March 7, 2014 Volume 18, Issue 5

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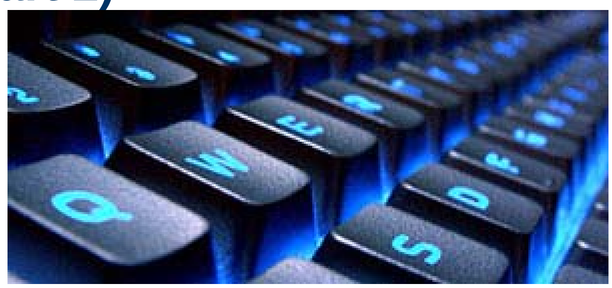
On The Horizon

- Tax Day - April 15
- Administrative Professionals Day - April 23

Quick Links

- ORS Member

All about PIRs (part 2)



Last issue, we introduced you to the world of PIRs. Now we'll take a look at the four phases of the process.

Development and testing is where most of the work happens for a PIR. But it's important to have the requirements, estimate, and Design Document correct so ORS and AST staff know how long it will take to complete, and how to make sure it works.

During development, AST makes most of the code changes with input from the business, and tests at the same time. Different testing locations, called "environments," are set up as needed. Once AST has the code in good shape, the business tests. This is called User Acceptance Testing (UAT). In UAT, staff make sure the change is working the way they want it to, based on the requirements.

Regression testing looks at the other parts of Clarety that weren't changed to make sure everything is still working correctly. Sometimes, a change may affect another part of Clarety and Regression Testing catches these bugs.

Then the PIR is updated to the Ready For Release phase so AST can get the changes ready to put into the live system. All the code changes that go into a release are called the "build."

Releases usually happen over a weekend. Since staff don't create forms over the weekend, the release has the least impact on production.

Stay tuned to the next issue of the *LookOut* to learn about the final step in the process, about how ORS communicates these code changes to staff (hint: it's the Build Report).

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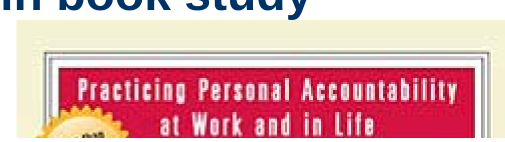
CS staff participates in book study



As a part of ongoing teambuilding and training activities, CS is participating in a book study focusing on personal

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 H, Laurie M, Anthony, and Kerrie)*
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 Expert
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

- **Forge Operational Excellence**

accountability. The book, *QBQ! (The Question Behind the Question)*, is a directive but simple text written to help readers change their thinking when faced with any problem, conflict, or choice they have, regardless of the setting.

Readers are challenged to ask themselves, "How can I let go of what I can't control?" and "What can I do to help?" instead of "Why me?" and "Who dropped the ball?" This change in thought process is designed to promote success and proactive behaviors while distancing the audience from victim thinking.

So far, **Letitia Levi** has conducted this study with the supervisors and analyst team, and now each supervisor is leading his or her respective team through the book. The teams review a few chapters at each team meeting, followed by an open discussion of the concepts. **Malachi Hooser** said, "This book forces you to place a mirror in front of your face and eliminate the IQ's (incorrect questions). It will also help us begin our thought process with "How can I?" and "What can I?" questions, to help us be more proactive in our group decisions." CE will also be reading and discussing the book. If you want to learn more about QBQ!, ask a member of the CS leadership team, or visit qbq.com.

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ORS and BCBSM review member communications

ORS and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) are conducting a joint review of member communications to improve retirees' understanding of their healthcare plan. On March 4, **Laurie Mitchell**, **Ian Broughton**, and **Mark Howard** met with BCBSM representatives to look at gaps in member communication, see if some communications need to eliminated or streamlined, and develop new communications.

BCBSM will conduct focus groups with public school retirees to find the best place to start working. A few of the areas the joint team identified for improvement are aging into Medicare, verification of coverage, annual health assessment, and prescription benefits.

More meetings between ORS and BCBSM are in the near future, and BPD and CS staff may participate in the process. This ORS/BCBSM initiative will also include more Master Health Care Plan vendors such as Delta Dental, Catamaran, and Blue Vision.

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New reporting standards for public school reporting units

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has established new accounting and financial reporting standards that

- **Instill Customer Confidence**
- **Engage Hearts and Minds**

require, for the first time, that the net pension liability is reported in financial statements for pensions across the country, including the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System effective June 30, 2015.

Each school district will have to include its portion of the pension liability on its own financial statement. ER and BPD have joined together to start a communication initiative to Chief Financial Officers at all of the reporting units. The first letter was successfully delivered on February 28, 2014.

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STAFF TRAINING

On February 12, **Anthony Estell** and **Meg Leonard** attended *Communication: Breakthrough to Understanding using MBTI*. This training uses the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to help those taking the course gain insights onto their communication styles and the styles of others.

