



# **NEWS**

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## **LOCAL JUDGE AND DCF MANAGER HONORED FOR COLLABORATION**

### ***They Saved Lives and Taxpayers' Money***

**MIAMI** — Before the Jail Diversion Expansion Program, on any given day, the Miami-Dade County Jail housed 800-to-1200 inmates with serious mental illnesses. People in acute psychiatric distress spent a lot of time in jail — in fact eight times more time than those without mental illness and at seven times the cost. Now, thanks to the ingenuity and determination of Judge Steven Leifman with the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida and Dr. Deborah Dummitt with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), these people are receiving appropriate treatment at millions of dollars less cost to Florida's taxpayers.

Leifman and Dummitt are being honored for their public service with a Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Award. In a collaborative partnership, they developed an innovative approach that involves the efforts of the entire community. Their program saved taxpayers \$2.7 million in one year. In addition it was awarded a one-million dollar, three-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand the program.

"We are pleased that the program has reduced recidivism to jail by 70% and redirected individuals with mental illnesses away from the criminal justice system and into community-based mental health treatment and services," said Dr. Dummitt.

"These are people with schizophrenia and bipolar disease who have been living on the streets for a very long time and have come through the system many times," noted Judge Leifman.

The Jail Diversion Expansion Program evolved from a two-day summit called in September 2000 by Judge Leifman, who invited all the stakeholders (22 agencies, the county commission, and three national experts) involved in treating detainees. As a result, the mental health and criminal justice systems have begun to work together to resolve Miami-Dade's mental health crisis, which has the largest percentage of people with serious mental illnesses of any urban area in the country (two to three times the national average).

It is a two-part program — the pre-arrest diversion program and the post-arrest diversion program. The pre-arrest program trained over 1,000 police officers in crisis intervention (CIT), so that the crisis is defused (not inadvertently escalated) and the individual is not arrested, but rather transferred to a treatment facility. At least one-to-two CIT training sessions are held each month for new officers and refresher/update courses are offered several times a year. The training is also provided to local jails and

police dispatch operators. Before the advent of the program, eighteen people had died in police encounters.

The post-arrest program identifies and transfers those with mental health problems within 24-48 hours to a community mental health facility for stabilization and evaluation. The detainee is then typically discharged and assisted with treatment, housing, and other entitlements available in the community

"We need to have the insight that these people are sick. One person was accessing the help of every stakeholder. Thirty-one people cost the taxpayers \$541,000 to be arrested with no treatment and no intervention. Daily psychotropic medications alone cost millions per year," said Judge Leifman. "I didn't become a judge to be a part of the problem."

The judge is delighted that the Dade County voters passed a \$22-million bond to build a multi-use forensic diversion facility and credits the success of the program to a wonderful relationship with DCF.

"Deborah Dummitt with DCF has done a phenomenal job, collaborating with the court training police to handle people with mental illness, getting their social security reinstated, funding treatment and housing programs, and helping the program grow," said Leifman. "The beauty of the program is — it works!"

Judge Leifman and Dr. Dummitt will be honored for their achievement at a luncheon tomorrow at Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club in Miami Lakes.



*Left to right: Dr. Deborah Dummitt, Judge Steven Leifman  
and Cindy Schwartz, Jail Diversion Project Director*

The Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards program is a major government improvement initiative sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, The Florida Council of 100 and the State of Florida. In its 18<sup>th</sup> year, the program recognizes and rewards state employees who clearly exceed their job descriptions and performance expectations in ways that improve service delivery and save money for Florida taxpayers.

The 2006 awards competition honored 555 winners across Florida for innovations and productivity improvements worth \$340 million in cost savings, cost avoidances, and increased revenue for state government. Since 1989, more than 12,000 individuals, teams, work units, and partnerships have been honored for saving the state \$5.3 billion.

Leifman and Dummitt's recognition is one of 55 team and individual awards to state employees in the Miami area to be honored at the luncheon for cost savings in the course of their jobs. Other honorees include:

- ▶ The 14-member I-595 Value Engineering Team, a multi-disciplinary team within the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), which was formed during the project development phase to review the I-595 road-building project before it entered the design phase. "Value engineering" was its purpose — to analyze the project from all perspectives for cost savings and to guarantee it was

reliably moving in the right direction at the lowest cost without sacrificing safety, quality, operations, maintenance, or environment.

