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It's a celebration!

Teamwork. Excellence. Inclusion. These words describe our values as state employees and we have heard them often in the past few years. The values were brought home in a most powerful way at last week's Vision ORS celebration.

On March 9, ORS joined the dozens of partners from inside and outside state government who helped make our pension payroll replacement a success. As speakers representing our many partners used acronyms that only someone intimate with our business would know—terms like WANG, SRVS, EFT, CPP, MAIN—it was apparent that an extraordinary partnership was behind an extraordinary achievement. And as the many, many people who were recognized stood up so we could applaud them, we saw faces from Covansys, DMB's Finance, Audit, and Agency Services, Application Support Team (AST), Department of Information Technology (DIT), Office of Financial Management (OFM), and Department of Treasury.

Partners helped us at every stage, from the initial visioning seven years ago; through many months of setting requirements, data purity projects, programming, training, testing and reconciling; and finally, to mailing the pensions generated by the new system to our retirees.



"This is a very, very strong team that knows its business. Congratulations and thank you for a job well done, ORS and all your partners."

--Lisa Webb Sharpe, Director
Department of Management & Budget

Calendar

March	
St. Patrick's Day	17
First Day of Spring	20
Fly a kite day	27
April	
State Employees Board Meeting	13
Tax Day	15
Easter	16
State Police Board Meeting	20
Public School Employees Board Meeting	27

Quick Links

- [Email the LookOut staff](#)

DMB Director Lisa Webb Sharpe set the tone as she donned a "Vision ORS—Celebrate Success" t-shirt. "Government works when people don't know it exists," she said. "Thanks to a job well done by ORS and its partners, people are getting their checks, just like before. We didn't get a single call, email, or letter from your

- [LookOut Archives](#)
- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Policies and Procedures](#)



" IT projects are successful when it's an organizational transformation involving people, processes, and technology—not just IT. The model we put in place worked here, ... and it's a model for the entire state."

--Ken Theis, Chief Deputy Director
Department of Information Technology

thousands of customers."

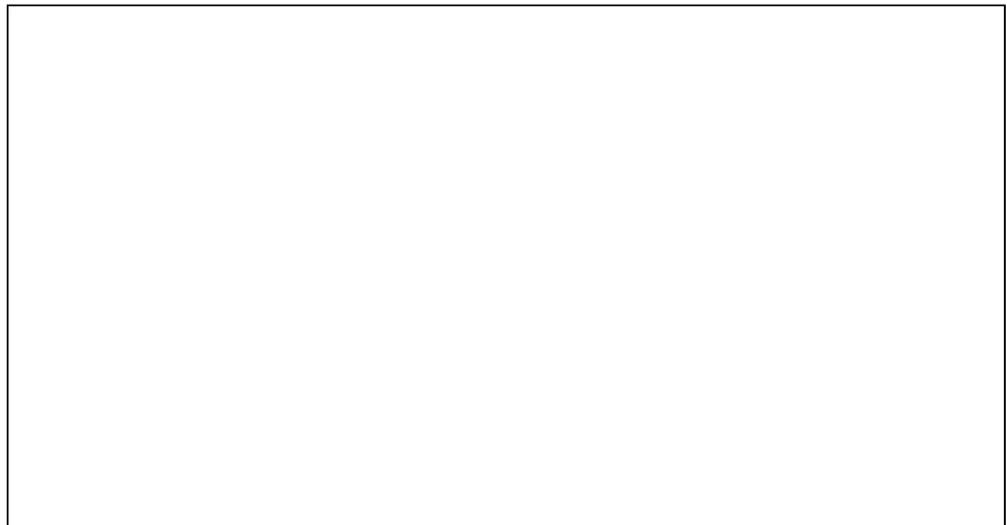
Lisa read a letter from Governor Granholm, who regretted that she was unable to attend. The Governor expressed her "sincere gratitude for a job well done," and said: "You should take great pride in your accomplishments. Whether you were directly involved with daily oversight or worked behind-the-scenes maintaining excellent customer service, your contribution is very much appreciated."

ORS Director **Chris DeRose** introduced and thanked ORS's key partners in the project, as well as key players on the project team. He also commended those in ORS who kept the business running while others were pulled away. "Even in the tough moments, we never lost track of our vision," he said. "And now we're taking advantage of exciting new tools on our desktop that let us serve our customers better."

Also taking the podium for brief comments and congratulations were Michelle Jones and Avind Malhotra of Covansys; Ken Theis of DIT; Rose Wilson of Agency Services; Mike Gilliland of Finance and Audit Services; and **Ray McIntosh**, Project Manager.

