

# ORS Look Out

Year 2000



56 Days

November 5, 1999

Volume 3, Issue 8

## 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.



*Fay Norris, left, Elaine Lewter, Jennifer Ashton, and John Davidson pause for a well-deserved breather on moving day. Deb Lawrence was not present for the picture.*

## ORS Calendar



### November

**Veterans' Day holiday - 11th**  
**School Employees Board Meeting ----- 19th**  
**Thanksgiving holidays ----- 24th & 25th**  
**Pension Paydate ----- 25th**

### December

**State Employees Board Meeting ----- 2nd**  
**ORS Holiday Party ---- 15th**  
**Pension Paydate ----- 18th**  
**Christmas holidays -- 23rd & 24th**  
**New Year's holidays - 30th & 31st**

## Welcome to ORS! Moving day for DC/DC office!

Today is moving day as staff from the Defined Contribution/Deferred Compensation office move into their new home in ORS. **John Davidson, Deb Lawrence, Faye Norris**, and DC/DC administrator **Elaine Lewter** now

are located on the third floor in A Wing. **Jennifer Ashton**, who joined Finance and Administration in September, is also working with the Defined Contribution/Deferred Compensation Plans. Welcome aboard, folks!

## DMB Director will share survey results

DMB Director **Janet Phipps** has received the compilation of responses from the employee survey conducted a few weeks ago. She will be holding one-hour sessions with interested employees to review the report. Attendance is voluntary.

Sessions are at the GOB, Conference Room A on November 8 from 3:00-4:00 and 4:00-5:00 and again on November 17 from 8:00-9:00 and 9:00-10:00. Staff interested in attending should make arrangements in advance with their supervisor.

## ***Emergency warrant procedure gets retirees' first check out sooner***

Beginning this month, customers who need an emergency advance warrant on their first Public School Employees' pension payment are receiving better service with the introduction of a new system. "In the past," reports **Lisa Reed**, Analyst for Retired Customer Accounts, "staff would request an emergency advance warrant if the retiree did not receive the initial pension payment in a timely manner due to a delay in the receipt of information from the school district or due to proof of financial hardship.

"Upon notification," Lisa continues, "Retired Customer Accounts would issue a special warrant from here on MAIN (Michigan Administrative Information Network) for the advance amount, and have Treasury pull the first warrant. The Treasury warrant contained

the first month's figures combined with the retro advance amount. Once the pulled warrant stub arrived at our office we would issue another warrant for the balance of the initial pension payment. This procedure required many highly orchestrated steps and hand-offs which could delay the retiree's first payment for approximately seven to 10 days following payroll.

"The new procedure, which processors have already been using for State retirees, is as follows: The Claims Processors make a determination for an emergency advance warrant, based on the given criteria, and request the warrant to be issued by Retired Customer Accounts. The Processor would set the retiree up for the next month to receive just a single month's pension

amount (retro would not be included). The following month's payment would be adjusted to include any retro payment still to be made, along with the regular month's pension payment. This would bring the retiree's account current."

- \* This would limit new retirees calling to inquire about the pulled warrant;
- \* limit the involvement of Treasury in the process;
- \* streamline the process to fewer parties and steps involved; and
- \* lessen the chance for overpayment and error.

Congratulations to the team who helped develop this new process to provide better service to our customers: **Lila Christiansen, John Donovan, Pam Kibby, Nancy Quick, Mary Ann Vicini**, and Lisa.

## ***ORS holds program for State human resource staff***

On October 5, ORS held its first Administrative Pre-Retirement Information Meeting (PRIM) for the State Human Resource (HR) staff. According to Outreach Office Manager **Ken Wright**, "The HR staff are usually the first point of contact for State employees with questions on retirement. The first meeting was a great success and the attendees indicated this

information was going to be very helpful."

Additional meetings will be announced and posted on the ORSstateHRLISTSERV. A videotape of the presentation will be made available to HR staff unable to attend one of the meetings. If you have any questions please contact **Linda Mahlow** or Ken Wright.



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## ***Form elimination speeds up microfilming***



*Sheila Large retrieves a file containing a document to be microfilmed.*

Life was made easier for ORS staff with a change in procedure eliminating the need to fill out a Microfilm Update Transaction Order when sending documents or files to be filmed. With a Post It note indicating which system

(Public School Employees, State Employees, State Police, or Judges) and status (disabilities, deaths, etc.) the Records Unit staff can accurately process these documents without the Microfilm Update form. This

saves staff from having to list by Social Security number each document to be filmed, prior to directing the document(s) to the microfilm area.

