

## State Honors Customer Service Heroes



Congratulations to those nominated by their agencies for statewide recognition for excellence in customer service, as part of this year's Georgia Public Employee Recognition Week celebration sponsored by the Georgia Merit System.

**Sandra McDuffie** from the **Department of Driver Services** received the state's individual award for customer service. She has worked in the Tifton office since 2004. Her supervisor, Sharon Hodges-Miller, described Sandra's "compassion, understanding and sincerity" with customers, particularly those with special needs.

The **R.S. "Bo" Marlow Transition Center team** within the **Department of Labor** was awarded for its service to 2,000 dislocated Ford auto workers. The team includes (pictured from left) Glenn Collins, Laura Amaya, Susan Harvey-Jones,



John Dunn, Ann Shirra, (not pictured) Beverly Johnson, Vivian Richardson, Max Wightman, Pam Griffin and Brenda Young.

"The Center partnered with the United Auto Workers, six DOL Career Center staffs, five Workforce Investment Act Boards, and Clayton State and Atlanta Technical Colleges to provide seamless coordination of services," wrote Dislocation

Services Manager Ann Shirra. "They provided information on how separation packages would affect workers' benefits and helped sponsor a job fair. Workers received training on unemployment insurance, re-training, career assessments, job searches, state licensing exams, rehabilitation services, résumé writing, interviewing skills and budget counseling." *Read more at <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service*

### Work Place Satisfaction Survey Enters Second Pilot

Following the pattern of testing and validation established for the customer satisfaction surveys (GSQI), a second pilot of the employee job satisfaction survey is almost complete. Renamed the Work Place Satisfaction (WPS) Survey, it more accurately reflects the focus on employee satisfaction beyond issues of compensation and benefits, which were reviewed separately by the Georgia Merit System.

Survey items used in the initial December 2006 pilot are being validated, along with new survey questions. The final instrument is due to be available for statewide use in August 2007. Agencies in this second pilot include: the central office of the Department of Technical and Adult Education; State Board of Pardons and Paroles; Office of Child Support Services, DHR; the Department of Revenue; and the former GTA Constituent Services group, which will transition to OCS on July 1, 2007.

**More Stories on the Web!** <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

**List of all Public Employee Recognition Week Customer Service nominees**

*Agencies nominated 36 individuals and teams for customer service awards*

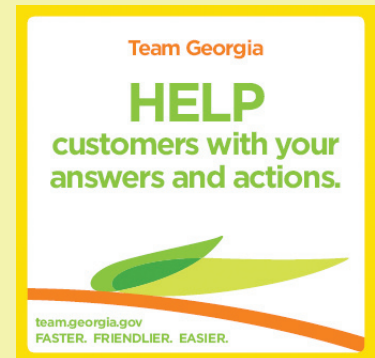
**Economic Development wins "E-Star" for exporting exceptional service**

*President Bush honors GDECD for customer-focused international trade practices*

**Kudos! Happy customers share thanks for GBA, DOR, DOAS**

*Read letters and survey comments acknowledging great customer service*

## Call to Action



### HELP: The Heart of Service

After you GREET your customers promptly and courteously, and then LISTEN and verify your understanding of the customer's needs, it's time to HELP customers with your *answers* – sharing your expert knowledge – and *actions* – producing results.

As public servants, what you do directly affects the lives of your fellow citizens. Whether you work in human services, law enforcement, administration or any other agency function, HELP is your opportunity to shine!

### Tips For Helping Customers

**View every interaction as an opportunity, not an interruption.** It's an opportunity to showcase the best you and your agency have to offer. This is your reason for being here!

**Remember, different needs require different ways of helping.** Be willing to step out of your comfort zone in order to help the customer. Think creatively while being flexible and adaptable. There is often no "one size fits all" answer.

**Maintain a positive attitude and energy.** Communicate an appropriate level of interest. Customers appreciate your attention and engagement.

