



In This Issue...

- [ORS establishes state's first HRA accounts](#)
- [Latest Active Member survey results available](#)
- [Ergonomics and stretches can make you more comfortable at work](#)
- [Power of Perspectives: did you know?](#)
- [QCI: Where do all these rules come from?](#)
- [Comings and Goings](#)
- [Sounding Out](#)

Calendar

February

State employees' board meeting	7
Valentine's Day	14
Presidents' Day	18

On the Horizon

- Daylight savings time - March 10
- St. Patrick's Day - March 17
- Public school employees board meeting

ORS establishes state's first HRA accounts

Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) are tax-advantaged health savings plans funded by employers to help retirees pay, tax-free, for qualified medical expenses incurred in retirement. Unused funds may be carried forward for reimbursement in future years.

The recent reforms established HRAs as a benefit under the Personal Healthcare Funds for participants in the state, public school, and state police retirement systems. This month, ORS is establishing the state's first HRAs for qualifying former state employees who elected the Personal Healthcare Fund during last year's reform and whose lump sum credit at termination exceeds IRS contribution limits to their 401(k) and 457 accounts. HRAs for state, public school, and state police employees hired beginning 2012 will be created down the road when these participants start reaching the required 10 years of service.



But some state employees terminating now qualify for an HRA, and ORS had to act quickly to meet the need. This required a cross-process collaboration: BPD worked with the Attorney General's office to create the plan document and with the Director's Office to present it to the board for approval on February 7. AST, BPD, and CS mapped out the process for administering HRA claims; CE developed brochures and claim forms which will be sent to participants next week, and CS is training staff to handle the claims that could start coming in shortly thereafter.

"Our goal is to make this as easy a process as possible for the participant," explained **Laurie Mitchell**. "They can submit simple claim forms to get reimbursed for eligible medical expenses—and the list of what's covered is long and comprehensive. We'll do our best to get them their reimbursement as quickly as possible."

Special thanks to the teams who've been working to launch this new benefit for members: **Kerrie Vanden Bosch**, Laurie Mitchell, **Aaron Usher**, **Andy Kolp**, **Kara Gross**, **Mike Goodman**, **Lyndsay Aldrich**, **Ryan Nevins**, and **LuAnn Kern**.

[back to top](#)

Latest Active Member survey results

- March 21

- First day of Passover
- March 26

- Easter
- March 31

Quick Links

- [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 (<i>Phil, Laurie H, Laurie M, and Anthony</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (<i>public school employees</i>)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (<i>state employees</i>)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

available

To find the most recent results of the Active Member survey, check the [CE tab in the KL](#). You'll also find links to the results broken down by system. Here's a quick summary.

Overall, 81.1 percent of those who have contacted ORS rated our service from good to excellent. Although slightly down from 85 percent during the previous survey, the change isn't considered statistically significant. Over the last four surveys, the scores ranged from a low of 80.7 percent to a high of 85 percent.

The chart below shows satisfaction by system for the last four surveys (judges didn't participate in January 2012).



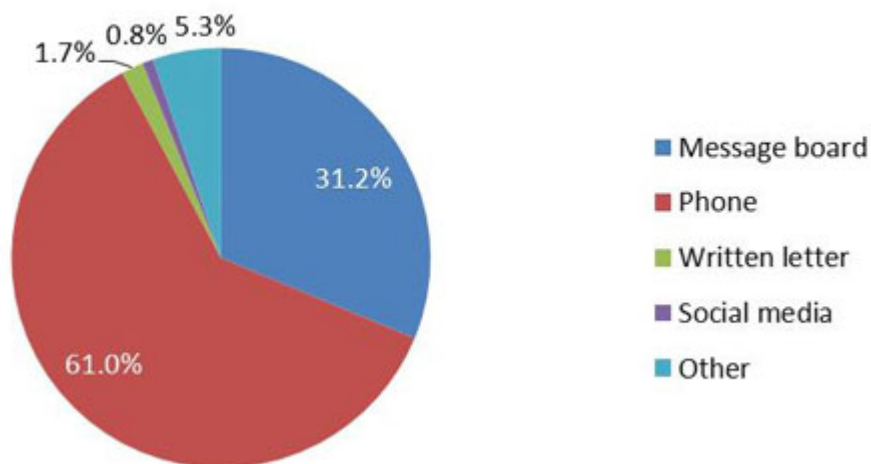
New this time around, we asked what method of contact people would use first if they had a question about retirement. People still rely on the telephone by nearly twice as much as the second most preferred method, the miAccount Message Board. But at over 31 percent the message board is gaining momentum and poised to reduce the burden on the phones.

