



**FINANCE  
NEW YORK**  
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DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE  
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# REVE NEWS

FINANCE'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER • JANUARY 2007 • VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1

## Divisional Corner

Leslie Zimmerman, Assistant Commissioner, Payment Operations



For most citizens, the Payment Operations Division is their only contact with Finance, and, as such, I feel strongly that my staff should make transactions with Finance easier for the public. How else can we hope to achieve our mission – “To help people pay the right amount on time?”

Towards that goal, and in keeping with the SMART initiative, Payment Operations is undergoing a transformation to improve customer service. Our focus is to make our processes and services transparent, fair and efficient. Of

course, I don't make any changes alone. I would not be where I am today – nor would Payment Operations be improving so dramatically – without the help and support of the *Payment Operations team: Howie Reiss, Virginia Ching, Linda Levine, Bob Contard, Eva Gambino, Casey*

*Crawford, John Conry, Orekondy Basavaraj, Karl Studebaker*, and hundreds of Payment Operations' staff members. We work so incredibly well together at Payment Ops that I refer to them as my “Finance family.” We celebrate weddings, children, and grandchildren, and we console one another when the chips are down. It's the personal connections we are able to make with people that make our work both meaningful and successful.

As some of you know, my dad – who was my best friend – recently passed away. He and my mom were married for 56 years, and his impact on my life has been immeasurable. My dad instilled in me the values of hard work, education, patience, kindness and treating others as you would want to be treated. My dad was a teamster, and he taught me respect for the way unions protect workers from unfair labor practices and promote good working conditions. How is this relevant for me today? For one, I still respect the unions that represent our City employees. Without a union, I might not have advanced from my first job as a College Aide to where I am now. As Assistant Commissioner, I work hard to improve conditions for the public in the same way that the unions improve conditions for City employees.

## OPERATING THE SMART WAY

Payment Operations are the people behind the scenes who generate Finance bills and statements, process business and property tax payments and parking fines, send out refund checks, and maintain up-to-date account information. Payment Operations includes the Business Centers in each borough and the residential, commercial, and construction property tax exemption programs (STAR, Senior Citizens, Veterans – to name a few). Our work is as exciting as it is important, and under the leadership of Commissioner Martha E. Stark and First Deputy Commissioner Rochelle Patricof, it is also creative, as we look for better ways to do things. In the past few years, there have been so many ways in which the Payment Operations Division has changed that it is hard to know where to start.

A huge first step in accomplishing the Finance mission – “Help people pay the right amount on time” – was the elimination of the old property tax bills and coupons and the development of the quarterly Statement of Account (SOA). If we expect taxpayers to pay the right amount on time, we had better be sure that we send them a statement that is easily understood. We knew that our old property tax billing system was confusing. Homeowners frequently used the wrong “coupon,” and their payments were credited to the wrong tax period. They ended up with a delinquency bill with interest, and Finance ended up with complaints. We revamped the billing process, creating the SOA in lieu of coupons. The SOA was an instant success. It was easy to understand and a cinch to use. Besides making the process easier for taxpayers, it made property tax transparent for the half-million homeowners who previously never saw a tax bill because their bank or mortgage company paid their property taxes.

In response to comments and feedback, we have made enhancements by clarifying text, simplifying discount calculations, providing broadcast messages, and confirming future property tax exemptions, to name a few. We also put the entire property tax system on the web, so everyone could check the status of his/her account.



1st Row left to right: Howie Reiss, Virginia Ching, Orekondy Basavaraj, Linda Levine and John Conry. 2nd Row left to right: Karl Studebaker, Bob Contard, Casey Crawford, Richard Reiskin and Eva Gambino.

We want everyone to benefit from legislatively enacted exemption programs, so that they pay the “right amount” and no more. In the past, many homeowners applied for STAR but not for the other exemption programs that could reduce their property tax. Who could blame them? Each program had its own application with lengthy instructions. So we decided to create a Universal Exemption & Abatement Form. Instead of having to understand

many program requirements and apply for each program individually, homeowners can now fill out one form, and Finance approves all the exemptions that the applicant is qualified to receive.

We've also made things easier for people by expanding the ways they can transact business with us: paying tax or parking tickets by check or credit card, in person, by mail, and online. We are promoting paperless options, beneficial to Finance as well as property owners, business taxpayers, and motorists, and we are making each of our five borough Business Centers into an “in-person 3-1-1” where people can transact all kinds of business and have any problem resolved.

