UTAH DEPARTMENT HUMAN SERVICES

The Human Touch

www.dhs.state.ut.us

May 1999 TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

From the Executive Director

Robin Arnold-Williams

WE'RE LISTENING

The 1999 Employee Survey results are in, and if there's one message I received clearly from your input, it's that DHS administrators need to provide more timely and accurate communication to all employees. While nearly all the scores on employee issues were up from one year ago, some of the numbers are still low -- particularly in areas of communication.

We've already begun thinking of ways we can more effectively deliver the information you want to hear. The comments some of you included on your survey forms are very helpful. I am compiling the issues you've raised, and I will answer some of those specific questions in this column next month.

Of course, you don't have to wait for a survey to give me feedback. There's a special email box that's linked to the Executive Director's Office. In GroupWise, it's **DIRDHS**. If you have a question or suggestion of a non-personal nature, email that address and my staff will check for messages regularly. I would especially like to hear your comments on what types of information you aren't getting, so we can improve. Your suggestions will be shared with appropriate divisions and offices, too.

Having said that, let me point out some survey areas that improved, where we will continue to work. I continue to be concerned about your safety on the job. While the "Work Environment" numbers are good, we want you to feel safer, and *be* safer at work.

The Department of Human Resource Management is developing a training booklet and interactive CD ROM about workplace violence. These will be published and placed on the Internet. We'll notify you when they are available.

Other areas in the employee survey were particularly encouraging. Foremost, more than half of you responded to the survey. Thank you! I'm pleased, too, that an increasing number of staff are satisfied with their jobs (84%).

The complete survey numbers and comments (no names) have been distributed to their respective division, office, or institution directors. We will all review what you had to say, take some satisfaction in areas where you are more satisfied with your jobs, and analyze what we can do to make Human Services employment more rewarding and satisfying.

You may read the survey highlights and all the numbers on the DHS Website at **www.dhs.state.ut.us/edo/empsurvey/ESrvyMen.htm**

KUDOS

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has awarded DCFS Regional Director Abel Ortiz its Child and Families Fellowship. The Casey family, which owns United Parcel Service, awards grants to train future leaders who work with disadvantaged children and families. Of the 120 nominees this year, 80 were found to be qualified, nation-wide. Ten people were ultimately named Casey Fellows. Abel will use his eleven-month fellowship to consult and observe with three organizations considered on the "cutting edge" of child welfare work. Abel is currently negotiating for time in Manhattan, New York and San Jose, California. Abel plans to return to DCFS after a year leave of absence.

DCFS Supervisor Beth Skidmore is retiring after 35 years dedicated to the child welfare profession. Most recently Beth has supervised the DCFS office for the Cache Valley area. Her laurels include

UPEA Outstanding Public Employee, Utah Legislative Award, Earl Condor Award finalist, and last year's DCFS Supervisor of the Year. A community partner wrote of Beth, "It is clear that Beth genuinely cares about children and their welfare. It is important to note that after all the years served in an often stressful profession, that Beth still exudes enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards all [who] work with her." After retirement Beth will continue her position as Justice Court Judge for Richmond City Court. A retirement celebration will be held in Beth's honor Thursday, 29 April, from 2-4 p.m., at 59 North 100 West, Logan.

Following a grueling legislative session, DHS Executive Director Robin Arnold-Williams recognized 13 employees with Distinguished Service Awards during the April Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meeting. The 1999 session was noted for its high number of complex bills. The 13 people each served as legislative liaison for their respective agencies. Robin commended them for their "outstanding survival skills." Department Legislative Liaison Jody Becker-Green received a commendation and warm embrace from Robin, as Jody is leaving DHS. Jody worked in the Department for six years, the last three as legislative liaison. She is leaving DHS employment mid-May for a job as a research analyst for Human Services Research Institute near Salem, Oregon.

Others commended include: Dan Maldonado - DYC; Sue Marquardt and Sharon Yearsley - DSPD; Abel Ortiz - DCFS; Darrel Bingham - DAAS; Janina Chilton - DMH; Janice Jones - ORS; Reta Oram - Licensing; Fred Weidner - OFO; John Mathews - OHR; Bart Hopkin - OAS; Michelle Jenson; Wendell Memmott - OT.

"CONTRACT MONITORING"

DHS is in the process of establishing a Department-level contract monitoring unit and is currently recruiting for a Director of the Bureau of Contracting. This new process will place greater responsibility at the Department level to oversee contracting and contract monitoring functions and to enforce contract monitoring findings, sanctions, and recommendations. It also provides for a departmental review of division contract monitoring efforts to ensure compliance with contract and contract monitoring standards, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of this new method of oversight.

