



February 1, 2008

Volume 12, Issue 3

Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

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- Deadline for ORS Excellence Awards Nominations
March 3, 2008

miAccount available to retirees

The day has finally arrived. Retirees are able to manage their account information online with the launch of *miAccount* on Tuesday, January 29.

Here are some things to keep in mind when using *miAccount*:

- Staff can **only** log in from the link emailed to you on Tuesday. Store this link in your Favorites.
- All staff (with the exception of interns and some temporary employees) should be able to log in now using the same user ID and password you use to log in to your computer in the morning. When you enter your user ID, enter it exactly including capital letters (e.g., LaClearK). Email **Kim LaClear** if you are unable to log in.
- When you log in the first time, you'll be prompted with a security certificate. AST is working to remove this, but for now, just click "Yes."
- Retirees log in from the After Retirement page on the ORS website.
- Check the **Knowledge Library** daily. Navigate to the *miAccount* folder in the left navigation. Check the daily status folder to learn of any updates.
- Please sign up for the notification feature for the *miAccount* knowledge base.
- Hours of operation for *miAccount* are 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- When you are in *miAccount*, don't use the "Back" button on your browser. Use the onscreen navigation tools, and be sure to use the "Quit" button when you've finished an activity.
- If you get a call about the website, try to help the user navigate through the problem. If you can't, log the problem in Seibel as a web defect and handle the call as you normally do.
- The login page does take a few seconds to load. Multiple attempts to reload will confuse your browser, and you will get an error message, so you must allow time for the page to load. If you get stuck, close all your browser windows and just start over.

Use the Knowledge Library to stay up-to-date on miAccount

- Check the **Knowledge Library** daily. Navigate to the *miAccount* folder in the left navigation. Check the daily status folder to learn of any updates.
- Please sign up for the notification feature for the *miAccount* knowledge base.

We welcome feedback. If you have suggestions or things that you would like to have changed after using the site, **email Kim** with your thoughts and the team will investigate if the change is possible.

Quick Links

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

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
CSC	Customer Service Center
DB	Defined Benefits
DC	Defined Contributions
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DMB	Department of Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie, Tim, Anthony, and Kathy</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
STG	Systems Technology Group (<i>Web self-service contract vendor</i>)
T&T	Tools and

Forms, Letters and Barcodes update

With the rollout of the Forms, Letters and Barcodes (FLB) project just around the corner, CSC staff had their first look at the changes this week. Training was held January 30 and 31 with the coordinated efforts of **Linda Reznick** and **Tom Zack**.

FLB enables forms and letters to be sent to customers with the touch of a button. Stuffing envelopes and sorting mail by system will become tasks of the past at ORS. Forms and letters will be pre-populated with the members' identifying information and other important data. Each evening, the batch list will be delivered to DMB-Agency Services where the documents and any informational attachments will be printed, inserted into envelopes, and mailed to the customer.

Barcodes on the forms will streamline imaging and indexing when the form is returned to ORS.

Security awareness at ORS

As we learned earlier this week, the ORS Security Awareness Committee has been working diligently on issues related to data security and information confidentiality. As part of the [National Data Privacy Day](#) on Monday, January 28, the International Association of Privacy Professionals promoted the importance of data protection and the privacy of sensitive information.

The Identify Theft Protection Act, 2004 P.A. 452 law was originally enacted in 2004 and further amended in 2007. From this act, DMB Advisory Memorandum 2008-02 was issued on December 18, 2007, requiring each office to conduct a thorough review of their systems, business practices and safeguards involving confidential information.

The ORS Security Awareness Committee has been working to assure we meet these requirements. Usually when we think of confidential information at ORS, social security numbers come to mind. However, our responsibility doesn't stop there. We handle other sensitive information such as passports, birth certificates, driver licenses and even the social security numbers of people not in our systems, such as vendor's and temporary employees.

Have you ever walked by a printer or fax that had documents set aside for several hours or longer? Did you ever consider if any of those documents might contain confidential personal information? If you print confidential information to a shared printer, it should be retrieved immediately. At the end of a shift, all information at printers or faxes should be distributed to the appropriate locations, or confidentially recycled.

We all handle some level of confidential information nearly every day. We make it our business to be careful with social security numbers, wages, and other sensitive information, and customers appreciate our diligence and awareness.