The list of accomplishments goes on and on. Each initiative has the same goal: to make transacting business with Finance transparent, fair, efficient, and easy. I encourage all Finance employees to get “SMART” and make suggestions. Remember: The only bad suggestion is the one that is not spoken.

## SMART CORNER

This article marks the debut of a new feature of **ReveNEWS** called “SMART Corner.” As you've noticed, much of the content in **ReveNEWS** is related to SMART, which is the agency's name for our effort to transform Finance into a results-based, customer service organization. This space will be reserved each month for activities the agency is undertaking to support the SMART transformation.

As Martha and Rochelle mentioned in a recent email to the staff, the agency made internal changes based largely on your employee engagement feedback.

### OPENING IN A FINANCE LOCATION NEAR YOU!

#### Smart Film Series Begins in February!

A series of short films about SMART concepts will be shown starting in February. The series will be open to all Finance employees and will feature films about customer service, improving performance, and teamwork. The films provide an easy way for all Finance employees to better understand the role they play in the agency's transformation.

Look for more details in the February issue of **ReveNEWS** and on **FinanceNet**.

We want to make sure our engaged employees have the support they need to deliver results for the people we serve.

What's new? There's been a lot of work behind the scenes to create and support a climate for change that will touch everyone in the agency.

#### Managing for Results

Over the last few months, you may have noticed that some of your managers have disappeared for all-day meetings.

(Continued on top of page 2)

ENTER!

## QUALITY OF WORK LIFE CONTEST: GUESS WHO?



**Have some fun and win a prize!** The QWL Employee Recognition Committee is sponsoring an Employee Photo Match Contest called "GUESS WHO?" Finance employees compete by identifying and unscrambling the names of their co-workers from childhood photos.

### The Contest

Fax your responses to Craig Woodall at 212-232-1893 no later than close of business on Wednesday, February 14, 2007. Visit **FinanceNet** after January 19th to see photos and enter contest.

## ReveNEWS DOG NAMED SMARTY

### Announcing the Winner of the "Name the Puppy" Contest!



Commissioner Martha E. Stark judged the "Name the Puppy" Contest and selected **SMARTY**, submitted by *Frank Alesci* (Employee Services). Congratulations to Frank, and thank you to all of you who entered.

Honorable mentions go to *Jim Horne* (Legal) and *Catrice Walden* (Payment Ops) for "FiDo (Finance Dog)"; *Beverly Terry* (Payment Ops) for "Pupplicious"; *Kamal Sharma* (Audit) for "Waiver"; *J. Delise Hood* (Sheriff) for "F.A.R.A.C.I.E. Pal\*"; and *Robert Dunn* (Property) and *Robert Rolandi* (Property) for "Scoop."

Thanks to all who entered!

(Smart Corner continued from page 1)

They haven't been slacking off – they've been attending required *Managing for Results* workshops designed to help them understand SMART, build their skills, and give them the tools they need to support you as we transform into a results-based organization.

So far, 165 managers have undergone the training. Before next July, every person who supervises employees will have attended the Managing for Results session.

The training consists of two full days of content, the first on "Managing Results" and the second on "Managing Others." Topics for Day 1 included leadership, the agency's mission and values, SMART cards, customer satisfaction, and complier treatment. On Day 2, supervisors learned how to build trust, foster a culture of collaboration, and create a culture of accountability.

Each full day was followed by a half-day practice session in which participants discussed how to apply what they learned to practical issues in their areas. The goal is for managers to demonstrate workshop skills and principles in their everyday work and make it easier for every employee at Finance to do the same.

We will know that we have succeeded if people who work with the supervisors who participated in the Managing for Results workshop show increased employee engagement scores. Ultimately, we believe this will help more people pay the right amount on time.

### Results Teams

Much of what we have done has been within divisions. However, as we all know, to achieve the best results, we have to work across divisions.

As a start towards this cross-divisional work, we have formed several "Results Teams." These teams will do exactly what the name implies – focus on achieving specific results. For example, Adjudication has formed a team to streamline the hearing process for Official Business Defenses, Special Vehicle Identification and Deceased Claims. The hope is to reduce the number of days it takes to turn around these claims, so that we can tell people the right amount due, quickly and efficiently.

