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Email the LookOut Staff



LookOut Archives

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**Calendar****December**

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**Message from the Director**

**Phil Stoddard reflects on the past year and wishes everyone happy holidays!**

Greetings ORS colleagues:

Over this past year we've seen economic uncertainties few predicted. We've seen several of our coworkers move on, while others joined us in our important mission. Thanks to your hard work, dedication, and energy, we've brought significantly improved services to our customers - *miAccount*, clear and efficient new forms, more secure systems, enhanced reporting features, and many others.

I look with pride at our respectful culture that continues to evolve, and the extraordinary generosity you demonstrate every day. It never ceases to amaze me.

I hope you find yourself looking back on 2008 with the same pride and a feeling that you've reached great success. I, along with Laurie, Tim, and Anthony, recognize and appreciate your hard work. We hope you enjoy your time off during the holidays to celebrate the season with your friends and family.

Phil

P.S. I'm sure 2009 will be another year full of opportunities and challenges. I'm looking forward to 2009 and hope you are too.



**Phil Stoddard**

**WAS upgrade**

Many of us may have heard of the WAS upgrade but may not really know what it is. WAS is an acronym for Websphere Application Server.

**WebSphere.** software

WebSphere is integration software developed by IBM that is needed to write and run web applications. The web application we are most familiar with is Clarity.

This upgrade will occur on January 31 and most of us will not notice the difference. But many staff are working hard behind the scenes to make the transition seamless.

Capital One Bowl football game	1
State Police Board	15
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Success Celebration	20-22
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Public School Employees Board	29

### On the Horizon

- MSU vs. U of M men's basketball game- February 10

### 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
ORS	Office of Retirement Services

**Chantele Geisenhaver** has participated in months of planning and communication in conjunction with **Sriram Rao**, the project manager. **Jim Rademacher** will take over from Chantele to hammer out the testing plan and completion. Our AST partners have been working long hours during the work week and even Saturdays in order to meet the deadline for a successful January launch.

Thanks to teamwork and a commitment to excellence by many people, we can look forward to improved system stability.

## Public Act 617 update

As reported a few issues ago, Public Act 617 of 2006, which goes into effect January 1, permits a public school retiree who marries or remarries after his or her pension began to name the new spouse as a pension beneficiary under certain conditions. The [public school employee's website](#) and forms have been updated to reflect the new information. The information will also be updated in the retirement life stages books during the next round of revisions.

Retirees who meet all of the conditions and wish to name a spouse as a survivor pension beneficiary should contact our office to request the [Election of New Survivor Pension Option and Beneficiary \(R0784C\)](#) form and an estimate of how naming a new spouse will affect his or her pension. *miAccount* is currently undergoing changes to allow retirees to request the estimate and application online, but will not be available until early February.

For complete details on these changes see the [public school employees website](#), or refer to the list of frequently asked questions in the [Knowledge Library](#)—article # 245074.

## One Great and Super Eight Celebration

Governor Granholm recognized DMB accomplishments last Tuesday, December 9, in a One Great and Super Eight Celebration. One Great and Super Eight was initiated by the governor who requested that each state department identify one area to redesign as well as eight areas where innovation and change could generate positive results for savings.

DMB had over twenty projects to choose from. It used guidelines like potential for innovation, improved use of resources, and potential to affect multiple groups to select its One Great project and the Super Eight projects.

The One Great project chosen was the Office Systems Project. This was a DMB-wide project to revamp furniture use, purchasing, and disposal. ORS team members were **Laurie Hill** and **Andy Kolp**.

Two ORS projects were recognized in the Super Eight. These projects were web-self service (**Mike Bilek**, **Anthony Estell**, **Jimmy Isaac**, **Anitha Japa**, **Kim LaClear**, **Meg Leonard**, **Laurie Mitchell**, **Marc Olenzek**, **Jim Rademacher**, and **Pat VerPlanck**.) and Rapid Insurance Processing for Dependents (**Michele Childs**, **Andy Kolp**, **Aimee Ross**, **Kerrie Vanden Bosch** with additional assistance from **Ryan Earl**, **Laura Garza**, **Kristin Kinney**, **Brenda Morris**, **Carlos Ruiz**, **Peggy Shinn**, **Aaron Usher**, **Jake Wagner**, and **Bonnie Yatchak**). **Peggy Shinn** was the ORS representative on the One Great Super Eight planning committee.



