



August 23, 2013

Volume 17, Issue 17

Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

- In This Issue
- ORS helps schools prepare for new year
  - Technology assessment survey completed
  - ORS Facebook page breaks records in first week
  - DTMB Senior Management Team tours ORS
  - Staff Training
  - Comings and Goings
  - Carrot Awards
  - The grass is greener at the ORS golf outing
  - Spotlight on: Mohamed Yacoub
  - Labor Day Weekend activities
  - Summer photo contest

## ORS helps schools prepare for new year

Employer Reporting and Customer Education will be preparing Michigan public schools for the new school year by providing a webinar focusing on the "hot topics" of reporting. Launching in September, the webinar will cover the importance of reporting on time and posting wage reports. It will also highlight areas such as updating employee information, new actuarial tables, working after retirement rules under Public Act 464, and TDP transfer rules.



A new school year can be a stressful time for schools and their payroll offices. ORS is optimistic that this webinar will help the reporting units by providing a good start to the new school year.

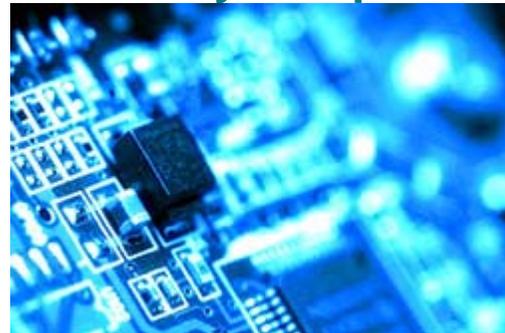
[back to top](#)

Calendar

September	
Labor Day	21
Public school employees board meeting	5
Central Perk cleaning	10
First day of autumn	22

## Technology assessment survey completed

On June 25 and 26, Process Support surveyed staff to see what ORS staff thought of the different technology and software programs we use. The survey allowed PS to gather feedback from staff on how our tools work and how they could work better.



There were surveys for Clarity, Siebel, miAccount, Knowledge Library, SharePoint, WFM and NICE. Each technology was rated on four different attributes:

- **Functionality** - How effective the tool is at its designed purpose
- **Usability** - How user-friendly the tool is
- **Reliability** - How reliable the tool is, and how often it's available
- **Flexibility** - How easy is the tool to adapt to new uses and changing

State employees board meeting 26

- On The Horizon
- Public school employees board meeting - October 10
  - State police board meeting - October 17
  - Halloween - October 31

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

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
CE	Customer Education
CS	Customer Service
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution
DTMB	Department of Technology, Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council ( <i>Phil, Laurie H, Laurie M, Anthony, and Kerrie</i> )
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting ( <i>public school employees</i> )
PRO	Preretirement

circumstances

"I was pleasantly surprised at how highly everything was rated," said **Nate Parrish**, who helped create the survey and crunch the numbers along with **Joe Brown**. "Overall, everything got a 3 out of 5 or higher from ORS staff."

Process Support will send out the surveys quarterly to track staff satisfaction with our tools. In the meantime, staff can continue to make suggestions and help resolve their tech problems by using two new SharePoint tools:

[Suggestions for New Technology](#): Did you come across technology or tool that you think would speed up or improve a process? Let Process Support know.

[Submit Technical Issues](#): Is there a technical issue that, if resolved, would make your life easier? Let Process Support know about it.

[back to top](#)

## ORS Facebook page breaks records in first week

We officially launched the ORS Facebook Page on Monday, August 12, and so far it has been a smashing success! In our first week, we built an audience of more than 13,000 "fans," or people who "like" our page. This is more than any other public state retirement system, and many of them have been on Facebook for several years!



When customers visited and "liked" the page, "liked" our posts, or left comments, the page went viral. Their friends saw the activity and many of them also decided to "like" the page, and so on. In the first week, more than 107,000 people saw something about ORS on Facebook!

So what? We've been able to quickly answer many questions which may also help others who read the chatter on our page. The page allows us to build trust with our customers, have an ongoing conversation with them about retirement readiness, and potentially prevent some phone calls.

Have any ideas for hot topics or fun posts we can use on our Facebook page? We're always looking for fresh ideas. Just email us at [ORS-socialmedia@michigan.gov](mailto:ORS-socialmedia@michigan.gov).

[back to top](#)

## DTMB Senior Management Team tours ORS

On August 16 the DTMB Senior Management Team, which includes Director Nixon and the 26 other team members, held their regular meeting at ORS. During their meeting, the team toured our facility, which is a model office at the State of Michigan. The tour gave us a chance to showcase our space that helps foster a culture of engagement. Our organized offices, clean facility, and the addition of a DTMB flower pot to our garden area presented us in a very positive, professional light. Thank you to everyone who pitched in and helped with the preparations, including the tour guides!

