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Calendar

July

State Police Board Meeting	20
National Hot Dog Day	23
Public School Employees Board Meeting	27

Reengineering Results – Death Processing

In the month of May, the Reengineering Team and a number of SMEs focused on designing new, more efficient ways to process the death of a retiree or member. Analysis of these sessions is now complete, and CSC leadership is putting plans in place to implement the new process. How much more efficient are the new tasks in death processing? Take a look at the table below:

Task Name	Handoffs Eliminated	Days Saved in Cycle Time	Cost Savings	FTE Savings
Retiree Deaths	3		\$213,430	1.7208
Death Correspondence				0.002
Life Insurance	3	16	\$446	0.507
Recoupments and Collections			\$135,000	0.2258
Death Audits		8		0.002
Non-reported Deaths		17		0.0565
Active Deaths	3	2		0.56
Total	9	43	\$348,876	3.0741

In addition to these quantitative savings, the team identified 26 areas where we could improve quality and/or customer service.

When added to savings achieved in insurance and forms inventory processes, the reengineering team has identified 53 areas of qualitative savings, eliminated 23 handoffs, saved 106 days in cycle time, and identified 6.49 FTEs' worth of time savings!

DMB Employee Survey Assessment

In the last issue of the Lookout, we published the latest results of the 2006 DMB employee survey (also referred to as the DMB Organizational Assessment). The survey is



National Cherry Festival

As the National Cherry Festival wraps up this weekend in Traverse City, your LookOut staff thought you might enjoy this link to a recipe for cherry lemonade. For more recipes and a listing of the weekend's remaining events visit www.cherryfestival.org.



Click here for the recipe

August

State Employees Board Meeting	10
ORS Golf Outing	15
ORS Picnic	22

On the Horizon

- Fall All-Staff Meeting October 24

Quick Links

- [Email the LookOut staff](#)
- [LookOut Archives](#)
- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Policies and Procedures](#)

Commonly Used Acronyms

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (<i>Consists of the EPC, BPOs, and BPLs</i>)
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 (<i>Chris, Laurie, Phil, Tim, Anthony, and Kathy</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services

one opportunity you have to share feedback and score us on how we are doing organizationally. The EPC always takes your feedback seriously. Discussions with business process owners, leaders, and executive process council have taken place. The BLA reflected on the results, and believe that the biggest opportunities for us to do a better job could be summarized as follows:

- Flexibility and ease of change (doing business)
- Greater inclusion
- Greater visibility

The concern over "flexibility" and "how easy it is to do business" is why recent action was taken on several business strategies including our new process model in March.

These strategies also include other efforts we are already working on:

- To bring the Vision project to a close.
- Transition all aspects of technology support from our vendor Saber (Covansys) to the Application Support Team (AST) within DIT.
- Development of our web self-service capability.
- Restoring emphasis on process including our reengineering effort.
- Review by the BPOs and BPLs of their roles and responsibilities and their continued commitment to live those roles and responsibilities.

These actions should provide improved flexibility and create opportunities for inclusion.

We recognize the need to continue applying staff's feedback on an ongoing basis in future decisions. It may not be possible to meet everybody's standard of inclusion but we feel strongly we can do better. We have all speculated that the recent organizational changes happened quickly and lacked a high level of inclusion. As we transition our way to the more permanent structure, early next year will present a new opportunity for staff to be involved in shaping our future.

In addition to the activity and opportunity described above, we would like to continue to explore the subject of inclusion and how visible leaders need to be. Kathy Tober has been asked to work through this effort, starting with CSC staff. We hope this effort will suggest insight and opportunities for us as an organization to pursue.

Finally, the EPC would like to thank those who offered feedback by completing the survey. We are committed to identifying actions that we can work on in order to achieve better results.

ORS continues to tune Clarety application

In addition to planning for Stage 3.3C (member self-service), this past month the T3 team has been focused on needed changes to Clarety that will improve daily transactions for staff. Staff members regularly identify things that they would like to see differently or that aren't working quite the way they should. These changes are grouped into releases, which are scheduled about every 4 – 6 weeks.

When Release #17 is deployed this week, staff will enjoy the following improvements.

In Health Insurances

- The batch program that updates health insurance rates was

Clarety



PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (<i>public school employees</i>)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (<i>state employees</i>)
PS	Process Support
T&T	Tools and Technology



improperly producing Pays-Us and COBRA workflows for hundreds of accounts. This is fixed for the next round of rate updates.