Most of the speakers said the project's success is due in large part to executive support, naming ORS director Chris DeRose as the one who kept us looking in the same direction and focused on results. Said Ken Theis, "He was the visionary who was able to operationalize the model and bring that vision to reality." Ray McIntosh concluded the ceremony by offering a definition of a project champion: "proactive doers, optimistic that they can make things happen with an unshakeable determination to succeed." Ray then lead the audience in a cheer for Chris, our project champion.

Congratulations to everyone who helped us on our journey to the ORS vision of *fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service.*





"We're here to celebrate an amazing accomplishment. It's here, and it's working well."
 - - **Chris DeRose**, Director, Office of Retirement Services

"Project Champions are ... 'proactive do-ers. They make things happen. They are mostly optimistic by nature and refuse to let obstacles like red tape, unhelpful people and other insignificant things get in their way.' Let's all give a hand to our project champion, Chris DeRose, who's been the guy with an 'unshakeable determination to succeed.'"
 - - **Ray McIntosh**, Project Manager

You ought to be in pictures

Coming soon to a website near you: "How to Earn or Buy Service Credit" and "How to Pay for Service Credit"

Location: The ORS Public Schools Employees website

Starring: Joy Bartell

Written and directed by: Ray Fleming

Technical gurus/special effects: Robert Glennon and Angie Schrauben



Review: ★★★★★

The Customer Education and Development team has created two service credit vignettes for the Michigan Public School Employees website. The vignettes are film clips in which Joy appears at the top left corner of the computer monitor and while she is speaking, a corresponding PowerPoint runs. The clip is also captioned for the hearing impaired. Each clip is about seven minutes long.

This is new technology for the Customer Education and Development team. At a team meeting last summer, it was decided that creating video clips, or vignettes, for the web was a top priority of the group. "We have created a whole list of topics we would like to cover," said **Ray Fleming**. "We started with service credit because it's something a lot of our customers ask about. We are counting on this tool to provide our customers with this information up front, so they will know if they are truly interested in purchasing service."

The clips are being previewed by a group of school employees who will view the clips on different computer systems. After testing, the clips will be launched on the website.

For a sneak preview, click on the link above.

Excellence Award nominations are in!

Reaching Mailbox 51 by the March 1 deadline, nineteen ORS employees were nominated for the ORS Excellence Awards. Each of the nominees was presented a certificate and honored with a luncheon hosted by ORS EPC.

Below are just a few of the many glowing comments the nominees received from their peers.

 <p>Jaime Abednego Director's Office</p> <p>Nominated for: Everyday Hero by Terry Jacobson</p> <p>"Jaime is always willing to face new challenges and take on additional responsibilities. She understands teamwork and can be counted on to step up in times of need. She accepted responsibility for acting as Interim Administrative Hearing Coordinator. She has proven to be dependable, and diligent to details in all aspects of her work."</p>	 <p>Laurie Abraham Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Customer Service, Everyday Hero, Innovator, Leadership & Living the Values by Lisa Kalchik</p> <p>"She is very knowledgeable and is always willing to share it. She is helpful, polite, and treats our customers with respect. She will skip a lunch or stay late to get answers for others and is always willing to help. Laurie works with and is always willing to do what needs to be done for the betterment of ORS."</p>
 <p>Lila Christiansen Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Leadership by Maureen Carden</p> <p>"She consistently demonstrates the qualities of a good leader. Lila is a team player and recognizes the strengths and qualities of others. She did an excellent job with training and positively promoted the 3.2 project."</p>	 <p>Angie DeRose Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Living the Values by Anne Watros</p> <p>"Angie expects equality and fairness towards all in Customer Accounts. She is the first person to drop what she is doing to assist others. Angie is diligent in getting results and greatly helped to diminish service credit backlogs and maintaining the 10-day turn-around for evaluations and billing statements."</p>
 <p>Fred Doll Benefit Plan Design</p> <p>Nominated for: Everyday Hero by Brian McLane and Dan Mackey</p> <p>"Fred consistently goes above and beyond what is expected of him, especially as evidenced with the Balanced Scorecard Training and taking over Act 218 (social security).</p>	 <p>Pam Kenney Customer Education and Development</p> <p>Nominated for: Living the Values by Fred Covert</p> <p>"She is honest and trustworthy and has the courage to model her beliefs and values every chance she gets. She also demonstrates care and concern for others. Pam routinely takes on additional</p>