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

## Balanced Scorecard

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



## PA 110 provision clarification

[PA 110](#) of 2007 requires that retiring public school members earn 0.5 years of service credit in the two school fiscal years immediately preceding the retirement effective date, or at least 0.1 years per year for the five school fiscal years immediately preceding the retirement effective date to be eligible for subsidized insurances. A clarification was recently made to this provision, indicating that it applies not only to deferred members but to active members as well.

Paid short term disability, weekly worker's compensation, and vacation time still counts as earned service credit. However, if an active member was on an unpaid leave of absence and then applies for a regular pension they may receive a lower insurance premium subsidy or none at all.

Updated FAQ document will be published in the knowledge library in the near future.



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).

## The gift of life

Seven years ago my father, Robert Schafer, signed up to be a bone marrow donor. In July 2008 he received a phone call from The National Marrow Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, asking him to donate bone marrow for a six-year-old boy with leukemia.

The [National Marrow Donor Program](#) began in 1987 with only 10,000 donors; today they have approximately 7 million. The program has helped with 33,000 transplants and averages approximately 4,300 a year. These transplants boost immune systems for people with conditions such as anemia and leukemia, where their bodies do not produce sufficient white blood cells.



Julie Schafer

Strict matching criteria must be met in order for a donation to occur. In the past, blood tests were used to determine if a donor was a match, but today a simple swab of cheek cells is used to test the tissue for compatibility. The genetic material gathered from the donor is then entered into a database to facilitate finding a match. When a donor is identified and accepts the request, he or she can choose between two forms of donation, the traditional marrow form (anesthesia is involved) or the peripheral blood cell form (anesthesia is not involved).

My father immediately began the process to donate marrow, which included a physical and blood work. In September 2008 the test results revealed he was in good health and could donate. Not only could he donate, but the genetic match was so close to the boy's that technically they could be twins. The actual donation process took just a few hours. He was given an anesthetic; and then a needle inserted into each hip bone drew 1.5 pints of bone marrow (a liquid that looks similar to blood).

Donating bone marrow is very rewarding. My father describes it best in the following segment of a letter written to the boy: "I would like you to know that I have a lot of love and respect for your family. All of the doctors and nurses are very professional and very special people. They made me feel like a very special part of a team that is doing something beautiful."

Two months after the donation he received a call informing him that the boy was released from the hospital and sent to an isolated rehabilitation center in order for



the white blood cells from the marrow to help rebuild his immune system.

Once the transplant is complete, donors may receive updates regarding the patient's status. Generally, an update is allowed after periods of one, six, and twelve months, and restricted contact can occur with the recipient if the agency approves it.

A donor can only donate a limited number of times. After the first donation the donor must wait a year with a few exceptions. After the second donation the donor must wait three years. There has never been a donor that has donated more than three times in the history of this program.

If you would like to learn more about the bone marrow donation process or are interested in donating yourself, please visit [www.marlow.org](http://www.marlow.org) or call (888) 811-1139.

## ORS keeps giving and giving and giving!

ORS staff spread the joy of the season by providing gifts to those less fortunate. The 150 angel gift tags from St. Vincent's home practically flew off the tree as willing participants selected a giving opportunity to brighten a child's Christmas.

The annual bake sale raised \$131, twice the amount from last year, and the Silent Auction brought in an amazing \$601. Proceeds will also go towards the St. Vincent families and provide for fun activities like dinner and a movie.

Dozens of creative baskets donated by staff created much excitement and provoked last minute bidding activity that generated \$1,133 in proceeds. This will help fund our annual holiday party and other fun activities during the new year.



"ORS is awesome!" **Anthony Estell** said about our ORS spirit. "Whether it is the Harvest Gathering, SECC, the angel tree, or helping a co worker cope with a loss, there seems to be no limit to the generosity and kindness that can be found here in ORS."

Thanks to everyone for your overwhelming generosity and kindness. ORS really does ROCK!



### Spotlight on Nancy Zalewski

Spotlight is a way for ORS staff to share their non-work related activities and hobbies. Email [ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov](mailto:ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov) with your article ideas about you or your coworker.



After 21 years of state service, **Nancy Zalewski** has taken the final step of retirement.

Nancy first began state employment in 1970 as a general office clerk with the Liquor Commission, earning \$2.50 an hour. Her intent was to make a career out of state employment, and she quickly moved on to a typist position. She commented, "Things have changed so much. I remember graduating to a typist level, which meant working in a room full of just typewriters, no cubes or computers." Nancy also worked at the Insurance Bureau, Public Service Commission, and the Boundary Commission before taking a break in 1981 to raise her children, Matthew now age 25, and Becky now age 27.