- When creating a recovery payment for an underpaid insurance deduction, the end date that Clarety calculates will now be correct and will not need to be adjusted manually.
- Clarety will retain all the Medicare information on the insurance tab, even when changes to the account are made.

In Death Processing

- When you capture a retiree death in Clarety, the state field will now default to Michigan properly.

In Payroll Processing

- The value of replacement checks will no longer be included in the year-to-date values reported on the retiree's EFT or warrant statement. This has created considerable confusion for staff and our customers.
- IRS and deduction amounts will be properly adjusted when a payment is returned or canceled.

In Process Support

- The Security Access Tracking Database is now operational. This database links a staff person to a business process and a security profile (a set of roles required to do a specific job). The database will make role assignments easier for Process Support to make and track and allow supervisors an easier way to affirm that staff have only the roles they need.

In CSC

- Three additional Clarety letters have had their address blocks updated for the new two-window envelope template; we now have 20 letters that you can use in the two-window envelopes.

In Service Credit

- For Weekly Workers' Compensation (WWC) billings, the start and end dates of the bill will now display on the billing tab.
- The details page has been enhanced for easier reading and sorting. The start and stop dates for the fiscal-year roll-up dates will now be the start date of the first wage transaction of the fiscal year and the end date of the last wage transaction of the year. Previously this was confused by interest-posting records and other non-wage records. If there are no transactions in a fiscal year, you won't have to click the link to find out. Instead there will be dashes in place of the dates. And finally, when you click to open a fiscal year, you will find a new link in the end date column that will let you sort transactions by end date.
- Payments for WWC wages will be included appropriately in the wage calculations when determining service credit bills and generating benefit estimates.

Many other behind-the-scenes changes that help the system run better and faster, or that fix individual members' accounts, are also being deployed.

New State Police website launched

CED launched a new and improved website for our state police members last week. Troopers will no longer have to navigate to a publication found on the website to find information about their plan; all the content from the former *State Police Guidelines* now "lives" on



the website. They can easily find what they're looking for using the navigation buttons: About Your Plan, Service Credit, Available Benefits, DROP, Ready to Retire, After You Retire, and Publications & Forms.

Kim LaClear, who led the project and designed the look and layout, thanks the many people who answered questions, reviewed content, assisted with building the site, and continue to provide feedback: **Tim Droste, Raini Majeske, Pam Gilchrist, Jon Seeger**, and the **CED team**.

If you haven't had a chance to check it out, go to www.michigan.gov/orsmsp. Be sure to let CED know your thoughts about this new website by clicking the [Website Feedback link](#) at the bottom of every page.



Public Act 158 modifies earnings limitations

On May 25 governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law [Public Act 158](#), allowing public school retirees who have been retired for at least 12 months to be exempt from earnings limitations if they have returned to work for a public school and are working in an approved critical shortage position or for a school that has an approved emergency situation. Previously, retirees had to have retired before July 1, 2003, to be exempt from the earnings limitations.

Customer Education has updated the member website with this new information and will make sure the information is incorporated into the Retirement Readiness and After You Retire books for public school employees. Additionally, communications will be sent to employers informing them of the change, and forms that address earnings limitations are being updated.

Earnings are exempt for up to six years or until July 1, 2011, whichever comes first. The list of [critical shortage exceptions](#) is published by Michigan's Department of Education (MDE).

New way to contact CED Knowledge Partners

As reported in the June 23rd LookOut, CED has rolled out a new "Knowledge Partnering" arrangement designed to leverage business knowledge and functional abilities of its staff. Several staff shifted offices to provide better communication and workflow within the unit. A few more changes have taken place to simplify the way ORS staff can request CED assistance, and to ensure quicker responses.

