



July 29, 2011

Volume 15, Issue 15

Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

In This Issue...

- [Prep work creates quality customer service](#)
- [Articulate User's Group](#)
- [New survey tool shows real time data](#)
- [Business briefs](#)
- [Comings & goings](#)
- [Using caution with email attachments](#)
- [Tech tips](#)
- [Ask Betty](#)
- [What makes Michigan great for you? Festivals, fairs, and events](#)
- [Correction](#)

Calendar

August

ORS Annual Picnic	3
Spacewalk	18
ORS Golf Outing	23

On the Horizon

- State Employees Board Meeting
- September 1
- Public School Board Meeting
- September 8

Quick Links

Prep work creates quality customer service

When legislators introduced House Bills [4701](#) and [4702](#) in early May, we started laying the groundwork to meet the needs of over 19,000 state employees in the Defined Benefit (DB) plan who may need to decide whether to stay in the DB plan or switch to the Defined Contribution (DC) plan.

The 2010 retirement incentives left us with many valuable lessons, one of which was to get started on changes as early as possible. Each process in ORS has been hard at work to prepare for another potential change.

Here's a look at what's been going on:

- Held townhall-style meetings in each process to discuss the impact of reform and answer questions from staff (EPC).
- Created a communication plan to identify all customer education needs and began work on creating letters, summaries, web content, etc. (CE).
- Drafted miAccount screens for members to make their plan choice (CE and PS).
- Developed new, static miAccount estimates for straight life and survivor options (AST, CE, CS, and PS).
- Began work with ING to develop a calculator for DB members to estimate their potential DC earnings (BPD, CE, and ING).
- Began developing a calculator for DC members to estimate the value of their Health Reimbursement Account (AST, CE, BPD, and PS).
- Started drafting technical requirements for changes to pension estimates and retirement application processing for Clarety (AST and CS).
- Began building changes for new benefit structures and wage and contribution collections with the state's payroll system (AST and ER).

"All of these initiatives put us in a position where we're prepared to meet the needs of our staff and customers if anything should happen," said **Laurie Hill**. "But being ready doesn't change the message we give our customers when they ask about the legislation. We must still tell them, 'Anything can happen, anything can change. But regardless of what happens, we'll be ready to help you.'"

The House is not expected to meet on this again until August. If there is any movement on either of these bills, the EPC will host additional meetings to address



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

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
CS	Customer Service
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution
DTMB	Department of Technology, Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (Phil, Laurie, Tim, and Anthony)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
FLB	Forms, Letters, 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

questions and concerns.

Articulate User's Group

In the [July 1 issue of the LookOut](#), we reported that twelve ORS staff met in June for training on the Articulate '09 software package. Articulate is software used to create e-learning courses for tutorials and training. That same group met again last week for the first Articulate User's Group meeting.



The ORS Articulate User's Group creates opportunities for its members to:

- Extend the training on Articulate software.
- Network with other ORS staff to learn about educational theory, instructional design, and PowerPoint best practices.
- Inspire and encourage one another to produce world-class tutorials and training modules for both internal and external customers.
- To prepare and keep on schedule an organizational list of our first 50 tutorials for members and employers which cover a variety of topics.

In addition to the items above, **Elaine Scott** is creating training tutorials for staff.

The User's Group will meet monthly. Stay tuned for more information on when courses are created and posted online.

New survey tool shows real time data

During the recent ER Outreach survey, **John Donovan**, **Steve Crippen**, and **Angie Schrauben** had access to real time data thanks to our new tool, SurveyMonkey. Using an internet link, they were able to check the results of the survey anytime from anywhere. John said, "It was exciting to monitor the survey results at the same time employers provided feedback."

The tool shows running totals for number of responses to the survey and to each question. It also provides a percentage breakdown for each question's answers. "Real time access to such data was something we wanted for a long time," said CE's **Fred Doll**.



SurveyMonkey™

Through the research efforts of CE's **Robert Glennon**, ORS was able to obtain access to SurveyMonkey for free testing. It didn't take long to convince people of the benefits over our old system. Since then, CE's **LuAnn Kern** has researched SurveyMonkey's capabilities and has found ways to improve our electronic survey capabilities.

