



Look Out

August 22, 2003

Volume 7, Issue 17

ORS Mission:

We deliver pensions, related benefits and services to promote the future financial security of our customers.

ORS Vision:

Fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service.

ORS Calendar

September

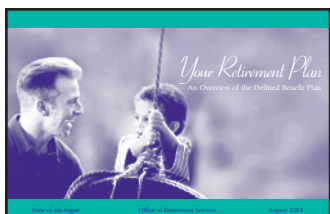
Labor Day 1st
 Public School Employees
 Board Meeting 4th
 Employee Open
 Enrollment Ends 6th
 State Employees Board
 Meeting 11th
 U of M Day 12th
 DMB Celebration 16th
 MSU Day 19th

Customer Education publishes new SERS books

You may be familiar with the current State Employees' Guidelines, which encompasses everything from eligibility for retirement to disability issues. Keeping our customers in mind, Customer Education has redesigned the book into four targeted publications.

The following publications will be available the first week of September.

- *Your Retirement Plan: An Overview of the Defined Benefit Plan.* This



handbook can be referenced by members at any time in their careers. It

provides general information about the Defined Benefit plan, as well as suggestions for long-term retirement planning.

- *Enhancing Your Pension: Earning and Purchasing Service Credit.* For Defined Benefit plan members who are interested in



increasing their pension amounts, or qualifying earlier, by adding to their service credit. The book includes details on the types of service credit available, how to apply, and different ways to pay.

- *Retirement Readiness: A Two-Year Countdown.* For Defined Benefit plan members who are within a few years of retiring. This book contains specifics on how pensions are calculated, the various payment

See New SERS books on page 2

Thank you
 EMPAC for a
 wonderful picnic!

Click here for more
 picnic photos.

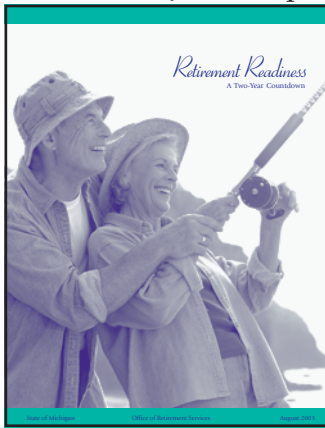


New SERS books

Continued from page 1

options, how to prepare for retirement, and the application process. It includes several worksheets and examples so members can make informed decisions about their pension options.

- *After You Retire: What Every Pension Recipient Should Know.* Members will receive this book with their final award letters. It tells retirees what to expect, and how and when they should contact ORS after their retirement benefits begin.



Two more booklets are planned to complete the SERS Defined Benefit plan series: *If You Become*

Disabled: Your State Disability Protection, and Leaving State Employment: Effects on Your Pension.

Another two publications are in the works for Defined Contribution members – an

introduction to the plan as well as a benefits guide.

All of the books will be available in Acrobat (.pdf) format on the ORS website. Members will be able to pick the publication that's most relevant to their career stage, search for topics by keyword, link to pages

by clicking on any table of contents entry, and print all or part of any publication on their home printers. Of course, staff can do the same – you'll definitely want to bookmark this site when it comes online.

The *Guidelines* revision project is yet another step forward in our effort to provide complete and accurate information to our customers so they can

make informed decisions about their financial future. The communication team extends a huge thanks to the many, many ORS staff who patiently shared their expertise for this project. Brace yourself – communication staff will soon be reappearing at your desk to start tackling new guidelines for our public school members.

Comings and Goings

Welcome to **Kerrie Vanden Bosch**, who arrived at ORS August 11. Kerrie is currently a student at Michigan State University working on her Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology. Here at ORS, she is working with the Change Management Team on the Vision project.

We also welcome **Anna Amirante** and **Ben Spitzley** from CareerQuest, who joined ORS on August 6.

Anna attends Michigan State University when she's not caring for her 3-year-old



Anna Amirante

daughter, Camryn. She hopes to earn a degree in Elementary Education.