In the same vein, Collections has created a team to automate "vacate" and "satisfaction" judgment procedures so that they can update their records quickly. This will prevent unnecessary notices that embarrass compliers and make it more difficult for them to pay the right amount on time.

Payment Operations has formed a team to analyze why transactions get "suspended" – in other words, get held up – in the payment system. They hope to reduce the number of suspended transactions so that they can post payments more quickly and accurately. The goal is to ensure that people get credit for paying the right amount on time.

Results Teams will help us take steps everyday to improve results so that we can help people pay the right amount on time. With guidance from a team leader appointed by the division head, these teams will have the tools and support they need to achieve meaningful results for our customers and compliers.

Results Teams will be given a lot of freedom – freedom to act, freedom to be creative, freedom to take risks, freedom to make mistakes and start all over again. In exchange for this freedom, Results Teams will be accountable for achieving measurable results on their division's SMART cards, rather than just completing activities. They will have deadlines and targets. They will regularly review progress, getting feedback to learn what's working and recognizing where they can still improve.

### Quarterly Operational Reviews Stretched Over a Week

Finance skipped Operational Review Day in October because we wanted to make sure we had more than just employee engagement data and feedback. In addition, we received lots of great suggestions from you about operational reviews.

Here are some of the changes we made based on feedback from you and your colleagues:

- Operational Reviews will take place over a week, which will allow us to find adequate space for each session and ensure that groups have enough time to have full discussions about what's working, what isn't, and how they can improve as a team.
- The new schedule will allow facilitators to attend Operational Reviews in their own divisions – something almost every facilitator said was important.
- Each division head has been asked to make sure that at least 25 percent of a division's employees – from all levels – participate in the Operational Reviews.

So, mark your calendar for the week of January 22nd when we will hold agencywide Operational Reviews to launch over 50 Results Teams across every division. We look forward to reporting back on their progress and accomplishments in future editions of SMART Corner.

## CITYTIME

### "Times change and we change with them."

The Loch Ness Monster...Big Foot...and the Citywide paperless timekeeping system...All myths, steeped in years of speculation and rumor. However, one of these myths has now been proven to be true. Soon, the Department of Finance will be taking part in CityTime, an automated timekeeping system that eliminates the need for paper timesheets (ETRs). CityTime will also collect more accurate information and, by so doing, prevent paycheck errors. Finance employees will be able to monitor their work schedules on the Finance Intranet at **FinanceNet** to make sure

their timesheets are correct. Supervisors will review and approve timesheets electronically.

The program is being implemented in other City agencies under the direction of the Office of Payroll Administration and in consultation with unions. It is in accordance with all contractual obligations.

Finance employees in the following divisions will begin using CityTime on January 15th :

- Audit, City Register, Collections, Communications & Customer Service
- Employee Services (formerly Administration), Information System Services

- Legal Affairs, Office of Technology Solutions, Payment Operations, Tax Policy
- Treasury

Other divisions will be notified of their City Time start date when it has been determined.

### Required Training for All Finance Employees and Supervisors

To learn how to use CityTime – and avoid disruptions in getting your paycheck – all employees and supervisors in the above-listed divisions must complete the 30-45 minute online training before January 15th.

Visit **FinanceNet**.

## COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE TAX (CMVT) CONVERTED TO FAIRTAX

### Payment Operations and ISS Work Together To Convert 70,000 Records

After a grueling 10 months, a team of Payment Operations and Information System Services employees converted the Commercial Motor Vehicle Tax operation from a 25-year old, semi-automated system to a fully automated FAIRTAX system. More than 70,000 records were converted, including medallion taxis, trucks, and livery vehicles.

This conversion has many benefits for Finance:

- First, it will allow Payment Operations to track CMVT payments and returned checks more easily and ensure that each payment is applied to the correct license plate number.

- Second, it standardizes billing and enforcement and links CMVT payers to other taxes.
- Third, tracking nonpayers through the process to the warrant stage will also be more efficient by using an automated docketing process with the State. (When debt is unpaid for a legally specified period of time, we request a judgment from the court. To get the judgment, the case must be put on the court's docket.)
- Fourth, the automated system standardizes the way mailings are addressed and makes processing returned mail more efficient.
- Finally, the new system creates more efficient Production Control processing by integrating CMVT into FAIRTAX instead of requiring a separate system, as in the past.

