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in ORS. See
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ORS Look Out

Year 2000



560 Days

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Y2K Update: ARMS Team celebrates a milestone

The Year 2000 or Y2K problem is one major hurdle closer to solution in ORS with the completion of the Automated Retirement System (ARS), the Automated Retirement Management System (ARMS), and Common Pension Payroll test plans.

The test plans were a mutual effort by ORS, Automation Services Division (ASD) and an outside contractor, CTA, to put together a comprehensive plan to test all aspects of software functionality, including use of dates in calculations, data storage, and reporting. The Y2K problem, in case you hadn't heard, deals with computer programs that



Rose Wilson, Director of DMB's Office of Administrative Services and DMB CIO, offers her congratulations on completing the Test Plan.

indicate the year as a two-digit number, for example "98" for "1998." When the year 2000 begins, unless software is corrected, computers will become

"confused" and not know whether "00" refers to "2000," "1900," or whether it is a null value.

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Did you know . . . about Customer Outreach?

Ever heard the expression PRIM? For some of us it's a new term. But many know that it stands for Pre-Retirement Informational Meeting. Conducting PRIMs is just one of the duties of the ORS Customer Outreach office staff. ORS

has three Customer Outreach offices in addition to the Lansing office. They are in Holland, Detroit, and Waterford, which is just west of Pontiac. Before the reorganization of ORS, the Customer Outreach offices served only public school

employees. But on July 1 of this year training will be
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Thought for the Day

Success is measured by what we do compared to what we could be doing.

—Gothard

Y2K Update: ARMS Team celebrates a milestone

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On Friday, June 12, a celebration was held for all of those folks involved in the Year 2000 project. **Rose Wilson**, Director of DMB's Office of Administrative Services and DMB CIO, was on hand to offer words of congratulations and pass out certificates of merit.

She said, "Today we celebrate the achievement of a major milestone in our DMB Y2K plan, the completion of test plans for Partitions 1 and 2, including the ARMS programs and Common Pension Payroll.

and software upgrades and a Y2K compliant network infrastructure."

She noted that, "This has been truly a team effort, the positive results of which will carry forward into our future joint activities. We now look forward to

Chris DeRose also made brief remarks. Prior to



Chris DeRose, Director of ORS, presented certificates of achievement following his remarks.



Part of the large team that will find the solution to the Y2K problem for ORS.

This represents over 15,000 hours of combined ORS, ASD and contractor efforts. We also recognize the other staff in ASD who are working on other critical components of the department's Y2K plan, including desktop hardware

our next celebration—the completion of all testing and the certification of the Retirement Systems as Y2K compliant!"

Dan Lohrmann, Director of ASD, and ORS Director

presenting certificates of appreciation to all ORS staff involved in the Y2K effort, Chris made the point that completion of this milestone was another sign that ORS was moving toward the goal of becoming an innovative, flexible customer focused organization with a **proven record of success.**



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Did you know?

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complete and the Customer Outreach offices will open their doors to members of the State Employees, Judges and State Police Retirement Systems.

The offices are part of the Customer Service Division under **Laurie Hill**. **Ken Wright** is the Customer Outreach Coordinator. The Detroit office is staffed by **Barb Pawel**, **Mary Dilworth** and **Xeronna Smith**, the Holland office is staffed by **Doug Davidson** and **Kathy Tober**, the Waterford office is staffed by **Mike Novak** and **Rick Wilhelmsen**, and the Lansing office is staffed by **Linda Mahlow**.

The Customer Outreach Program provides comprehensive retirement services to customers in their local areas in partnership with the Intermediate School Districts (ISDs). Ken says, "Our goal is to provide the opportunity for each member to attend a PRIM and /or have an individual counseling session within 50 miles from their home at a minimum of twice a year. This goal is met in most all areas of the state, and

greatly exceeded in many areas. The program was piloted at thirteen ISDs in the 1996-97 fiscal year and expanded statewide in fiscal 1997-98." Similar types of programs are being developed for the State Employees, Judges and State Police Retirement Systems.