Though there's room to grow, overall understanding of the pension plan rose. Most of our respondents have a basic understanding (over 55 percent). The number of those with a good understanding or better rose from 34.7 percent to 37.6 percent. With an increased focus on retirement planning, we expect to see this score rise in the future.

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

If you had a question about your retirement, which method would you likely use first to contact ORS?



So what's next? Your BPO and BPL have met with their EPO to discuss action plans. Some may be new and some may be part of work already in progress. To learn how your process is implementing the action plan, check with your BPO.

[back to top](#)



Ergonomics and stretches can make you more comfortable at work

Finding your neck and shoulders getting stiff as the day goes on? Do your fingers and wrists ache? You're not alone. Studies show that 86 percent of office workers report some discomfort at their work stations. Being physically comfortable in your workspace can improve your health, lift your morale, and boost your productivity. Making a few easy adjustments to your work space and stretching throughout your day could help. Try these:

- Achy shoulders? Lower your arm rests so that your shoulders are relaxed and your elbows rest comfortably.
- Stiff neck? Could be your monitor is too high, or low. The top of your monitor screen should be slightly below eye level, so that you don't have to raise your chin to look at it.
- Sore wrists? Keep your wrists in a straight, natural position, not bent up or down.

submit a
poP
shout out



1	Shoulder Stretch. One hand under elbow. Lift and stretch across chest. Don't rotate your body as you stretch. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
2	Upper Arm Stretch. Lift one arm and bend it behind your head. Place other hand on bent elbow and stretch upper arm and shoulder. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
3	Chest Stretch. Hands behind head. Squeeze shoulder blades together, bringing elbows back as far as possible. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
4	Chin Tuck. Face straight ahead, lower chin to chest. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
5	Head Turn/Chin to Shoulder. Face straight ahead, shoulders straight, turn head to one side. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
6	Lower Back Stretch. While sitting, bring one knee toward chest, pull gently toward you. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
7	Side Neck Stretch/Ear to Shoulder. Face straight ahead, shoulders relaxed. Tilt head and bring ear to shoulder. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
8	Standing Thigh Stretch. Stand, one hand on chair or desk for stability. Bend knee and bring foot up toward buttock, holding ankle or pant leg. Keep back straight and knees parallel to each other. Hold for 15-30 seconds.

For more suggestions, check out the interactive office ergonomics chart offered by the [Mayo Clinic](#), or try incorporating some of the simple [office stretching exercises](#) above into your day. If you're still feeling discomfort, consult your physician and review DTMB's administrative policy on [Ergonomic Assistance](#).

Thanks to our models: **Fred Covert, Chanda Donnan, Dustin Duprest, Anthony Estell, Ray Fleming, Danielle Fowler, Erica Sligh, and Mohamed Yacoub.**

[back to top](#)

Power of Perspectives: did you know?

New staff and students will be participating in the Power of Perspectives (PoP) training sessions scheduled for February 26 and 28, or March 6 and 8. The sessions are also open to staff who want a PoP refresher. "Taking the course a second time can be a helpful and different experience since you'll be participating in the discussions with different people," said **Anthony Estell**, training facilitator. Those interested should contact Sara Hoppes to register; priority will be given to new hires. At this time, the training isn't available to temporary employees.

