



April 4, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 7

Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

- In This Issue
- Temps wrap up two successful projects for ORS
 - Different approach to application processing this year
 - It's school incentives season
 - Spring in the walk-in office
 - CS/CE quarterly meeting recap
 - Business Briefs
 - Comings & Goings
 - Tech Tips
 - Snap a new pic for the Photoboard

Temps wrap up two successful projects for ORS

March 28 was the last day for the temporary staff working on CS projects. The temps were instrumental in the Insurance Dependent Audit and Affordable Care Act Find Your Healthy Fit projects. The final numbers aren't in yet, but early metrics look good.



Find Your Healthy Fit. Temporary staff made more than 17,000 outbound calls and talked to more than 8700 retirees! Their calls, a follow up to the Find Your Healthy Fit mailer, spurred at least 55 members to decide that a plan under the healthcare exchanges was a better fit than their ORS retiree insurance. We expect more retirees to drop our coverage and enroll in Medicaid when the expansion takes effect in early April.

Insurance Dependent Audit. Temps processed documentation returned by members who were audited to ensure spouses and dependents were eligible to stay enrolled in ORS insurances. Through these efforts, 28 spouses and 192 dependents who were no longer eligible were identified and were disenrolled from insurances.

Making sure only those eligible for insurance are enrolled, and helping those who would save money in a different plan, means current and future cost savings for the retirement system.

The temps helped ORS to forge operational excellence by focusing their work on these special projects which had minimal impact on full time staff.

[back to top](#)

Calendar

April	
Tax Day	15
Easter	20
Earth Day	22
Administrative Professionals Day	23
All-Staff Meeting	29

- On The Horizon
- State police board meeting - May 8
 - Mother's Day

Different approach to application processing this year

Most ORS staff members know that spring and summer each year means an increase in the MPSERS retirement



- May 11
- State employees board meeting
- May 15
- Memorial Day
- May 26
- Public school employees board meeting
- May 29

applications since July 1 is the most popular retirement effective date. To absorb this increased business, Customer Service begins planning early by forecasting volume and making plans to staff the work in a way that ensures that our customers do not have a gap in income between active employment and retirement. The past couple of years we've had some temporary staff on hand which helped absorb the impact to other parts of the business while additional resources helped with retirement processing.

This year is different and thus the planning has to be different. It's estimated that about 4,000 members will retire effective July 1, and an additional 1,000 will retire effective June or August. Making sure these customers receive their first pension payment on time requires about 15 dedicated staff. Plus we have other work that must continue. This means taking a hard look at how resources can be used most effectively to support all of the goals.

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

Who will be selected for application processing training? CS supervisors have reviewed their staff members' skill sets and matched their skills to the priority work that needs to be done in addition to application processing – phone and message board support, other application processing (SERS, disability), insurance enrollment and discrepancy management, etc. As a result, staff have been identified and assigned in order to make the best use of all resources and minimizes the effect on our customers. **Jennifer Dunavant** will train the selected application processing teammates and then supervise their output.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 Orientation (<i>state employees</i>)
PS	Process Support

Greater use of technology should also help streamline the process this year. Each week, those applicants who have filed for retirement will receive a GovDelivery email to set expectations in order to reduce "where's my stuff?" calls. We'll also use secure Message Board to send outbound messages requesting missing proofs that might delay their retirement processing. Working together, we'll tackle this increased business and still maintain our desired service levels across the organization.

[back to top](#)

It's school incentives season

"My school is offering an incentive. What happens now?" Members ask a lot of questions when their employers offer retirement incentives. But the question that matters to us as ORS representatives is different.

Some schools and community colleges offer incentives for employees to retire early. We don't need to get bogged down in the details of the specific incentive; we only need to know, "According to P.A. 300, as amended, are they eligible to retire?"

Even if members decide to take an incentive offered by their employer, they still have to meet eligibility requirements to retire in the public schools retirement system. If they stop working and aren't eligible to retire under one of the rules they'll be deferred, which may affect their insurance subsidy eligibility.



