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Calendar

November	
Veteran's Day	11
Space Walk	19
Central Perk Cleaning	25
Thanksgiving Holiday	26-27

On the Horizon

- Christmas - December 25

Quick Links

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

Highlights from the fall All-Staff

Thank you to the all staff planning team, **Ginger Czuback, Annie Earls, Josey McCloud, Matt McCool, Crystal Newsome, Angela Parkhurst, Linda Reznick, and Nick Thelen**, for delivering a well-planned morning of events.

Message from Phil

Phil Stoddard got the meeting started with a discussion on the challenging times we face and the opportunities that lie ahead. "It's okay to have doubts," he said. "And it's natural to be fearful. But it's not okay for us to retreat or go backwards. And we always have to keep our customers first."



Enjoy [photos from the meeting](#) and [review the presentation](#) if there's anything you missed.

After welcoming new staff to ORS, Phil concluded his message by thanking everyone for their willingness and effort given each day.

Message from Lisa

DMB Director Lisa Webb Sharpe spoke next and echoed the likelihood of challenging times and opportunities to be had in the coming year. She talked about ideas she and the DMB Senior Management Team are looking at to achieve greater savings in this fiscal year: playing nice in the sandbox, putting our best foot forward (utilizing communication and marketing), cost control and cost containment, shape of the family tree, functioning in a public environment, data management, employee impact, and leadership.

Dealing with change

David Ware from the Employee Services Program joined us to discuss the difference between change and transition. His PowerPoint presentation includes details about how to deal with change and gives staff additional resources to further their knowledge. This PowerPoint can be found in the knowledge library or you can [view it here](#).

Here are some key tips suggested by Dave to help deal with change:

<u>Website</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Library 	
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
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 (<i>Phil, Laurie, Tim, and Anthony</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
FLB	Forms, Letters, and Barcode
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
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

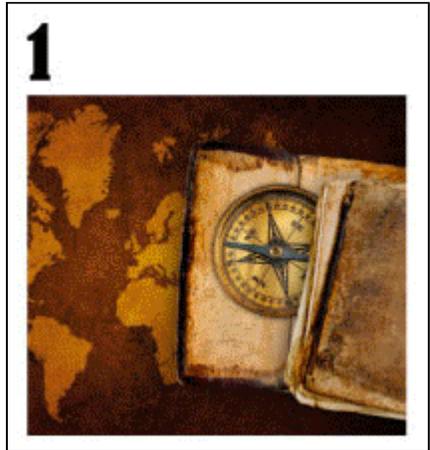
- If you have information, share it.
- If you don't have information, ask for it instead of settling for rumors.
- Use active listening to manage frustration and maintain a respectful atmosphere.

Innovation at ORS

Joanne Brown and **Erica Quealy** talked about innovation at ORS – what it is, how anyone can be innovative, and how diverse teams and individual passion help spark innovation.

The two led the group in an exercise that combined images (as seen on the right) to create a product or service that could be bought or sold. Examples that groups came up with are:

- 2+1 = Global Insurance – “Everyone has a dark period in life. During those dark times, we’re there to help.”
- 1+2 = Solar powered flashlight that provides navigation via different colors.
- 3+4 = Use the sunflowers to produce bio-fuel; plant stalks for tire treads; petals for yellow paint.
- 4+6 = Agritourism – “Come visit our cranberry bog and neighboring sunflower field.”
- 2+3 = Scooter-powered electric company and compact florescent scooter headlights.
- 5+6 = Advertising cranberry products.
- 4+1 = Use a compass/GPS to create a geocache activity in the sunflower fields.
- 4+2 = Robot sunflowers that use nano-technology to collect energy from the sun.
- 5+6 = Coffee and photo café for artists to display their work.
- 2+3 = Motorcycle lightbulb delivery service for new and old bulbs.
- 6+1 = Cranberry-colored nautical watches for the fall.