Some of the strengths of the new system are:

1. It will ensure quality services are provided to clients by developing contracts that clearly identify and define performance measures and the Department/Divisions' expectations.
2. It will also ensure the objectivity and independence of the contract monitoring function (an element that is missing now) by eliminating actual or potential conflicts of interest where possible.
3. Additionally, it will ensure that public funds are used in accordance with federal and state laws, rules, and policies, and that the Department/Divisions receive full value from purchased services.
4. Finally, the department-level leadership in oversight and coordination should promote uniform and clear definitions of contract monitoring, strengthen coordination among contract-related entities, eliminate duplication of effort for on-site contract monitoring visits, and provide support, consultation, and technical assistance to the divisions on contract monitoring and related issues.

This major reorganization of the contracting processes is slated to begin in August of 1999 after the new Director of the Bureau of Contracting has been hired. More information will be available on this change at the agency level, and we will keep you informed via the Human Touch.

CHANGE IN "GRAMA" MEANS STIFFER PENALTIES

Passage of recent legislation- House Bill 272, means there have been some important changes in "GRAMA." The Government Records Access and Management Act is modified regarding appeals to the State Records Committee, amending

requirements for producing the required records, and providing penalties for non-compliance. H.B. 272 is a reaction to agencies that haven't abided by the orders of the Records Committee in the past.

All the agencies in the Department of Human Services should have a good understanding of the processes surrounding GRAMA, as the new penalty for failure to produce records if an agency loses an appeal to the State Records Committee is $500.00 a day, or the fairly impressive sum of $3,500.00 for just one week's penalty!

The course that a "Request for Records" takes is as follows:

- a request is made
- an agency either approves or denies all or part of the request
- the requester then has the opportunity to appeal the denial to H.Craig Bunker, Legal Counsel at the Executive Director's Office
- if the requester isn't satisfied with Mr.Bunker's decision, they can appeal to the State Records Committee or the District Court
- if the requester chooses the State Records Committee and the Committee orders the release of records, the agency can appeal the Committee's decision or comply. Failure to do either can result in a penalty

It is at this point that the $500.00 a day penalty could come into play.

Avoiding a penalty need not be difficult. We have Craig Bunker, our Legal Counsel who handles GRAMA, to advise staff on any problems and to make sure we are well represented on the State Records Committee. If you have any questions about GRAMA contact your agency GRAMA representative, or Craig via email, or at (801) 538-4233.

DHS EMPLOYEE REACHES OUT TO NAVAJO FAMILY

There were no fire trucks responding when the Bitsinnie family home burned to the ground 18 March. Only seven figures stood in the middle of the southeastern Utah desert watching nearly all their possessions being consumed in the blaze. A wood stove started the fire. The Navajo family that lived in the cinder block house had little time to save anything besides themselves. The only possession salvaged during the blaze -- a treadle sewing machine.

Jody Becker surveys fire-gutted home

Fortunately, they still have each other, an old trailer and a traditional Navajo hogan to resort to. It would be months before the Navajo Nation would be able to help rebuild their home.

It is good to have land, and the freedom of open spaces. But living where there is no running water, no electricity and no communications, hampered relief efforts to help the Bitsinnie's, if any help would come at all.

Maybe it was more than coincidence that a friend of the family was visiting Mexican Hat, some 30 miles away, when the tragedy struck the family. Jody Becker had worked with Navajo families for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) two and a half years ago. She knew the Bitsinnie's well. Two of the family members had developmental disabilities. Jody was their social worker for about three years.

Since then she moved to Salt Lake City and took a job as the Legislative Liaison for the Department of Human Services. Following the 45 days of hard work and stress imposed by the recent legislative session, Jody and husband Jeff escaped to Mexican Hat for a vacation and to renew old acquaintances. That was when the fire happened.

No sooner back in her Salt Lake office, Jody wanted to do something to help her friends, the Bitsinnie's. With Department approval, she asked each division to sponsor a family member. Food, clothing, housewares, blankets, and beds were needed urgently. The legislative liaison in the Division of Mental Health, Janina Chilton, offered to ask her daughter whether the radio station where she worked could help. Within the week the plight of

the Navajo family in southeastern Utah was promoted regularly on the KCRL's airwaves.

The hearts of people, inside and outside of DHS, were opened. "I was overwhelmed, excited," Jody recalled. "I didn't believe all this would happen. People's generosity in helping this family in a time of tragedy was astonishing." Jody said she's especially appreciative for the many department employees who contributed to the family.