We must continue to treat information confidentially and make sure we demonstrate the importance of this responsibility each and every day. It is critical that we share any potential risks with supervisors. If you have a concern about information security, immediately communicate it to management so action can be taken and the



	Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

Security Awareness Committee can review the issue.

Correction

In the previous issue of the *LookOut*, names of AST staff who contributed to the SPEC project were inadvertently spelled incorrectly. The correct list of AST staff contributors is as follows: **Mike Bilek, Dave Gabler, TJ Hariprasad, Vivek Menon, Baskar Rajamani, Mark Sands, Subbaraju Sagiraju, Kannan Sridharan, and Scott Wager.**

Additionally, the finance team—**Randy Bitner, Trina Guy, Cindy Myers, Cindy Peters, Jamin Schroeder, Erik Simmer, Paula Webb, and Julie Zolnai**

Spring all-staff planning

With warmer weather and blooming flowers comes a much anticipated event—the spring ORS all-staff meeting. It may seem like a long time from now (and that warmer weather will never come), but Tuesday, April 29th is really just around the corner, especially when considering what goes into planning an all-staff meeting.

To keep them vital and interesting, a new planning team—comprised of representatives from each process—is convened for each meeting. Team members seek input from their coworkers before identifying the objectives for the all-staff meeting. They then brainstorm ideas and themes that will help meet the objectives with educational, inclusive, and fun activities.

These meetings are an important part of our culture and a critical means of making sure we stay connected as a team. Every employee survey shows that staff consider it a valuable and worthwhile exercise.

It's an important team and one that needs you. **Please consider volunteering.**



State employees receive statements and newsletter

The 2007 *Member Statements* will go out the week of February 4 and will include the new *PROactive* newsletter. *Member Statements* are two-page, double-sided documents that include a brief description of the retirement plan, and details about active member service credit, contributions, and wages.



In addition, the *PROactive* newsletter included with the statements features a message from **Phil Stoddard** about ORS, information about when to contact ORS, tips for successful retirement planning, retirement publications, and details on military service. [Check out a copy of PROactive on the website.](#)

Revised Retirement Readiness for state employees is available on the website

Retirement Readiness, A Two-Year Countdown for state employees was revised in January and is now posted on the web. Updates include Public Act 95 information (affecting pensions for those returning to work for the state after retirement), new Detroit office information, and other changes for clarity and consistency with the public school *Retirement Readiness* book. New copies should be at ORS next week, but please continue to use up the April 2007 version until the supply is depleted.



Comings & Goings

Colleen Beaumont began working for CitiStreet on January 2. She will cover accounts in Macomb County, Michigan; Clayton County, Georgia; and Islip, New York and serve as a back-up to the Michigan plan. Colleen earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Michigan State University and a Master's degree with a concentration in finance from the University of Detroit Mercy. Prior to joining CitiStreet, she was a Portfolio

Manager with Comerica Bank's Wealth and Institutional Management division and has more than 8 years of experience in the financial services industry. She lives in Ferndale, Michigan with her husband and one very spoiled little dog.



Beaumont

On Tuesday, January 22 CSC welcomed **Shaun Baker** and **Andy Fitzpatrick** to Application Processing, **Nakia Payton** to the walk-in office, and **Travis Ricks** to Services.



Shaun Baker



Andy Fitzpatrick



Nakia Payton



Travis Ricks

Shaun Baker is working on the state employees deferred project and will later start learning the pre-application process. Shaun is currently attending Davenport College with an interest in Business Management. He enjoys sports and spending time with his family and friends.

Andy Fitzpatrick is working on the state employees deferred project and will later start learning the pre-application process. Andy enjoys playing the guitar, and spending time with his dogs Snoop and Shaw. He attended Lansing Community College for a year and hopes to have a successful career in music.

Nakia Payton lives in Lansing and has two daughters: Lakiria who is six and Tatiyana who is four. She enjoys shopping, traveling, and reading. She says that she's a little shy, but once you get to know her, she's the funniest person in America.

Travis Ricks joined CSC and is a graduate from Michigan State University with a degree in music performance. He recently completed a newspaper internship in Fort Lauderdale, FL where he was a page designer. Outside of work he enjoys playing his clarinet, hanging out with friends, and meeting new people.