Q&A

EPC members took turns answering questions submitted before the meeting. To see the Q&As, along with answers to questions that were not answered during the meeting because of time constraints, [click here](#). Questions submitted during or after the meeting will be answered in and upcoming issue of the *LookOut*.

Conclusion

Phil closed the meeting by answering the final question: “What is my individual impact within this organization?” Phil went on to say that ORS is responsible for approximately 600,000 customers. If we take that number a step further and break it down than it means that each ORS member assists approximately 3,000 people! That is a very large individual impact each person carries! As Phil said the final number, Crystal entered the room with 2, 999 gumballs (guess where the other one went?) to give staff an idea of what 3,000 of anything looks like.





Sounding Out

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.

Here **Linda Albro Sparks** shares her experience at a Pre Retirement Orientation (PRO) and urges her coworkers to attend one.

A day well spent

Recently I experienced what I describe as "a day well spent." I had the opportunity to finally take the Pre Retirement Orientation (PRO) offered as a course through Civil Service for employees and their spouses. We had signed up a few years ago and had to cancel because of a scheduling conflict. My husband Corey is also a state employee working for the Department of Community Health.



Linda Albro Sparks

We both really enjoyed the course and highly recommend it to other state employees. We had presentations by **Kathy Van Fossen** from ING, Vonda Vantil from the Social Security Administration, and **Josey McCloud** from ORS.

The funny thing was I ran into two former coworkers, and one looked at me and said, "I am so surprised to see you at this class since you work at Retirement now," and the other one said "You must be here representing Retirement as you really don't need this class." I assured them both just because I work at Retirement by no means does that mean I know everything about it, and I was learning a lot from participating in the sessions.

I thought I would share with you a few of my thoughts.

Even though everyone at ORS recently attended three ING training sessions I still managed to pick up a few valuable things from that part of the day. Kathy did a really nice job talking about what ING has to offer state employees.

I was really looking forward to the social security session even though I often hear people say "there won't be any social security by the time I can collect it." Well, that might be true. Then again, it might not be true. I say I would rather be prepared and can only plan for what I know to be true today. Vonda Vantil did an excellent job presenting and even gave some interesting scenarios.

Josey was a very good presenter for the Defined Benefit retirement session. She always responded to questions with something like "that's a great question," which goes a long way in assuring your attendees every question is a valuable one.

The bottom line is this - Even if you work here at ORS, I recommend that you go ahead and sign up for the class. I think afterwards you will agree it will be a day well spent.

Later that evening, Corey and I made a point to access our account information on both the MiAccount and ING websites. More time well spent.

November is Integrity month

Benefit Plan Design and Director's Office

- The Director's Office and BPD staff honor the



CBT process through self-reflection, even when it may be difficult to acknowledge a weakness in ability.

- ORS honors the role of the retirement boards in the oversight of the systems, and the Director's Office staff provides them with materials they need for their meetings by the deadlines.
- No matter what the size, the Director's Office and BPD staff will take responsibility for a mistake and make sure to correct it.

Customer Education

- We look for opportunities to improve our skills and knowledge – such as our lunchtime learning sessions – so we can better serve our customers.
- We do what it takes to get the job done.
- We advocate for our customers to get what they need.

Customer Service Center

- If we don't know specific information, we know where to find it. Once we know it, we pass the information on to other staff.
- Coworkers are willing to share information and if they say they will do something, they will do it.
- We always come up with ways to help others in need. We say we care about others and we show it through our actions.

Employer Reporting

- Employer training was provided to ensure reporting units have the information needed to perform their jobs and report their members accurately.
- Cross training in various areas ensures the information provided to our customers is accurate. Cross training also provides more efficient service to our customers enabling us to meet their expected response time.
- We respond to the miAccount message board timely and accurately.