The CMVT Conversion Team was made up of the following employees:



Left to Right : Raj Basaravaj (Payment Ops), Richard Gans (ISS), Millie Roman-Serrano (Payment Ops), Victor Lee (Payment Ops), Jenny Palencia (Payment Ops), Howard Reiss (Payment Ops), Sondra Simonson (Payment Ops), Don Martenson (ISS), Robert Lugo (Payment Ops), Karl Studebaker (Payment Ops), and Leslie Zimmerman (Asst. Commissioner, Payment Ops)



## STAR OF THE SEASON



Left to Right: Commissioner Martha E. Stark and Juan Lopez of the ISS Division

Recognition Committee, Kevin Burke and Craig Woodall.

Mr. Lopez works in the Microcomputer Unit, resolving PC problems and glitches throughout the agency. He received this honor for providing excellent customer service and advice when resolving computer problems. His nomination – by *Theresa Sarrica, Howard Walwick, Jayne Lindberg, and Lisa Maluf* of the Customer Relations Unit – reads, in part: “[Juan] is the most responsive, informative, friendly and helpful support staff person that we can depend on when our computers and their programs act-up. Juan responds to his Help Desk requests, phone messages and emails in a timely fashion and arrives to his appointments with a positive ‘let’s see what we can do to help’ attitude. He consistently goes the extra mile to assist his ‘customers’.”

## 2006 TOY DRIVE A BIG SUCCESS!

### Thanks to All Finance Employees Who Contributed

Finance employees again helped those less fortunate by donating hundreds of new toys for children in need. According to *Hillary Bloomfield* (Collections), the Finance Toy Drive Coordinator, the toys were distributed to churches, youth organizations, and hospitals throughout the City, including Brooklyn Tabernacle Church, the Bronx Youth Uptown Development Corporation, Queens Hospital, Islamic Leadership School, Thessalonian Baptist Church, and Discovery for Children. A special thanks goes out to the Building and Floor Captains in each Finance location who collect the toys.

## SHERIFF'S DIVISION NEWS

During the past several weeks, the deputies of the Sheriff's Division have continued to excel in their endeavors, both on and off duty, enforcing civil judgments, assisting citizens in need, and apprehending individuals that may be a danger to themselves and others.

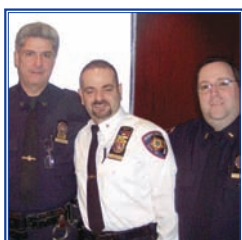
### Thanksgiving Turkeys



Deputy Jamal Williams

Finance should be very proud of Deputy *Jamal Williams* (Kings County Private Sector office). Deputy Williams – and his brother, Jermaine, a real estate broker – work hard to give less fortunate families something to be thankful for each Thanksgiving. For the past three years, the Williams brothers have purchased 100 turkeys and distributed them throughout the community before Thanksgiving. They contact family and friends, and through word of mouth and area churches, they identify the families and organizations in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan who will receive free turkeys. For example, this year, an NYPD officer who does volunteer work at the Halsey Avenue Senior Citizens' Center contacted Deputy Williams, and the Senior Citizens Center received 12 turkeys in time for Thanksgiving dinners. Deputy Williams says that he “is blessed and wants to give back to God and thank Him for all that he has been given.”

### Excellent Police Work



Left to Right: Sheriff Michael Cascio, Undersheriff Fucito and Lt. Steve Burdman

At the latest SmartStat meeting – the Sheriff's answer to the NYPD's ComStat – *Lt. Steve Burdman* and *Deputy Sheriff Michael Cascio* received Excellent Police Work breast bars for locating and apprehending an individual who had eluded the police and Family Court for a long time. Richmond County Family Court issued an arrest warrant against a juvenile delinquent for a violation of parole. En route to one of the teen's friend's homes, Lt. Burdman and Deputy Cascio

overheard a domestic dispute radio call to the NYPD about the teen's grandmothers house. They told NYPD that they would respond to the call and why and, when they arrived, the teen was present. He surrendered and was returned to Family Court, where he is presently undergoing rehabilitation.