Ben, originally from Haslett, graduated from MSU in May of 2001 with a degree in business administration. He currently resides in Haslett.

Both Anna and Ben are helping out in Employer Reporting.

Customer Accounts said good-bye to **Sara Credeur**



Ben Spitzley

whose last day was Monday, August 11.



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SPOTLIGHT

on Kay Johnston

Coin collecting, fishing, non-competitive sports, arts and crafts – what do they have in common? They are just a few of the many of hobbies that people engage in to relax and unwind – and maybe serve as a creative outlet at the same time.



Kay Johnston

For Kay Johnston, creating pottery is just one of many different artistic activities she's pursued over the years. Using her hands and her imagination, Kay can shape and mold this earthy clay into a distinctive and useful piece of art. She might bend slabs of clay into a decorative plate or weave strips of clay into a basket to hold fruit or fresh rolls, or mold a mound of soft clay into a beautiful vessel on the pottery wheel. Kay can direct her creative juices into the project at hand, having total control over what it will evolve into. And if she doesn't like the end result, she can throw it back into the clay bucket and start over.

Kay started making pottery and other 3-dimensional crafts during her college days at Western Michigan University. She was pursuing a degree in theater performance with an emphasis in directing. Although theater directing is an art form – like painting with people – Kay wanted another creative outlet that might give her a refreshing break from some of the inherent stresses involved in being a theater major. One of Kay's professors, Lyda Stillwell, was supportive of her pursuits and helped her realize that creativity and an artistic nature don't have to be limited to one discipline.



Kay signed up for a pottery class and found it to be just the type of outlet she needed. She continued taking other types of art classes, but especially enjoyed the 3-dimensional arts such as ceramics and metal-smithing. By the time she completed graduation requirements for her theater performance degree, Kay had acquired enough credits for a minor in art.



Although Kay has a pottery wheel at home and has created many elegant pieces there, she found that she missed the interaction and camaraderie of being with others who have similar artistic interests. Fortunately Kay found a retired art teacher, Jerry, who teaches pottery classes from his studio in Grand Ledge. Jerry was willing to provide her with a creative environment complete with studio space, tools, and equipment that she didn't have at home, plus access to several different types of kilns used to fire special types of clay and pottery. Each fall and spring, when Jerry holds classes at his studio, Kay tries to arrange her schedule so she can attend. She continues to learn new techniques and through the classes can share her ideas and enthusiasm for this art form with others.

Over the years, Kay has generously shared her creations with many folks at ORS. She's donated many different items for the EMPAC auctions and special sales and she puts her pottery to functional use for staff celebrations or special events. We've pictured a few of her favorite pieces here, but if you want to see more, stop by her cubicle.

If you're looking for a creative outlet, Kay's advice is: "Try something. Often we limit ourselves. We need to allow ourselves to try. Don't limit your creativity to just one thing. Many times actors may be good at painting, or a dancer may have success with sculpture. Personally I think of myself as an artist with many brushes – I've just laid the theater brush aside for awhile and picked up the pottery tool."

Your Idea Count\$

Your Idea Count\$ is an initiative spearheaded by DMB Director **Mitch Irwin** to gather employee input for cutting costs across state government. Mitch firmly believes that the best ideas for economizing will come from the employees who bring first-hand knowledge of DMB operations.

Mitch urges employees to look for ways to improve department operations and continue to cut expenses. "I'm especially interested in ideas that may involve processes across offices in the department," he says.

Two DMB employee suggestions have been implemented to date:



- **Reduction in trash pickup at Vehicle and Travel Services**

(VTS). Trash pickups at VTS have been reduced from five to three times weekly, resulting in annual savings projected at \$2,772. Patrick Miller of VTS submitted the suggestion.

- **Designating CareerQuest as DMB's first contact for temporary help.** CareerQuest, a provider of temporary employee services, works with DMB at a lower administrative markup than other businesses providing similar services. To date, that effort has reduced contract costs by \$2,787. As contracts continue to be arranged through the agency, additional savings are expected. Because CareerQuest may not be able to fill all of DMB's temporary help needs, the department will continue to work with other service providers. Vivian Grinnell of Infrastructure Services submitted the suggestion.