The team of Ann Broadwell, Richard Creed, Daphne Georgiadis, Eduardo Caballero, Scott Seeburger, Shandra Davis Sanders, Maria Vilches-Landa, Tom Stepp, Rocco DePrimo, Steve Braun, Gary Keife, Joseph Borello, Norman Bryant, and Paul Lampley, was the first in the nation to build value engineering into the project development process.

They used a visual simulation virtual reality model to demonstrate the proposed improvements and potential conflicts or concerns. The 3-D aerial allowed them to view potential sites for the rail/bus terminals, locations of FP&L sub-stations, proposed alignments for transit, roadway alternatives with flyovers, bridges and proposed braided ramps. Their proposals have the potential to save more than \$100 million.

The team received the National Value Engineering Award for "The Most Innovative Proposal During Project Delivery" at the 2005 AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) Conference.

► The six-member FDOT State Road 707 team, which also applied value engineering to evaluate constructability, level of service, operation and maintenance, bicycle-and-pedestrian-friendly crossing issues, overall costs, public acceptability, environmental and business community impacts, aesthetics and right-of-way drainage. Their recommendations will potentially save the taxpayer \$14.5 million.

The savings is mostly the result of design changes that eliminated acquisition off the more costly parcels. The value engineering team, Eva Morava, John Panos, Laurice Mayes, Ryan Kerschman, Dustin Duke, and Shandra Davis initially generated 60 ideas and chose five to suggest for the design phase of development.

► Quinn Northcutt, a Financial Crimes Investigator with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement at the Broward County Miami Regional Operations Center, Public Assistance Fraud Unit, who took the initiative to coordinate his public assistance fraud investigations with the Broward County public housing authorities.

His efforts enabled local housing authorities to remove ineligible residents from the limited public housing and provide housing to those who truly needed the assistance. He referred seven cases of fraud to the local State Attorney's Office, which enabled the impacted housing authority to receive court-ordered restitution. This returns money to the local housing authorities rather than the federal housing agency. His initiatives saved the taxpayers almost \$53,000 to date.

► The fifteen-member FDOT Maintenance Contract Resource Enhancement Team of Maria Connolly, Matthew Price, Dean Morris, Peter Nissen, Ronni Fisher, Asem Al-Turk, Thomas Greene, Michael Atkins, Courtney Drummond, Thomas Reynolds, Jose Quintana, Don Archibald, Melvin Pollock, Eric Padron, and Hassan Abedi. The team reviewed and analyzed the historic contract expenditures and the maintenance budget for their operations centers.

As a result the Department of Corrections increased participation of at-risk youth training organizations in road maintenance, resulting in readjustment of the contract amounts. This generated a savings of more than \$12.5 million in a year to fund the biggest Asset Management contract in the state.

"This is the first time that this type of systematic examination of the District Maintenance budgeting and contracting process has been done and this effort will provide benefits immediately and for many years to come," said William Wang, Assistant District Maintenance Engineer.

► The six-member Florida Department of Transportation School Pools Team in Fort Lauderdale, Jeff Weidner, Corine Williams, Peter Slack, Jim Udvardy, Sabrina Kirkpatrick, and Christine Rosas are being recognized for developing alternative ways to commute to school.

The team broached the idea of developing a pilot program with Boca Raton Elementary School. Their goals were to educate students and parents on alternative modes of transportation, save money, create new carpools/vanpools/walking/biking groups, increase safety for students bicycling and walking, reduce traffic congestion and parking around the school, and reduce auto emissions created by automobile congestion and idling. The program was marketed through a web site, through videos

and DVDs, posters, brochures, commuter licenses, T-shirts, logos and other promotional and informational program materials.

As a result, the pilot program created 23 carpools, three biking groups, and five walking groups. It reduced automobile congestion and student drop off times from about 25 minutes in the regular school driveway to three minutes for the specially-designated carpool lane, eliminated 20,124 miles driven, and yielded \$11,310 in savings.

The complete list of Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Award winners can be viewed at [www.floridataxwatch.org](http://www.floridataxwatch.org).

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[Click Here to View the 2006 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards magazine](#)

**MEDIA NOTE: The Awards Luncheon Ceremony honoring area winners will be held 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club, 6842 Main Street, in Miami Lakes. Presenting the awards will be Ani Victoriano, Manager of Financial Services, Coral Gables Office/South Florida Agency of Prudential Financial and Clarissa Dunlap, director of the Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards.**

**MEDIA NOTE: The Virtual Reality Simulation model in the I-595 Value Engineering Team achievement is available for viewing at the DOT district office. Contact Steve Braun 954-777-4143 to arrange a viewing of this new high tech method of highway planning and design.**

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