Sheriff Lindsay Eason cited both officers for their diligence in attempting to locate the teen, for being alert to the domestic disturbance call to the police, and their quick response in apprehending the teen.

### Nassau County Sheriff's Office Aided by Kendra's Unit



Lieutenant Thomas Zane

Many New Yorkers remember when, in 1998, a mentally disturbed person pushed Kendra Webdale in front of a subway train. Kendra's Law was passed because of this incident. The law enables courts to better protect the public against persons suffering from mental illness who are considered to be potentially dangerous to themselves or others by allowing the courts to enroll such people in a treatment program.

When the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene or the court notifies them to do so, the Kendra's Unit of the Sheriff's Division locates and apprehends individuals who refuse to be examined at a hospital or comply with their treatment program. The Kendra's Unit averages 20-25 cases per month. This unit has done its work so successfully that the Nassau County Sheriff's Office recently asked if Nassau County deputies could meet with our staff and learn how to improve their own mental health unit. Two Nassau County Deputy Lieutenants traveled to Queens and met with *Lt. Thomas Zane*, the officer in charge of the Kendra's Unit, and several unit members. Lt. Zane briefed them on what the unit does, how they obtain information from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, how their equipment is used, and how they handle difficult situations.

Deputy Lieutenants Mark Hammer and Al Busa from the Nassau County Sheriff's Office expressed their respect and admiration for the skills displayed by our deputies.

## AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Agencywide Awards for Excellence were presented on November 15th at New York University's Kimmel Center. Following breakfast and an opportunity to mingle with friends and colleagues, *Commissioner Martha E. Stark* and *First Deputy Commissioner Rochelle Patricof* made the award presentations.

The 2006 Lawrence Brochhausen Memorial Award for Leadership was presented to *Mary Gotsopoulos*, Chief Administrative Law Judge and head of the Adjudication Division. (For those who do not remember the late Lawrence Brochhausen, he was the Deputy Commissioner of the Payment Operations Division from 1986 until his death in 1994. He was known throughout Finance as an exceptional manager, an innovator, and a first-rate human being.)

The **Denise Chamberlain Memorial Award for Professional Service** was presented to *Barbara McBain-Grant*, Assistant Manager of the Queens Payment Center (Payment Operations Division). (This award was named for the late Denise Chamberlain, who was the Administrative Manager of the Manhattan Business Center at the time of her death in 2004. Denise was well known for her commitment to customer service.)



Left to Right: Commissioner Martha E. Stark, Mary Gotsopoulos, Chief ALJ and First Deputy Commissioner Rochelle Patricof

and vacating (or canceling) judgments. This

The Team Finance Award was presented to the interdivisional **Automated Satisfaction/Vacates** Process Team. The team simplified the manual processes of obtaining judgments to collect outstanding debt, obtaining satisfactions showing the debt has been paid,

greatly improves efficiency for Finance but also for the courts and the taxpayers involved. The team members (pictured below) are: *Peggy Dowd, Cedric Gaillard, Richard Gans, George Gulifield, Barbara Iapoce, Guy Impallomeni, Lubov Litani, Annette Malatesta, Chandra Mohan, Francisco Perez-Abreu, and Stephanie Washington* (ISS); *Frances Barber, David Callender, Cecelia Carrion, Ayisha Green, Shirley Harris, Clara Howard, Mildred Jones, Denese Morgan, Michael Pinks, Laverne Roberts, Cynthia Tucker, and Monica Yacolca* (Collections); and *Heidi Chain* (Legal Affairs).

For further details concerning the Awards for Excellence Program and other award categories, visit **FinanceNet**.





GOOD-BYE TO OLD FRIENDS

Recent Finance Retirees

The following employees have recently retired after many years of City service (a combined total of 280 years of service). Some may enjoy a life of leisure; others may work elsewhere. Whatever they choose, colleagues and Finance friends will certainly miss them and wish them well.



Are You Considering Retirement?

If you are thinking about retirement, the first thing you should do is visit the NYCERS' Customer Service Center at 340 Jay Street in Brooklyn. You do not need an appointment, and you will have the chance to meet with a qualified retirement counselor.

