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Email the LookOut Staff

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The 2013-2014 PRIM (Preretirement Information Meeting) schedule is now available on the [public school employee website](#). Meetings through the end of the calendar year are listed. Meetings scheduled for next calendar year will be available in early December.

In addition, the PRO (Preretirement Orientation) schedule is available on the [Civil Service Commission intranet site](#).

To make sure we have enough seating and materials, advance registration is required for both PRIMs and PROs.

Registration for public school employees

Customers can register for a PRIM on the public school employees website. To begin the registration process, customers navigate to Webinars and Seminars. Then click on the meeting from the list, fill out a short form, and submit the registration to receive a confirmation. Customers can register for a meeting as early as 60 days before the event.

Registration for state employees

Customers must register for a PRO through their department's training or human resource office. A PRO is a four-hour, half-day session featuring information about ING payout options, DC insurance eligibility, and the DB pension plan.

Additional Meetings

Additional PRIMs will be scheduled throughout the course of the season, including in the Upper Peninsula next spring. The PRO schedule for 2014 will be posted on the Civil Service website beginning in early November.

Webinars

Live online webinars are also available for our members. CE will have at least one webinar available at all times. Members can register for webinars directly on our website.

[back to top](#)**October Forging Breakthroughs sessions and more**

ORS is committed to a culture where open-mindedness is practiced, respect is demonstrated, diversity is valued, and creativity and innovation thrive.

ORS is conducting two sessions for those who have



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On the Horizon

- State employees board meeting - December 12
- Public School employees board meeting - December 19

Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)

Commonly Used Acronyms

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (<i>EPC, BPOs, and BPLs</i>)
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process Leader
BPO	Business Process Owner
CE	Customer Education
CS	Customer Service
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution

participated in Power of Perspectives, but who haven't experienced the Forging Breakthroughs session.

Session 1: 10/9 kickoff, 10/23 facilitation session
Session 2: TBD

In addition, employees who have not taken the Researcher Rescue training will have the opportunity before the end of the year. Researcher Rescue is a dynamic exercise designed to help you gain practical experience with the Forging Breakthroughs principles in a simulated setting.

In the coming months, you'll see monthly PoP essays, a self-contained application session titled *Lost at Sea* to practice Forging Breakthrough principals, and there's always the PoP tab on the KL page where you can learn more and share your story.

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ING holding Advice Open Labs for ORS

Want to manage your defined contribution accounts, and satisfy your sweet tooth at the same time? ING has you covered!

The week of October 7, ING is holding Advice Open Labs and personal, 45-minute one-on-one advice sessions for ORS staff. The Advice Open Labs are free to anyone who'd like to walk in; if you want to attend a one-on-one session, email [Janet Hile](#) or call (517) 636-6071 for scheduling.



Anyone who attends the Advice Open Lab or one-on-one session also gets a golden ticket to the dessert bar on October 17 from 2 pm to 4 pm

Wednesday, Open Advice Lab 10 am – 3 pm, Conf. Rm. T
October 9: One-on-one sessions 8:15 am – 12 pm, Conf. Rm. M
One-on-one sessions 1:30 pm – 3 pm, Conf. Rm. M

Thursday, Open Advice Lab 10 am – 3 pm, Conf. Rm. T
October 10: One-on-one sessions 10:30 am – 12 pm, Conf. Rm. C
One-on-one sessions 2:15 pm – 4 pm, Conf. Rm. N

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IVR Enhancements launched September 27

As we continuously improve our customer service, our tools must adapt to meet customers' needs. The complex phone network that handles our daily calls using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology is just one system that's been enhanced over the last year. Lead by **Ryan Marr**, this project added, removed, and upgraded various features of the IVR to improve our customers' experiences on the phone.



Some of the enhancements deployed on September 27 include a revised script with plain language, simplified menu options, and faster tempo; call routing for Military Retirement System; a second Hot Topic option; improved routing of calls based on application status; and removing unnecessary IVR items (like validation questions for default menu callers and employers).

Thanks to **Greg Blake, Jason Browning, Danielle Fowler, Doug Murray, and Nate Parrish** for their contributions to this project.

DTMB	Department of Technology, Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie H, Anthony, Laurie M, and Kerrie</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

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**

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What is “the cloud” anyway?

