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Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

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Employer statement training

On Monday, November 9, ORS kicked off a series of ten training sessions for public school reporting units to help them reconcile their employer statements. Designed for school business office and payroll staff, the sessions are being conducted at various locations throughout the state and online, through early February, by **Steve Crippen** of ER, **Carl Pier** of BPD, and **Kay Johnston** of ER..

Each session will provide a detailed overview of the employer statement, including the following:

- Reconciling the employer statement.
- Completing the remittance advice.
- Shortfall billings.
- Transactions that can cause reconciliation issues.

More than 300 registrations have been received so far. Steve says, "Having schools understand the reporting process, improves accuracy, and increases efficiencies for employers and us."

Reporting unit staff who are interested in attending can register online at the [Public School Employer Information Website](#). Registrants are encouraged to download and print their training materials before attending a session.

Health care contracts awarded

BPD oversees and develops ORS's six health care contract proposals. Each contract is on a three-year cycle to ensure we receive the best pricing. Recently, the Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM) and the Hospital Medical were under review and awarded. The PBM contract was awarded to Catalyst Rx for public school retirees, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) for active and retired state employees; BCBSM received the Hospital Medical contract for public school retirees. Both contracts are effective January 1.

The bidding process

The process of awarding a contract is not simple and can take up to 18 months from start to finish.

The process starts with defining our requirements and compiling them in a

Calendar

November

Central Perk Cleaning	25
Thanksgiving Holiday	26-27

December

MPSERS

Board Meeting	10
SERS Board Meeting	17
Space Walk	17
Christmas Holiday	24 - 25
Central Perk Cleaning	30
New Year's Eve	31

Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP is then made public for vendors to bid. The information in the bids is extensive and generally consumes two large binders of reading material per bid. Eight different vendors bid on the Pharmacy RFP — 16 binders of material were reviewed!



A plethora of information that has to be reviewed before awarding the bids.

On the Horizon

- New Year's Day - January 1

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
FLB	Forms, Letters,

Upon receiving the bids, the Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC) has several weeks to review the materials. The JEC is a diverse group of individuals and depending upon the contract, may also consist of outside consultants. For larger contracts ORS uses consultants with industry expertise to review the technical and pricing proposals and analyze the future impact of administering the program. The JEC for the PBM contract consisted of **Brian McLane**, **Kathy Tober**, and **Kerrie Vanden Bosch** from ORS, designated EBD staff, and our consultant; and the JEC for the Hospital Medical contract included Brian, Kerrie, and **Aimee Ross** from ORS and our health care actuary Gabriel Roeder Smith and Company.

Last spring the JEC reviewed each requirement and evaluated how each of the eight bids could meet each of the program needs. Once all questions are asked, a pass or fail is given to each bid. Those bids receiving a pass are then reviewed for the Best of Value. This is where the team evaluates the quality of the program for the price—the goal being to offer a high quality program for a low price. The JEC chooses the bid by the Best of Value process and then the JEC and purchasing director will award the contract to the vendor. The contract is announced, but other bidders have 14 days to protest the awarded contract. If there is a protest, the bid goes through a review process. If there is no protest, the contract goes before the Administrative Board for the final decision.

What are staff thankful for?

I am thankful for...

Richard Miles: During this season of thanks, I am most thankful for my health. Many people take this for granted in their youth because we think it will always be around, but this would be folly I realize there are many people whom are afflicted with illnesses that would give anything to be home with their families during this time, but are instead, spending their season in hospital beds. So I tip my hat to good health.



Vanessa Felix: I am thankful for closeness of my family and clearance racks.

Travis Peake: I am thankful for Sports in high-definition TV.

Joe Osentoski: I am thankful for everything!

Linda Reznick: I am thankful for reading glasses!



Joanne Brown: Before our thanksgiving meal,

	and Barcode
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (public school employees)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (state employees)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

everyone in our family (no matter how many are together) each share what they feel most thankful for. It's a great time to remind ourselves how many things we have to be blessed for.

Patty Wethy: I am thankful for my family and the fun we have together.

Dick Pennington: I am thankful for family gatherings- good food, fun times, good food, grand kids, good food, and a comfortable lounge chair . . . after the good food, of course.

Kyle Seymour: I am thankful for my girlfriend.

Anne Watros: I am thankful for the basic necessities of life which so many take for granted - shelter, warmth, food, health. I am grateful to be steadily employed in these challenging times. And last but certainly not least, the love of my family and my friends.



Linda Albro-Sparks: I am thankful for my family and friends.



Kim Marton: I am thankful for my family every day.

Cindy Adams: To me,

Thanksgiving means ... lots of planning, shopping, cleaning and cooking, then all the things that make the work worthwhile: visiting, eating, seeing family, hugging, eating, laughing, remembering, EATING, and thanking God for these things we are so blessed with and grateful for!

