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**Commonwealth’s Management Certificate Program**

**Commences in October**

We are pleased to announce that we will soon be starting the second year of the Commonwealth Management Certificate Program (CMCP) in October 2011. There were 114 managers who graduated from the inaugural class in a graduation ceremony in the Great Hall at the State House in June with Governor Patrick as the guest speaker. This year’s program has been changed slightly based on feedback from participants in the inaugural class. There will still be seven one-day sessions plus a final project presentation, but one session has been modified to become a HR Conference Day which will be held in 2 locations in January 2012: Boston and Worcester-area. Participants from the 2010-2011 class will be invited to participate in this day.

The CMCP allows participants to cultivate new skills, explore diverse perspectives, and develop new leadership styles—enabling them to become leaders in state government with the confidence and skills to manage their staff and agency in all economic environments.

The CMCP is designed to maximize the impact your manager will immediately make when he/she returns to work. Equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills and management tools, managers will be prepared to meet the challenge to do more with less, improve productivity, and increase employee morale.

Approximately 80 managers from across 32 Executive Branch agencies will be participating in this year’s program. The program runs from October to June and consists of seven one-day courses. Classes will be offered in Boston the southeast and Central Mass locations.
Read the collective bargaining agreement after receiving an FMLA request or it may cost you.

In June 2011, an arbitrator ordered the Department of Environmental Protection to reinstate an employee and pay him over three years in back pay for improperly denying the employee’s FMLA request and consequently terminating his employment.

On January 30, 2008, the Department terminated an employee for insubordination. The employee was a Union member whose terms and conditions of employment were governed by a collective bargaining agreement. Under the parties’ agreement, the Department can ask an employee for "satisfactory medical evidence" to verify his/her FMLA request. The agreement provides that satisfactory medical evidence must be signed by a licensed Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Physician’s Assistant or Dentist and shall contain the nature of the illness, a statement that the employee is unable to perform his/her job, and the prognosis for the employee’s return to work.

After serving a five day suspension for poor performance, the employee requested FMLA leave and provided a "Certification of Health Care Provider Form" signed by a Nurse Practitioner in support of his request. The Department rejected the employee’s request and insisted that the satisfactory medical evidence must be signed by a physician and that the employee inform his physician that he had been previously disciplined. The Department demanded this information no less than seven times over a seven-week period. The employee consistently refused to provide the requested documentation. Rather, the employee provided further documentation signed by a Nurse Practitioner reiterating the same information he previously provided to the Department. The Department sent the employee to a physician of its choosing to determine whether the employee was able to perform the essential functions of his position. The physician determined that the employee was fit to return to work. As a result, the Department terminated the employee for insubordination.

The arbitrator upheld the grievance. He reasoned that the Department’s order that the employee submit documentation from a physician to justify his FMLA leave was in violation of the parties’ agreement. The parties’ agreement states that documentation signed by a Nurse Practitioner constitutes satisfactory medical documentation. The employee provided satisfactory medical documentation signed by a Nurse Practitioner; the Department was not permitted to change the clear terms of the parties’ agreement. Similarly, nothing in the parties’ agreement permitted the Department to order the employee to inform the physician that he had been disciplined as a condition of receiving FMLA leave. The arbitrator further held that it is not insubordinate for an employee to question a supervisor when the supervisor is insisting on conditions that are well beyond what is allowed by the terms of the agreement. The arbitrator concluded by noting that it is "inexcusable and indefensible" under the terms of the parties’ agreement to terminate an employee before following the contractual process that permitted the parties to jointly select a third physician to resolve a medical dispute over the employee’s illness and ability to work. As such, the arbitrator awarded the employee reinstatement and full back pay, minus any mitigation he may have received.
Candidates Turnout for 2011 Police Officer Examination
By Bruce Howard, Operations Manager, Civil Service Unit

On April 30th, 2011, the Human Resources Division’s Civil Service Unit administered the entry-level Police Officer exam to over 9,600 applicants at 16 sites across the Commonwealth. This examination is the first step in qualifying applicants to serve as Police Officers in municipalities across the state and the MBTA.

