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## Ready, Set, Retire Group Counseling Sessions

When the Detroit Outreach Office reopened on January 7, CE staff members **Joy Bartell** and **Chuck Simpson** began piloting *Ready, Set, Retire* group counseling sessions for public school employees retiring within the next 12 months.



ORS's Detroit Outreach Office is located in the Cadillac Place Building in downtown Detroit.

*Ready, Set, Retire* sessions help customers understand their pension estimate and the application process. Though we are confident that our educational materials, estimator tools, and clear application forms are all customers need, we have also learned that many are afraid to take such a big step in their lives without face-to-face assurance. They feel they need to visit our office and ask, Am I missing anything? before turning in the forms. Group sessions aim to provide that assurance to multiple customers at once, enable the Detroit Office to run smoothly with only two staff members, reduce walk-in traffic both in Detroit and Lansing, and reduce the number of applications that must be returned because they are incomplete.

Customers must register for the counseling sessions on the public school member website. After registering they are mailed a pension estimate, retirement application packet, instructions on what to bring with them, and a map to the Detroit office.

At these two-hour sessions, which are held on Monday and Wednesday afternoons and Friday mornings, complete confidentiality is always exercised, and at the end of each session participants are able to submit their applications if they choose.

Joy is very enthusiastic about the sessions: "Chuck and I are very pleased that our customers' responses indicate that the group sessions are meeting our objectives, and we look forward to developing other educational tools to meet our customer's needs."

Sessions are currently limited to a maximum of eight members plus their spouses per session.

Calendar	
<b>March</b>	
State Employees Board Meeting	6
Public School Employees Board Meeting	13
St. Patrick's Day	17
First Day of Spring	20
<b>April</b>	
State Employees Board Meeting	10
State Police Board	

Meeting	17
Public School Employees Board Meeting	24
All Staff Meeting	29

Quick Links	
•	<a href="#">ORS Member Website</a>
•	<a href="#">ORS Employer Website</a>
•	<a href="#">Knowledge Library</a>

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 Benefits
DC	Defined Contributions
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (Phil, Laurie, 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)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter

## Lunch with Lisa and Rose

DMB Director Lisa Webb Sharpe and Deputy Director Rose Wilson stopped by the GOB on February 19 to chat with staff during the noon hour.

During this visit Lisa recapped her recent budget proposal to the Legislature which highlighted the great things DMB is doing, including reduced costs to state government, enhanced parking enforcement, a review of leased space, and requests for call center and technology upgrades for ORS.

Other key points discussed with Lisa and Rose:

- Organizational Development (ORS's former training crew) has been hard at work developing new training and updating their intranet site with lots of new and valuable information – check it out! ([Log into the intranet and click on Employee Services, Organizational Development](#))
- Renovations on the first and second floor of the Lewis Cass Building are underway and a number of offices have moved. If you're headed downtown to meet with your fellow DMB staff, double check their location before you travel.
- DMB priorities have been set—stay tuned for an announcement from **Laurie Hill** and **Phil Stoddard**.

After speaking about department changes and how DMB is staying on track with excellence, Lisa noted, "If there are things you see within DMB and think, Why are we doing that?, we want to know."

Lisa and Rose welcome your views at any time. You may send an ID mail note to the Director's Office in the Lewis Cass Building or an email note to [DMBDir@michigan.gov](mailto:DMBDir@michigan.gov).



### February 2008 Retirement Times Delivered

The most recent issue of the school employer newsletter, Retirement Times, is now available online at [www.michigan.gov/psru](http://www.michigan.gov/psru). Retirement Times is issued quarterly and provides news, tips, and updates to school payroll, benefit, and human resource staff.

### Stress Management

The Employee Services Program is offering Systematic Stress Management, a highly interactive program that is available 24/7 and is composed of seven modules to provide a personalized system to help manage stress in your life. You can participate in this free, confidential service by logging on to [www.michigan.gov/esp](http://www.michigan.gov/esp) and clicking on Systematic Stress Management Program.

### All Staff Agenda Items Wanted

The All Staff Planning Team would like your ideas for agenda items for the April 29 meeting. You can provide your ideas in the cans located around the office, or [offer them online](#).



Sounding Out is a way for ORS staff to share ideas, viewpoints, gripes, praises, and concerns. Email your opinion (300 words or less, if possible!) to [ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov](mailto:ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov).

	Expert
STG	Systems Technology Group <i>(Web self-service contract vendor)</i>
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

### Maureen Carden reflects on Black History Month

Black History Month gives all of us an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the heritage and culture of the African American people in many of the same ways we celebrate the Irish or the Polish, Germans and Hispanics. We have renaissance festivals, famous pastries, St. Patrick Day parties and Cinco de Mayo. These celebrations express the traditions and cultural values of the hearts and faces of the peoples they represent.



Maureen Carden

Clear back to the days of the potato famine and the days of slavery, men and women have come together to highlight the contributions of the inspirational leaders and civic minded citizens who have paved a better way for future generations. Black History Month reminds all of us of the journey and progress of African Americans as they live and prosper in the 21st century.

It provides a venue to be certain we dare not forget where we once were as a people, and tells about where we are now, in a free diverse society.