BPD's **Mark Howard** attended *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* from February 25 through February 27. The Seven Habits apply at all four levels of leadership (personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational). The Seven Habits program teaches inside out improvement; first building your trustworthiness, then creating trust on an interpersonal level to improve relationships.

Amy Wheeler attended Crucial Conversation from February 26 through February 27. This program will helps the participants learn to master their crucial conversations to improve their organization, strengthen their relationships, and improve their overall health.

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business briefs

ORS and DTMB letterhead and FLB templates updated

ORS and DTMB letterhead and FLB templates have been updated with the new DTMB Director name effective March 1, 2014. All template directories now have the new director, David B. Behen, listed. Please make sure to update your links to any templates you use on a regular basis. The templates are located in the S: Template folder. If you find a template that still needs to be updated, please contact **Carolyn Parkinson**.

CS starts QA correspondence initiative

In March, CS started training staff on the new Quality Assurance process for free-form letters. Free-form letters (not FLB letters) will begin to be reviewed in the month of March, and review will begin in earnest in April. If you have questions about the new QA correspondence initiative, contact **Katrina Kaufman**.

Engagement Survey complete

The January 2014 Engagement Survey has wrapped up and the results are in. The overall engagement score is 74.4% selecting Agree or Completely agree. That is up from 73.9% in the September 2013 survey. Log in to the Knowledge Library, under the CE Now tab click Surveys to see all of the results of how engaged we are as an office.

March Connections is published

The latest issue of the retiree newsletter, *Connections*, has been published to the public school, state employees, state police, and judges' websites. The March edition includes financial information for each system.

New state employee orientation tutorial now available online

The New Employee Orientation for State Employees is now available on the State of Michigan 401(k) and 457 Plans website as a tutorial. The tutorial provides details about the state employee Defined Contribution (DC) Plan and the resources available to participants.

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Going

CS wishes the best to **Tammy Stephens**. Her last day was February 21.

CS also bid farewell to **Marie Leik**. Her last day was February 24.

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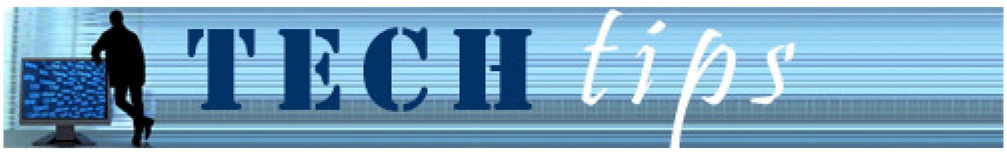
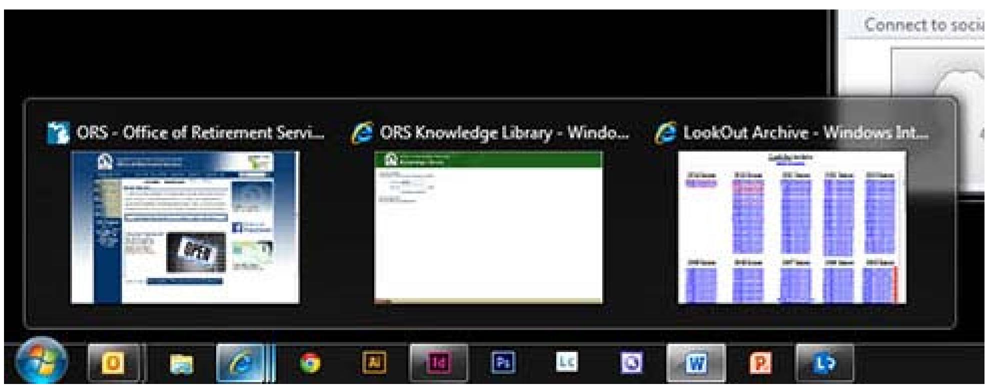


Convenient new features in Windows 7

Now that we've migrated to Windows 7, there are a few new great features we can take advantage of.

Live previews. If you have more than one window open in one program, hover over the icon in the taskbar. Windows 7 will give you a live preview of each window, so you can quickly choose what you want. [pic]



Window snapping. If you need to see two applications at once (like Clarety and Siebel), it's easier than ever in Windows 7. Place your cursor on the title bar of a window and drag it to the left or right side of the screen. The window will automatically snap and take up exactly half of your screen. [pic] You can also use the keyboard shortcut Windows+right (or left) arrow.

Jump lists. If you have a program pinned to your taskbar, right clicking it will give you a list of the documents or websites you open the most.