<p>He also organizes and oversees ORS projects to benefit others such as 119th Battalion, and the 2005 Fall Harvest Gathering.”</p>	<p>tasks without complaint. Pam works in Customer Education and Development. Besides conducting Preretirement Information Meetings, Pam also works with school and state employer groups for retirement reporting to ORS.”</p>
 <p>Deb Lawrence Employer Reporting</p> <p>Nominated for: Everyday Hero by Joanne Masarik</p> <p>“She has a very optimistic attitude and a great working relationship with other employees. She is very dependable, and completes assignments in a timely manner.”</p>	 <p>Josey McCloud Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Everyday Hero by Anne Watros</p> <p>“Josey demonstrates dependability and diligence by consistently providing accurate and timely information to members and coworkers. She is a team player and is always quick to credit coworkers for their suggestions or assistance.”</p>
 <p>Brian McLane Benefit Plan Design</p> <p>Nominated for: Leadership by Laurie Mitchell</p> <p>“Brian led the research needed to identify the best possible implementation of Medicare D. In doing so he achieved a cost avoidance of \$83 million. He also kept Customer Accounts in the loop, answered customer questions, and provided strong leadership.”</p>	 <p>Judy McLean Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Customer Service and Everyday Hero by Cindy Mooney</p> <p>“Judy is always available to help both internal and external customers. She goes above and beyond, and always follows up. She sets an excellent example of teamwork to her peers and coworkers, and she is always the first to offer help.”</p>
 <p>Kris Morris Process Support</p> <p>Nominated for: Innovator by Deb Grescowle and Meg Leonard</p> <p>“Kris has been instrumental in implementing a successful imaging process. She will implement changes to the process, working with the business to make sure we meet the customers’ needs. She also found a way to save money on our maintenance agreements.”</p>	 <p>Kim Preston Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Customer Service by Mike Sysak</p> <p>“Kim has a great attitude at work and it carries over to the customers she speaks to on the phone. She is also a big help to her coworkers. Kim does a lot to cheer up those working around her and is always there to lend a hand.”</p>
 <p>Ann Schneider Training</p>	 <p>Jon Seeger Customer Service</p>

<p>Nominated for: Everyday Hero by Laurie Mitchell</p> <p>“She has been serving as interim Business Process Leader for first Benefit Plan Design and then Benefit Processing. She is now managing a whole new area for the next year. With each request, she has stepped up and done everything she has been asked to do without complaint, and works cooperatively with her peers.”</p>	<p>Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Innovator by Laurie Mitchell</p> <p>“Jon has maximized customer service by researching the various types of calls that are received and worked with Telecomm to allow retiree calls to route to a bank of temporary staff.”</p>
 <p>Alice Semevolos Process Support</p> <p>Nominated for: Everyday Hero by Kris Morris</p> <p>“Alice demonstrates the values of 'Everyday Hero' by her participation in the conversion of ORS payroll from CPP to Clarety. She is diligent in her role as payroll scheduler to ensure that monthly and daily payroll runs in a timely manner and is free of errors. Alice serves through DCDS Timekeeping and as a training coordinator.”</p>	 <p>Clarissa Sheler Process Support</p> <p>Nominated for: Customer Service by Kris Morris</p> <p>“She comes to work with a positive attitude and offers her assistance whenever she sees the opportunity, and she is prompt and always at work on time. She believes in 'fun in the workplace' and tries to make light of difficult situations, where appropriate.”</p>
 <p>Linda Turner Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Leadership by Anne Watros</p> <p>“She organized the events for Customer Service Week, put together the Customer Accounts Board with 'customer kudos,' and worked with staff to implement a Quality Assurance Guideline for emails. Linda takes the time to personally thank staff for assistance, expertise, and enthusiasm.”</p>	 <p>Kerrie Vanden Bosch Customer Education and Development</p> <p>Nominated for: Leadership by Maureen Carden</p> <p>“She is 'living the values' and she respects and values others and conducts herself in a manner that exemplifies good, healthy leadership. She is always well prepared, works well with others, and recognizes individual strengths and openly compliments others.”</p>
 <p>Anne Watros Customer Service Center</p> <p>Nominated for: Customer Service by Angie DeRose</p>	

"Anne is always willing to go the extra mile to provide complete and accurate information, and strives for excellence and quality. Anne loves her job interacting with customers on the phone and in the office. She is very thorough and committed to resolving customers' issues."

Congratulations!

ORS showcased as a best practice in videoconferencing

ORS has been successfully using videoconferences for two years to conduct Pre-Retirement Information Meetings (PRIMs) in the northern lower and upper peninsulas. **Pam Kenney** and **Ray Fleming** of Customer Education and Development recently attended a training session to enhance ORS's abilities to facilitate our own videoconferences.

