

October 7, 2011

Volume 15, Issue 20

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**Calendar**

**October**

State Police Board Meeting 6

## Leadership answers your All-Staff questions

You asked, the EPC answered. A few weeks ago, you received a survey asking what you wanted covered at next week's All-Staff Meeting, and asked for any questions you have for ORS leadership. Many of you responded with questions and suggestions, and some of you used the pink cans for your thoughts. The EPC gathered and wrote plain language, straight talk answers to every question — take a look at these before the All-Staff meeting on Tuesday.

[Click here to view the questions and answers.](#)

During the meeting, **Phil Stoddard** will host a Town Hall-style question and answer session to address any follow-up, or new, questions you have.

## New line item for prescription coverage

We recently changed how we capture prescription drug coverage information in Clarety and display it on numerous forms for public school retirees.

Public school members who have Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO will now see a separate line item of \$10 for their prescription drug coverage listed with Catalyst, their prescription drug vendor. The change ensures we're able to give accurate and timely information and payment to our vendors.

Cross-process collaboration made this effort successful. CS and AST worked together to develop requirements, AST and the miAccount team made programming changes to Clarety, and CE made changes to the print and Clarety forms, and put together FAQ language for CS call agents.

Check the September Build Report on the PS home page for more details on the "health care drug split."

	Total Premium- Unsubsidized	Retirement- Paid Subsidy	Your Monthly Cost
Health Insurance - Blue Cross/Blue Shield-09 Effective 11/01/2011	\$1,205.66	\$0	\$1,205.66
Coverage - Self and Spouse			
Drug Insurance (If enrolled in BCBSM) Effective 11/01/2011	\$10.00	\$0.00	\$10.00
Coverage - Self and Spouse			
Dental/Vision Insurance Effective 11/01/2011	\$69.54	\$0	\$69.54
Coverage - Self and Spouse			

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PROactive Week	17-21
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Public School Board Meeting	20
Spacewalk	20

- On the Horizon**
- ORS Boo Day - October 28
  - Halloween - October 31
  - EPC Brown Bag lunch - November 2
  - EPC Brown Bag lunch - November 16

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

**Commonly Used Acronyms**

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (EPC, BPOs, and BPLs)
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

## Orion training helps ensure value in ORS activities

In mid-September, 18 ORS employees had the opportunity to attend a two-day training presented by Orion Development Group. Nearly fifteen years ago, Orion helped ORS become the process-based organization we are today. The training, Eliminating Non-Value Added Activities, was presented by Amanda Dietz.



Jennifer Dunavant, Angela Sanborn, and Josey McCloud complete an activity led by instructor Amanda Dietz at the Orion training in mid-September.

By identifying and eliminating non-value adding activities, ORS can reduce cost and increase customer satisfaction.

ORS staff learned how to:

- Define what value means from the customer's perspective.
- Identify process activities that create and add value to customers.
- Reduce cost by improving value adding activities and reducing non-value adding activities.
- Apply techniques that can help monitor and manage business activities.

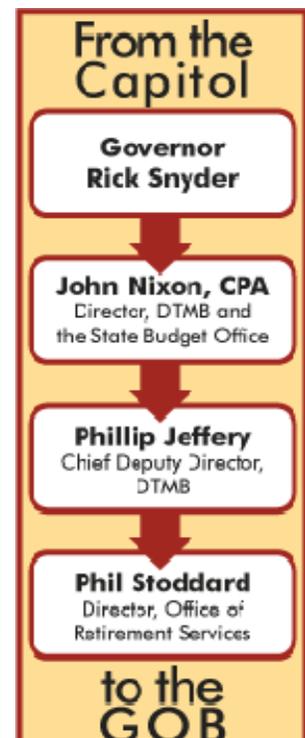
As a process-based organization, ORS will use these new tools to ensure we live up to our standards of exceeding customer expectations and reducing the roadblocks that get us to that goal.