If you would like to see how SurveyMonkey displays data online, check out this secure link to the [ER Outreach Survey](#) site. We'll keep you posted on other opportunities for using this tool.



Employer friendly updates to service credit forms

New versions of the *Service Credit Retirement Clearance (R0671CG)*, [University Service Credit \(R0447G\)](#), [Other Government Employment Service Credit \(R0127G\)](#), and [Out-of-System Public or Nonpublic Educational Service \(R0149C\)](#) are available. The forms ask members to estimate when the service occurred, and they clarify that

ORS Strategic Goals



- Innovate and Improve Customer Service
- Best In Class Business Practices
- Instill Confidence in Staff Through Quality Communication
- Engage Top Talent to Realize Potential
- Continuously Renewed Business-Driven Technology
- Build Business Capacity Through Education and Development
- Proactive Policy Development and Legislative Strategy



we need employer and/or matching contributions reported by the employer's official custodian of retirement records. This helps employers with older microfiche or paper records know where to begin looking for the data.



CS welcomed the following nine employees who will be working part-time in the call center, and their full-time supervisor, on July 18:



Bianca Torres is the new CS supervisor over the part-time staff. Bianca comes from the Department of Human Services where she was a supervisor for nearly seven years — three of which in a call center. She studied business administration at Lansing Community College. She enjoys spending time with her two kids and playing tennis.



Traci Fisher earned her bachelor's degree from Michigan State University. She is married and has five kids. Traci also teaches fitness classes at the YMCA, and in her spare time, she enjoys volunteering for her children's soccer program.



Cheri Friar owned a children's consignment business for three years before joining ORS. She studied industrial supervision and management at Central Michigan University and she enjoys spending time with her two kids.



Mollie Leahy attended Fulton High School. She is married and has three kids, and owns a business with her husband.



Victoria Madejek is married and has an 18-year-old. She previously worked for the Michigan Department of State as a technology liaison and at Michigan State University as an on-call employee. She enjoys scrapbooking and traveling.



Teresa Psiharis-Rankin has a degree in social work from Western Michigan University. She has two dogs — a St. Bernard and Golden retriever. Previously she worked for the Department of Human Services. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her husband and six-year-old daughter.



Gail Ruiz previously worked as an assistant interior designer and attended Haslett High School. She has one quarter horse and two painted horses and enjoys taking them to horse shows. She is married and has two kids.



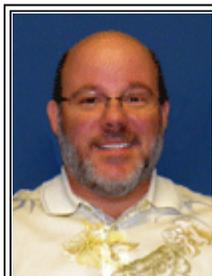
Judy Snell worked for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan before coming to ORS. She attended Waverly High School. She is married and has two kids. During her free time she enjoys shopping and making jewelry.



Evelyn Walkington-Jensen previously worked for the Department of Human Services and took executive secretary classes at Davenport University. She is married and has a five-year-old and three-year-old twins. She enjoys golfing, hunting, and fishing.

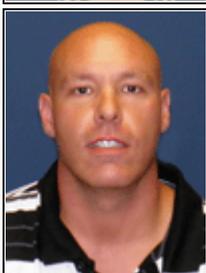


ER welcomed **Wayne Aldrich** on July 25. Wayne was a senior sales executive for Brady's Business Systems before coming to ORS. He uses his skills and passion of photography for weddings and senior photos. He received his MBA from Davenport University in human resources. He is married and has a three-year-old daughter and a baby on the way due in January.



AST welcomed **David Pinelli** on August 25. David obtained a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Florida. He is an avid collector of sports memorabilia and enjoys going to sports expos. David previously worked for Comerica Bank as an IT project manager. He is married and has two daughters, ages nine and twelve.