Recently, our Outlook upgraded to Outlook365, a “cloud-based” version of our previous Outlook. Do you have visions of your calendar and inbox floating free in the air with puffy white clouds? It helps to keep in mind that the term “cloud” is a concept that a clever marketing person devised to help sell internet-based services to consumers and business. Your data is not floating in the sky, but it’s stored in huge data storage facilities. The difference is that the data is on your service provider’s servers and not your own servers or computer. “Cloud” can also mean that the software you use is not loaded on your own computer but you access it on the internet. Examples of this include Office 365, web-based email services like Hotmail or Gmail, and even online banking services.



There are advantages and disadvantages, and sometimes the advantages can be disadvantages. The primary example of this is that you can access these services anywhere you have web access. However, what if you don’t have access or your web connection is slow or completely down? Then you’re out of luck. The cost for cloud services can be low, particularly with data storage. You can also have a computer that is leaner on storage capacity if you don’t need to save software applications and documents on it, and you don’t need to worry about running out of server space. On the other hand, subscription services can sometimes end up costing you more over time than the old model of purchasing software. Overall, the advantages for ORS in switching to cloud-based services are cost savings, saving time on updates and maintenance and the ability of users to access anywhere they have web access.

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The SECC tradition is underway

The State Employees Charitable Campaign (SECC) is an annual campaign for State of Michigan employees to contribute to charitable organizations. The campaign runs for five weeks beginning in September.



The majority of participating agencies provide voluntary, charitable, health, and welfare services to individuals or their families that have a direct and substantial benefit to residents or charities in the State of Michigan. Several national and international charitable organizations also participate in the campaign.

State employees are invited to log in to MI HR Self-Service to set up biweekly payroll deductions for the charitable organization of their choice. For those who wish to participate, the minimum pledge is \$1.00 per organization, per pay period. Enrollments need to be completed by October 11, 2013.

The ORS SECC volunteers host events during the campaign to raise money for charitable organizations. This year’s events include a penny/coin drive, casual days, and a bake sale. Funds will be donated to three charities – The Humane Society, Ele’s Place, and The Listening Ear.

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Celebrate the Michigan Harvest Gathering Festival





This year marks the 23rd annual Michigan Harvest Gathering (MHG). The MHG is an annual food and fundraising campaign that helps to provide emergency food to Michigan families. Proceeds go to the Food Bank Council of Michigan, its member food banks, and community agencies that include food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters.

In its first 22 years, the MHG Campaign collected over 8.7 million pounds of food and over \$8.6 million. Many people who receive food from emergency food providers are elderly residents who have exhausted their fixed incomes on medications or children who receive their only nutritious meals from free lunch at school. The MHG campaign goes from October 14 – October 25.

The 2013 SECC/Harvest Gathering volunteers are **Dustin Duprest**, **Chana Lee**, **Kayla Lintz**, and **Julie Soliz**. Please see any of these representatives to participate in the tradition of giving.

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8th Annual ORS Reunion will be October 17

Arrange to get away for a few hours on Thursday, October 17 to enjoy lunch and reconnect with some of our former staff and retired co-workers. The reunion will be held from 11:30 am to 2 pm at Tony M's on Creyts Road in Lansing.

During the last seven reunions, attendees from ORS and the old Bureau of Retirement (yep, that used to be our office's name) have reminisced and shared memories from their days at Retirement, and discovered what other adventures and activities are now filling their friends and colleagues' lives.

If you'd like to attend this year's event, please RSVP to [Fred Covert](#) as soon as possible. Keep in mind this is not an official ORS event, so you need to have your supervisor's approval to attend and request appropriate leave time through DCDS.

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Get Fit gets ORS into denim and pink in



October

Get Fit is sponsoring a Denim Day on Thursday, October 10 for \$2. Half of the proceeds will be donated to charity in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During this month, women are encouraged to do a self-exam or get a mammogram, and encourage another woman to do the same. There will also be a prize for the person wearing the most pink or the best pink outfit! (Wearing pink is not required to participate in the Denim Day.)

On another Get Fit note, there has been a real fight on the leader boards for the September challenge! It will end on October 14 so get to stepping hard for the last

week!