## DTMB's chief deputy director visits ORS

ORS staff enjoyed cookies and conversation with Phillip Jeffery, chief deputy director of DTMB, during a meet and greet last week. We'll have the opportunity to hear from Mr. Jeffery again next week at the fall All-Staff Meeting.



Have you ever wondered about how DTMB's leadership is organized? To the right is a simple org-chart that shows



EPC	Executive Process Council <i>(Phil, Laurie H, Laurie M, and Anthony)</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
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

the direct line from Governor Rick Snyder to ORS Director **Phil Stoddard**.

If you'd like more information about the DTMB Executive team, check out [this page on DTMB's website](#).



**Blue Cross sends Medicare letters to public school members**

In early October, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan began sending about 55,000 letters to Medicare Advantage members with chronic health conditions who have not visited their doctor recently, and members with chronic health conditions who may be homebound. More information, including samples of the letters and FAQs, can be found on the [CS Today page](#) under the Insurance tab.

**Public school working after retirement information revamped**

Communicating complex information can be challenging, which is especially true regarding the working after retirement rules for public school employees. Last year's legislative changes created different rules, depending on whether a public school employee retired before or after July 1, 2010. In response to customer needs, we've revamped the way working after retirement information is presented; [the new content is now on the website](#) and will be changed in the public school employees' *Retirement Readiness: A Two-Year Countdown* and *After You Retire: What Every Pension Recipient Should Know* publications later this fall.



- 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



**Comings**

Congratulations to **Mark Howard** who was recently selected to fill the BPD analyst position vacated by Tom Zack. Mark served in BPD these past 16 months as a Blue Cross Blue Shield contract employee. He and his wife have a 16-month-old daughter and are expecting the arrival of their son in February. Before working with ORS, Mark taught English at a kindergarten in Korea.

Welcome to **John Schiller** who joined BPD as a financial analyst on October 3. John has 10 years of experience with DC plans and worked for the Air Force as a civilian for 15 years before that. He lives in Fenton with his family and enjoys watching his daughters play fast-pitch softball.



**Goings**

AST wishes the best to **TJ Hariprasad**. His last day is today.

**Amita Das** has accepted a new position and will leave AST on October 14. Best wishes, Amita!

**Staff on the move**

**Brad Barron**, who has been assisting with the verification of coverage (VOC) project and who worked as a contract employee in CS earlier, will be replacing Mark’s data analyst position through the Blue Cross contract. Brad has a master’s degree in public administration with a focus in health care administration.

After working-out-of-class as a supervisor and analyst for nearly two years, we congratulate **Kara Gross** who accepted an analyst position in CS. She will focus on health care, while supporting Workforce Management, Skills Based Routing, and NICE quality assurance.



### Kick off NS4RW with ING

ING is kicking off National Save for Retirement Week by hosting a desert bar in Crossroads on Monday, October 17 from 2-4 p.m., for ORS staff. The event also celebrates the partnership between ORS and ING, and recognizes both our efforts to promote retirement education and helpful service for our customers. Nice work, everyone.

Enjoy a sweet treat – you deserve it!



**ORS Style Guide and Ask Betty on CE Now**

Check out the CE Now page for easy access to the *ORS Style Guide* and Ask Betty!

Use the *Style Guide* to make your communications (letters, emails, Message Board responses, forms etc.) conform to ORS style in tone, grammar, word choice, and more.

Use Ask Betty to get help with communications like letters and presentations, or to suggest changes to existing materials like the website, forms, or publications.



Tad and Betty are your guides to stylish and clear communications.

**PoP Shout-Outs, more training sessions**

Wow! We’ve got quite an impressive list for our first recipients of the Power of Perspectives (PoP) Shout-Out awards.

Congratulations to **Jason Browning, Steve Cary, Elizabeth Chachaj, Vernique Jackson, Marie Leik, Letitia Levi, Nate Parrish, Nicole Podgorski, and Ava Smith** (all from CS), and to **Mike Surfass** (from ER). And thanks to **Tammy Stephens, Kris Morris, and Trisha Heinze** for recognizing their efforts and submitting the nominations.

