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Email the LookOut Staff   LookOut Archives

Fall 2006 All Staff Meeting — The print version

After the announcement came from **Chris DeRose** that he'd be leaving to pursue opportunities in Ohio, it was decided that the business originally slated for the Fall All Staff meeting would be delivered via the *LookOut* and the EPC would follow up with staff at regularly scheduled process meetings. This was done so that we could use the scheduled time and room to properly send off our director. If you were not able to attend the WDRA farewell party for Chris, you can watch the video and photo memoirs on Wednesday, November 1, and Thursday, November 2, during lunch in Crossroads.

WDRA leadership have prepared the following three articles that will bring you up to speed on the new CBT process, the latest on 3.3C project status, and the answers to questions submitted by staff. In the next two weeks members of the EPC will pop into your staff meetings to follow up on these business items. In the meantime, we hope that this information is helpful.

Farewell Chris! In lieu of an All Staff, WDRA celebrated Chris's accomplishments over the past eight plus years and bid him a fond farewell. DMB also hosted a farewell party for Chris, October 23, at Constitution Hall. The DMB gala included his family and constituents. Click to see more photos from each event. Above, **Judy McLean** and other WDRA employees secretly filled the large front windows of Chris's office with balloons to surprise him on his last day at WDRA. Best wishes Chris!

CBTs get a facelift

Recently, WDRA's training staff examined the Integrated Performance Management System and Competency Based Training (CBT) process that has been in place for the last five years and have made improvements to it.

One of the improvements was to validate the core competencies for employee classifications. Department Technicians level 7, 8, 9, and 10 was the first classification to be reviewed. Employees at this level examined the competencies listed for their level, and changes to the core competencies were made based on their input. All other classifications' competencies are expected to be reviewed and put in place before the 2007-2008 review period begins.

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Public School Employee Board Meeting	30

On the Horizon

- EMPAC Holiday Tree

Quick Links

- ORS Member Website
- ORS Employer Website
- Policies and Procedures

Commonly Used Acronyms

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly *(Consists of the EPC, BPOs, and BPLs)*
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process Leader
BPO	Business Process Owner
CED	Customer Education and Development
CSC	Customer Service Center
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council *(Chris, Laurie, Phil, Tim, Anthony, and Kathy)*
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting *(public school employees)*
PRO	Preretirement Orientation *(state employees)*

Over the past several weeks, supervisors have attended workshops to refresh their understanding of the process and for additional training in several areas. If you have not already, you will soon be involved in a meeting with your supervisor to begin developing your Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Individual Growth Plan (IGP) for the 2006-2007 review period. This meeting will provide you and your supervisor an opportunity to discuss the competencies identified during previous discussions, address tasks that will assist you in improving the identified competencies, and develop your IDP for the upcoming review period. Discussion will also take place regarding your IGP. This will provide an opportunity for you and your supervisor to discuss your business interests and tasks that can be performed to assist in your personal business development.

In addition to these changes, an opportunity has been added for you and your supervisor to meet with the second-line supervisor (that is, your supervisor's supervisor) after completion of your IDP and IGP. This will assist in informing the second-line supervisor of your accomplishments, strengths, and interests. Upon agreement of all individuals, the CBT form will be signed and become the guiding document for the upcoming review period.

3.3C activity forges ahead

While the business continues to adapt to all the changes that Stages 3.1 and 3.2 brought, things are still hopping down in Wing B with 3.3C and some new initiatives. Here are some of the activities going on.

SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

From the beginning, 3.3C has been all about stuff that makes things better for you. A lot of those things are behind-the-scenes changes that make the system run better, but a few deliver new functionality. Soon, the entire staff will take advantage of new search and navigation tools. For our auditors, fewer accounts will land in the audit queue because Clarety will filter accounts for audit based on conditions set by your T3 team. Mass email tools will be added for both employers and members, and a new correspondence folder will be added to images to capture outbound messages to employers and members. Watch for the first round of changes in December and the second round in February.

Four other major initiatives are occupying your T&T team:

- The Status/Positions/Effective dates/Closures (SPEC) initiative will change the existing Clarety application to provide member status in a more effective way, to use effective dates better for processing, and to close accounts accurately.
- The development of new customer correspondence tools will allow for easier delivery of forms and letters to members and for more efficient processing of returned mail in the mailroom.
- A new ad hoc query tool that will allow the business to generate their own queries as needed without affecting system response times.
- Web self-service.

The first three of these initiatives will be developed with our Saber partner. The web self-service initiative will be bid separately and managed under a different contract, possibly with a different vendor. T&T has completed three of the four sets of requirements for these initiatives and is moving ahead with planning and development.

