



February 25, 2000

Volume 3, Issue 15

ORS Mission:
We deliver pensions related benefits and services to promote the future financial security of our customers.

ORS Vision:
Fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service.

ORS Calendar

February

Pension Paydate ----- 25th

March

St. Patrick's Day ----- 17th
Public School Employees Board Meeting ----- 23rd
Pension Paydate ----- 24th
ORS All-Staff Meeting ----- 30th

April

Easter ----- 23rd
Pension Paydate ----- 25th

Update on the MIP Buy-back

In 1991 all Public School Employee Basic Plan members were given a second opportunity to elect the Member Investment Plan (MIP) during the 1991 MIP Window. Those who elected MIP, were required to pay the MIP contributions they would have paid, had they joined MIP when it was first offered to them. Since that time, the members who made the election have either paid their MIP Buy-Back balances or have been making payments on the balances with post-tax dollars. These payments have been made either with direct payments to ORS, or through payroll deduction through their Reporting Unit. An annual 8% interest is charged on the

unpaid balance. In late 1999 the IRS gave approval for these members to pay their Buy-Back balances using pre-tax dollars, if their Reporting Unit passed the TDP and MIP Resolutions. ORS has notified these members of this opportunity. ORS has also been working to transition members who have been making payroll deductions on a post-tax basis to the money saving pre-tax payroll deduction program.

If the Reporting Unit does not pass the resolutions, the member must continue to make post-tax payments and satisfy their MIP Buy-Back balance prior to retirement.

Strategic Team Update

Team # 4 – Partner with State Service Providers to Acquire Consistently High Quality Service (Strategic Partnership Team)

Team Members: Fred Covert, Carla Price, Carol Keyes Baubie, and Darlene Workman.

Team Sponsor: Ginger Bomar.

To date, the Strategic Partnership Team has partnered with two State service providers – the Consoli-

dated Print Center (CPC) and Mail & Delivery Services (M&DS).

The process of partnering involved interviewing five to 10 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) within ORS who work with the service providers, and asked them for any issues, challenges, problems or suggestions. Results from these interviews showed that there were opportunities for improvement.

See Strategic Team Update on Page 3

From the ORS mail bag

Dear ORS:

When my husband died two plus months ago, I knew I would spend most days grieving the loss. That was expected. What I did not realize was that I would have to spend hours and hours dealing with corporations over and over again trying to settle business and financial matters. There are several matters started at the end of November that are still not resolved.

With reluctance, I contacted your group a short time ago. I was not looking forward to another hassle over business and financial matters relating to my husband's death. I was amazed at the level of service I received. I want you all to know that you have made this process the easiest of any that I have had to deal with. You have restored my faith in people – and in the fact that there are business groups out there that still believe in customer service. Bless you

all and keep up the great work. You are appreciated!

K.S.
Fremont, Michigan



Do you know about ARS?

ARS stands for Automated Retirement System. This computer application allows users to view and/or correct Public School Employees wage, service, and demographic records at ORS. The information is located on the Michigan Information Processing Center's (MIPC) mainframe computer system.

Each Reporting Unit in Michigan sends in a quarterly report that contains detailed information on individual employees and the entire Reporting Unit. This data is submitted by computer disk, magnetic tape, or computer cartridge. Once the information is received, it is entered into ARS, where staff can review the data for accuracy.

Once the information has been verified, it is locked and uploaded to the Automated Retirement Management System (ARMS). ARMS is the system which stores data on all active members of the Public School Employees Retirement System. Once the data is uploaded to ARMS it is reflected in each member's account history and can be accessed by all ORS staff.

Incidentally, if you use ARS, did you know that you can change your own password? Before a password expires (30 calendar days, including weekends and holidays) follow these simple instructions: Logon on to ARS. From the HOME position, type PSWN. The system will

automatically assign a new password. It's suggested that you mark your calendar for approximately 25 days after a new password is assigned, then change your password, rather than waiting until the last day.

The logo is identical to the one at the top of the page, featuring 'ORS' in blue stylized font with a pen nib and 'LockOut' in black cursive below it.

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Strategic Team Update *Continued from Page 1*

A set of “Measures of Success” was drafted for each partnership. Invitations to join ORS in this partnership were sent to the director or manager of each provider. The Strategic Partnership Team met several times with the providers, and their staff toured their places of business and discussed common needs and opportunities. Fred Covert commented, “These meetings proved very fruitful and bore some ‘quick wins’ as well as long term opportunities.”

The team is in the process of finalizing the partnership agreements. Before this can occur, they will identify specific Business Process Owners so that all can come to a mutual agreement of expectations.

The Strategic Partnership Team is in the process of starting a third partnership with the Office of Property Services.

Of Special Note:

The 1999 MIP Window began June 1, 1999 and ran through November 26, 1999. Four hundred thirty Basic Plan members elected to enroll in the MIP.

75% Option is fully implemented

Information Technology and Reengineering (ITR), Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) and ORS Operations staff recently finished the task of implementing the new 75% Option for the Public School and State Employees Retirement Systems. In the early summer of 1998, the State legislature approved a 75% survivor option at retirement for Public School and State Employees in, addition to the 50% and 100% survivor options. The new option went into effect January 1, 2000.

Incorporating this new option required reprogramming the Common Pension Payroll system (CPP) to accept a two-digit code for the survivor option. The previous software only allowed for a one-digit code. ITSD staff reviewed all of the programming and identified the changes that would be necessary. **Joyce Buchanan**, ITR Analyst and ORS Project Lead, commented, “Having ITSD review the code up front was a tremendous help. They were able to identify potential problem areas that we would not have found.” More than 100 programs were affected by this project.

ITSD staff included: **Robert**

Kubish, Carey Robinson, and Diane Wagner. ORS staff involved in the reprogramming included: **Laurie Abraham, Joyce Buchanan, Fred Covert, Colleen Daley, Anthony Estell, Denice Hansen, Meg Leonard, Margo Keeler, Pam Kibby,**

75%

Lisa Naccarato, Dick Pennington, Lisa Schmidt, Norma Simon, and Michael Zingsheim.

Implementing the 75% Option required more than just reprogramming computer programs. An implementation team, consisting of **Nick Armit, Matt Beha, Joanne Busley, Robert Glennon, Linda Mahlow, and Dick Pennington**, identified all publications and presentations that needed to be revised to incorporate this change.

Kudos to all involved in this huge project!

Thought for the Day

“The only thing worse than training your employees and losing them is not training them and keeping them.”

– Zig Ziglar

PC Tips & Shortcuts

When you are working in Microsoft Word, you can select a single word in your document by double-clicking it. You can select a paragraph by triple-clicking anywhere in the paragraph. This can be useful when you are cutting and pasting, or if you want the spell check a single word or paragraph.

Comings & Goings in ORS

Ginger Bomar, Information Technology and Reengineering Director, recently accepted a position with the Virginia Retirement System. She has served at ORS for more than 23 years. Her last day is today, February 25.

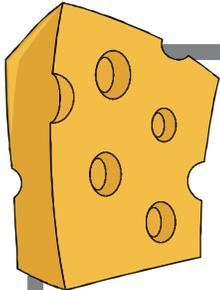
Connie Lyles, from the Director's Office, recently left ORS.

Here's the answer to last issue's Scramble:



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ouy od ro asy
si clubip slateroni

Everything
you do or say
is public relations.



The Cheese Corner

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife, enjoying his extended family.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He

handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you." The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock, we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we'd do it much differently. But we cannot go back.

You are the carpenter. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. "Life is a do-it-yourself project," someone has said. Your attitudes and the choices you make today, build the "house" you live in tomorrow. Build wisely!