	Orientation ( <i>state employees</i> )
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
UAT	User Acceptance Testing



- Innovate and Improve Customer Service
- Best In Class Business Practices
- Instill Confidence in Staff Through Quality Communication
- Engage Top Talent to Realize Potential
- Continuously Renewed Business-Driven Technology
- Build Business Capacity Through Education and Development
- Proactive Policy Development and Legislative Strategy



[back to top](#)



### Multi-generational Appreciation

**Chantele Geisenhaver, Lisa Schmidt, and Allison Wardlaw** attended the DTMB Multi-generational Appreciation training on August 20. Right now, there are four generations of people in the workplace, which means more diversity than ever before. This training revealed how people's behaviors and viewpoints are connected to their generation's culture, and allowed participants to discover commonalities and encourage communication across generations.

### Microsoft Office

**Krystal Strachan** has taken advantage of the Microsoft trainings offered by DTMB. She participated in the intermediate levels of Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook. "The DTMB classes are beneficial," said Krystal. "The trainer, Lori Edwards, is very patient and thorough. If you're looking to brush up on any of your skills or learn something new, then I would definitely recommend the trainings that DTMB has to offer."

### QCI: A PowerPoint on PowerPoint

There is still room to register for the Quality Communications Initiative training A PowerPoint on PowerPoint on Tuesday, August 27 from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. In this training we'll review PowerPoint best practices, how to engage your audience, using text and images to make your presentations pop, and how best to use handouts. Check with your supervisor and email [Danielle Fowler](#) if you're interested in joining!

### CS Soft Skills Training

On August 15 and August 21, the CS Hub expert team and members of the Quality Assurance team participated in the Service Mentality training. The goal of this training is to identify the behaviors and characteristics of excellent customer service. The team members learned the following seven characteristics required to provide excellent service:



- **Empathy** - A caring tone of voice.
- **Enthusiasm** - Projects ability and willingness to help.
- **Ownership** - Commit to resolving a problem.
- **Responsibility** - Be considerate to co-workers and customers.
- **Adaptability** - Change approach to each type of customer.
- **Balance** - Meets the challenge of satisfying the customer and meeting the needs of the organization.
- **Resiliency** - Remain calm, recover quickly.

Along with the knowledge and insight into the behaviors required to demonstrate a *service mentality* they discussed how to apply the behaviors to specific work situations. They also conducted a self-assessment of their own *service mentality* and made a commitment to practice and change three of the behaviors they demonstrated the least often.

This training is the second in a series for the Hub team, who participated in *Essential Telephone Skills* in April. These programs are part of the Telephone Doctor series which **Katrina Kaufman**, **Sherea Lacy**, and **Elaine Scott** identified as a model product for our call agents. In the coming months this module and others in the *Telephone Doctor* series will be available for the entire customer service center team and other ORS team members to participate in.

— back to top —



### Coming

AST welcomed four new members to their team in July:



On July 8, **Anand Narimetla** joined the project management team. Anand lives in Okemos with his wife and enjoys travelling, photography, football and cricket. He received his bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering in India and recently managed some projects with MDOS for almost a year, having worked previously with firms like Morgan Stanley and Seagate.

On July 15, **Omair Siddiq** began working as a student assistant in AST. Omair lives in East Lansing where he also attended high school. He's currently working toward an associate's degree in Computer Program Analysis at LCC.

Also on July 15, **Carl Gonyea** began working with the operations team. Carl retired from the Military (Air Force) and will be earning a degree at U of M yet this summer. He's in the process of moving to Bath with his wife and two daughters, and spends a

fair amount of his free time staying abreast of the latest gadgets and tech toys.

On July 31, **Chris Trout** also joined the project management team. Chris is from Genoa Township and comes to ORS with 18 years of project management experience. He has a BS in Business Management from CMU and enjoys everything from boating to snowmobiling in northern Michigan with his wife and family.



ER greeted student assistant **Autumn Hubbard** to the team on August 19. Autumn lives in Grand Ledge and is working toward a bachelor's degree in Human Resources management at LCC. She married recently and enjoys nature and being outside.