BUILDING OUR APPLICATION SUPPORT TEAM AND SUPPORTING OUR TECHNOLOGY

AST is working closely with our Saber partners to gradually take over the daily management and production changes of the systems already in place. To help

PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
T&T	Tools and Technology

with this, we have added a few new staff members. **Dave Gabler** joined us in May as our new Applications Manager. Since his arrival he has added three functional analysts, **Jimmy Isaac**, **Baskar Rajamani** and **Mark Sands**, all of whom worked for Saber and have now become permanent members of the state team. This is a great benefit to us as their knowledge of our systems is excellent. In addition to managing our daily application needs, the AST is taking ownership of the important software tools that manage our system (e.g., the software that tracks problem incident reports and the software that deploys new program code).

Probably the most important activity on our AST team's plate is to replace the servers that support Clarety and Siebel. The Clarety system and all its subcomponents need production servers, failover servers (disaster recovery), and multiple test servers. All of our servers and several sets of software need to be upgraded. This important activity is targeted to be complete next spring.

Above: Application Team members (left to right) - **Mark Sands**, **Dave Gabler**, and **Jimmy Isaac**. **Baskar Rajamani** was not available.

You had questions, EPC has answers.

- What's our next Vision? We're wrapping up the project. What's next for ORS?
- What are the titles we should call Phil, Tim, Laurie?
- Are there plans to move our offices downtown?

See the answers to all this and more! Click here to view the questions that were collected for the All Staff and how the EPC answered them.

Let's plan our future

Recently **Brian McLane** and **John Donovan** met with process teams to explain how WDRA will craft our new mission, vision, and strategic plan. In a twist to conventional business practices, the EPC has asked that our new mission, vision, and strategic plan be driven by our employees. Traditionally, organization leaders decide what direction an organization should move.

So what are a mission, vision, and strategic plan used for? A mission will define our core purpose—who we serve, who we are, what we do, and why we do it. A vision defines who we want to be. The vision focuses on tomorrow—it is inspirational and provides clear decision-making criteria, and is timeless. Finally, the strategic plan is the roadmap to our long-term goals and the strategies to get there.

The rollout of the initiative to create a new mission, vision, and strategic plan has been in the works for many months now. Generally speaking most organizations revisit their mission, vision and strategic plan every three to five years.

Brain and John have begun meeting with focus groups for your input to help define these very important pieces of our organization. Why is your input and participation important? Because we all have a different piece of the puzzle that will help us craft a clear picture of what we need to do in the future.

When you participate in these focus groups you will be asked two questions: (1) who are our stakeholders; and (2) what do we do for them? After meeting with all of the focus groups, a work group of volunteers will take the ideas and sort them into themes (more information on this at the meetings). Then you will be asked to

validate the themes and once that is done, the work group will put together some drafts of mission and vision statements for you to vote on. After that is accomplished, work will begin on the strategic plan itself.

If you have ideas to share outside of the scheduled meetings, you may do so by emailing Brian (mclaneb@michigan.gov) or John (donovanj@michigan.gov), or put your ideas or suggestions into the box that will be provided in Central Perk.

Impressive!

WDRA folks are some of the best around and to prove this, just take a look at the nominees we had for the DMB 2006 Employee Recognition Awards.

Nominee	Award Category
Jaime Abednego	Every Day Hero
Lila Christiansen	Leadership
Lori Edwards	Customer Service
Robert Glennon	Innovator
Deb Lawrence	Every Day Hero
Judy McLean	Customer Service
Kris Morris	Every Day Hero
Outreach—Joy Bartell, Fred Covert, Ray Fleming, Pam Kenney, Chuck Simpson	Innovator Award Winner
Jon Seeger	Innovator
Alice Semevolos	Every Day Hero
Kerrie Vanden Bosch	Leadership

Visit the DMB intranet for the complete list.

Harvest Gathering 2006

Did you know that the food or money you donate to the Harvest Gathering will help feed the estimated one million people who will require food bank assistance this year? The Michigan Harvest Gathering campaign is in its 16th year and is a food and fund-raising program of the Food Bank Council of Michigan. The campaign wraps up today, October 27, 2006. The goal for this year was to raise $350,000 and 500,000 pounds of food. Watch for future communications to see if this challenge was met.

You can't order this fine pastry from your local bakery. It's a WDRA original with some of our own EPC members, **Anthony Estell, Tim McCormick, Kathy Tober,** and **Phil Stoddard**, as the decorators. The cake was awarded as a prize —first prize, not a consolation prize—for the process that brought in the most money in the SECC bake sale. Process Support claimed the frosted beauty with an average donation of $4.60 per person. Watch for the SECC totals in a future *LookOut* article.