[back to top](#)

Spring in the walk-in office

As the weather takes a turn for the better, the



SME	Subject Matter Expert
UAT	User Acceptance Testing



- Forge Operational Excellence
- Instill Customer Confidence
- Engage Hearts and Minds

walk-in staff have been receiving an upturn in member visits. Not only are driving conditions improving allowing for safer travel to our office but with summer rapidly approaching many public school members are starting the process to retire.

This year the walk-in office has been busier than normal. Last year, February and March saw about 350 members in total. This year has been almost double that. **Rudy Litterini** says, "School layoffs, pay cuts, and buyouts being offered have made a noticeable difference in member volume in the walk-in office."

Although many districts haven't begun spring break just yet, a member mentioned to **Dominique Davis** they knew ORS would be busy during that time and came to beat the crowds. "Spring break may be the busiest time of the year," Rudy added.

[back to top](#)

CS/CE quarterly meeting recap

The CS/CE Quarterly combined meeting took place on April 1 and started with an April Fools True and False Quiz. (Did you know that Chuck Norris counted to infinity twice? Yes, he did!) The winners won casual day passes for a year. (April Fools! Only for one day.)



The meeting continued by recognizing five new part-time employees in CS (**Lisa Arnott, Sean Gardner, Valerie Holley, Donna Seeger, and Stefanie Turner**), seven new full-time employees in CS (**Mike Bates, Erica Higbee, Andrea McDonnell, David Meiers, Marissa Palacio, William Roe, and Jeff Rudnick**), and one new employee in CE (**Amy Buttery**).

Thirteen employees were recognized by their supervisors and leaders for a variety of different accomplishments (**Andrea McDonnell, Linda Johnston, Jawone Baker, Latoya Hill, Judy Snell, Angie Parkhurst, Krystal Strachan, Amy Buttery, Sandy Blommer, Erica Higbee, Heather Zaban, Sandra Croom, and Alvina Manson**).

The meeting then turned to three presentations.

Bianca Torres spoke briefly about the role of the Call Center Coordinator and how reports and data are used for production planning.

Andy Kolp and **Ian Broughton** presented plans for handling the processing of an estimated 4,000 applications containing a July 1 effective date. An exciting new development this year is using the GovDelivery mass email service to set customer expectations about when they can expect their application to be processed. Application processing staff will also be able to send outbound messages to members who are missing documentation for their application.

Ian also provided an overview of the *Lilly Project*, a part of MSU's Lilly Teaching Follows Program. ORS will work in conjunction with Michigan State University on a project designed to benefit university instructors, university students, as well as state government. **Dominique Davis**, from CE, is leading a team of MSU students in the analysis of data as to why customers call ORS with questions. A final report on this project is expected in April.

The next CS/CE Quarterly Meeting will happen this summer.

[back to top](#)



STAFF TRAINING

On March 26, **Marla Milton** attended *DDI – Communicating With Impact* and *DDI – Navigating Beyond Conflict*.

Chantele Geisenhaver and **Heather Zaban** attended *DDI – Valuing Differences* on March 27. This training provides the trainees effective skills and tools for exploring others' unique perspectives, understanding and leveraging people's inherent differences, challenging devaluing behavior, and creating an environment in which people's differences are respected and utilized.

On April 2 and 3, **Steve Cary, Dominique Davis, Ray Fleming, Michael Herbach, Malachi Hooser, Kayla Lintz, Ryan Marr, David Mogel, Ryan Nevins, Nate Parish, Angela Sanborn, Ben Southwell, Mary Staley, Trista Stine, Bianca Torres, Pam Ward, and Amy Wheeler** attended *Visio 2013* training. Ray stated, "I've used Visio before and had to find things by accident. The training helped show me quicker ways to make flow charts and process maps and expanded my understanding of other things Visio could do that I could not have imagined."

back to top



business briefs

ORS presents training to state employee HR staff

State employee HR staff welcomed **Trista Stine** at their last two meetings in downtown Lansing. At a January meeting she gave a presentation explaining recent changes in reporting new hires and rehires. Last week she provided an overview of insurances for DC plan participants.

