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Retiree survey shows positive results

They like us! They really like us!

If Sally Field was a spokesperson for WDRA, that's how she might sum up the results of our 2007 Retiree Survey.

Over 90 percent of the members responding from each system rated our service as good to excellent. The overall satisfaction percentage is 93.4 percent.



This year's survey was updated to eliminate outdated, less useful questions and to add a few new questions. This was also the first time retirees could respond online and nearly 10 percent of them did so.

The response rate was nearly 49 percent, which is considered very good. The response rate has remained fairly consistent over the last several surveys.

Most of the questions that remained from the previous survey questionnaire had results similar to those of the previous survey. Those that showed a significant difference in their scores are as follows:

- Over 50 percent of public school, state, and state police retirees indicated they have contacted their insurance carrier for assistance. Normally, the range is from the mid 30 to low 40 percent.
- Public school mail order pharmacy usage showed an increase from around the 50 percent range to over 70 percent.

With the new questions, we found the following:

- Over 46 percent of respondents have been receiving a pension for 10 years or less.
- The top three reasons our retirees use the internet are as follows:
 - ◆ Email – 54.4 percent
 - ◆ Research – 46.2 percent
 - ◆ Recreational – 34 percent

Note: members were able to choose more than one option.

Calendar

August

WDRA Staff Picnic	16
Annual Golf Outing	29
Open Enrollment Deadline	31

September

Labor Day	3
Public School Employee Board Meeting	13
State Employee Board Meeting	20

On the Horizon

- All Staff Meeting
October 16

Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)

- Policies and Procedures

Commonly Used Acronyms	
AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (<i>EPC, BPOs, and BPLs</i>)
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process Leader
BPO	Business Process Owner
CED	Customer Education and Development
CSC	Customer Service Center
DB	Defined Benefits
DC	Defined Contributions
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie, Tim, Anthony, and Kathy</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (<i>public school employees</i>)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (<i>state employees</i>)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
STG	Systems Technology Group (<i>Web self-service contract vendor</i>)
T&T	Tools and Technology
WDRA	Workforce Development and

- Nearly 83 percent of respondents indicated the Connections newsletter was either useful or very useful.

So what's next?

BPOs and EPOs have been asked to discuss the results. If they feel the results warrant, action items will be added to their process business plans to address the issue. Additionally, the results will be shared with staff, particularly the data that is affected by their process.

The next survey is scheduled for winter 2008.



Reminder:

On Wednesday, August 22, at 12:00 and 12:30, Director Lisa Webb Sharpe and Chief Deputy Director Rose Wilson will be in Conference Room B for an informal lunchtime conversation. To reserve your spot, visit the DMB intranet home page

<http://connect.michigan.gov/dmb>.

CSC application processing

Application processing worked diligently getting the July 1 school retirees on the July payroll. An amazing 2,702 out of 3,984 July 1 retirees received their first pension payment in July. Great job!

Electronic TDP reports implemented

After running a 30-day pilot for a small group of school employers to electronically submit tax deferred payment (TDP) data, ER is rolling out the process for all employers. Payroll staff will no longer mail a text file of the TDP agreement and addendum on a diskette; instead they'll be able to upload an electronic file (known as an ftp, or file transfer protocol) to a secure location. Notices and instructions were mailed this week. Eventually, employers will be able to report this information along with their regular wage and service reports on the employer reporting website.

Annual superintendents certification mailed

ER mailed its annual certification to school superintendents this week. The certification requires superintendents to identify the people in their reporting units who are authorized to report wage and contribution information, and certifies that reports submitted by their reporting units are consistent with the law. By their signatures, superintendents accept responsibility for the retirement reporting activities of their reporting units.

Newsletter reference

Associations and agencies that serve our customers often publish newsletters. For example, the State Employees Retirees Association publishes the *Sera Nade*; Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel issues the *Vanguard*; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan sends out *Best of Health*. If a customer contacts us regarding content that appears in one of these newsletters, you can now access them in the Knowledge Library.

Yacht brochure delivered

CED, with the assistance of Mail & Delivery Services, sent all public school reporting

Retirement Administration

units a supply of [Is There a Yacht in Your Future?](#) to distribute to newly hired employees. The brochure introduces ORS, gives a brief overview of the retirement plan, and encourages exploring the ORS website and saving for retirement.

Desktop PC inventory

DIT field services technicians have been busy this week conducting an inventory of our personal computers. They are making sure hardware is sufficient to run the Windows XP operating system, a conversion planned for next spring. They are also compiling an inventory of software. Once each user has a profile, the "managed desktop" concept will allow DIT to troubleshoot software problems remotely, without having to send a technician.

