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Message From the Director

Phil Stoddard talks about the importance of staying flexible to meet customer needs.

I keep up with retirement issues in the news and I see a number of trends impacting our business and the customers we serve. Rocky investment markets; rising costs for energy, food and health care; GM lowering their long standing practice of offering a retiree health care plan to salaried retirees at age 65 (following Ford and Chrysler who already made this move); and an increasingly large number of baby boomers set to retire in the near future. This large national and global focus hits home on many occasions.

I recently read an article, Hewitt Study Reveals Widening Gap Between Retirement Needs and Employee Saving Behaviors, which talks about the rising health care costs, longer life spans, and the decline of pension benefits. Even if we believe half of what is included in the article our purpose has never been more relevant than it is today. Education, retirement planning, and putting that plan into practice is necessary to achieve financial security in retirement.

How do we as a retirement system meet this awesome charge? Do we have capacity to provide the services that are needed? How do we ensure quality? First and foremost, we must make sure we are running as efficiently as possible. We need to understand our business processes, optimize them, and consistently perform them well. We may need to let go of the things that don't provide value.

Some examples: We have a new team in Employer Reporting dedicated to making their process a model, seeking ways to eliminate gaps and reduce cycle times, ensuring it has the right tools, technology, and people needed to succeed. We're redesigning our environment, and relocating within our office so that processes that work together are connected. Those with technology expertise are part of this integration, so technology solutions and efficiencies will be found wherever possible. We're strengthening our Customer Service Center team with added staff, training, and resources toward providing even better service to customers. We're looking at new ways to educate customers about their plans, their tools, and the importance of taking charge of their financial future.

There's a lot going on, a lot to do, but we're in great shape. I see our staff growing



**Phil Stoddard,
Director**

We are an innovative retirement organization driven to empower our customer for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

On the Horizon

- Public School Employees Board Meeting- September 11
- All Staff Meeting- October 7

Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Knowledge Library](#)

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
CSC	Customer Service Center
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (Phil, Laurie, Tim, and Anthony)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (public school employees)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (state employees)

professionally and evolving on a daily basis. We continue to utilize and improve our process environment and knowledge sharing. The end result is an environment that supports change and allows us to serve our customers and each other in the best way possible. I'm confident we're equipped to meet evolving retirement trends.

Brochure gets new name, new use

The [Welcome Brochure \(R0633C\)](#), formerly referred to as "The Yacht Brochure," has been redesigned and will now be mailed with the automated FLB Welcome Letters to all new hires in the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System starting August 1.

Changes to the brochure include mention of miAccount, updates to language regarding how much income you'll need in retirement (80 percent of preretirement income instead of 70 percent), and other tips and tools.

This new welcoming process allows us to get information in the hands of every new hire and eliminates the need to rely on employers to deliver this important information to new members. Because of this efficiency, the Welcome Brochure will no longer be provided to employers at the beginning of the school year, and has been removed from publication area page on the employer website.



New print forms available online

The following forms have been updated and are now available on the member websites under Forms and Publications.

- [Public School Employees Application for Retirement \(R0009C\)](#)
- [State Employees Defined Benefit Retirement Application \(R0131G\)](#)
- [State Police Application for Retirement \(R0732H\)](#)
- [Electronic Funds Transfer \(Direct Deposit\) Application \(R0277X\)](#)
- [Federal Income Tax Withholding Authorization \(R0012X\)](#)

Keep in mind we strongly encourage active and retired members to use miAccount rather than printing and mailing paper forms.

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars. September 23rd from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. we will celebrate the completion of Vision ORS. Be sure to watch for more information in future *Lookout* issues as the event draws nearer.

Annual mailing pushes miAccount and Member IDs

The [2008 Member Statements](#), scheduled to begin mailing to public school employees in the next couple weeks, includes a cover letter from Phil Stoddard announcing miAccount and the use of secure Member IDs. In addition, a new issue of [PROactive](#) will be included with stories focusing on:

- miAccount.
- Financial retirement needs.
- Service credit.

PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

- Member IDs.

Comings & Goings

AST welcomed student assistant **Megan Steele** on Monday, July 28. Megan is a student at Lansing Community College and has a certificate of completion in administrative and information management in professional studies. She will graduate with an associate's degree in the spring of 2009 and is a member of the International Association of Administrative Professionals.



Megan Steele

CSC bid farewell to student employee **Melissa Miller**. Her last day was July 25.

Staff on the move

Jennifer Cook has moved into a Student Programming Apprenticeship position working for AST's Development Team.



Sounding Out is a way for ORS staff to share ideas, viewpoints, gripes, praises, and concerns. Email your opinion (300 words or less, if possible!) to ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov.

Career Choices

Chuck Simpson, retiring from ORS Customer Education on August 15th, sounds out about his past career choices and how they led him to an unforgettable career with ORS.



Chuck Simpson

On career day, ever so long ago, I never said, "state retirement, that's for me!"

I've worked on a farm and clerked in a store. Farming was nice, fresh air, plenty of exercise, communing with nature, and helping feed the world. Clerking was easy but boring. Both jobs just happened along. Neither one paid very well, but it was enough to get me by.