Ken states that for retirement services in the field, staff use laptops with a remote connection to customer data, portable printers, and data projectors to provide immediate and comprehensive quality customer service.

Administrative PRIMs are also held to provide informational seminars for school administrators. Information on legislative and/or Retirement Board activities that may impact school administration, as well as the retirement processes and requirements are included. For the 1998-99 fiscal year reporting issues for payroll personnel will be included. A similar program is being developed for the State Human Resource Departments and workshops are scheduled to begin this October.

The Customer Outreach office staff are responsible for

all field customer services, including the development and facilitation of the pre-retirement programs in all four retirement systems and for development and implementation of all aspects of the Outreach program. In addition, the Customer Outreach staff represented ORS at the Defined Contribution informational meetings throughout the state earlier this year.

You might wonder how busy these offices can be. Well, take a look at the numbers. From October 1997 through May of this year they have had 838 counseling appointments, 1,253 walk-ins, handled 15,548 customer phone calls, presented 75 PRIMs to 6,713 attendees, presented 19 administrative PRIMs to 725 school administrators, and in their spare time, answered a batch of correspondence that included 290 letters plus 273 service credit letters. That's busy!

The Customer Outreach office staff are providing a very important service for our customers and are doing a great job. As ORS increases customer service in coming years, the Customer Outreach office staff will play an even greater role in making sure our customers are our first priority.

Silent auction raises big bucks for picnic fund!

Proving once again that action speaks louder than words, the silent auction on Friday, June 5th, raised \$404.77 for the ORS picnic

had no idea who was in what envelope. When the money was paid by the bidders, envelopes were given and the suspense ended.”

on the keyboards while I got to do one of my favorite things—talk to people.”



Camille Offord, left, holds the Teddy bear on which she had the winning bid while Cindee Clouse and Kay Johnston ponder what might have been.

The Steering Committee was drawn as follows: Envelope #1, containing the name of **Phil Stoddard**, went to Administration. Envelopes #2, 4 and 5 with the

Laurie Hill fulfilled her work requirement in service credit. She says, “I spent two hours assisting (as least I hope that I assisted) with the location of idle account info, a Detroit 4301, two refund apps, undocumented service (I think this was a test from Andy) and my favorite, pulling labels off of diskettes—it was a pleasure to spend time with some very hard working staff—thank you for giving me this opportunity.”

fund. The bake sale contributed an additional \$103.29, for a grand total of \$508.06, all of which goes toward defraying the cost of the picnic on Friday, July 31st. Bidding was fast and furious on a number of items, with the winning bids being placed right at the deadline.

The services of each member of the ORS Steering Committee was auctioned off. To assure fairness, explains **Lisa Schmidt**, “I printed out each member’s name, labeled five envelopes with numbers one through five, and gave the names and envelopes to two neutral parties in Finance who didn’t know who bid on which numbers. After I left, they placed a name in each envelope and sealed them. I

names of **Chris DeRose**, **Deb Gearhart** and **Laurie Hill** went to **Sandy Elstro**, **Cathleen Curran** and **Mike Curtis**. Envelope #3, containing the name of **Ginger Bomar**, went to the Customer Information Center (CIC). The winners will contact their Steering Committee member and arrange a time for them to perform two hours of work.

Ginger Bomar and Laurie Hill have already performed their duties. Says Ginger about her duties in the CIC, “I attended the morning meeting and spent an hour ‘helping’ respond to the phone calls. The staff made me feel welcome,” she reports, “they had the head phones waiting for me!! **Tony (Contu)** was very patient and helpful. He was

A complete listing of items, high bids and winners has been posted throughout the office.

The ORS Employee Activity Committee, EMPAC, thanks all donors of auction and bake sale items. Says Lisa, “We couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you to all who bid, even if you didn’t win. You forced those who won to bid more. Thanks to our winners for being generous gotta-have-its.”

Lisa adds that profits from the food in the break area also go to the picnic fund. She says, “If you have suggestions on what type of food to sell at the break areas contact me. We’ll try to accommodate your preferences.”

Kudos, everyone!!!! Customer service at its best!