Nancy took a second shot at state employment in 1999 when she was hired by ORS. She started off her ORS experience in microfilm, moved to insurances, and then landed a position as a processing benefit applications processor in CSC, where she has been ever since.

Nancy is looking forward to traveling and spending time with her family. When her husband Mike retires in the near future they plan to hit the road with a fifth wheel and see some sights. Until then, Nancy plans to have lots of fun with her sisters and is excited for a two-week vacation to Colorado, where she once lived.

Thanks Nancy for all your time and commitment! We wish you the best!

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## business briefs

### Fees to be charged on late or missing retirement reports

Starting January 1, any reporting unit with retirement reports missing or late will be assessed a fee. With the implementation of member self-service (*miAccount*), it is crucial that ORS have timely and accurate information available. As such, we rely heavily on reporting units to provide timely wage, hour, and contribution data to provide our customers billings, statements of account, pension estimates and payments, and actuarial projections.



### Pure Michigan

Pure Michigan. You've seen the advertisements and billboards. You've heard the commercials with Tim Allen extolling us to take advantage of the great resources our beautiful state provides.



Now you will start seeing the Pure Michigan theme in our ORS materials and websites. Watch for the links and look for ways to be part of Pure Michigan!

### Mat-Pat no more

Staff who've been around a while can roll off the term "maternitypaternitychildrearingtime" as if it's a single syllable. Others use "mat-pat," and seasoned staff know what is meant. Fortunately for the rest of us, our legislators have changed the name of this type of purchasable service credit to Parental Leave. Beginning January 1, we can all speak the same language and understand what we're talking about. Forms, websites, and publication changes are underway.



**Christina Bishai's** last day in PS is December 19. She has accepted a position with the state's Department of Human Services.

**Betty Jones's** last day in CSC is December 23. Betty will be working for Department of Corrections.

We wish Christine and Betty the best in their new jobs.

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## Tired of the same old



## thing?

If you're dealing with the same work issue over and over again, or inspired to do work differently for better results, you should attend the Innovation Lab sponsored by the Office of Great Workplace Development.

This workshop will help you identify areas for improvement, refine your ideas, and package them in a way that your boss and others will want to make your innovative idea a reality!

The Innovation Lab: Moving from Issue to Innovation-OGWD (CREATOG001) is available:

- 1/23/2009 - Lansing - Deadline: 1/15/2009; or
- 3/27/2009 - Lansing - Deadline: 3/19/2009

Be sure to contact your supervisor for approval and follow normal training request policies.



Bring an innovative idea to improve work as you can test out the concept.



## Fed up with phone books?

If you are fed up with having to dispose of those unwanted phone books from various companies, there is a mechanism which allows you to "opt out". Go to [www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org](http://www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org) to get your name off the list for all yellow and/or white pages. Once your name is off the list and you wish to receive the local AT&T directory, you will need to contact them and make a request to have one delivered to your home.

Instead of using a phone book, try [192.com](http://192.com) to search for people, businesses, and maps.



## Equipment reservation

Do you require a laptop and projector for meetings, speakers for conferences, or a "spider" phone for teleconferences? Reserve these in advance to make your meeting or presentation run smoothly.

Process Support asks that you reserve these items to ensure availability upon request. Use the GroupWise address ORS-Equipment to reserve the equipment. If the equipment is no longer needed, simply delete your request from the ORS-Equipment address. Please follow the instructions listed in the Knowledge Library when [reserving](#) or [canceling](#) equipment requests.

In addition, be sure to sign out the equipment on the sheet of paper located on the equipment locker. The equipment locker is located at pillar B-6 and is locked at all times. Please see **David Travis** or **Travis Peake** to receive the equipment you reserved.





## Can't we catch a brake?



**Fred Doll, Fred Covert, Robert Glennon, Dan Norberg, Joe Osentoski, Kyle Seymour, and Julie Schafer** teamed up to push a car out of the snow. The team of good Samaritans pushed with all their might, but the car just would not budge. It wasn't until the parking brake was released that they seemed to make real progress.

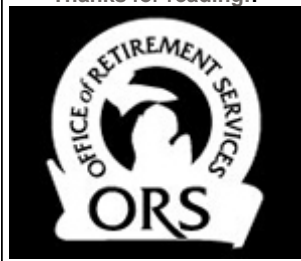
**DMB Mission:**  
Partners in achieving  
excellence

**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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Thanks for reading!!



## ORS holiday party



[View more pictures from the 2008 ORS holiday party](#)

**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.