Jim Rademacher: I am thankful for my family, friends ... and Thanksgiving Turkey!

Dan Norberg: I'm thankful that my sixteen-year-old son (still) asks me for advice.

Phyllis Bradley: The definition of being thankful is simply acknowledging your appreciation for an act of service, kindness, or a gift, with the understanding that no one is obligated to consider you or your well-being in anything they do. So for ALL the acts of kindness, service, favors, considerations, and ALL the gifts one may receive during the year, it is those small as well as large things we should be thankful for. Why? Because someone was thinking of you.



Danielle Fowler: I am thankful because living in Seattle meant I could adopt a new football team. Go Seahawks!

Johnny Moore: I am most thankful for my mother. Her will to live and the quality of life that



she brings to her kids will never go unnoticed. I am most thankful for this GREAT WOMAN!

Annie Earls: I am thankful for my friends and family. They have stood by me through the good times and bad and the happy and the sad. Without them, I don't think I would be who I am today. Oh, and I'm thankful for the turkey and stuffing I will indulge in for the next couple of weeks! Yea Thanksgiving!

Angela Bryan: In this time of hardship, I am most thankful for my family and my job. I am thankful I have a job to come to when I see many peers who have struggled with job loss.

Cathy Shoemaker: I'm thankful that I live in the great state of Michigan, and I get to go hunting with my best friends! This picture is of my dog and brother!

Rosemary Baker: I'm thankful for the strong ties our extended family continues to have and how we all make it a priority to gather together regularly for holidays, birthdays, homecomings, and other joyous occasions.

Pam Ward: Family and Friends! I am so thankful for both! We share the holiday with my husband's family totaling a dinner for 25 ranging in age from 7 to 86. There's chatting, eating, watching movies, games, outside activities, the school age kids drawing names for Christmas gifts for each other - I just love being together and focusing on each other for two days. Then we come home and spend the rest of the weekend on each other in our immediate family with more games, movies, and outings.

John Donovan: I feel very fortunate to have a good job and a great family!

Ray Fleming: I am thankful that my trees dropped their leaves and that I raked them up before it snowed.

Taylor Stiles: I am thankful for the people God has put in my life.

Deepthi Chigurupati: I'm thankful that Black Friday is around the corner so I can contribute in stimulating the economy.

Judy Mclean: I'm thankful for the wonderful people I work with. I spend more time with them than I do my family.

David Travis: I'm thankful for my health. It's now been five years since I had a heart valve transplant. Only 10 percent of people who have had this surgery have survived. I'm also thankful for my employment with ORS. I'm surrounded by so many smart and intelligent supervisors and staff. I appreciate the environment and atmosphere.

Donna Ford: I am thankful for all the good food



and family that will be at my Aunt's house on Thanksgiving.

Charla Drysdale: This year I am very thankful to have my husband home for the holidays (not deployed over seas), thankful to be pregnant with a healthy baby and thankful for my amazing two-year-old son who brings joy into our lives each and every day!

Bill Motz: I am thankful for my wonderful family, and thankful that my daughter is getting married, November 14, to a very special guy named Dan! Life is good!



Power of Perspectives training on the road

Because of the statewide diversity initiative and DMB's initiative of embracing a culture of diversity and inclusion, DMB Director Lisa Webb Sharpe invited **Anthony Estell** to deliver the Power of Perspectives training to members of the Governor's Cabinet, senior staff in several departments, staff from the Governor's executive office, and members of the statewide diversity initiative team. He delivered the trainings on September 9, October 1, and October 5 and 6.

One of the components of the statewide initiative is to provide training to all employees. Lisa wanted to share the work that DMB has done with other departments so they could consider our approach as one possible option.

Each department will have some discretion on how they will train their employees. Some departments may elect to follow our approach or go down a different path.

All Staff/Employee Survey feedback Employee Survey

Even with all that we have been through over the past several months and the uncertainty that still surrounds us, ORS employee satisfaction remains high. Nearly 3 out of 4 respondents, (73.5 percent), indicated they were satisfied as an ORS employee. More than 3 out of 4, (75.5 percent), indicated they would recommend ORS to a friend as a great place to work. Although these scores are slightly lower than the April 2009 survey responses, the change is not considered beyond what could occur through random chance.

If you would like to read comments provided by staff [click here](#).

Fall 2009 All Staff Survey

[The Fall 2009 survey results are available for viewing.](#)

In addition, staff anonymously asked questions of the EPC after the all staff meeting. The answers to these questions are available [for viewing](#).

You made it happen

"Strategic Planning seems like a management tool, but this certainly is an example of how it has affected me," said **Angie Parkhurst** of her selection to serve on the all staff planning team.