ORS meets with Logistics & Ops Support

Representatives from ORS meet with partners at DTMB's Logistics and Operations Support on a quarterly basis to foster our vital relationship, which supports many parts of our business at ORS. **Andy Kolp, Ian Broughton, Lyndsay Aldrich, and Dominique Davis** attended on March 24 to explore lessons learned over the past quarter, what's new in the business, and what's on the horizon.

LOS is an agency within DTMB's Office of Support Services that contains Printing Services, Mailing Services, and Delivery, Warehouse, and Surplus Services.

ORS honored as Plan Sponsor of the Year finalist

ORS has been named as a finalist in the Plan Sponsor of the Year for Public Defined Contribution plans. You can view the nomination at the Plan Sponsor website, [here](#), on page 45.

back to top



Coming



AST welcomed project manager **Samar Benthami** to the team on March 13. Samar has worked for the state for 6 years, as a programmer at DHS and most recently as a project manager within DTMB. She earned her master's in electrical engineering at the University of Quebec, lives in DeWitt with her husband and two sons, and enjoys spending time and traveling with her family.



PS welcomed their newest analyst **Jennifer O'Herron** on March 3. Jennifer joins ORS from the Office of Child Support where she worked as a trainer on the MiCSES project. Jennifer studied at GVSU where she earned two Bachelor's degrees, in English and History. She lives in the St. Johns area and enjoys hiking and the outdoors, especially the Manitou islands.

Going

BPD wishes the best to **Aaron Usher**, his last day is today, April 4.

CE says farewell to **Danielle Fowler**. Her last day is April 11.

AST wished the best to **Julie Soliz**, **Bhuvaneshkarthick Krishnasamy**, and **Dean Feldpausch**. Their last days were March 7, 20, and 21, respectively.

On the Move

Robert Grescowle began WOC as an analyst in CE on March 24.

[back to top](#)



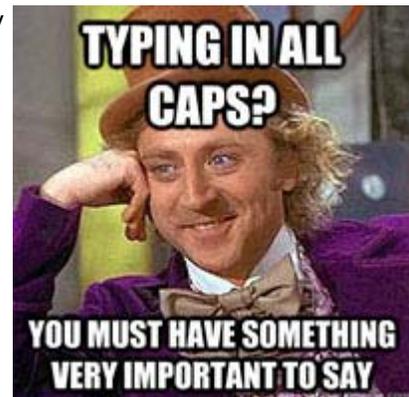
Removing all caps

If you've read the *ORS Style Guide* (or spend any time on the Internet), you probably know that all caps is SHOUTING. But, if you work in Siebel, you know all caps is the rule for comments. If you go back and forth from Siebel to Clarety or Outlook to create documents or send email, you might forget to unlock the CAPS LOCK button, AND THEN EVERYTHING YOU TYPE IS IN ALL CAPS.

Is there anything you can do, other than backspace and retype everything?

Yes, there is!

- Highlight all the text with your mouse.
- Hold down Shift and F3 at the same time.
- Like magic, your text will turn into all lower case!
- If you hold down Shift and F3 again, the text will become title case



(the first letter of the sentence is a capital letter).

- If you hold it down once more, it will go back to all caps.

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

This trick works in Word and Outlook, but won't work in Excel or Siebel.

[back to top](#)

Snap a new pic for the Photoboard

Tired of your old picture in Crossroads or on the [digital photoboard](#)? Don't recognize your own staff picture in the *LookOut*?

Get a new picture taken! If you would like a new picture, please complete and submit an email [using this template](#). We'll schedule a few minutes to take some new photos and help you pick the best one. We look forward to seeing you!



[back to top](#)

Thanks for reading!!



This week's header is a photomicrograph of an ocean jasper from Madagascar, taken by Bernardo Cesare.

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.