CS welcomed six new full time staff on July 25:

	<p>Kay Cannon graduated from Everett High School and attended Lansing Community College. She has a background in Medicaid with the State of Michigan as a contract employee. She is married and has three girls and one boy, and enjoys shopping and playing volleyball.</p>
	<p>Linda Johnston previously worked as a telemarketing manager for Tele Data Systems. She studied courses in health and science at Mott Community College in Flint, and she enjoys fishing and skiing. She is married and has two boys.</p>
	<p>Rudy Litterini studied pre-law and public administration at University of Michigan. Before coming to ORS, he worked for Kelly Services in Lansing. He enjoys biking and weight training.</p>
	<p>Peg McLeod previously worked for Blue Care Network in patient accounts, finance, and IT facilitations for 23 years. She is married and has two daughters. Peg is a Michigan State fan and enjoys camping, golfing, and gardening.</p>
	<p>Shannon Prawdzik worked as a call center manager for Innovative Monetary Solutions in Texas. She has a daughter, 19, and a son, 24. She enjoys reading, camping, hiking, and is an animal lover.</p>
	<p>Tammy Stephens graduated from Davenport University with a bachelor's degree in business professional studies. She previously worked in production and casting for Collective Development Incorporated in Lansing. She considers herself very athletic and enjoys acting and swimming.</p>

Today is **Cathy Shoemaker**'s last day with ORS. She will continue to work as a contractor in a project management role with the Department of Treasury.

BPD wished the best of luck to **Carl Pier** on July 28. He accepted a financial management analyst position with Citizens Republic Bancorp. We previously reported he accepted a position with the Department of Transportation, but he since decided to work closer to home.

Staff on the move

Kara Gross is currently working as a working-out-of-class analyst in CS.

Tim McCormick will spend the next year on an assignment of measuring and documenting our work at ORS. **Laurie Mitchell** will be filling in for Tim as Executive Process Owner of CS and CE.

Using caution with email attachments

Some of the characteristics that make email attachments convenient and popular are also the ones that make them a common tool for attackers:

- **Email is easily circulated.** Forwarding email is so simple that viruses can quickly infect many machines. Most viruses don't even require users to forward the email — they scan a user's computer for email addresses and automatically send the infected message to each of them. Attackers take advantage of the fact that most users will automatically trust and open any message that comes from someone they know.
- **Email programs try to address all user needs.** Almost any type of file can be attached to an email message, so attackers have more freedom with the types of viruses they can send.
- **Email programs offer many user-friendly features.** Some email programs have the option to automatically download email attachments, which immediately exposes your computer to viruses within the attachments.

While email attachments are a popular and convenient way to send documents, they are also a common source of viruses. Use caution when opening attachments, even if they appear to have been sent by someone you know.
--

What steps can you take to protect yourself and others in your address book?

- **Be wary of unsolicited attachments, even from people you know.** Just because an email message looks like it came from your mom doesn't mean it did. Many viruses can spoof the return address, making it look like the message came from someone else. If you can, check with the person who supposedly sent the message to make sure it's legitimate before opening attachments. This includes email messages that appear to be from your internet service provider (ISP) or software vendor that claim to include patches or antivirus software — ISPs and software vendors do not send patches or software in email.
- **Don't assume that embedded files and links are safe.** Many file types are used to send viruses and malware to users, including office document files (such as .doc or .xls), program files (.exe or .bat), and compressed files (.zip). Just because an embedded link appears useful or work-related doesn't mean it's safe.
- **Turn off the option to automatically download attachments.** Check your settings to see if your software offers the option, and make sure to disable it.
- **Trust your instincts.** If an email or attachment seems suspicious, don't open it — even if your antivirus software claims the message is clean. Remember, even messages sent by a legitimate sender might contain a virus. If something about the email or attachment makes you uncomfortable, there may be a good reason. Don't let your curiosity put your computer at risk.