Angie participated in the Helping Hands survey last March, which stemmed from Strategic Plan Objective 11. The survey was designed to give

**Goal: Best in Class
Business Practices**

staff opportunities outside of their daily job duties.

“I wanted to get involved and meet new people while gaining experience. At the all staff planning team meetings, I got to meet people from across the processes and learn more about the work they do,” Angie said. “Typically, I feel like I mostly only talk to CSC people.”

Objective 11 -- In order to grow a positive work place and work culture, ORS will focus on the continuous improvement of its staff, as well as offer opportunities to best utilize the skills of the staff.

This fulfilled the vision of the Best in Class Business Practices Strategic Planning Team. They felt we needed to find ways to practice teamwork and inclusion, so employees can stretch and grow. The team included **Andy Kolp, Josey McCloud, Connie Morse, Elaine Scott, and Anne Watros.**

“I’m excited to see the implementation of Objective 11 with the helping hands survey,” said Elaine. “When it was introduced, I completed the survey and encouraged my coworkers to do so as well. Now, anyone who wants to join in ORS-wide activities may.”

“I definitely like that they asked us what we want to do, and then selected people by their preferences,” said Angie. “I hope to be able to do more.”

If you are interested in participating in the Helping Hands survey, the next one will be circulated office-wide in the spring.



ING Customer Satisfaction Survey

Each year ING works with an independent research firm to conduct a customer satisfaction survey regarding the state of Michigan 401(k) and 457 plans.

A total of 900 people responded to the survey which was delivered to new hires with one year or less of service, employees who have been with the state over a year,

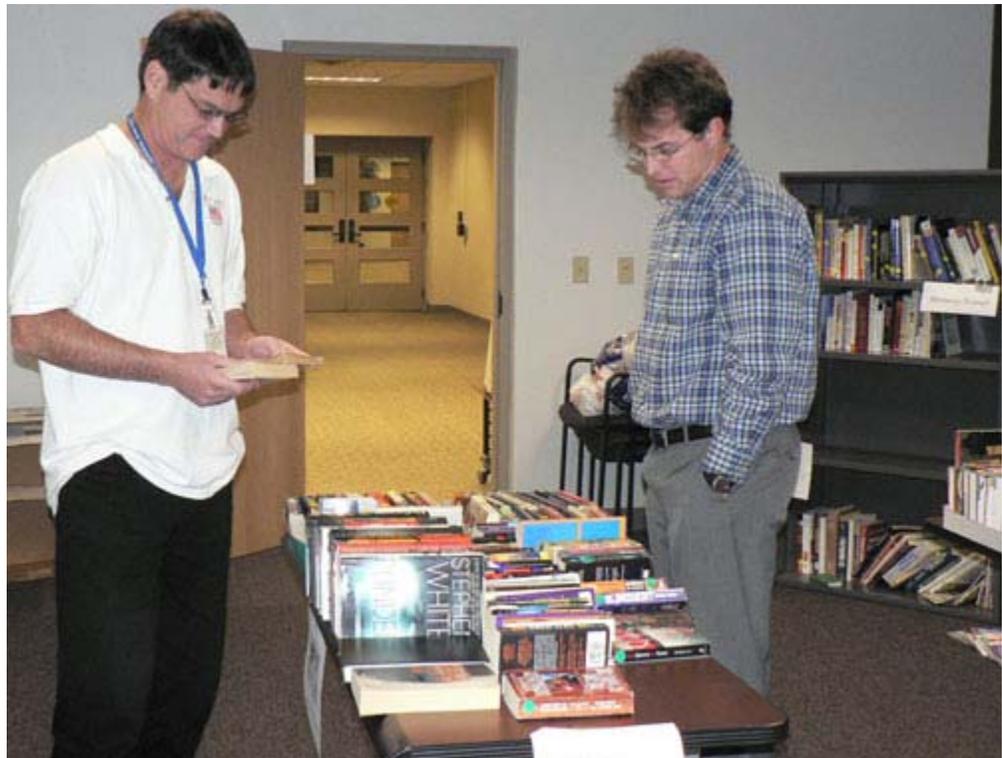
and retired and terminated employees.

The results for 2009 are in and the total participant satisfaction rate is at an impressive 94 percent. The survey reported that more participants are aware of ING seminars and fewer are requesting a closer location. ING's work over the past year to expand seminar locations and provide webinars likely contributes to these findings.

Of the respondents, 20 percent were aware of the new *Defined Contribution Health and Life, Disability and Death Benefits* guide, which is a new publication this year. Of respondents, 35 percent are using the target-date retirement funds that ING has in place, up from 20 percent last year.