Similar to previous recent exams, the 2011 Police Officer exam is a state-of-the-art selection instrument consisting of three components: the Written Ability Test (WAT), Work Styles Questionnaire (WSQ), and the Life Experience Survey (LES). The WAT is designed to test a series of abilities, such as written comprehension, problem sensitivity, and reasoning, that are important to the effective performance of entry-level law enforcement officers. The WSQ is designed to assess certain motivational, value-related and attitudinal characteristics that are relevant to successful performance of entry-level law enforcement officers. The LES consists of a series of multiple-choice questions related to candidates’ past history and experience relevant to successful performance of entry-level law enforcement officers.

As the Civil Service Unit conducts the scoring process and establishes the list of eligible candidates from which Departments can appoint, preparation begins on the 2012 entry-level Firefighter exam which consists of a similarly formatted written examination, plus a physical abilities test.

Ask HRD …What is the Eugene H. Rooney Award

Eugene Rooney demonstrated a passion for public service and a sincere respect for those with whom he worked and came into contact with. During his 21 years of public service, he believed that the most important investment was that made in human resources. In this regard, Gene was a true idealist - one who believed in the value of each and every individual.

As a creative thinker and inspiring leader, Gene worked to build a supportive environment by promoting and fostering learning and development opportunities for thousands of state and municipal government employees. Gene had a special ability to keep focused on the mission of government, while at the same time, keeping in mind the smaller things in a situation – humor, irony and most importantly a personal touch.

Gene Rooney was a reformer, innovator, mentor and a friend. He left a legacy of enlightenment and caring that serves as an example to us all. Although taken from our midst at too young an age, Gene’s spirit and ideals still drive us to excel in the development of human resources, on which the future relies.

The Massachusetts Legislature established the Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Public Service Award to recognize employees who have demonstrated creativity and innovation in the area of human resources development and training. This year’s 2011 Recipient of the Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Public Service Award is Sandra Borders, Director, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, Human Resources Division.
This past June, the Human Resources Division secured a contract with NEOGOV in an effort to implement a more stable and usable hiring application for all of its Civil Service Hiring needs. The NEOGOV company produces computer applications that assist in automating the hiring process.

NEOGOV was the chosen vendor due to its high performing applications and because the company has extensive experience in working with public sector agencies. Mr. Jack Buba, Project Manager, will oversee both the implementation and stabilization processes for the project.

The main goal of the project is to replace the current Civil Service Application known as ELIPSYS with the NEOGOV product which will be called MaCS. The MaCS system stands for Massachusetts Automated Civil Service. MaCS will improve the effectiveness and the delivery of Civil Service/HR Services. Mr. Jack Buba commented, “Moving to NEOGOV should not be technologically challenging. The package is a good fit designed for Civil Service. We are not customizing a general purpose HR tool for Civil Service.”

The new application is expected to be more time and cost-efficient, promote automation and improve the Civil Service certification and hiring processes overall.

Members of the NEOGOV Procurement Team: Pictured Above:
Edward Swartz, Service Account Manager, Information Technology Division;
George Bibilos, Director, Organizational Development Group,
Human Resources Division; Regina Caggiano, Deputy Director,
Organizational Development Group, Human Resources Division;
Ann Parkis, Chief Developer, Civil Service ELIPSYS Application,
Human Resources Division.
Not Pictured: Gene Coetzee, IT Consultant; Bruce Howard, Operations, Civil Service Unit;
Neil Montague, Systems Director, Fiscal Affairs Division; and
Jennifer Murphy, Exam Administration, Civil Service Unit
The ceremony started with welcome from Chief Human Resources Officer, Paul Dietl, and opening remarks from Administration and Finance Undersecretary, Matt Gorzkowicz. Governor Patrick then spoke about public service and the importance of state employees to the Commonwealth.