We envision a DTMB where open-mindedness is practiced, respect is demonstrated, diversity is valued, and creativity and innovation thrive.

If you'd like to review the strategies from Forging Breakthroughs, you have until the end of the month to access the online Forging Breakthroughs training. Contact Jennifer Carter if you have trouble logging in.

Don't forget the new Ladder of Inference email tool in the Knowledge Library. Use the template provided to organize your thoughts and arguments when advocating for an idea.

And keep your eyes open: the next round of PoP Shout Out awards will be given in late March! Nominate a coworker who has demonstrated open mindedness and using high quality advocacy and inquiry techniques.

[back to top](#)



Where do all these rules come from?

In elementary school, the rules were simple: capitalize the first letter in the first word of a sentence and put a period at the end. As we got older, the rules got more complicated: add a comma before a quote (but not if it's completing a phrase), when you pause (unless it's a new thought, then use a semicolon), and before the second-to-last item in a list (depending on who you're writing for).

Later, in high school and after, we learned there are different sets of rules that contradict each other: APA, MLA, and Chicago, just to name a few. So how do you keep it all straight, and how do you know which rules to follow?

The goal is consistency: to pick one style and stick to it. Readers should be able to take your writing style for granted, so they don't have to work hard to understand it.

At ORS, our writing style comes from the *Gregg Reference Manual*. (And even in this one manual, there are 33 pages of rules for how to use commas!) We boiled down the Gregg manual to the most common rules that ORS uses, and created the ORS Style Guide for websites, publications, message board messages, and letters.



For questions on writing, formatting, or style, [contact CE](#).

[back to top](#)



Coming

AST welcomed new manager **Jennifer Smith** to the team on February 4. Jennifer has a bachelor's degree in Business and Quality management and has previous experience at EDS, McKesson Pharmacy solutions and briefly worked at ORS a few years back. She enjoys spending time with her daughter and travelling, which frequently includes Disney World.



You may have already seen Accenture's **Nat Sheppard** around the office; he joined ORS as a consultant on social media on January 7. Nat has a Materials Science and Engineering degree from Ohio State University and has worked in various consulting capacities from organizational change management to public relations and communications. He likes to ski and is currently training for his second half-marathon.

Going

AST said farewell to HTC contractor **Matt Arman**. His last day was January 28.

BPD wished GRS contractor and former BPL **Pat Langs** a happy retirement, her last day was January 31.

Staff on the move

Dominique Davis accepted an analyst position with CE, also on February 4. Congratulations, Dominique!

[back to top](#)

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!!



My 57th presidential inauguration experience

by *Katrina Kaufman*

As I reflect on the 57th Presidential Inauguration, one pivotal moment stands out most in my memory. As President Obama left the stage he turned back to take one last look at the inauguration crowd and humbly said "I'm not going to see this again." As I stood at the U.S. Capitol watching history I wanted to hold on to the sheer jubilation I and those around me felt for I knew that moment in



time we would never see again.

Standing on the National Mall looking back at the 56th Presidential Inauguration of 2009 in contrast to 2013, I can't help but smile remembering the many tears of joy that were shed then were now cheers of exhilaration and accomplishment of a tough fight fought for a victory won that embodied the true spirit of America. This day would—will—be talked about, felt, and evoke strong emotions for many generations to come.



Sharing this wonderful experience with people from all over the country and from all walks of life on that cold wintery day in Washington, D.C. warms my heart and soul. I marvel at the fact that I was there to witness what would be remembered as a day that the American people were united, coming together for a common purpose.

Reflecting on this historic event, when President Barack Obama took the Presidential Oath of Office using Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Bible on Monday, January 21, 2013, it was not

about black or white, republican or democrat, Michelle's bangs or if Beyoncé lip synced. It was truly a celebration to underscore "One Nation Under God" working to move this country forward, simply because one man dared to dream and another man had The Audacity of Hope.



[back to top](#)

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.