During the opening dialogue, both Pam and Ray—who attended to learn how to enhance our product —were praised by the presenter from Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District who said, "I'm going to close my part by telling you that tomorrow is my birthday. I'm turning 55. I wanted to get more information to plan out five years. What information do I need about retirement? I turned to the Office of Retirement Services, who does videoconferences now, on a regular basis rather than traveling. You connect with them via a videoconference. One of the most effective presentations I've ever participated in was through that office. It's a regular part of their routine. They don't just ask 'can we?' Rather, 'we will use videoconferencing.'"

"It was great to have our efforts validated, but at the same time very humbling," shared Ray. "Although we've conducted videoconferences, we've never seen one conducted. It was interesting to see how we might look on the screen at the remote site."

The goal of the half-day session was to gain an understanding of the methods, technical steps, delivery, and suggestions about how to create a collaborative/interactive environment for distance learning. Some of the high points that Pam and Ray would like to incorporate into ORS a videoconferences are:

- Tips and tricks about using the technology, like a document camera. For example, you should use light blue rather than white paper to eliminate glare.
- The importance of retaining a facilitator at the remote site to help with handouts and to assist during the question and answer sessions.
- A pre-videoconference checklist that we will incorporate in our own practices at ORS.

As part of a legislative initiative for Michigan public schools, videoconferencing will be used more frequently for both professional and academic development. For example, all 8th graders will be required to participate in a videoconference. This means that

the future for ORS and videoconferencing to meet customers needs will grow as our customers in the public school system are becoming more comfortable with the technology.

Spring is in the air



A little spring-cleaning was done on Thursday. **Amy Betts, Clarissa Sheler, and Joan Schneider** started the ambitious job of “sprucing up” the supply room. This project helped place forms and supplies in more user-friendly locations.



EPC's newest member, **Tim McCormick**, joined **Phil O'Stoddard** and **Laurie McHill** in handing out green treats to all ORS staff in celebration of St. Patrick's Day.

Support our troops

Last fall we gave you a little history about the 238th Aviation Battalion out of the Grand Ledge National Guard and mentioned that **Charla Drysdale's** husband, Sergeant Joe Drysdale, and his company was heading to Kosovo for a 12-month stay.

238th Battalion members have arrived at their new post and, as can be expected, there are many things they miss from home. In order to provide them with a few of the comforts they are accustomed to, the ORS family has planned to send care packages to the soldiers quarterly for the duration of their deployment.



The following is a list of a few suggested items that the soldiers have requested:

- Phone cards – \$10 International phone cards are the best deal; all phone card types/brands are accepted.
- Magazines – Sports Illustrated, ESPN, Hunting & Fishing, etc.
- Local Newspapers – Grand Ledge Independent, Lansing State Journal, etc.
- Music and Movies– any CDs or DVDs
- Snacks – Cookies (these are a popular request) Pringles, Slim Jim, Pop Tarts, and gum/candy are a few of their favorites.

In addition to the above suggestions, cards, letters, and monetary donations are welcome. "Thanks for thinking of us," Platoon Leader Randy Bebee wrote in a recent email to friends back home.

Your support is greatly appreciated! You can place your donations in cubicle G11, near pillar B3, no later than Friday, March 31. Questions can be directed to Linda Turner, 322-1801, or Maureen Carden, 322-6068.

Comings & Goings



Angela Sanborn and **Chantele Geisenhaver**, who were both working on the Vision ORS Project, have accepted new positions in Process Support. Angela will fill the role of a Business Tester, and will focus on testing new functionality, enhancements, and fixes on the new system. Chantele will serve as the Business Data Steward and will oversee the accuracy, availability, security, and integrity of the ORS data.

Staying on by popular demand are three of the original seven quick hits team members (the team handled over 5,000 calls in February – way to go!). Please welcome **Jenniffer Parker**, **Shanna Hoss**, and **Delainie McNeil**.

Jenniffer previously worked for EDS and received her degree in quality management from Cleary University in Howell. She now lives in Lansing.

Shanna has a fun and outgoing personality and enjoys working with staff at ORS. She joins us from Career Quest and lives in the Lansing area.

Delainie lives with her husband in Eaton Rapids and has previous state government experience with the Department of Community Health. She enjoys temping and hopes to pursue a career in the legal field.

Good luck to **Christina Engel**, who worked on the Vision ORS project. Christina is leaving ORS to pursue a permanent employment opportunity.

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Thanks for reading!!

And the magnets go to ...

Laurie Hill presented **Lila Christiansen, Laurie Mitchell, Linda Reznick, Kerrie Vanden Bosch, Erica Waltmire, and Pam Ward** with great job magnets for their planning and success of the 3.2 Vision celebration.



Laurie said "This event showcased our partners and our values of Inclusion and Excellence. I think we had some fun too!"

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.