“Thanks to the forward and customer oriented thinking of **Darla Brzezinski** and **Tim Droste**,” reports **Lori “Lila” Christiansen**, “we are processing the majority of June retirees for the June payroll.” Lila says that Darla and Tim looked at payroll dates and cut-offs and realized that this was a month that we would have the data needed to complete processing at least two days before cut-off and so they decided to try to GO FOR

IT!!!! So with the help of **Sara Mills** and **Tom Braun** they identified a goal of placing 75 out of approximately 100 June 1 retirees on the June payroll, and they DID IT.

“The most impressive thing about this,” Lila adds, “is that we have achieved a high level of responsibility within the team. People working in all aspects are looking at what needs to be done and making decisions without waiting for someone to guide or direct them.”

Not to be overlooked is what this means in terms of the ORS reputation. Just two short years ago SERS members often had to wait up to six months to receive their first pension check. And now, a mere 24 months later, the transition from paycheck to retirement check is becoming almost seamless.

What a great customer service. Thanks to the initiative of Darla, Tim, Sara and Tom.

Surfers find more on ORS Web pages

The ORS Web site on the Internet is sporting some new and revised pages these days. For the first time, State Police and Judges now have their own pages. In addition, a copy of the first issue of the ORS retiree newsletter, *Connections*, is now available on our Web site. The page detailing the administration of ORS now more closely reflects the way things are since the reorganization. The board members for the four systems have also been brought up to date.



calling our office and waiting for a form to be sent out, a member can visit our Web site and print out any of nine forms immediately. Plans are in the works to include even more forms in the future.

Set your browser to <http://www.state.mi.us/dmb/ors/> to see the latest changes on the ORS Web site. And if you see anything that needs to be changed, please notify **Matt Beha**.

Comings and goings in ORS

Lori Curry began in Administration on Monday, June 15. She will be working with mail and microfilm.



Lori Curry



Chris Nowicki

Chris Nowicki is a student assistant in Customer Service. He will begin studies at Michigan State this fall.

Fran Hayden, John Ellis and **Susan Affholder** have joined DC.

Janelle Jenkins began Monday in the Director’s Office. Janelle previously worked for SERS and also for the CIC as a temp.



Janelle Jenkins

Stefan Garrison, a student assistant in Finance and Administration, has left, as has **Bryan Cornellier**.

Bits and pieces from here and there

And the winners are . . .

The winners in the Six Weeks to Wellness competition were Wanna Be Slim (team) consisting of **Tunishia Dankenbring, Angela Sanborn, Marcy Savage** (Angela's sister) and **Joan Sanborn** (Angela's mom). 'Crusin' **Carol Keyes Baubie** (individual) and **Pat Jorae** (individual competing for prizes within a team that wasn't). Exercise Poker winners were **Marcy Savage, Cindy Nevins** and **Cindee Clouse** (they earned a card each week

they met the exercise points—the highest hands won). “We had an excellent turnout this year,” notes Six Weeks Coordinator **Lisa Schmidt**, “and it seems fun was had by all.”

New Form Available

A new (purple) death notification form now serves all ORS retirement systems and (effective immediately) replaces the SERS and MPERS forms formerly used. The form, #R395X, is part of an effort to reengineer the death benefits process to enhance

the quality and quantity of information obtained from a caller reporting a death. It is available in the storage room.

There's still time

If you haven't completed a feedback form on the Customer Follow-Up Survey, we're like to have your input. Please use the cherry colored form that was in the last *LookOut*, or pick up a form above the Customer Service mailboxes by CIC, and place your completed form in the wire basket.

Smart cookies will solve this Scramble!

This is no half-baked idea. We aren't saying you'll be rolling in dough if you solve this issue's Scramble. But you might find the recipe for success in the workplace. The degree to which you can apply this kernel of wisdom to your job will be a measure of your ability to rise above the crowd. So get stirring and rearrange these mixed up letters!

dogo honegu
reevn si.
bideeb delif
drounef
rms slifed skocioe

As is always the case, the unscrambled posters will be on display next Monday on first and third floors in ORS.