I personally am grateful that over the past 20 years, I've been able to raise my children in a time that is much less tainted with the fear, hatred and bigotry of yesterday and much more filled with tolerance, fairness, equality, love and compassion for everyone.

**Balanced Scorecard**

[Click here to view the latest Balanced Scorecard.](#)

M/V

Goals

Strategic Plan

Business Plan

### Free training opportunities

To help satisfy your Competency Based Training (CBT) requirements check out these free training opportunities.

- Civil Service has an [online library](#) to check out training materials. Categories include customer focus, human resources, information and analysis, leadership, quality, results, strategic planning, and training.
- Attend (and assist) at a Public School Employees Preretirement Information Meeting (PRIM) or State Employees Preretirement Orientation (PRO) presented by ORS CE staff. This can be as easy as simply walking down the hall for a video conference, or possibly visiting a meeting site nearby (such as Charlotte, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, or the Michigan Library & Historical Center). View more information about [public school PRIMs](#) and [state employee PROs](#).
- Remember, some of these meetings are held after normal business hours and may require travel, so work with your supervisor if you'd like to attend a meeting.
- [QuickKnowledge](#) is an online tool that offers free self-learning courses on presentation skills, basics of business writing, managing stress, and much more.
- The [Microsoft Office Live Meeting Web Seminar Archive](#) offers various online seminars about customer service, leadership, and other topics. The sessions are about an hour long and require Real Player or Microsoft Media Player to view the content along with headphones or speakers to access the audio portion of the seminars.
- Brush up on computer skills by signing up for free computer courses taught by DMB Organizational Development staff. For a schedule of upcoming classes, log in to the DMB intranet site at <http://connect.michigan.gov/dmb>, click on Employee Services, then click on Organizational Development.

### Deadline extended for Excellence Awards nominations

The deadline for Excellence Awards

nominations has been extended until Monday, March 10.

Is there a person who routinely goes the extra mile to ensure that projects are completed on time; someone who continually goes above and beyond to serve both internal and external customers; or someone who does his or her job with a smile all the time? Now is the time to submit a nomination form to recognize this special person for their efforts!

Nomination forms can be found on the shared drive at: <F:/ORS Excellence Awards/ORS Nomination Form Fillable.pdf>.

## Comings & Goings

**Arlena Tucker-Hampton** joined CE on February 25. She has a background in graphic design and digital technology, with a fine arts degree from the Art Institute in Chicago. Arlena recently moved to Holt to get away from the big city life with her two teenage sons and three-year-old daughter. Welcome Arlena!



Arlena Tucker-Hampton

## Leap Year is not just for frogs

During a leap year, an extra day is added to the calendar to synchronize it with the seasons. The extra day, known as a leap day, is added at the end of February, giving the month 29 days instead of the usual 28.

Since the tropical year (the actual length of time it takes for the earth to complete one orbit around the sun) is approximately 365.242190 days long, a leap year must be added roughly once every four years.

A leap year occurs every year that is exactly divisible by four (e.g. 2008), but not in years that are both exactly divisible by 100 and not exactly divisible by 400 (e.g. 2100). This division rule makes up for the fact that one extra day every four years is slightly too much correction. Since the tropical year is 11 minutes and 14 seconds less than 365 ¼ days, the calendar would overshoot the tropical year by one day after approximately 128 years if you added a leap day every 4 years.

So what would happen if we did not use leap years to adjust our calendars? With the tropical year being approximately ¼ day longer than the calendar year, over the course of a century, the difference between the tropical year and the calendar year would become 25 days! Instead of summer beginning in June, for example, it wouldn't start until nearly a month later, in July.

Although various adjustments to the leap-year system have been proposed, none have been instituted.

### Leap year facts



- The probability of being a leap day baby is approximately 0.0663942%.
- The Gregorian calendar has a 400-year-long cycle for the calendars to have the same week days -- February 29, 2008 is a Friday and February 29, 2408 is a Friday.
- The Gregorian calendar has 97 leap years during those 400 years.
- The longest time between two leap years is 8 years. Last time was between 1896 and 1904. The next time will be between 2096 and 2104.

Resources: <http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/LeapYear.html>  
<http://charon.nmsu.edu/~lhuber/leaphist.html>  
<http://www.timeanddate.com/date/leapyear.html>  
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/leapyear2.html>

**DMB Mission:**  
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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Director:  
 Phil Stoddard  
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So, if you did not realize that 2008 is a leap year and have not already planned what to do with your extra day this year, you may want to leap into action!

## Spring forward, fall back, and check your batteries

Daylight Saving Time (DST) begins at 2:00 a.m. on the second Sunday in March. This year that is March 9.

On August 8, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the *Energy Policy Act of 2005*. This Act changed the DST dates in the United States beginning in 2007. DST now begins on the second Sunday in March and ends the first Sunday in November.

As a safety reminder, many fire departments encourage people to change the batteries in their smoke detectors when they change their clocks because DST provides a convenient reminder. "A working smoke detector more than doubles a person's chances of surviving a home fire," says William McNabb of the Troy Fire Department in Michigan. More than 90 percent of homes in the U.S. have smoke detectors, but one-third are estimated to have dead or missing batteries.

Source: <http://webexhibits.org/daylightsaving/b.html>



**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.