Name	Division	Yrs. of Service
Alvin Berman	Audit	20
Dorothy Fulgoni	Property	34
Fung Lee	Payment Ops.	34
Melvin Metz	ISS	16
Betty Mood	Audit	31
Carol Ricci	ISS	14
Barry Rosenberg	Administration	22
Louise Rowland	Payment Ops.	26
Frances Tripp	Adjudication	32
Shirley Tripp	Payment Ops.	35
Ekow Wilarthur	Audit	16

ReveNEWS SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to the 259 Finance employees who took the time to complete the **ReveNEWS** survey in November's issue. Your feedback is very helpful as we look for ways to improve **ReveNEWS'** appearance, content, and distribution.

Here is a summary of the survey results:

- 87% were glad Finance has a newsletter to keep employees informed.
- 87% plan to read the next issue.
- 75% like having **ReveNEWS** online.
- 73% like the appearance of the newsletter.
- 64% prefer reading about agency events and staff recognition.
- 61% especially enjoy the Divisional Corner.
- 61% like having the hard copy with their paychecks.
- 60% said they learned many interesting things from reading **ReveNEWS**.
- 57% read the entire issue.
- 55% enjoy the contests (although only 18% have entered one or more of them!).
- 18% might be interested in participating in the Ad Hoc Committee.

Visit **FinanceNet** for complete results.

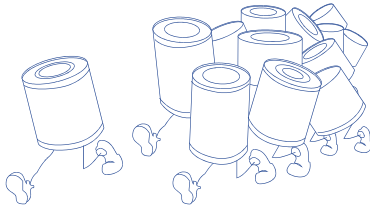
Correction to ReveNEWS Article

In the November edition of **ReveNEWS**, we published an article called "Finance Auditors and Attorneys Recognized." We were unaware that *Karen Schlain* and *David Ho* (both analysts from Tax Policy) were also recognized at the ceremony on September 27th for their contributions to determining audit policy related to various securities transactions by securities firms. We apologize to Karen and David for the omission of their names.

DOF EMPLOYEES CONTRIBUTE A MOUNTAIN OF FOOD

2006 Food Drive a Huge Success!

Finance outdid itself again this year by donating almost 100 boxes of food totaling 5,600 pounds for the Annual Holiday Food Drive. *Cheryl Couch* (Property) served as the QWL 2006 Agencywide Holiday Food Drive Chairperson. The food was donated to City Harvest, who distributed it to food pantries and shelters throughout the five boroughs. **ReveNEWS** and the Quality of Work Life Career & Personal Development Committee extend their appreciation to all those employees who worked on the committee, coordinated the Food Drive, and, most important, donated food. You made a real difference in the lives of those less fortunate.



**ReveNEWS** congratulates and thanks the Coordinators of the 2006 Food Drive: *Alethia Barnes* (Sheriff), *Joan Best* (Legal), *George Betton* (Property), *Quentin Brown* (Property), *Sharon Chew* (Enforcement), *Sharon Danner* (Payment Ops), *Marie DeCandia* (Property), *Aida Descartes* (Property), *Lillie Foy* (Adjudication), *Eva*

*Gambino* (Payment Ops), *Arlean George* (Employee Services), *Callie Harris* (ISS), *Daphne Harris* (ISS), *Shirley Harris* (Collections), *Leticia Martinez* (Audit), *Elaine McNeil* (ISS), *Maria McGhee* (Budget), *Jackie Morrell* (Executive), *Portia Perkins* (ISS), *Karen Pilgrim* (Property), *Marie Richard* (Payment Ops), *Karen Schlain* (Tax Policy), *Laura Schoolfield* (Adjudication), *Zena Spence* (City Register), *Della Stilley* (Legal), *Yolanda Taylor* (Sheriff), and *Debra Wright* (Employee Services).

Thanks also to the QWL Committee!

Representing Labor: *Minnie Blackman* (Local 1113), *Daphne Clifford* (Local 1113), *Cheryl Couch* (Local 375), *Sharon Jaffee* (Local 1180), *Kim Ohanian* (OSA), and *Michael Ramoutar* (Local 1757). Representing Finance Management: *Rose Horton* (Payment Ops), *John McBride* (Sheriff), *Colette McCain* (City Register), *Mary Scheman* (Payment Ops), and *Sheila Williams* (Employee Services).