**Sheila Large** was instrumental in making this change. Eliminating the Microfilm Update Transaction Order form is possible since the microfilm area is current with work to be filmed and inserted. The forms were a way for both Records Unit staff and others to find a document or file prior to filming/inserting into the member's microfiche jacket. With the elimination of backlogs in this area, staff can expect to receive requested files within hours of the request, in most cases.

## ***Here's an update on the ORS Outstanding Service Award***

On May 19, 1997, Director **Chris DeRose** initiated the ORS Outstanding Service Award, two traveling trophies to be awarded to someone performing outstanding service for a customer or a fellow co-worker. He presented the first awards to **Sara Mills** and **Andy**

**Daignault**. In keeping with our philosophy that we need to have fun while we work, the loving cup trophies each held a large bag of M&Ms, and the rules state that when the trophy is passed on, it must be filled with something for the new recipient. The

trophies have passed through many hands in the past two years. They presently reside with **Joy Bartel** of the Detroit Outreach Office, who received hers from **Mary Dilworth**, and **Mary Picken** of Finance and Administration, who was awarded hers by **Carla Price**.

## ***HR representatives hear presentation on ORS disability process***

**Pam Kibby**, Claims Processing supervisor, and **Mary Ann Vicini**, manager of Claims Processing, made a presentation on Friday, October 29 to six Human Resources representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, the

Department of Transportation and the Accident Fund. The presentation outlined the current ORS disability process, the planned future disability process, definitions for State Employee's duty and non-duty, total and permanent disabilities, and the role that

Human Resources plays in completing the employer's statement and providing position descriptions. The presentation was the result of a request from the HR offices and was very favorably received.

## 1999 MIP Window sign-up deadline draws near

Public School Employees' Basic Plan members eligible for the 1999 MIP (Member Investment Plan) Window recently received one last notice reminding them that the deadline for signing up is November 26, 1999. So far 205 Basic Plan members have elected to enroll in the Member Investment Plan through the 1999 MIP Window program.

Last year the Public School Employees Retirement Act was amended to allow a limited window of opportunity for certain Basic Plan members to enroll in the Member Investment Plan (MIP). The group targeted by this legislation were those who did not have an opportunity to enroll in MIP during either of the previous two MIP Windows. In order to be eligible for the 1999 MIP Window, members must meet all four criteria:

1. Must be actively employed in a Michigan Public School at the time of the enrollment.
2. Must have been employed by a Michigan Public School Reporting Unit on or after January 1, 1987 and before January 1, 1990.
3. Must have worked and received one year or less of credited service as of January 1, 1990.
4. Must not have worked in a Michigan Public School between October 1, 1991 and December 31, 1992 (the timeframe of the second MIP Window).

Earlier this year, a team comprised of **Matt Beha, Michele Childs, Lois Musbach, Mary Picken, Carla Price, Phil Stoddard, and Ken Wright** from ORS and **Dennis Ramsey**, who worked for Information Technology Services Division at the time, identified 5,500 employees potentially eligible to participate.

Those who choose to enroll in MIP must pay MIP contributions on the wages they earned since the Member Investment Plan was first instituted. To assist members in paying these contributions, the Internal Revenue Service approved a plan allowing participants to make these special MIP payments with tax-deferred dollars using payroll deductions.

Before employees could use this Tax-Deferred Payroll (TDP) program for 1999 MIP Window payments, the individual Reporting Units had to pass a special MIP Resolution to participate. So far 268 Reporting Units have passed and returned this MIP Resolution.

This past week, billing statements and a TDP MIP Window Payroll Agreement/Authorization form were sent to pending MIP enrollees and those already signed up, letting them know their MIP Buy-Back costs.

Those who choose to enroll by the November 26, 1999 deadline will be eligible for all of the MIP benefits: earlier retirement eligibility; higher pension benefits due to a three-year final average compensation rather than the Basic Plan five-year average; a guaranteed 3% annual non-

compounded pension increase; earlier eligibility for survivor benefits; and tax savings, since MIP contributions are made on a tax-deferred basis.

Thanks go out to all ORS staff who are or have been involved in this special program to provide enhanced retirement benefits to our members.