ING and ORS will use these detailed results to structure their objectives for the upcoming year and identify ways to better meet the needs of plan participants.

EMPAC book sale



ORS staff check out the many books on display at the EMPAC book sale.

November is Excellence Month

This month, ORS celebrates Excellence Month. CE came up with the following items they believe show their team excellence.

- We take personal pride and responsibility for delivering exceptional service.
- We seek solutions to problems or ways to improve the work environment.
- We work to earn customer respect.



Look for how the other processes in ORS show their excellence in the next edition of the *LookOut*.

business briefs

Thanksgiving work schedule reminder

Remember, compressed work schedules are suspended next week because of the Thanksgiving holiday, so plan on working standard 8 hour days.

New book available

A new version of the [Your Retirement Plan \(R0614C\)](#) is available for public school employees. Changes include the addition of service credit information and miAccount details.

State police statements are on their way

Approximately 1,600 [Member Statements](#) and [PROactive](#) newsletters will be mailed to active State Police members by November 23 for the 2009 fiscal year. *PROactive* articles include the following:

- 3 things you need to know.
- Essentials to understanding your retirement plan.
- Your pension is safe and sound.
- Retirement preparedness: health, wealth, and happiness.



Staff on the move

On November 19 **Julie Andretz** will move from CSC to ER to temporarily assist with a number of projects.

ORS lives our values

Staff members arriving to work today were greeted by flooded floors, saturated and broken ceiling tiles, and water dripping from the ceiling. A valve in the humidifying system went on the fritz and wreaked havoc on the 3rd floor hallway, training room, Central Perk, and most importantly the Customer Service Center walk-in area.

Our early arriving ORS staffers jumped into action and exemplified our values of teamwork, excellence, leadership, and integrity. **Sue DeBor, Mary Lowry, Bill Motz, Chelsea Sherman, Mike Sysak, Joyce Weber, and Patty Wethy** quickly grabbed paper towels, wiped down desks, and moved wet chairs out of the walk-in area. Meanwhile, **Clarissa Sheler**, Mary, and



DMB Mission:

Sue set up fans to accelerate drying.

Despite their valiant efforts to open the walk-in center, the musty smell and moisture was too overwhelming to serve customers. The team made the leadership decision to reroute walk-in customers to Conference Room D. Within minutes, **Deb Grescowle, Andy Kolp, Leza Rebera, and Mike Sysak** had laptop computers and a printer set up in the conference room.

Promptly at 8:30 a.m., walk-in customers were being served by **Donna Ford** and **Kara Gross**. Although, the morning cleanup was hectic, there was no disruption of service to our customers.

Great work team ORS!

The humidifying system is repaired and weekend aeration will minimize the odor. The walk-in area is expected to resume normal business Monday.



ORS staff come together to help clean up after a valve in the humidifying system broke flooding parts of the 3rd floor. [View more pictures now.](#)

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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Eat, Drink, and be Merry

Eat. Yes, thank you, we will. Almost nonstop through the next six weeks or so. There will be food at work, food at home, food at all holiday events and gatherings, and did we mention food at work?

Drink. Not so much thank you, but, it's another high-calorie, low-nutrition holiday tradition. Even the non-alcohol beverages like hot apple cider and eggnog can be loaded with sugars and fat.

Be merry. Not if you're standing on the scale.

So what to do? Here are some fun exercises you can do during the holiday rush.

- Are you making the pumpkin pies? Before you begin, hold two 14-ounce cans (pie filling, gravy, etc.), one in each hand, palms down. Raise your arms straight out in front of you until they are parallel to the floor. Pause, and then slowly return to the starting position. Repeat 15 times. Why? Strengthens shoulder muscles and grip, which you'll need to carry all those holiday shopping bags at the mall.
- Waiting for the oven to heat? Do some hamstring kicks (your "ham" not the one in the roaster). Stand facing a counter (hold on for balance). Shift your weight to one leg, and bring your other heel up toward your derriere. Hold and squeeze for a few seconds. Return your leg to the starting position, and then lift it straight out to the side, and again back down. Repeat 15 times with each leg. Why? It works those hamstrings and the outer-thigh (your thigh, not the bird's) muscles.

Thanks for reading!!



- Standing at the buffet table? Try this ab flattener. Tighten your abdominal muscles as if preparing to take a punch. Hold and squeeze for 5 to 10 seconds. Release and repeat 10 times. Why? It strengthens abdominal and core muscles, and your new holiday outfit will look so much nicer!
- Big calorie burners – Try mixing cookie dough by hand and you'll burn 170 calories per hour versus 80 calories for just standing there holding an electric mixer.
Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator. Ten minutes on the stairs burns 89 calories versus 13 for 10 minutes of standing on an escalator.

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.