- continued on back -

## MCG Certifies Staff in Faster, Friendlier, Easier Customer Service

The Medical College of Georgia in Augusta is committed to serving those who will one day serve all Georgians - as physicians, nurses, dentists and other health professionals. Charged by Governor Perdue and University System of Georgia Chancellor Erroll B. Davis to provide faster, friendlier and easier customer service, MCG created a formal customer service certificate program for employees.



Champion Deb Barshafsky, left, hands Nikia Curd her certificate. Debra Arnold emcees.

The first certificates were awarded to 18 participants April 26. Deb Barshafsky, vice president of decision support and MCG's Customer Service Champion, presented the certificates.

You are ambassadors for good will about the customer service initiative on campus."

"The institution really doesn't do anything on its own," said Barshafsky, addressing the group. "It's people who change the culture of the institution.

Employees who receive certificates will be acknowledged for their achievement at MCG's annual employee recognition ceremony in the fall.

## Call Centers Improve Performance, Set State Goals

### All Call Centers - Past 15 Months

	1st Quarter 2006	2nd Quarter 2006	3rd Quarter 2006	4th Quarter 2006	1st Quarter 2007	GOAL
<b>% Calls not answered</b>	17.3%	17.0%	13.2%	11.0%	14.16%	<b>9%</b>
<b>Average hold time</b>	4 min 42 sec	2 min 24 sec	2min 2sec	1 min 39 sec	2min 1 sec	<b>60 sec</b>

Aggregate data provided by both state-operated and outsourced call centers show progress being made in reducing both hold time and percentage of calls not answered. A comparison of same quarter data from year to year is the best indication of call center improvements as many call centers experience seasonal fluctuations.

Telephone access to state service is significantly faster, according to 15 months of data gathered from the state's call centers.

The call centers, both outsourced and state-operated, have been reporting common metrics each month with a uniform methodology developed by the Call Center Solutions Team.

The Call Center Solutions Team was formed in January 2006 by the state's call centers to find common remedies to their specific service issues. The Team identified and defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and conducted a cost-per-call study.

The Team also set statewide goals for 2007. The initial goals focus on decreasing the average hold time to 60 seconds and reducing to 9 percent the percent-

age of abandoned calls.

Some individual call centers already meet those standards, but the statewide KPI reporting is done in aggregate numbers so that individual performance data is not shared.

Just focusing on these metrics has already resulted in successes in almost every call center. The next focus of the Call Center Solutions Team will be the utilization rate, which is the amount of time an agent spends actually taking calls.

"The key to driving our call centers to meet these goals is the amount of time agents spend handling calls," said David Fields, director of Call Center Improvement for OCS. "That agent accountability drives improvements in all areas of performance."

## Call to Action...(cont.)

**Speak and write as clearly, concisely and jargon-free as possible.** Give the customer accurate and consistent information. Avoid using acronyms, as the customer probably doesn't know what they mean. For example, instead of saying OCS, say Office of Customer Service.

**Provide solutions and options.** Solutions solve a problem or answer a question; options are appropriate when there is no precise resolution. If you cannot give the customer exactly what he or she wants, offer all appropriate alternatives. Similarly, if you need to connect the customer to another person or agency, make it clear that you are doing so to better serve the customer, not to make him or her "somebody else's problem."

**Be empathetic and helpful, even when saying "no."** Sometimes, you have to say "no" to a customer. Do so in a polite and courteous way, and be sure to explain why.

### Every little bit helps!

At **Pardons & Paroles**, employees will soon be cross-trained on the areas of expertise of each work unit. As a result of the cross-training, once a staff member has heard a customer's problem or request, he or she will know the proper response or the correct work unit to forward the customer to.



Posters displaying HELP tips are currently on display in **Georgia Public Broadcasting's** lobby. One such poster is pictured above.

## Governor's Office of Customer Service

Sonny Perdue, Governor • Joe Doyle, Director

COMMUNICATIONS • Jerri Cloud, Director • Justine Holcomb • Cassie Yoder

CONTACT • 404-463-5914 • success@ocs.ga.gov • http://team.georgia.gov