After speaking, Governor Patrick presented the awards to the recipients of the Manuel Carballo Governor’s Award for Excellence in Public Service, the Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Public Service Award and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Workforce Mentoring Award. 14 awards were presented in total. The Commonwealth Citation for Outstanding Performance winners were in attendance as well.
Now known as Organizational Development Group (ODG), I’m a Senior Human Resources Advisor within the unit. Nancy is currently responsible for supporting the Massachusetts Department of Transportation in matters of management classification, compensation and organizational restructuring. She is also coordinator for the state’s annual Performance Recognition Program (PRP).

Nancy enjoys working with the ODG team and values the work the team does. “Our main purpose is to support the HR shops throughout the Executive Branch agencies, which allows us to get to know and develop relationships with the HR Staff in the various agencies. Through our work, I feel we gain a better understanding of the individual agencies, as well as state government as a whole. When not working to support DOT, I also enjoy the work I do for the PRP. It may be one of the things I am most proud of in my years at HRD.”

Nancy recalls how she needed to amend the PRP program due to financial and resource limitations. She stated, “When I first started at HRD, PRP was a high profile program with ample funding which allowed award recipients to celebrate on a grand scale. However, in 2001 when the Commonwealth, and the country as a whole, was faced with the post-9/11 financial fall-out, celebrating PRP on any type of extravagant level was neither feasible nor appropriate. The event was scheduled to take place just 2 months after the events of 9/11 so the decision was made to cancel it. In the following year, the year I was charged with managing the program, there was still very little funding for the program and there was a question of whether or not the program would remain intact. It was my feeling, and the feeling of my team, that in the climate we were in, a program that honors and celebrates outstanding employees was needed more than ever. So we worked to keep the program alive.”

Although PRP has been scaled back, the program itself carries the same meaning and Nancy and her team have found other means (including enlisting the support of participating agencies) to recognize and celebrate the award winners. Nancy explained that each year, no matter the size of the venue, there is always such an excitement and appreciation from the award recipients for being recognized by the Governor, their Agency Head and their peers for the work that they do. Nancy finds it very rewarding to be a part of the program.

When not at work, Nancy’s greatest enjoyment comes from spending time with her family. She proudly explained, “My husband Chris and I live in Braintree where we both grew up. Our son, Jared, is 9 years old and keeps us busy with his many sports. Our son, Owen, is 5 and very excited to start kindergarten in September and be at the same school as his big brother! Our daughter, Avery, will be 3 in the fall and works very hard at keeping up with both of her brothers! I feel very fortunate that I’ve found such a manageable balance between work life and home life. As a part-time employee, I feel that my department has been very supportive of me and my career. I have found that working for such a “family friendly” employer has made me appreciate my job and want to exceed expectations of me.”

Nancy has already began preparing for next year’s PRP event. No matter the circumstances she is always ready to assist her fellow employees and recognize them for all they accomplish.
Outside the Office...

While not working as HRD’s Procurement Coordinator, Rich Currier has been working diligently as founder of the Friedreich’s Ataxia Project. Richie, together with his wife, Maria, founded the project after Richie was diagnosed with FA in 1998 and has been wheelchair-bound since 2004. After attending their first Friedreich’s Ataxia Symposium at Children’s Hospital in Philadelphia in 2008, they realized there was a need for their organization.

After learning more about FA, and after meeting others with the disease, the couple thought about how fortunate they were despite the challenges posed by Richie’s illness.

“We thought, we know so much about this disease, and we’re in a good situation where we both work full-time,” Richie said. “All these families that we’re now connected with we know need help, and so we started The FA Project.”

The Curriers and a group of their friends established the organization to raise awareness about FA and to provide support in the form of travel grants, medical equipment, and other assistance. The travel grants fund trips to the Friedreich’s Ataxia Symposium, where those afflicted with FA and their families can learn more about the illness.

The Curriers are also focused on educating the public about FA. To that end, they encourage readers to visit the FA Project website, which contains information about the disease and Richie’s personal experience living with FA.
Quarterly Quotes

The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.

- Babe Ruth