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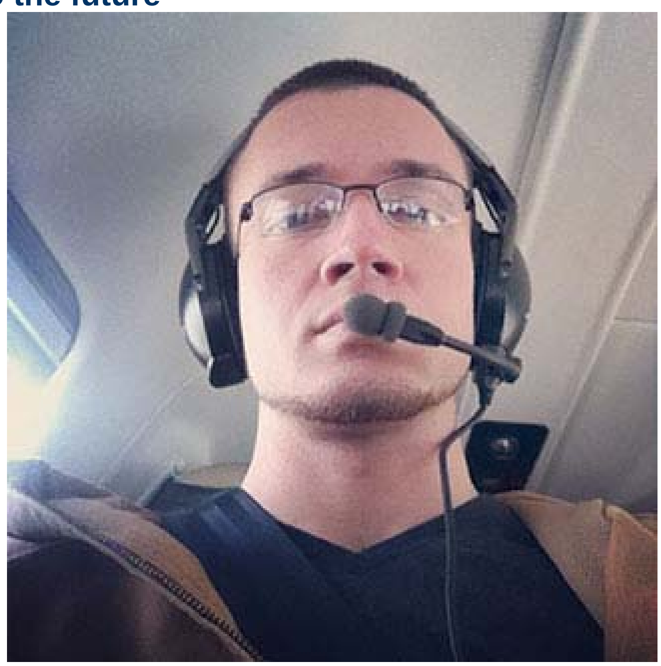
Lucas Cairns flies into the future



Back in grade school, if you had asked **Lucas Cairns** what he wanted to be when he grew up, he may not have said "a pilot" but it probably would have involved airplanes. "I always thought planes were really cool, like really cool," he said. With an uncle who is a pilot and an aunt who is a flight attendant, Lucas knew it was within reach to work with those planes he always loved. So after high school and a year of community college, he decided to try flying courses at LCC.

Now Lucas is within sight of his first goal: earning his private pilot license. He hopes to complete his training—about 15 more hours of flight time, plus the flight test—and get his license this summer.

Once Lucas receives his private pilot's license, he'll be permitted to fly a limited number of passengers in a smaller, non-commercial airplane. Lucas's ultimate goal, however, is to get his commercial license.

His favorite part of flying is the thrill. "Being up in the air away from everything is a great feeling. It's cool to fly around Lansing and see places you're familiar with, or to fly along the shorelines of Michigan's lakes and beaches. The views are amazing," he said.

The only downside is training maneuvers that require nerves of steel. For example, part of the training is performing a "power off stall," where the pilot pulls up on the airplane until it stalls and starts falling, at which point the pilot levels out and regains momentum.

So far, his favorite flight was to Holland and Muskegon. But rather than dreaming of an ideal flight, he thinks more about a dream airplane. "I've always thought the huge airplanes like 747 or Airbus are very cool. Private jets are very appealing as well and I would love to have a job flying one of those someday."

Lucas's advice for anyone considering learning to fly: start early. You can get a private pilot's license at age 18 and start building hours. Also, make sure it is absolutely what you want to do before you get into it. It is very expensive and can be a very big commitment. Most importantly, "just have fun with it—after all, it is flying."

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From the archives

On March 13, 1998, ORS debuted Connections, the retiree newsletter. Check out the entire *LookOut* Volume 1, Issue 16 to see if you catch some familiar faces.

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!!

ORS LookOut - 2 -

ORS debuts retiree newsletter

This month, every ORS pension recipient will receive the inaugural issue of *ORS Connections*, the first-ever ORS-wide retiree newsletter.

Office of Retirement Services
ORS Connections
March 1998 Vol. 1,

Connections will be inserted into every pension recipient's March pension check or electronic funds transfer statement. ORS will publish the newsletter twice yearly, with the second issue scheduled for publication in September.

The first issue of the four-page newsletter will contain a summary of the Annual Report information for each recipient's respective retirement system, as required by law. The remainder of the issues will feature helpful information for pension recipients about how to do business with ORS.

The contents include EFT enrollment information, an article introducing the Customer Information Center, instructions for contacting ORS by telephone or mail and instructions for retirees to change their address.

Also, this issue contains an article about Medicare eligibility and solicits retirees' advice to help former colleagues about to retire. A collection of retiree feedback will appear in a future issue.

ORS Director Chris DeRose said he is pleased to be able to offer this service to retirees.

"Connections gives us another opportunity to reinforce the message that we're here to help our retirees," he said. "By making it easier for retirees to do business with us, we can further our goal of becoming a customer focused organization."

Copies of each version of *Connections* will be distributed to staff by next week. We can thank Student Assistant **Dave Schupbach** for the new ORS logo design.

Customer survey begins

Continued from page 1

staff person who served that customer, providing feedback about the quality of service.

"This involves a time commitment of only a few minutes per week," he said. "If

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Beware the Ides of March! This week's header is The Death of Julius Caesar *by Vincenzo Camuccini.*

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.