Do you know of someone deserving of a PoP Shout-Out? **Nominate** as many people as you like, as often as you like; no deadlines. Winners will be announced every month.

All demonstrated open mindedness by asking questions about someone’s ideas, listening carefully to opinions, and learning from the experiences of others. Go to the Power of Perspectives Shout-Out page in the KL to learn more about what these folks did and how it’s helping creativity and innovation thrive here at ORS. Great work, everyone! Enjoy your Shout-Out awards — a special bottle of PoP pop!

In other PoP news, if you missed the earlier training sessions, now's your chance. An additional training session will be offered on the mornings of October 25th and 27th. The training is open to state employees and long-term contractors. Contact [Chanda Donnan](#) to register.



### on Matt McCool

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



**Matt McCool** is a busy guy with a can-do attitude. When he's not here working as a student assistant for the DO, or taking classes towards his bachelor's degree in business administration from Ferris State University, you can find him working as a supplemental instructional leader for the accounting department at Lansing Community College.

Matt started his new duties this past summer when he was selected to work with students struggling with their accounting courses. He meets with study groups three times a week, attends the course lecture, and participates in biweekly training meetings to strengthen his instructional leadership skills. Together they work through accounting problems given in class, as well as on homework assignments. Matt tries

to incorporate different teaching styles to accommodate the different learning preferences of the students.

In addition to teaching others, Matt has learned a few things himself: "I have learned to appreciate different perspectives when analyzing material. This experience has helped me have greater patience when explaining how a procedure would work. This experience has also helped me organize ideas in my head before verbalizing them, making them more easily understood by others."



"It gets a little hectic trying to balance my schedule at LCC with my own classes and working here at ORS," said Matt. "It is very tiring, but I really enjoy helping students who appreciate accounting as much as I do."

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## SECC event a SOUPer success

ORS and AST raised \$369 in soup sales and donations for this year's State Employees Charitable Campaign (SECC). Thanks to everyone who contributed soup, deserts, and beverages.

And, congratulations to **Swathika Thiyagarajan** (AST) for bringing in ORS's favorite dish, the Black Bean Soup!

Keep up the good work, ORS. Let's make this year's SECC the best yet!

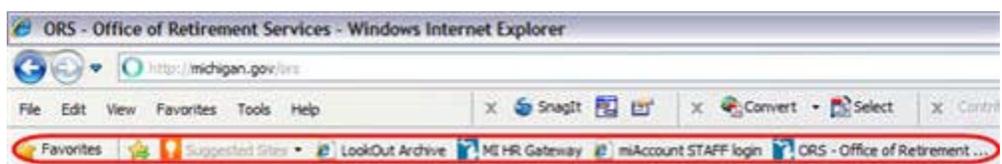


**Bookmarks bar**

Did you know you can set your Internet Explorer browser favorites so that some show up in the top of your web browser? It's simple.

Click and drag your top-used favorites—like the ORS website, ING, miHR, DTMB's intranet site, into your favorites bar folder.

Anything in the favorites bar folder will show up every time you open Internet Explorer.



## Fire awareness month's flammiferous Tips

October is fire awareness month. Below are a few tips that can help you prevent a fire and stay safe.

### 1) At home

- Know all of your nearest escape points and emergency numbers.
- Have a place to meet that's far enough from the danger but not too far.
- Install and frequently check smoke detectors.

### 2) At work

- Know your nearest exit.
- Leave immediately when the fire alarms go off.
- Mind your ORS monitors and follow their instructions.
- People who may have trouble getting out quickly have a special plan to help them in case of an emergency.

### 3) Be proactive

- Don't leave lit candles unattended, and soak matches or ashes in water before throwing them away. If you smoke, never smoke in bed, and be careful if you have taken any medication that makes you drowsy. Keep your dryer free of lint. Check all tubing regularly and clean the lint catcher before and after every use.
- When using a space heater, keep all clothing and blankets at least three feet away from the heat source.
- Don't plug too many items into an electrical outlet, and make sure you toss or repair old or frayed cords.

