

The Accounting Department looked for ways to improve processes, procedures and employee morale during its June 19 retreat. (Photo by Shawn Lowe)



## **Accounting Retreat Focuses on Team-Building, Uniting**

By SUSAN CARIASA

(July 8, 2003) What do you think the Accounting Department is doing when it's not crunching numbers? Uniting and building its team! And it did just that, June 19, when it held its annual team-building retreat.

At the retreat, various departmental cross-functional teams presented their accomplishments, projects and goals. Each of the teams was responsible for an area of focus aimed at improving the department's processes, procedures, and employee morale.

Customer service was the theme of this year's retreat, as well as the focus of a presentation given by a customer service expert, who was invited to share with the Accounting staff her secrets to "knock your socks off" customer service.

The Office of Development and Training (OD&T) conducted exercises aimed at better understanding diverse behaviors in the workplace and how they affect both client and customer service. The interactive discussions, role-plays and activities highlighted the importance of being aware of differences and devising strategies to improve cooperation and understanding.

An important objective of the retreat was to provide the teams with an opportunity to present their achievements and goals to the entire staff.

### **Long list of accomplishments**

The team presentations revealed a long list of accomplishments, including Team 3's on-line "Learning Portfolio" (available via link on the Accounting Department home page), which will encourage continuing professional and technical training among the Accounting staff.

Team 2 presented its highly successful "Around the World Desserts Galore," which served as a tasty reminder of the benefits of working in a diverse workplace; and Team 6 explained its ongoing efforts to promote teambuilding and spirit with colorful bulletin boards, birthday e-mails, and department lunches.

Team presentations finished up with suggested goals and objectives for the coming year, and outstanding achievements in safety, performance and attendance were recognized and awarded. These included the "Best Idea Award" given to Carmelita Malonzo and Nancy Untalan for suggesting a process improvement in the Accounts Payable Unit.

Overall, the retreat was a success. The staff was invigorated and rewarded for its achievements, and everyone enjoyed a break from the daily grind of bill paying, payroll, and other accounting activities.

Now the accounting department is back to crunching numbers, especially with the audit season having just started.

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