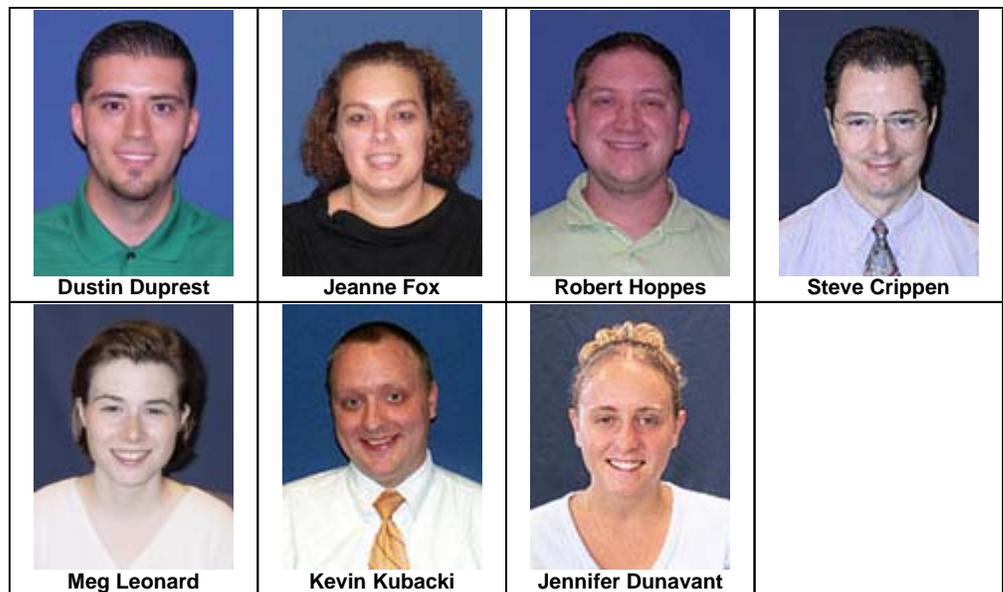
**On the Move**

On August 19, Andrew O'Keefe began a temporary assignment in Employer Reporting. Congrats, Andrew!

[back to top](#)



Carrot awards are ORS's way to recognize staff for doing great work. Below are the carrot recipients since May 2013.



[back to top](#)

**The grass is greener at the ORS golf outing**

Another Pure Michigan summer day greeted the 23rd Annual ORS Golf Outing on August 14 at Centennial Acres Golf Club. Seventy golfers and helpers from ORS & AST present and past, as well as business partners, family, and friends enjoyed a day on the links. A hot dog lunch "at the turn" was followed by an exceptional carved roast beef dinner.



Click the photo for the entire gallery!

Two teams split the proceeds from the SKINS game, with We're Slicers, Not Hookers pulling down two SKINS. Winning medallions, hole prizes, and the traditional drawings for an array of door prizes were presented during dinner.

**1st place** - We're Slicers, Not Hookers: Darrell Swartz, Jim Hert, John Rebera (all from Analysts International), John Kalanquin (DTMB) with a score of 9 under par 61

**2nd place** - Big Health Swings: **Laurie Svendsen** (ORS), Kathy Kendall, Carol Solomon, Ed Harden (all from McLaren Health Plan) with a score of 8 under par 63

**3rd place** - The Wrecking Balls (all ORS): **Chad Seppala, Dustin Duprest, Ryan Nevins, Tom Schwab** with a score of 7 under par 63

Special hole prizes were awarded to:

- Goofus (most lost balls): **Joe Osentoski** (9)
- Longest drive men: **Travis Peake**
- Longest drive women: Kathy Kendall
- Longest putt men: Floyd Yesh
- Longest putt women: Lisa Eggert
- Closet to pin men: Ryan Sadler
- Closet to pin women: **Peg McLeod**

Last year the participants banded together to donate to charity, and this year they more than doubled the offering to St Vincent Charities Children's Home! A percentage of the registration fee, donations for goodie bags, and a silent auction resulted in a total donation of \$644! Special thanks to everyone who helped make this a great success.



Click the photo for the entire gallery!

The planning team will survey again this year, so watch for your chance to contribute suggestions and ideas. For a full list of scores, the sponsor list, and a history of the event, [click here](#).

back to top



### Yacoob takes a summer trip home

It was four years since **Mohamed Yacoob**, known as "Yacoob" at ORS, had been back to his home in Madurai, India. Since coming to the United States in 2006, he's only been back a couple of times. He made the trip again this June.

Not only did he catch up with family and friends, Yacoob had many adventures planned for his trip, including visits to the mountain area of Ooty and the seaside city Kerala. But his plans were interrupted.



His sister was considering a marriage arrangement, and she hoped Yacoob could meet with her potential husband and, if everyone agreed, set a date for the wedding. Yacoob met with the gentleman and his family and did some checking on his education, work, and family background. After everyone decided it was a good match, his family decided to hold the wedding in the short time Yacoob was home. This meant cramming years of wedding planning into a few short weeks! (Keep in mind that this wedding had 3,000 guests!)