The current DSPD support coordinator for the Bitsinnie's, Bonnie Kosoff, supplied a list of specific necessities. DHS employees and the public responded by donating virtually everything on the list. In addition to food and clothing, some contributions were particularly thoughtful. When Jody received one surprising item, a new set of cast iron cookware ideal for this family, she exclaimed, "Score! This is perfect!" And a back pack for 13-year-old Bobbie Sue Bitsinnie was a another ideal item.

More cargo than space

Jody's husband, Jeff Green, teaches at Reid School where contacts brought boxes of dishes, pots, and pans, plus blankets, toys, and even four beds from families there. The success of the project created a new problem -- transportation.

Jody secured the use of a large van. But when the packing began, the lone vehicle could contain only the food, clothing and some household goods. Large piles of boxes, beds, a TV set, stereo, dresser and other goods sat on the roadside. Another DHS employee had been searching for a truck to take the larger items, with no success. The evening before departure, the Deseret News generously offered to pay for the gas, but still no truck. Then only hours before Jody and Jeff prepared to drive south, Ryder Transportation donated the use of a 15-foot moving van. The small caravan was on its way.

The 400-mile journey would have been executed as planned, were it not for an unseasonable blizzard that blanketed the region from Moab to Arizona Friday, 2 April. It was white-knuckle driving through the southern Utah mountain passes and over the 20 miles of snow-covered dirt road out to the Bitsinnie property.

Blizzard hampers relief caravan

"We were glad we made it here safely," Jody said. "But I was a little disappointed the family wasn't around." With no family members in sight for two days, Jody and crew unloaded beds, clothes, food, and other essentials into a storage shed, and left boxed items in front of the hogan.

"It will be a happy Easter when they find all this stuff," mused Jody.

"Easter surprise" placed in front of Navajo hogan

A half truck-load of remaining goods was taken to the Monument Valley High School where storage sheds accommodated the supplies. The items will be distributed to other needy families during an upcoming food drive.

"Since a big part of my job was with the Navajo's, it was nice to leave on a good note -- at least in this family's life."

LITTLE SAVINGS ADD UP TO BIG BUCK$

DOLLARS AND SENSE

A recent suggestion from Terry Schow, an ORS employee in the Ogden Office, is this month's winner of the *Dollars and Sense* award. Terry's winning suggestion involves two parts; the first part deals with the environmental benefit of saving paper, and second is for utilizing the paper so it won't be wasted.

This suggestion materialized when Terry realized a report that ORS workers must run weekly always included three pages with just a line or two of text. These extra sheets were simply going to waste. When Terry calculated the amount of paper that was being wasted, it was 2,000 sheets or four reams of paper in just one month. Terry decided that his ORS team would save the pages, and then have them cut into ½ pages (they can also be cut into 1/4 pages), and have the ends gummed with padding compound and turned into notepads. 2,000 pages of paper will make a lot of 4"x 6" notepads.

So at ORS, instead of having to buy notepads for hundreds of dollars - hundreds of notepads could be made from the leftover paper for approximately $15.00! A substantial savings of over the price at a popular office supply store. Terry said he "started the program just because I hated wasting all the paper from the printouts." Thanks to Terry for sending in his timely tip, and he will receive this month's $100.00 award for his idea!

Please E-Mail any *Dollars and Sense* ideas you have to Randy Ripplinger. As always, the Human Touch welcomes efficiency and cost cutting ideas from any employee. Submissions are judged on the basis of demonstrable savings, potential for department-wide use, and original thinking.

The Ultimate Safe Driving Challenge

by Bob Hunt, Human Resource Manager

The State Risk Management office has introduced a new "Safe Driving Training" program. It is a video and workbook titled "the Ultimate Driving Challenge." This is required of all state employees who drive even as an incidental part of their work. It is required every three years. For employees who drive as a major part of their work, it is required every year. This takes only 45 minutes to complete and can be done individually or as part of a staff meeting. "The Ultimate Driving Challenge" replaces SAFE Plus and SAFE Fleet as well as the Defensive Driving Course. Please use only this new training and not the older versions. To obtain copies of the video or workbook, please contact Dave McShane, DHS Risk Management, 538-4247.

MAY 1999 DHS CALENDAR

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

3 New Employee Orientation, DHS Admin., Room 129, Shannon Pruett, 538-4353

5 Public Mental Health Conference, Park City, Linda Hunt, 538-9857

11-12 Supervisor Training Series, Administrative Skills 1 & 2, DHS Admin., Room 129, Shannon Pruett, 538-4353

12-14 Troubled Youth Conference, Snowbird, Leasa Banks, 538-455

14 Utah Federation for Youth, Anger management workshop, 6-9 p.m. 120 North 200 West, #129, Salt Lake City, Ut, 538-9836

METEOR SHOWERS, SUNSPOTS AND Y2K?