2006 LEGISLATION REVIEW

Governor Pataki signed the following Finance bills into law:

**Making Co-op Sales Prices Public and E-filing:** Finance's highest priority has allowed the agency to utilize technology to improve processing efficiency. The new law brings greater transparency to property taxes by correcting a 2003 state law that excluded co-ops from the required disclosure of real estate sales prices. Finance is now required to make such sales data publicly available, allowing co-op buyers and sellers free access to the same information. This bill represents another step in our effort to make the property tax more transparent. The same bill also includes a mandatory e-filing provision that will modernize the collection of the City's Real Property Transfer Tax (RPTT) and the Real Property Income and Expense (RPIE) form.

Universal Exemption Application

**Deadline:** This bill increases consistency and clarity in filing deadlines by setting the New York City deadline for filing all property tax exemptions, including STAR, at March 15th. This new law will make it easier for more people to apply and receive benefits to which they are entitled.

**Civil Penalty for Counterfeit Cigarette Tax Stamps and Extending Time to File for Refund of Cigarette Tax:** Both bills were priorities of Finance's Office of Tax Enforcement and will allow the office to deter tax evasion as well as streamline administration.

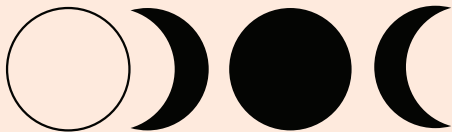
**Commercial Rent Tax and Commercial Expansion Program "Clean-up":** Drafted with Finance's assistance, these two priority bills of the Department of Small Business Services will allow for better access to important incentive programs.

COMBINED MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN

Department of Finance Recognized for Contribution

On October 31, 2006, the City agencies with the highest number of participating employees in the Combined Municipal Campaign (CMC) were recognized at the 2007 CMC Kickoff Ceremony. Finance has the highest percentage of participating employees of any agency with 1,000-5,000 employees. (Other winners were the Fire Department, the Department of Sanitation, the NYPD, the Department of Parks, and the Housing Authority.)

THE LUNAR CALENDAR



Ever wonder why certain celebrations and holidays such as the Chinese New Year, the Jewish New Year, Chanukah, the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Hindu holidays, and the Christian holiday of Easter do not fall on the same date each year?

Visit **FinanceNet** for details.

REVE NEWS

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59 Maiden Lane, 22nd Floor  
New York, New York 10038  
Phone 212.232.1776/Fax: 212.232.1890

**Communications**  
Sam Miller, Assistant Commissioner  
Theresa Sarraica, Director of Communications

**NEWSLETTER STAFF**  
Editor: Theresa Sarraica  
Contributing Writers:  
Jayne Lindberg  
Owen Stone

**Web Design:**  
Theodore La Barbera

**Photographer:**  
Susie Yuen

E-mail comments & suggestions for future issues of **ReveNEWS** to [SarraicaT@finance.nyc.gov](mailto:SarraicaT@finance.nyc.gov)

**Executive**  
Martha E. Stark, Esq.  
Commissioner  
Rochelle Patricof  
First Deputy Commissioner

**Adjudication**  
Mary Gotsopoulos  
Chief Administrative Law Judge

**Audit**  
Pauline Hyles  
Assistant Commissioner

**City Register**  
Annette M. Hill  
City Register

**Collections**  
Pamela Parker-Cortijo  
Assistant Commissioner

**Enforcement**  
Carlton Butler  
Assistant Commissioner

**Payment Operations**  
Leslie Zimmerman  
Assistant Commissioner

**Pension**  
Diane Bratcher  
Director  
**Property**  
Fadil Brija  
Acting Assistant Commissioner

**Sheriff**  
Lindsay Eason  
Deputy Commissioner

**Treasury**  
Robert Lee  
Deputy Commissioner

**Internal Support Divisions**  
**Employee Services**  
Galia Galansky  
Assistant Commissioner

**Budget**  
Pat Mattered-Russell  
Director  
**Communications & Customer Service**  
Sam Miller  
Assistant Commissioner

**Department Advocate**  
Nancy Goodman  
Director  
**Equal Employment Opportunity**  
Annie Long  
Director  
**Information System Services**  
George Mark  
Assistant Commissioner  
**Internal Audit**  
(vacant)  
**Legal Affairs**  
Dara Jaffee  
Assistant Commissioner  
**Tax Policy**  
Michael Hyman  
Assistant Commissioner  
**Technology Solutions**  
A.H. Stratton  
Chief