Contact center training

Thanks to the efforts of many dedicated WDRA staff, four new contact center employees were able to begin serving customers in mid-October with all the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to meet our high standards of service. **Julie Andretz, Jennifer Morrissey, Christina Pakkala,** and **Patricia Smith**, who, along with CSC's **Tom Zack**, completed the 5-week course to learn about the retirement systems and workings of the contact center.

The contact center's training course has always been driven by the recognition that quality, comprehensive training is needed before any staff member serves a WDRA customer. It has evolved to include a predefined curriculum, classroom time with subject matter experts, study, quizzes and examinations, drills and role-playing, and ongoing mentoring and monitoring.

The training schedule was intensive, running from 8:30 to 5:00 each day. Topics included an overview of all four retirement systems WDRA administers in addition to Siebel, Clarety, Service Credit, Telephone Etiquette, and Insurance. Trainees also spent a couple of hours most days observing and listening to

Here's an example of teamwork and integrity during the training program, offered by **Lois Musbach**:

"I was responsible for the service credit parts of the training. It was condensed into 3 days for both systems so I trained both AM and PM. We had to break early one day as someone was conducting a training over the lunch hour and needed the computers in the training room.

We had been having numerous problems with the overhead projectors and were down to one working projector. We were told that when this one "goes" it could not be repaired (just like the previous one). When my group returned for the afternoon training session, the projector would not work.

I am horribly incompetent when it comes to all things "computer" so I did a few of the things I'd seen Linda do the previous day, e.g., checked the connections, checked

customer calls, to gain a realistic idea of what to expect before transitioning from training to phones.

Planning and implementing the training required many hours of preparation. **Linda Turner** facilitated the project—reviewing and updating training materials, developing the training plan and schedule, reserving rooms and equipment, and grading quizzes. She was aided by **Catherine Jones** who recommended changes to the final exam; **Cindy Mooney** who created an EDRO PowerPoint presentation; and **Melissa Miller** who handled many of the handouts and forms.

Trainers included **Angie DeRose, Jennifer Dunavant, Lois Musbach, Kim Preston, Elaine Scott,** and **Linda Turner**. Subject matter experts included **Laurie Abraham** and **Anne Watros**, along with CE's **Ray Fleming** and **Pam Kenney**. **Angela Bryan** and **Elaine Scott** helped drill the trainees on the information presented. Many other CSC staff were, and continue to be, involved in mentoring.

the plugs, etc. Since all of my planned training was being driven by a PowerPoint presentation, I dashed back to A-Wing and hunted **David Travis** down. Knowing my time was limited and the class was waiting for me, I returned and started presenting my training material to the class.

In only a few minutes, David had the projector working and was just about out the door. Of course, I had to call him back in because I needed to understand what was wrong so I could fix it myself next time.

I could tell something was up because he was smirking a little. Turns out, the PC got shut off! I have to give him credit—he didn't want to embarrass me in front of the class but it was just too funny to pass up. So much for my 'Subject Matter Expert' title. Of course, my class didn't let me forget it for awhile."

The outstanding teamwork and communication among the trainers and mentors, and, of course, many hours of study by the trainees, resulted in great success. Here are comments from those involved in the training:

- The Public School Employees Preretirement Information Meeting was so informative that it should be required for all new employees, regardless of the process they are supporting.
- Having actual customer accounts to review and evaluate based on eligibility criteria is valuable.
- Call center staff are tuned into what customers ask about. Having call center staff role play as a customer is helpful.
- When I was giving the Generate Benefit Estimate (GBE) training, the system went down so I made up mock scenarios and had each trainee treat it as an incoming phone call, with only their training and the website as resources. We were able to reinforce what they had learned with some unique situations, and have fun while we were doing it. It was the perfect way to end training on a Friday afternoon. If my mock calls are any indication, there is nothing that Jen, Tina, Julie and Trish can't handle.
- I believe that the training went very well. They were a great team to train and I believe they will have great success.

Clearly, this extraordinary effort demonstrates all of our values—integrity, excellence, inclusion, teamwork, growth, and fun. Furthermore, CSC's training initiative ensures that our current and future customers can count on receiving accurate information and exceptional service.

Employee survey results

The results of the recent WDRA Employee Survey are in. Staff from each process area provided valuable feedback in this survey that was conducted in late August

and early September. Nearly 53 percent of staff participated, keeping the response rate to the survey high.

According to the survey, 81.9 percent of you are satisfied as WDRA employees. Generally, an employee satisfaction score of 80 percent or higher is considered good, but at WDRA we have come to expect more. This score reflects a drop from the previous results in April 2005. We know we can improve this score and leadership is working with the BPOs and BPLs to take steps to improve our overall satisfaction at work.

The survey also polled staff as to whether they would be satisfied if they received the quality of service WDRA provides to our members. The average score was 4.26, based on a 6-point scale. This question was also asked back in 1996, resulting in a score of 3.93.