Insurance rates for state retirees published

Employee Benefits Division has sent bulletins to state retirees announcing new insurance rates that take effect October 1. The rates for health, dental, vision, life, long term disability, and COBRA, along with zip code lists and the bulletins, can be found at the Civil Service website.

Top scores for Michigan websites

Michigan ranked as the second best state for e-government, according to the eighth annual e-government analysis conducted by researchers at Brown University. Websites are evaluated for their electronic features such as online publications, databases, audio and video clips, online services, accessibility, and readability level. The ORS member websites typically rank among the state's most visited state sites. To read more, view [Brown University's report](#).

Governor's survey coming soon

On Monday, August 27, watch for an e-mail from the Governor with a link to a survey on values in the workplace. This is a continuation of the survey she's distributed through the Office of Great Workforce Development the past four years. In addition, DMB employees will be given an opportunity to share their view on evidence of values in DMB.

Employees living the values

Fun is an important value enjoyed by all who took part in the WDRA Employee Appreciation Picnic and Tigers baseball game. Click the images below to view more photos of these fun events.



Please be sure to complete the [picnic survey](#) COB next Wednesday, August 22.

Comings & Goings

Lauren Holton's last day was Friday August 10. Lauren left PS to pursue a full time position with a local construction company.



on Michelle Thompson

Spotlight is a way for ORS staff to share their non-work related activities and hobbies. Email ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov with your article ideas about you or your coworker.



Making friends with the world ... One friendship at a time!

If you're looking for ways to experience other cultures, **Michelle Thompson** has a suggestion: host a foreign exchange student.

Last school year, Michelle and her family welcomed Marieke (Ma-rie-ka) Schulte, a 17-year-old German exchange student, into their home. "We realized shortly after her arrival that our cultures had many similarities," said Michelle. "I was really surprised that they listened to the same music and wore the same style clothes." However, one delicious difference was their chocolate. "German chocolate can't be beat and Marieke's family was gracious enough to keep shipments coming."

The biggest cultural difference seemed to be between country life and city life. Michelle and her daughter Cindi are very much into fishing and other outdoor activities, in contrast to the subways, bus system, and night life that Marieke was accustomed to in her hometown of Münster.

The Thompsons' love for the outdoors and Marieke's experience with big cities proved to be a great combination when the family went on a camping trip to Washington, D.C. It was Marieke's very first camping trip and the Thompsons' first experience with a big city. "Marieke loved the camping aspect and, fortunately, quickly picked up on the metro system which was very helpful in getting us around the city."

After touring the city they discussed how Münster had a similar memorial to Arlington National Cemetery. However, like most things Marieke noticed in America, the eminent display at Arlington was much more ceremonial and formal than what she was accustomed to back home.

Michelle reflected on how Cindi and Marieke got along. "Their differences were okay because they still had enough in common. Like sisters, they argued sometimes but had a good sense of humor and could laugh at each others' differences."

In June Michelle proudly watched as Schulte participated in the commencement ceremonies for Fulton High School. She found it very difficult to say goodbye when Schulte returned to Germany to complete her curriculum.

"We really, really enjoyed having her," said Michelle. "It was a wonderful experience for all of us."

For more information on how to become a host family or participate in student exchange programs, check out these sites:

http://www.isep.org/Students/US_students/sites_open_us_applications.asp

<http://www.nse.org>

<http://www.aise.com>

DMB Mission:

Partners in achieving excellence

WDRA Mission:

We are a customer-focused organization that serves members and employees today and prepares them for tomorrow.

WDRA Vision:

Empowering people for a successful today and

Governor protects against wildfires

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today banned outdoor burning in 75 counties in Michigan due to the extremely high wildfire danger that continues to threaten most of the state. The ban covers most of the Lower Peninsula and all of the Upper Peninsula.

a secure tomorrow.

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The emergency ban takes effect at 4:36 p.m. on Friday, August 17 and will remain in effect until conditions change significantly to reduce the risk of fire.

“The persistent drought conditions across Michigan’s Lower and Upper Peninsulas, coupled with the hot, dry weather, are creating dangerous conditions for wildfires to occur,” Granholm said. “We are already battling a major wildfire in Luce County, and any open flame is a hazard to our state at this time; that is why I have ordered this burning ban.”

For more information on counties affected and to read the entire proclamation, go to <http://www.michigan.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-23442-174376--,00.html>.

Thanks for reading!!

Note: Because some of the links in this newsletter point to resources within ORS, some of the links may not work if you are outside of ORS.