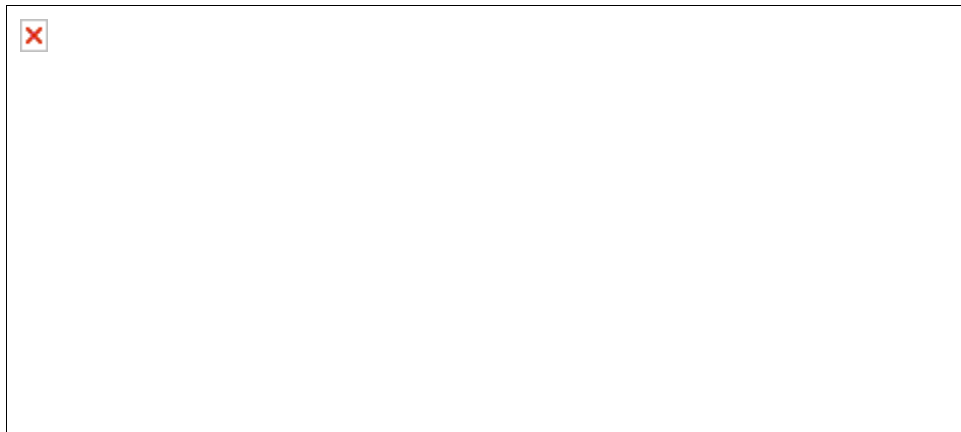
First, you can use the new GroupWise mailbox, found at [ORS-CED](#) in the GroupWise address book. This mailbox is intended to serve as a primary point of entry for requests coming into the unit.

"In the past, people would send emails to specific staff in our unit," said lead analyst **Connie Morse**. "For example, I get a lot of notes related to the life stage publications, Robert gets website suggestions, and staff often start with Rosemary if they want to change one of our forms. This mailbox allows everyone to send their thoughts to a single source that all of us can monitor. The Knowledge Partners are working together to review the mailbox for items that pertain to them."

Added analyst **Robert Glennon**, “Before, if I was on vacation or out of the office and someone sent me an email, it wouldn’t get answered until I got back. Now, it will quickly be reviewed and answered by my Knowledge Partners, or if they are out too, someone else in CED.”

ORS staff are encouraged to immediately begin using the [ORS-CED](#) mailbox for suggestions, ideas, and requests. However, this additional tool shouldn’t prevent you from calling staff directly or stopping by to discuss ideas if that’s your preference.

The *Request For Communication Services* (form R529X) has also been updated. This BRIGHT YELLOW form can be found in the CED pod and is another tool ORS staff can use to start the process for communication services. However, if you prefer to send an email to [ORS-CED](#), that’s fine. CED staff will fill out the form and get to work on your request.



In preparation for the 4th of July celebrations, ORS staff showed their patriotic spirit by dressing in red, white, and blue! A few of their smiling faces are shown here. From the left are **Ed Helzerman, Fred Covert, Sylvia Maat, Beth Nurenborg, Pam Kenney, Deb MacGregor, Angela Bryan, David Meiers,** and **Lynne Bemrose**.

Make safety at work your first priority

Where would you go in the GOB if there was a fire? A tornado? A bomb threat? It’s important to know the answers to these questions.

The Michigan Emergency Monitor Network was established to provide training for volunteers and a plan for evacuation in the event of emergencies. ORS has nearly 30 staff members who have volunteered to be part of this network. The team recently met to review procedures for fires/bomb threats and tornadoes and would like to remind you of these important points:

- If the fire alarm sounds, exit the building immediately. Monitors (with yellow or red arm bands) will be quickly checking the floor. Anyone who does not immediately evacuate must be reported to building management.
- In the event of a fire or bomb threat, please use the stairwells nearest to you. Building management will have already turned off the elevators. See the [3rd floor GOB maps](#) that show you the best exit to use.
- The fire alarm is used for both fires and bomb threats, so it’s very important to move at least 100 feet away from the building in case a bomb goes off. If you’re not far enough away, monitors will ask you to move out further.
- For those who are unable to use the stairs for any reason, if you work in A-Wing move to the stairwell immediately outside the A-Wing entrance. If you work in B-

Wing or C-Wing (the Core, which includes the reception area, Central Perk, the mailroom, and our supplies area), move to the stairwell directly outside the B-Wing entrance. Monitors will notify fire officials of anyone in these stairwells and the fire officials will assist these individuals as their first assignment on arrival at the GOB.

- Fire officials will notify you when the building is considered safe and you are able to return to the building.
- Be certain to wear your state-issued identification badge. You may need to show it to reenter the building. It's a good idea to have it with you at all times. However, don't return to your work station if you forgot it.
- If the tornado alarm sounds, please move to the hallway by C-Wing (the Core) on the 3rd floor. Do not enter Central Perk or the reception area and do not use the central staircase.
- Do not return to your desk until the all-clear has been sounded. Remember, monitors (with the arm bands) will be checking the floors and must report anyone who refuses to evacuate for a tornado alarm.