If you thought Y2K was going to be a problem only on January 1, 2000, you may be in for a huge surprise. Most people are aware of the Year 2000 Problem - when computers and computerized components may not be able to distinguish between the year 1900 and the year 2000. Although the roll-over from December 31, 1999 to January 1, 2000, has the biggest potential for problems, that isn't the only one. The Gartner Group, a well-respected research group, thinks the highest number of Year 2000 computer failures will occur from July 1, 1999 to March 31, 2001, and have even predicted the time frame when most of the problems will occur. In

Utah, and forty-six other states, the first major date for a problem could be the start of the new fiscal year July 1, 1999. In spite of the obvious problems associated with Y2K, there are some fascinating aspects associated with it. If you would like to understand more about the far-reaching effects associated with the Y2K, plus be light-years ahead of your friends in understanding it, please see "Gazing Into The Y2K Crystal Ball"at: **www.dhs.state.ut.us/edo/employee/y2k.htm**

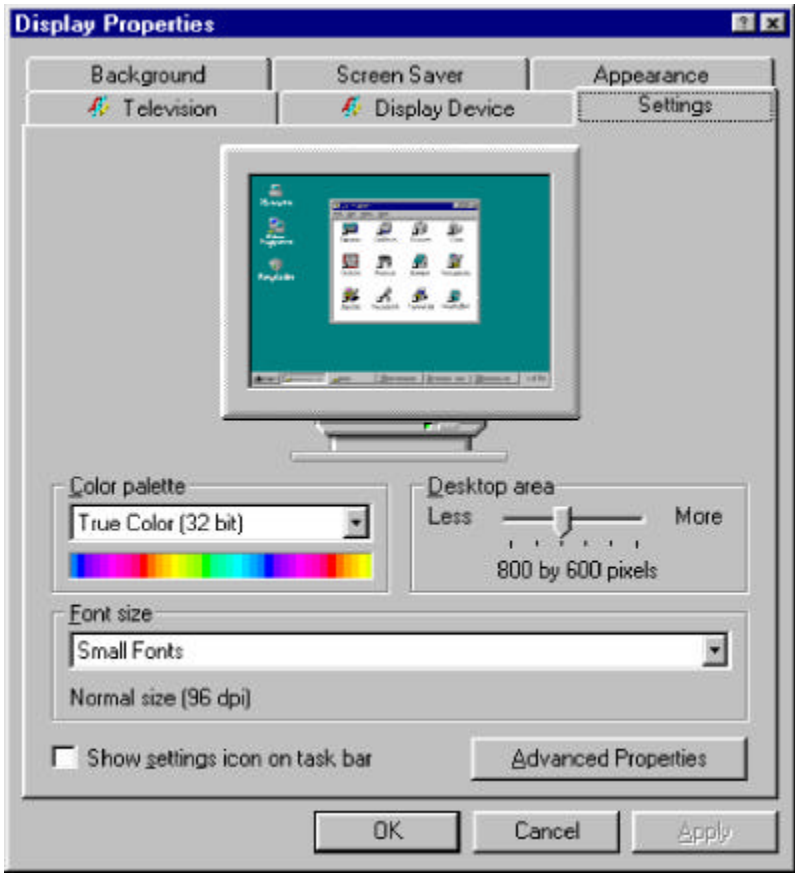
Changing the Size of the Icons on Your Desktop

Tech Tip by Janice DeVore

After you have logged onto your computer are the icons on your screen too large or too small? That's because of how the resolution is set on your computer. You can either use your mouse or use the Control Panel to access the **Display Properties** dialog box to change the resolution. For most users, the resolution is 800X600.

USING THE MOUSE:

1. On the desktop, find an empty area (not on an icon), then right-click on the mouse for a shortcut menu.
2. Select **Properties**.
3. Click on the **Settings** tab.
4. In the **Desktop area**, click on **Less or More** line with the arrow, to increase or decrease the resolution.
5. You may wish to click on the **Font Size** pull-down window to make the fonts larger.
6. Click **OK**.



The Human Touch

Published by the Utah Department of Human Services

Robin Arnold-Williams

Executive Director

Edited by Randy Ripplinger, 120 North 200 West, #319, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103. Articles or ideas welcome. Send e-mail, FAX 801/538-4016 or call 801/538-3991. Deadline is the 10th of the month. All articles subject to editing.

WWW.DHS.STATE.UT.US