Yacoob describes his family circle as "very large," which meant a list of tasks like:

- Deciding on the dates of wedding and reception coming to a family consensus.
- Inviting wedding guests personally by visiting them.
- Booking the marriage hall.
- Deciding on decorations and seating arrangements.
- Organizing food for everyone—from the caterers to buying meat, vegetables and groceries before the wedding day.
- Arrange for the newlywed’s sendoff.
- The tradition of buying dresses for the wedding for close relatives and the bride and groom.
- The tradition of buying furniture, vessels and pans, bridal supplies as a gift from the bride’s side.
- Receiving relatives at the family home and providing food during their stay.
- Preparing for the rituals and traditions for the day before the wedding.
- Welcoming everyone to the wedding, coordinating the guest services, and seeing that everyone ate well ("Our place is very famous for the hospitality," explains Yacoob. "We see to that our guests are at their utmost satisfaction.")
- Arrangements for reception after the bride and groom return from groom’s family.

"I wouldn't say I did all of these alone," says Yacoob. "We do things as a family. That's our culture. My father, brother, spouse, mother and close relatives helped me all through. On the whole it was a grand success and got my sister married to a nice guy. I felt happy for being with my family and friends after a really long time."

In a year/couple of years, Yacoob may make another visit home. He hopes to have some of the adventures he'd planned for this trip—unless there's another surprise!

— back to top —

## Labor Day weekend activities

<p><a href="#">Michigan Mosaic Music Festival</a> Adado Riverfront Park, Lansing <b>08/31/13 - 09/01/13</b> Free admission A celebration of diversity and unity featuring various cuisines and performances.</p>	<p><a href="#">Labor Day Weekend Stock Car Races</a> Tri-City Speedway – Auburn <b>08/30/13 - 08/31/13</b> \$14 and under Two full nights of racing, fireworks on Saturday night.</p>	<p><a href="#">Detroit Jazz Festival</a> Hart Plaza – Detroit <b>08/30/13 - 09/02/13</b> Free admission 34th annual Detroit Jazz Festival – dozens of artists performing over four days.</p>
<p><a href="#">Rodeo at Double JJ Resort</a> Rothbury <b>Every Saturday</b> Pig roast, rodeo, midway, and petting farm; fun for the</p>	<p><a href="#">DALMAC</a> East Lansing to St. Ignace <b>8/28/2013 - 9/1/2013</b> \$155-\$230 Annual Dick Allen Lansing</p>	<p><a href="#">Wild &amp; Woolly – Exhibit</a> South Haven Center for the Arts <b>09/01/13 - 09/30/13</b> Collection of both abstract and realistic</p>

whole family.	to Mackinaw Bicycle Tour.	work by fiber artist Barb Bare.
<a href="#">Labor Day Truck Parade</a> Downtown Holland <b>9/2/2013</b> Free admission This event showcases the big rigs of local lakeshore area companies.	<a href="#">Jack Pine Lumberjack Shows</a> Mackinaw City <b>6/4/2013 - 9/1/2013</b> Daily competitions at 7:30 pm of chopping, chain-sawing, pole climbing, logrolling and more!	<a href="#">Michigan Renaissance Festival</a> Holly <b>8/17/2013 - 9/29/2013</b> Admission varies by event Music, costumes, sword-swallowing, turkey legs, comedy, fire-juggling and more!
<a href="#">Art From the Lakes</a> Lansing Art Gallery <b>8/2/2013 - 9/28/2013</b> Art exhibit including works from local and Japanese artists in unique exchange project.	<a href="#">National Dahlia Show</a> Meijer Gardens – Grand Rapids <b>8/31/2013 - 9/1/2013</b> Free admission Hundreds of dahlia flowers from across the country.	<a href="#">Michigan State Fair</a> Suburban Collection Showplace – Novi <b>08/30/13 - 09/02/13</b> \$6 and up The state fair is back with performers, livestock, a beer garden and midway.

**ORS Purpose:**  
 We are an innovative retirement organization driven to empower our customers for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

The *LookOut* is published by the Office of Retirement Services, Department of Technology, Management and Budget, State of Michigan

Director:  
 Phil Stoddard  
 Edited by Customer Education

[back to top](#)

## Summer Photo Contest

Summer is coming to a close; it's almost time to send the kids back to school, put away the beach towels, and say goodbye to the big, floppy hats.

Before we officially bid farewell to the long days of summer, let's celebrate the season with a photo contest!

Send your best summer fun picture to the LookOut by COB Wednesday, September 4 to be included in the contest. Winners will be announced in the September 6 issue!

Thanks for reading!!



---

[back to top](#)

*This issue's header is Homage to the Square, Soft Edge, Hard Edge by Josef Albers featured at the Eli Broad Museum of Art at MSU.*

**Note:** Because some of the links in this newsletter point to network resources, some of the links may not work if you are reading this outside of the organization.