### 4) In case of fire

- Only worry about getting you and your family out. Never go back into the fire for any reason, and don't grab things on your way out of a fire.
- If you come to a door, check all handles with the back of your hand and open doors slowly.
- If you're stuck in a room with no way out, block all openings with a towel or clothing to keep out as much smoke out as possible. Wave bright clothing or a light out of a window to help rescue workers find you.
- Don't panic. Panicking causes you to release more carbon dioxide and by doing so you are using up your oxygen supply faster.
- Crawl low to the ground to stay below the smoke line. If possible, grab a damp cloth to breathe through to help keep ash and smoke out of your lungs.
- If you catch on fire, do not run. Running will cause the flames to burn faster and hotter, so if you find yourself on fire, stop, drop, and, roll.

For more fire prevention tips visit [the Home Safety Council website](#).

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## Kudos to staff!

Huge kudos to **Angie Schrauben** and **Shannon Prawdzik** who used their sign language skills to help out a hearing-impaired couple in the walk-in office recently. The duo not only went the extra mile but proved what I've always known – they are wonderful customer service representatives and ORS should be proud to have them as employees. Of course, neither of them thinks they did anything special. It was just what they do and who they are naturally.



Thank you to **Lisa Braun** and the **CS student staff** who helped plan Chad's baby party. Keegan also says thank you! In Chad's words, "It seriously made my month. ... You guys rock!"



Thank you, **Vernique Jackson**! Your support during the Process Documentation project has been tremendous and you've done a fabulous job learning a new program and managing all of the documents.



Kudos to **Brenda Ritenburgh** for providing wonderful service to our members!



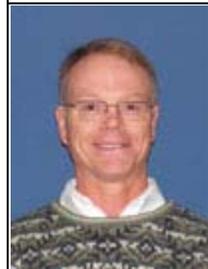
Big kudos to **Carolyn Parkinson** for ALWAYS ALWAYS helping out. A coworker said, "Whenever I'm swamped, she helps carry the burden. From editing, to writing, to researching — she's there when I need her. Thanks, Carolyn. So much!"



A big kudos to **Chanda Donnan** for recruiting more help to clean Central Perk, and to those who answered her call who were not scheduled to clean! Without Chanda's quick action, a mere four people would have had to attempt to clean Central Perk. Those who answered the call are a shining example of the good people here at ORS.

I want to give thanks to the entire AST scheduler team, especially to **Mike Bilek, Sandra McClendon, Robert Pollick, Venkat Ramakrishnan, Thasin Sardar, and Brenda Smith**. "When a coworker was on an extended absence, I inherited some of her job duties. I had a tight deadline to get a form ready for prime time. This team

patiently walked me through the process and helped me fix any bumps that came up along the way. Thank you!"



Kudos to **Fred Doll** for putting together a very nice *LookOut* article about the ER Outreach survey.



Kudos to **Steve Crippen** who gave an excellent presentation at a recent public school board meeting. According to one attendee, "It was the best review of the pension tax changes I've seen to date. It will be an excellent resource for employees and recent retirees with questions."



Thank you so much, **Julie Wight**, for your enthusiasm to keep CS knowledge flowing. The way you take a lead on ensuring your coworkers have the KL available is awesome.



Kudos to **Kay Johnston** who has a fabulous voice for ORS! Thanks to her and her great work on the employer tutorials.



I wanted to extend my appreciation to **Pam Ward** on behalf of ORS for your heroic efforts in the recent space redesign for our new staff. I was quite amazed and surprised to hear that the space would be ready when staff completed their training. This was done in record time!

I want to say that all of the temporary staff assisting with the verification of coverage (VOC) project have been doing a wonderful job! Big kudos to **Brad Barron, David Meiers, Kim Wilcox, and Don Williams.**



Kudos to **Lynn Stowell** for assisting with insurance questions members have in the walk in office.



I was trying to get help from **Deb Lawrence**, who I think is 5-star wonderful, and she knew what to try right away. I like to share sunshine and we all need to know when someone appreciates us. So, good going, Deb!