Your valuable feedback and comments provide insight regarding how you perceive our service and helps to shed light on factors that influence your satisfaction. Your BPO and BPL plan to further discuss the survey results with you soon. If you have immediate questions, please feel free to ask them.

Comings and goings

New student employee **Zena Johnson** arrived October 2 and is working on the Vision ORS Project. Zena is a junior at Michigan State University majoring in general business administration. She has previously worked at the Detroit Medical Center Corporate office as well as Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. She enjoys shopping, reading and "hanging" with her family.

**Zena Johnson**   **Lauren Holton**

Lauren Holton also arrived on October 2 and is working in the Records Unit. Lauren has been a temp since March of this year and has worked for Treasury, the Department of Labor and Economic Growth, and the Department of Human Services. When she's not at work she enjoys music, cooking, skiing, and reading.

As Vision ORS winds to a close, we must say good-bye to old friends. **Ray McIntosh** has been with the project from the beginning helping to manage our contract and our relationship with Saber/Covansys. Ray has gradually been phasing out since about June and is now fully engaged with the Department of Treasury.

Be a well-informed voter

Election day is fast approaching—Tuesday November 7—and this year we have a holiday on election day, so there's no excuse for not voting.

How well informed are you regarding the candidates and the ballot proposals? Have you found it difficult to sift out factual candidate information from all the mud-slinging you see and hear? Maybe you've already decided which candidates will get your vote and how you stand on each of the ballot proposals. But if you're in the undecided group, you might try checking out some of these websites for reasonably unbiased information. Many also provide links to the individual candidates' websites where you can find more details about their platforms and their campaign promises.
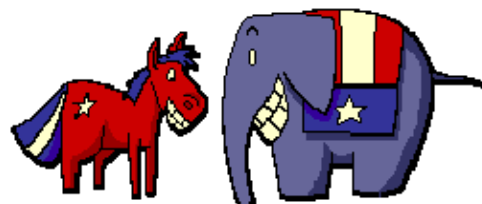
- The Green Papers website lists all of the candidates for Governor and Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and the U.S. congressional candidates for open Senate and House of Representative seats. It's loaded with additional links.
- Politics1's website is another unbiased source for top Michigan positions and congressional candidates.
- The U of M Documents Center – 2006 Election website is a very comprehensive site with extensive links to candidates, polls, top policy issues, and more.
- For a one-stop election information source visit the Michigan Secretary of State Elections in Michigan webpage that hosts a gateway for a number of voter-related websites. You'll also find the full text of each proposal as it will appear on the ballot.

Remember, you have a voice in how we're governed – but only if you get out and VOTE!!

Voting history and trivia

Voting for political candidates has been around for centuries—but today's voting is nothing like it used to be. Consider these interesting facts about voting and elections.

Ancient Greece. One of the earliest forms of democracy began in Ancient Greece around 508 BC. However voters (male landowners only) cast a vote for the politician they most want exiled for 10 years. If any politician received over 6,000 votes, then the one with the largest number of votes was exiled. If no one got 6,000, then everyone stayed. Because the voter population was limited, a politician really had to be disliked to be voted out.

U.S. Constitutional Amendments about voting. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution were passed in the late 1860s, after the Civil War; they outlawed slavery and legally extended civil rights and suffrage (voting rights) to former slaves. However, numerous restrictions kept many African Americans from actually voting until the 1960s Voting Rights Act.

The 17th Amendment provided for U.S. senators to be directly elected by popular vote. Before 1913, senators were appointed. The president is still not elected by popular vote, but by the Electoral College. If you remember, in the presidential election of 2000, Al Gore won the popular vote, but George Bush won the electoral college vote.

The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920, the result of an international movement of "Suffragettes."

The 26th Amendment, passed in 1971 in the midst of the Vietnam War, lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, allowing 18-year-olds who were routinely drafted and sent to war to have a voting voice.

World's largest democracy. Wonder who it is? It's NOT America! In the 2004 election in India, 380 million people voted — more than the entire population of the United States. India conducts its voting on multiple days, moving thousands of voting machines from one province to the next.

Qualifications & results. Age does matter—you must be 35 years old to be president, 30 years old to be a U.S. senator, and 25 to be a U.S. House of Representative member.

Did you know that we've had more vice presidents than presidents?

One vote CAN make a difference.

- 1845 – ONE vote brought Texas into the Union.
- 1868 - ONE vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- 1876 - ONE vote gave Rutherford Hayes the presidency of the United States.
- 1939 - ONE vote passed the Selective Service Act.
- 1960 - ONE vote per precinct elected John F. Kennedy President.
- 1978 - in Fullerton, California, a Democratic candidate for the State of California's legislature lost by TEN votes in a primary election where 32,000 votes were cast.

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.