Process Support

- **Kris Morris** demonstrates the value of integrity. She received a congratulatory letter from Governor Granholm recognizing her commitment to creating a supportive and effective workplace.
- If someone asks for a security role, **Alice Semevolos** safeguards member data by verifying the responsibilities of the requestor to ensure the security role requested is not more than what is needed.
- We image documents within the expected turnaround times so that staff can meet their deadlines. We strive to provide exceptional quality with the digital imaging and workflows created, as we promise to do.
- PS developed strong relationships with ORS staff, other agency staff, vendors, and other partners. These relationships are important in making sure various tasks are completed timely and accurately.

business briefs

Yea Customer Ed!

Congrats to Customer Education for creating great graphics! Recently, the Social Security Administration (SSA) and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) requested permission to use Customer Education's three-legged stool and image of a Medicare



card on their websites.

ING advisor help

If you haven't looked at your personal retirement account recently, now's the time! Take advantage of ING Advisor Service review sessions on a quarterly basis, starting November 16 through the 18.

With approval from your supervisor, you have 30 minutes to spend in the Training Room between 11am and 2pm. ING staff will be available to answer questions and help with the Advisor Service. Empower yourself for a successful today and a secure tomorrow!



ORS Salutes Our Veterans!



Below is a list of veterans in ORS who responded to our announcement in the last issue of the *LookOut*. Whether you responded or not, if you're a veteran, THANK YOU!

- Vanessa Felix
- Brian McLane
- Richard Miles
- Diane Monroe
- Dick Pennington
- Karen Short
- Taylor Stiles



Calling all entertainment media!

EMPAC is searching for books, books-on-CDs (or on tape), other CDs, DVDs, or videos needing new homes! We want to help reduce your clutter at home by recycling your books and other forms of entertainment in an ORS user-friendly way - through an EMPAC Book Sale on Thursday, November 19. You get to clear out the entertainment media you've already read or viewed and no longer want around your house. Your coworkers have the opportunity to purchase those items at a very reasonable price. And EMPAC receives funds to sponsor more fun-at-work activities!



So, please gather your books, CDs, videos, and DVDs that you no longer want, bring them into the office between now and Wednesday, November 18. Give them to your EMPAC representative and plan on attending the EMPAC book sale on Thursday, November 19, to pick up some new sources of entertainment.

Your current EMPAC representatives are **Rosemary Baker** from CE, **Lisa Barrone** from ER, **Clarissa Cram** from AST, **June Holbrook** from PS, **Joe Osentoski** from BPD, and **Matt Torok** and **Amy Wheeler** from CSC.



AST welcomed four new members to their team.

Srinivas Janaswamy, a supporting architect, previously worked for Chrysler. He and his wife are expecting a child in December. In his spare time, he enjoys movies and golf.

Radhakrishna Lingamgunta is a senior QA test analyst. He is married, has two children, and enjoys watching NBA, football, and movies.

Sateesh Nallapata, programmer analyst, has an interest in new technologies, is recently married, and enjoys playing cricket.

Balaji Sundararajan is a senior project manager and is married with two children. He enjoys playing the violin and has an interest in taxes. Balaji enjoys traveling and has been to Japan, Singapore, Canada, Sri Lanka, and many U.S. destinations.



Srinivas Janaswamy



Radhakrishna
Lingamgunta



Sateesh Nallapata



Balaji Sundararajan

In addition, BPD welcomed Cooley Law student **Noah Bradow** on November 3. Noah is a political science graduate of Michigan State University and a Lansing resident. He recently married and enjoys camping, reading, and attending concerts in his spare time.



Noah Bradow

Halloween photos!

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.

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[Click here to view more photos from EMPAC's Halloween lunch and Boo Day!](#)

Thanks for reading!!



Deer season safety

November 15 marks the opening day for firearm deer season. While the hunters prepare their deer stands, it is important to prepare ourselves for an increase of deer on the roads. Here are a few tips:

- Drive with extreme caution in areas where deer crossing signs have been posted.
- Be mindful of the high risk time periods – dusk and



dawn.

- If you see one deer on or near the road, expect that there will be more.
- Wear your seatbelt and drive at a safe speed.
- Do not swerve your vehicle to avoid hitting a deer.

For more information please visit the [Michigan Deer Crash Coalition website](#).

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.