Michele Childs is the Head Monitor for the A-Wing, with **Lisa Schmidt** as her backup. If you have questions on the evacuation plans, please feel free to contact Michele or Lisa.

In addition, if for any reason you might be unable to use the stairs in an emergency, please let Michele know immediately. She will add your name to the list identifying those who need assistance that the building manager maintains.

Finally, if you have First Aid or CPR skills (or if you might be interested in attending First Aid/CPR training), please contact Michele.

It was a very good year... for retirement meetings

ORS presenters from CED conducted 167 meetings and seminars during the 2005-2006 meeting season. Attendance at these meetings totaled 9,184 people. This number is down from last year's total (9,438) but still more than two years ago (9,069).

Over 7,000 public school employees attended Preretirement Information Meetings (PRIMs) during the 2006 season beginning in October 2005 and ending in May 2006. During a two-hour PRIM, public school employees learn the details of their pension plan—from service credit to post-retirement insurance—in a general overview and in a group setting. Because the Public School Employees Retirement System is larger than the others, 109 meetings were conducted for this audience alone. The attendance figure for these public school meetings was slightly down from last year.

In addition to meetings for employees, **Pam Kenney** and **Kerrie Vanden Bosch** conducted 29 meetings for public school administrators and payroll personnel. In all, 395 people attended two different versions of this seminar. The basic meeting was geared towards employees new to the retirement reporting process. The update meeting was geared towards those people who needed a refresher and more specific information.

"My mother is a retired teacher," said **Chuck Simpson**, from the Detroit office, "so I know that retirements in the schools seem to follow a cycle. They'll be up for a few years, then down for a few years."

Speaking of cycles, another thing that has an impact on meeting participation are rumors about possible legislative action, especially this year for state employees

thinking about retirement. In 28 meetings for state of Michigan employees, 2,082 people attended, up significantly from last years total of 1,808.

"We've noticed a lot more state employee walk-in traffic this year over past years," said **Joy Bartell**, also from the Detroit office. "It's not the only reason, but I believe the proposed early out legislation had a little bit to do with this."

In addition to the meetings for public school and state of Michigan employees, **Ray Fleming** conducted a meeting for members of the State Police Retirement System, the first since 2004. Forty-three people attended that meeting, held in the GOB.

Fred Covert, manager of Customer Education and Development, makes this observation: "Every meeting is yet another opportunity to put a face on those ORS staff who work so hard behind the scenes. CED takes this responsibility very seriously."

State employees' PROs continue throughout the year, while CED staff is now working hard preparing next season's public school PRIM and Administrative meeting schedules.

KUDOS

Below are some of the kudos we've collected from the past quarter. They are expressions of approval, commendations, praises, accolades, or compliments for excellent customer service that we have provided to our external and internal customers. If you have received a kudo, or know of someone who has, please email them to ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov, or place the original card or letter in ORS mailbox #174, for possible inclusion. We'll try to include as many as possible, but we might not be able to include all of them.

Pam Kenney praised the **Document Management staff** for having the insurance-related documents imaged so quickly. Pam was amazed at how the work she was finding in the work list was just received the day before. She thanks PS staff for doing such a great job.

<p>Irma Z. called to say she was very pleased with the service that Eve Baumgart provided her. She stated that Eve was helpful with her many questions as she transitions into retirement and the decisions she has had to make.</p>		<p>Beverly V. passes along her thanks to Brenda Allen for her perseverance and patience in helping a member have her insurance transferred from Priority Health to BCBS. The member had many problems getting her address updated with BCBS. "Brenda is Great!"</p>		<p>Good afternoon, I just had the pleasure of working with Diane Monroe, an intelligent and cheerful ORS staff member. I accidentally made a mistake with a TDP. Diane listened intently, asked appropriate questions, then spoke with another staff member and straightened out my mistake. Diane deserves a raise and/or paid vacation. Her supervisor (s) should also be commended for being able to retain such a competent and helpful employee.</p>	
<p>Jackie M. of Stephenson Schools gave ORS a big "Thank You" for the extra balancing page when they hit the accept button. She says it is the best tool ever!</p>		<p>Dear Marcia Mahoney, Thank you for displaying such a pleasant and professional manner with the return and handling of my telephone call.</p> <p>Thanks again,</p>			

	Deborah D.~	With appreciation, Mary M. Midland Public Schools
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David Meiers took a call from the State Representative's office at 5:00. Their office had received a call from a public school Basic Plan retiree who had called regarding the lack of a supplemental payment for the last few years, and wanted to find out when another one would be issued. David explained the supplemental payment per the talking points and pointed her to the most recent CAFR on the website and reviewed selected portions with her. The caller thanked him for the information and for referring them to the financial reports.