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### Updated Rapid Copy/ Printing policy

To ensure our internal and external customers use the most up-to-date versions of ORS forms and printed materials, general print orders for reproducible materials, including print requests submitted to Rapid Copy must be placed through **Rosemary Baker, Matt Beha, Amy Betts** or **Robert Glennon**. In addition **Terry Jacobson** and **Pam Ward** of the Director's office are authorized to submit Rapid Copy orders for specific Director's Office printing requests. This procedure will provide a number of benefits:

- ✳ Avoids copying forms, which are obsolete, or being revised, or where additional stock is in the warehouse, but not yet restocked to the shelves.
- ✳ Consolidates efforts and improves record keeping of quantities ordered.
- ✳ Provides a single source of contact to determine what form version is most current, which forms are scheduled for revision, and the status.
- ✳ Assures forms meet specific DMB standards for forms design and printing.
- ✳ Assigns an official form number for tracking purposes.

### Thought for the Day

*Success is measured by what we do, compared to what we could be doing.*





*Fred Cover (hidden), left, Darlene Workman, Carol Keyes Baubie and Carla Price learn about the CPC's 12 high speed printers from CPC Manager Ken Mitchell.*

## **ORS tour of CPC is A-OK!**

The ORS Strategic Partnership team, announced at the All-Staff meeting in October, visited the Consolidated Print Center (CPC) on October 29. The visit presented an

opportunity to tour the CPC facility and hold a kickoff meeting with CPC staff to improve our relationship.

**Fred Covert, Carol Keyes Baubie, Carla Price, and Darlene Workman**

participated in the visit. They learned that CPC currently prints eight million pages of information for various State agencies each month. While retirement warrants are not part of the large volume being printed by CPC now, equipment is on order so this task can be transferred from the Department of Treasury to CPC in June 2000.

### **CIC sets new record!**

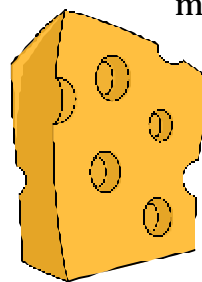
On October 26 the ORS Customer Information Center (CIC) fielded 1,163 phone calls, breaking the previous record of 1,132 calls set on September 28, 1998. Congratulations, CIC, on this amazing feat!

### **Nothing cheesy about this solution!**

As you will recall, gang, in our last episode, we posed the puzzle: In the basement there are three light switches in the "off" position. Each switch controls one of three light bulbs on the floor above. You are in the basement and you may move any of the switches, but you may only go upstairs one time to check your results. How can you determine which switch controls which light bulb?



**Solution:** Turn any one switch to the "on" position for five minutes. Then



turn that switch "off." Quickly turn any other switch to the on position and run

upstairs. Feel the two lights that are off. One of them will be hot because it was on for five minutes. Obviously, the hot bulb is controlled by the first switch you turned on. The light that is currently on is controlled by the switch you last turned on. The remaining switch controls the cold bulb.

## ***“I look a fright!” could have won you a prize!***



An imaginative group of ORS staffers put on their thinking caps and other odd items of apparel October 29 to celebrate Halloween. Costume winners were **Fred Doll** (above right), dressed as Waldo, **Veronica Tsai** in her witch attire and **Kris Morris** (above left), our friendly maintenance worker. The picture lower left features witches Maureen Carden, left, and Mary Anderson, while Janet Graham was snapped in the shot lower right. The big scary picture starts with Terry Weller, back row left, John Ellis, a ghostly hand and face belonging to Deb Gearhart, Ginger Bomar, Chris DeRose, Janet Graham, and Michael Zingsheim. Second row, left, Mary Lowry, Mary Anderson, Connie Lyles, Maureen Carden, Kris Morris, Deb Mosher, Cindy Nevins, Sue DeBor, Patsy Burhans, Pam Kenney, and Judy McLean. Front row, left, Veronica Tsai, Fred Doll, Ann Beach, Lisa Schmidt, Susan Park, and Joyce Weber. Dessert Design winners (not pictured) were **Lisa Schmidt**, **Al Juderjohn** and **Jaime Mosley**.

## ***Solving this Scramble will be the cat's meow!***

We're not lion when we say that it's a jungle out there. So pause to reflect on how you can make the best use of each day. Don't just hang out all day and then report a tale of woe. Carpe Diem, as they say (that's Latin for "Seize the Day")! Begin by solving this Scramble:

gliklin meit  
sluqae  
drumering na nittypoopr!

Getting help from your co-workers doesn't make you a cheetah. In fact, it's encouraged. Once you solve the riddle, talk it over and put it to work in your daily tasks. The unscrambled version will be printed in the next issue.



***gliklin meit  
sluqae  
drumering na nittypoopr!***