Send your suggestions to Your Idea Count\$ by email to DMB-OrgServices@michigan.gov, or by ID mail to Organizational Services, Lewis Cass Building 2nd Floor to the attention of Pam Nemanis.

**Thanks to all who
participated in the book sale!
EMPAC made \$196.25!**

Construction Update:



The detours around Fast Easy Access Road are displayed on the wall just inside Wing A. Watch our progress as the detours close and our road straightens. Keep an eye on the Blaster Worm, too, - you never know where he might show up! We've also received reports that the worms are breeding. Two new ones called Sobig.f@mm and Nachi.worm have been spotted.



The Emergency Road Crew is paving the TDP posting potholes - and early reports show that they are making huge progress. Since August 11, they have posted over 100,000 TDP payments - and they did it under tough working conditions.



The Benefits Management process has completed repairs on the Insurance Correspondence stretch of the road. This detour has been removed from Fast Easy Access Road - take a look at our newest, clear stretch of highway.



The Adopt-the-Vision Highway project has started. By now, each of you has talked with or received a message from your supervisors inviting you to sign up for the project. Team dates and activities will be published shortly.



14th Annual ORS-Partners Golf Outing:

The 14th Annual ORS-Partners Golf Outing had another wonderful day for golf. Eighteen foursomes participated in the outing this year and another 4 drove beverage carts for a total of 76 participants. This year's outing included ORS staff, former staff, and a bunch of business partners, family, and friends.

After checking in and picking up "goody bags" which included nifty knickknacks, trinkets and trash, and a sleeve of golf balls, participants lunched on hotdogs, chips, and pops. Then as the Grand Ledge Country Club (GLCC) airhorn "shotgun" sounded, everyone headed out to the links under a bright, sunny sky with a nice breeze.

Two beverage carts served ice-cold bottled water and cans of pop, all included in the price of the outing. After 18 holes of golf, dinner was served in the GLCC banquet hall with Italian chicken breasts, BBQ pork sandwiches, hotdogs, and lots of salads, chips, fixings, cookies, and more beverages.

There were five hole-prize winners and a Goofus prize for most lost balls as well as lots of

wonderful door prizes including folding chairs, golf club covers, polo shirts, golf balls, and plenty of \$10 & \$20 restaurant gift certificates. Special gifts were presented to the beverage cart drivers, **Becky Cain, Raini Majeske, Mary Pickens, and Pat VerPlanck** for their help.

The golf winners were awarded medallions as follows:

1st place GOLD medallions (with a 13 under par 59) The Masters: **Dick Pennington** - ORS, **John Donovan** - ORS, **Jeff Dumroese** - ORS, and **Brad Choate** - MSP Crime Lab.

2nd place SILVER medallions (with a 10 under par 62 and with 22 putts - tie breaker) The Four Aces: **Tom Schaefer** - ORS, **Chris Goodman** - Gabriel, Roeder & Smith Consultants, **Rich Williams** - Williams & Carroll Financial Planning, and **Jason Sikkenga** - student.

3rd place BRONZE medallions (also with a 62 but with 23 putts) Phil's Fearsome Foursome: **Phil Stoddard** -ORS, **Barb Murphy** - BCBSM, **Mike Murphy** - Barb's husband, **Darrell Newsone** - BCBSM.

Right: **Lisa Barrone, Cindee Clouse, Beth Nurenberg, and Kim Preston** ham it up on the golf course.



Left: The 76 participants in this year's golf outing prepare for the day's events.



Left: "Beverage Cart Chicks" **Pat VerPlanck** and **Raini Majeske** take a break from delivering refreshments.

Right: **Charla Clifford, Gordon Hicks, Faye Young, and Maureen Carden** pose for a team photo.



[Click here for more photos at F:\Shared Photos\GolfOuting8-2003\index.htm](F:\Shared Photos\GolfOuting8-2003\index.htm)