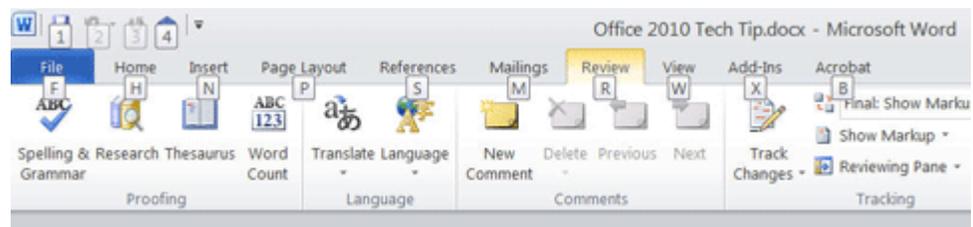


Office 2010 Tech Tip: Keyboard shortcuts

Do you use keyboard shortcuts? Do you want to learn how? They can save you a lot of time, and can save your wrists the trouble of moving your mouse so much.

Here's a tip to help you find and use the keyboard shortcuts in MS Office 2010 (Word, Excel, Access, etc.).

In any Office 2010 program, you can hit the Alt button and keyboard shortcut keys will appear. Then, instead of pointing your mouse and clicking, or pressing Command and a shortcut, you just hit the keyboard shortcut next to what you want to do (it's usually a single letter).



Note: This ONLY works when you can see the keyboard shortcuts as shown in the image above.



Writing tip: Parallel structure

The names for grammatical tools can be intimidating, although the concepts are often pretty simple. Ideas like parallel structure make it easier for your reader to follow your sentence, and are important in professional business writing.

Parallel structure means using similar patterns of words to describe similar content. For example:

- Denise likes hiking, camping, and swimming.

If the words aren't in the same form, they can make sentences halting and confusing:

- Denise likes to go hike, camping, and to swim.

An easy way to check if your sentence is parallel is to read it aloud. If you don't hear the same kinds of sounds repeated, or something is breaking the rhythm of the sentence, it might not be parallel.

What makes Michigan great for you? Festivals, fairs, and events

Mark your calendars! Your coworkers recommended these great upcoming festivals, fairs, and events:

Next up: Where do you go to get away? Tell us your favorite Michigan hotel, resort, or B&B (bed and breakfast). [Click here to cast your vote!](#)

ORS Purpose:
We are an innovative retirement organization driven to empower our customers for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

The *LookOut* is published by the Office of Retirement Services, Department of Technology, Management and Budget, State of Michigan

Director:
Phil Stoddard
Edited by Customer Education

Thanks for reading!!



- [Alden Days](#) on Torch Lake, July 29-31. Small town Michigan at its finest, and there's a gorgeous lake.
- [Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival](#), July 29-August 7. Parades, art fairs, fireworks, and more to honor the men and women who serve in the U.S. Coast Guard
- [Jazz Fest](#) in Old Town Lansing, August 5-6. Four stages with live music, kids activities, food, crafts, and a beverage tent! Old Town is taken over with jazz for this annual weekend festival.
- [Ingham County Fair](#) in Mason, August 1-6. Farm animals, carnival rides, corn dogs, and elephant ears. What more is there?
- [Great Lakes Folk Festival](#), East Lansing, Aug 12-14. A unique fusion of part art fair, part music festival, and part county fair with a multiethnic twist.
- [St. Johns Mint Festival](#), St. Johns, August 12-14. Fun activities for the whole family including a parade, pony rides, a dog show, a mint cooking contest, and tons more!
- [The Grand Ledge Color Cruise and Island Festival](#), October 9-11. Cheap fun for all ages. Mini pumpkin painting, color cruise down the Grand River, encampment reenactments, and much more

We also had some fans of past events. But hey, there's always next year!

- [Festival of the Sun](#) in Lansing's Old Town (June).
- [Lansing's Common Ground Festival](#) (July).
- [Michigan Brewers Guild Summer Beer Festival](#) in Ypsilanti (July).
- [The Ionia Free Fair](#) and [Eaton County Fair](#) in Charlotte (July).

To find out more about other Michigan festivals, fairs, and events, visit the [Michigan Festivals and Events Association](#) or <http://www.michigan.org/>.

Correction

In last issue's [Changes to the TDP process](#) article, **Angie Schrauben** should have been recognized for her key role in the process. We apologize for the omission

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.