Thank you to **Robert Glennon** for taking our input about the walk-in area seriously. I went down and said to Craig, "Wow, they took my suggestion!" Having all the shortcuts to our websites, phone directory, etc., made my life so much easier the two days I was in walk-ins this week. Thanks again!

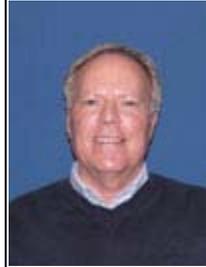
Thanks to **Carolyn Parkinson** and **Rosemary Baker** for all their hard work in preparing and delivering the Festival of Forms training to their CE team members. They provided an enjoyable and informative learning experience on something that's very detailed and often confusing.



Thanks to **Mary Anderson** for helping with the difficult death processing accounts.



Thank you to **Lisa Braun** for not even thinking twice about working on a last minute project for me, and doing it in the spirit of excellence. You ROCK!!



Thank you **Tom Schwab** for always having a smile on your face and for inviting us all over for a pool party :)



I just wanted to say thanks to **Olivia Johnson** for being such a pleasure to work with! This afternoon she helped with a major workload and I'm sincerely grateful. I just wanted to give a shout-out to Olivia for being super AWESOME!

The new Pension Plus plan brought new reporting and payment requirements to the public schools. ER staff **Lyndsey Bagi**, **Joe Osentoski**, and **Michelle Thompson** have worked very closely with the schools to help them comply with the new rules. This team has called the schools, provided the schools analysis and data, and has help the schools understand what the school needed to do. This has been a very big effort and is really paying off. This team is supported by ER call center staff **Kay Johnston**, **Annette Ruiz**, and **Deb Lawrence** who get many of the initial calls. Also in support are **Rebecca Cole**, **Becky Davis**, **Katelyn Henika**, and **Brenda Ritenburgh**. Financial services staff Paula Webb and Jamin Schroeder have also made significant contributions to the effort.



Thank you, **Angie Parkhurst**, for being awesome. "I've had to ask you to switch tasks in the middle of your day and you do so with so much finesse. Never a grunt or even a peep about, 'Why is this person asking me to do stuff?' It's very mature and I think you are an amazing person." Kudos!



Big kudos to **Jim Rademacher** for helping out with a last-minute query! He stepped up when a colleague was gone and was able to gather the exact data I needed in less than a day. Thanks so much!



Thank you, **Pam Garver**, for being so wonderful! You always go above and beyond!! Just the right balance of passion, energy, smarts, and intuition.

**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,



Kudos to **Sam Sanders**. A coworker said, "Thank you for everything you do!"

The new Pension Plus website looks great, it's clear, simple – fabulous! "I love it! Congratulations **Robin Stremlow** and **Lyndsay Aldrich** for all your hard work putting this together!"



Kudos to **Aaron Usher** for getting me clear, concise answers about some new insurance laws and how they might affect customers. He's truly a fount of knowledge!



Huge thank you to **Thasin Sardar** and **the AST team**. "I continue to be impressed with the high level of customer service you provide. You make my job so much easier! Thanks!"



A big thanks to **Angie DeRose** for always being there to answer random questions from her coworkers.

State of Michigan

Director:  
Phil Stoddard  
Edited by Customer  
Education

Thanks to the **students in CS** for putting together Shay Ells's going away party.

Thanks for reading!!



Thank you, **Andrew O'Keefe**, for helping with apps and Excel. A coworker said, "It's great to be on the same team as you."



Thank you, **Danielle Fowler**, for your assistance on the PowerPoint presentation I was developing for the EPC. Your addition of graphics to the slides enhanced the presentation and made it easier to follow and understand. This definitely added to the professionalism and quality of the presentation.



Let me say that **Kim Marton** is an absolute gem. She took the time to understand our need and the issues, figured out the best approach, sought answers from the right people so as to minimize delays and red tape, analyzed and prepared the recommendation, and then pursued it with the tenacity we've come to love her for. Hang on to that girl!

**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.