Thanks for providing great customer service, David!

Christine L. from Ferndale Public Schools shares that at recess today she and several other prospective July 1 retirees were commenting on the interactions they have had with our office. Besides agreeing that we provide excellent service they also said that each person they have spoken to has been wonderful and that our representatives were helpful, considerate, and compassionate.

CSC Rocks!

I'd like to say **CED** does a fantastic job in producing the Lookout. It's very informative and very well put together. Today's issue was especially wonderful the way you published the photo contest pictures. Thank you, I enjoy every issue.

Raini Majeske

Good Morning,

I want to take a minute to comment on the service I received today when I called for a retirement packet.



At first I was a little anxious because of the wait time but I realize that you are all very busy. When **Elaine Scott** came on the line I was treated very pleasantly and professionally. I got the feeling that she indeed knew what she was doing and was going to take care of what ever was needed in an efficient manner. At a time like this being reassured that everything will work out is a very important issue to those in my shoes.

Thank you,
Harry H.

Michelle Thompson,
Thank you for providing answers to my questions



and directing me to the appropriate staff and resources, especially when I needed audit assistance on my account last fall. I was extremely concerned until you and your colleagues provided prompt assistance and got it all sorted out. You are always friendly and

Mr. Chuck Simpson,
I want to thank you for your help



explaining to my husband and me all the details of the retirement program and paperwork. I know you have done this hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times, but it was the first time for us and you treated us with patience and understanding ... and with a little humor thrown

Thanks to the ORS employees who answered all my concerns, and there were many, with such patient, compassionate, and calm demeanor. Processing my application was quite cumbersome, but the problem has finally been resolved.

I would like to thank
Lisa Kalchik for resolving my problem expediently.



<p>willing to take the time to help, Michelle, which is refreshing when many in state government are swamped these days.</p> <p>Jackie Z., Michigan Economic Development Corporation</p>	<p>in as well. I can't begin to tell you how important that is when someone is on the brink of a major life change. This means, of course, that we will be passing your name along to others!</p> <p>Take care, Marsha L.</p>	<p>She was extremely committed in ensuring my situation had been resolved. She is quintessence of a truly loyal employee who displayed supreme work ethics. Please express my obliged to her.</p> <p>Sincerely, Shirley R.</p>
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Comings & Goings

ORS says goodbye

Loren Greeley's last day was Friday June 23. Loren worked in PS on the backfile conversion project. She has accepted employment with a law firm.

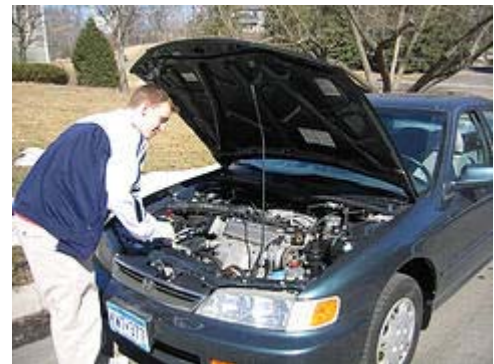
Ann Cook has accepted a position with National City Bank. Her last day is today, July 7. Good luck on your new job.

The CSC wishes the best to **Charles Stewart**. His last day was June 30.

Avoid car problems this summer

Before you hit the road for a fun-filled summer vacation, make sure you take care of the following:

- Exchange your winter tires for summer or all season tires.
- Check your tire pressure—this will help avoid flat tires and help your fuel economy.
- Change the oil.
- Check the coolant/antifreeze mixture inside your vehicle's radiator. The ideal ratio of coolant to water is 50 to 50 for optimal temperature regulation in both cold and hot weather.
- Check the belts, hoses, wiper blades, and battery.
- Prepare an emergency kit, and pack it in the car.
- Pack only what is necessary, and don't let your luggage obstruct your vision.
- Finally, be patient on the road! Remember that other vacationers may be tired and cranky, and possibly traveling with small children in the car. Please be cautious and considerate.



Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund Newsletter

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.

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Thanks for reading!!

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.