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CS team attends training on dealing with difficult customers

On September 16, **Christina Sanchez's** team attended the Civil Service training, Dealing with Difficult Customers. The team had to recall real life experiences handling difficult customers. The scenarios were analyzed and feedback given on the best way to handle a situation involving a possibly irate customer.

Mary Anderson said, "The presenter, Phil Kovacs, style of teaching resonated with me. I will remember his examples, and apply them when I do have a difficult customer." **Tony Contu** added, "It was beneficial to the team to spend some time together outside of the work environment. I enjoyed the class and thought that Phil Kovacs kept the audience engaged in his presentation. We learned many good techniques on how to approach a difficult customer." It's clear this experience was valuable for the team.

Michigan Digital Government Summit at the Lansing Center

On September 24, **Meg Leonard** and **Ian Broughton** attended the Michigan Digital Government Summit at the Lansing Center. This annual event for local and state government focuses on the use of information technology as a strategic tool for managers, executives, and policy makers. The summit began with presentations by John Nixon, DTMB Director, and David Behen, Chief Information Officer, about the state of IT in Michigan. The rest of the day included presentations on a wide variety of topics, including cyber security, data management, collaboration, innovation, and marketing.

7 Habits of Highly Effective People

ER's **Trista Stine** attended Dr. Steven Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People training on September 24. The training is intended to help you identify your own goals and desires, and to prioritize the tasks that help get you there. One of the habits described how identifying and prioritizing the "Big Rocks" in life (family, promotions, vacation, etc.) leaves room for the smaller "pebbles" (insignificant things that don't help you reach your goals) to fill the gaps, while focusing on the insignificant now doesn't allow enough room in your life to manage your big rocks. The training also emphasizes focusing on things you can control and change, rather than spending so much energy fretting about things out of your control. Another important concept from the 7 Habits is "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." The goal is to not insert your personal opinion, or agenda, but strictly to listen and understand where the person is coming from. Covey makes a point to say you don't have to agree, but you have to understand. Once you are able to truly understand what the person is saying, you can begin helping them understand you.

Microsoft training

CE's **Krystal Strachan** earned a certificate of completion for Microsoft Word 2 training. This training was a classroom/instructor atmosphere held in East Lansing through PTD Technology. Krystal learned how to use macros to automate tasks, and how to create pivot tables. She will be completing another class for Microsoft Excel 3 within the next couple of weeks. Krystal said, "I have taken a couple classes now through PTD

technology, and I think the instructors are full of knowledge. They offer a step-by-step process first for each lesson by following along with the instructor, then they have lessons that you work through on your own. For a hands-on-learner like myself the structure was beneficial.”

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business briefs

Picture Your Future: Advancing on Your Road to Retirement Readiness workshop set for 2014 seminar season

After successfully conducting two pilot sessions of the Picture Your Future: Advancing on Your Road to Retirement Readiness workshop, CE's live in-person meetings will kick off their 2013 - 2014 season on Tuesday, November 5 at Wayne RESA. Six to eight other presentations will be scheduled through June 30, 2014. Some confirmed locations include St. Clair RESA, Oakland ISD, and Washtenaw ISD. Presently, the workshop will continue to be marketed by direct email to public school employees who are six to ten years away from retirement and reside within 25 miles of the facility and will not be posted on the public school employees website.

My Site 411 reminder

The DTMB My Site 411 allows you to update your phone number, email address, work location, and organizational area, among other items. Through this one update other systems are automatically updated - your Outlook, your SharePoint profile, your Lync information and the state's active directory. Great! One update and five systems are updated! Simply go to inside.michigan.gov, click your name in the upper right-hand corner, then choose My Site. To update your info, click My Profile at the top of the page, and type away.

Please take a moment to update your information as soon and then review your contact information periodically. Thank you for helping to improve our contact resources. Accurate information helps all of us reach each other easily – by phone, by email and in our offices.

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ER wishes a happy retirement to **John Davidson**. His last day was September 27.

CS sends best wishes to **Donna Ford**, who accepted an auditor position with Dept. of Treasury. Donna's last day will be October 11.

AST bid farewell to **Swathika Thiyagarajan** on September 18 and **Jaya Tamrakar** on September 19.

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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!!



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.