I was a soldier, a sailor, and a baker. I was a lousy soldier, never had the proper military bearing, but I finally learned that the occasional "no" was not an option. I was even worse at sailing. I sailed on the Great Lakes ore boat, GA TOMLINSON. I shipped out with romantic visions of life on the lakes. Then reality set in. I occupied the lowest rung on the boat, coal passer. It was hot, dirty, and hot. In all I sailed about four months and during that time I got off the boat for about six hours. I learned why your momma told you not to hang around the waterfront and she was right. I left the antsy boat for dry land and all that went with it.

Later I worked at Schafer Bakery on Logan Street and it was really boring. The building and the street name are both gone now. I earned more money than a twenty-something should have. My recollections of that place are a little spotty, but it sure smelled good.

Then on to state government. Never did get into the first band on the Civil Service clerical exams but was offered a job that nobody else wanted. Working part-time on the weekends and completely destroying my social life. I did meet another refugee seeking the good life, Fred Covert.

I was hired into the Bureau of Retirement Systems in 1989 as second runner up (the first choice wasn't eligible). Back then there were two speeds, day-to-day operations and crisis management. Brian White came and went during the 1990s with promises

of future change. Then came Chris DeRose and his “cheese movers.” After that, things were never the same (about time).

Lots of familiar faces were here when I hired in and some will still be here after I’m gone. But a lot of friends have left ORS over the years, and now it’s my turn.

I’ve seen the light and can honestly say, “State retirement, that’s for me!”

Member IDS mailed to active state DB members

Over 25,000 active state Defined Benefit plan members will receive their Member ID in a letter scheduled for mail late next week. The letter details the importance of keeping personal information secure and introduces miAccount. Members are encouraged to use their Member ID when contacting ORS.

The cubicle turns 40

Although the creation of the cubicle seems unexciting to the many Dillberts out there, it was a milestone for office buildings. The concept began with Robert Propst in 1968: his original purpose was to design a workspace to increase productivity in the office

He studied work environments and found a need for plentiful work space, shelves, privacy, and a desk with varying work levels for standing or sitting.

Propst designed the office space with good intentions, but failed to realize the expenses involved. Business idealists took Propst’s original plan and modified it to a cost effective tool called the cubicle. Today, the cubicle claims the largest share of office furniture sales at approximately \$3 billion a year, and has outlived every “office of the future” meant to replace it.

Since the cubicle is such a huge (or tiny) part of office life, it is no wonder that the employees at ORS do all that they can to make their cubicle a home away from home. If you walk about the office you are sure to notice the many innovative arrangements that people have created to build a personal and comfortable atmosphere to work in.

[Spoof on how to make your office space bigger.](#)



Open office hours

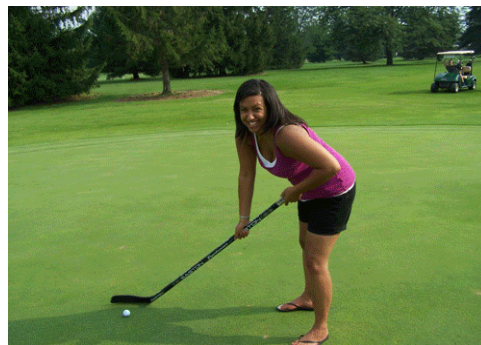
ORS Leaders know that the best way to achieve goals and improve the workplace is by listening. They also know that in a busy environment it can be difficult to find time to talk about ideas, suggestions, questions, or concerns. It is for this reason that all BPLs and BPOs have blocked every Wednesday morning until 9:00 a.m. as open office hours. Feel free to stop in during these “open office hours” and discuss your thoughts with any BPL or



BPO.

ORS Golf Outing

The deadline to participate in the 18th Annual ORS Golf Outing is Thursday, August 14th. The cost is \$156 per foursome and includes lunch, riding cart, pop and water, 18 holes of golf, dinner, and a chance to win lots of prizes. Please contact **Fred Covert** or **Bill Motz** for more information.



2007 ORS Golf Outing

We always knew we give 110 percent!

We are justifiably proud for having achieved an amazing 100% response rate on the latest DMB survey. After we hit our goal a question was raised because a few people in ORS had not yet taken the survey, so we asked the DMB people managing the survey how we could have reached 100 percent. They tell us the survey was sent only to those who were employed here as of June 14, and ORS likely had people coming and going after that date. It's also quite likely the link was shared with staff who arrived after the survey was delivered. Because the survey is confidential, they can't keep track of responses by each individual--only the total number of responses compared to the total number sent out. In short, for each person who did not take the survey by the deadline, another ORS staff person did complete it. And we remain proud.

DMB Mission:
Partners in achieving
excellence

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 Management
and Budget, State of
Michigan

Director:
Phil Stoddard
Edited by Customer
Education



Greetings from the ORS card shop

Send a coworker or friend a ready- to- print greeting card for any occasion using the new ORS card shop located in the Knowledge Library.

To access these cards click on the ORS Rocks tab on the front page of the Knowledge Library. Inside this tab, you will find an assortment of cards to choose from. Find the card you like, personalize and print, then pass it on to your deserving coworker.

Pack up and play–ORS picnic is on the way!

The 12th Annual ORS Picnic is at Hawk Island County Park (1601 East Cavanaugh Road) on August 20th from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This year's festivities will include volleyball, horseshoes, cricket, hiking, paddle boats, and much more! [RSVP soon so EMPAC can prepare accordingly.](#)

Thanks for reading!!



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.