CE said goodbye to **Zach Wight** on January 29. Zach has left his student position at ORS to pursue an internship with Maner, Costerisan and Ellis, a role that aligns closely with his course of study at Michigan State University.

In addition, CE prepares themselves for the departure of yet another great employee, **Lyndsay Keller**. Lyndsay has accepted a permanent position with the Department of Treasury where her experience with forms will be put to good use. Her last day is February 8.

Detroit office – update on progress

The Detroit office has reopened, but now it's different. Without receptionist Tawny Anderson who played a large part in day-to-day operations, **Joy Bartell** and **Chuck Simpson** are adjusting to major changes.

Previously, Tawny set up appointments, dealt with walk-ins, and answered nearly 30 phone calls per day. To compensate for the absence of a receptionist, the Detroit office now offers walk-in services Monday through Thursday and specialty appointments (EDROs or disability retirement) on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

The biggest change is the introduction of *Ready, Set, Retire* group counseling sessions. These sessions will replace the one-on-one appointments, which were

previously the primary service rendered in Detroit. These are being conducted late Monday and Wednesday afternoons and Friday mornings.

“Interest in the group sessions is increasing,” Chuck said.

When asked about returning to Detroit, Joy beams happily, while Chuck just looks sleepy.

A day in the life of Lila Christiansen

As a tester for the T&T team, Lila Christiansen ensures that Problem Incident Reports (PIRs) are working and ready for live production. PIRs are created and fixed when there are new functions, problems Lila detects, or issues that the business brought to her attention.



Lila Christiansen

Some PIRs are easy fixes to an individual account, and there are more difficult ones such as Member Statements requiring test-plans and coordination with multiple testers. Once the PIR is “fixed” by the Functional Analyst (FA), Lila will either run the tests herself, or build a test-plan to ensure all aspects of the fix are fully tested.

On a daily basis, she juggles multiple test plans, each in a different phase of the project.

7:30	Start the day with a shot of Diet Coke
8:00	First order of business determines how my day will go. If I’m waiting for deployments to test environments, I check to see if they occurred over night. If yes, then I test the issue I am currently working on. If no, I have to track down my FA to determine when they’ll be deployed. If I’m working on issues that have already deployed, I review those test-plans to see where we may still need testing.
8:15	My main focuses right now are Forms, Letters and Barcodes (FLB), focusing mostly on batch related letters; and the 834, which is a very detailed testing of electronically sending information to insurance vendors. Currently, I make daily checks on the FLB and 834 reports to determine where I need to start testing.
9:00	I have one business-critical PIR we are attempting to get into production this week. This is a PIR affecting the annual disability certifications. I worked with the business to determine our best fix solution, and now we are waiting for the PIR. If the fix is in today, I’ll test it to so we can get it deployed for tomorrow. This will allow the necessary batch to run in production over the weekend. I’m working with Angela Schrauben on a new batch for FLB to determine how we need to test. Since we are not sure, I need to see the new use-cases. In addition, I will track down the FA on the existing batch that produces pay-us coupons to determine if letters were generated for the COBRA folks too. I will communicate with Angela so she knows that she can have letters printed.
11:00	I have a phone conference with Express Scripts for the 834 testing. I have weekly meetings with at least one insurance vendor on the 834 progress. In addition, I’m working very closely with BCBSM to ensure any changes we make on 834 will not negatively impact their process. This aspect of 834 is challenging since vendors all process in unique ways. Our goal is to

ensure we have a HIPPA compliant file, and we can't always accommodate their system issues or constraints.	
Lunch	
1:00	<p>I review completed transactions and a file that was generated yesterday for the next 834 tasks. This file was created specifically for Express Scripts. To ensure everything is what I expect, I document the results before sending them to Express Scripts.</p> <p>For yesterday's task, I created a test-plan and completed the necessary transactions. The biggest challenge now is that I don't have a dedicated environment, and I may have to put in transactions to run a report. When I come in tomorrow, everything I've done will be refreshed. It's all a timing issue down on this end, and we have to be very aware of what is going on in the environments to avoid re-work. Yesterday I completed the transactions on a test grid and requested a batch to run so I would have today to do the review.</p>
2:00	<p>I test a date change request (DCR) for a business-critical PIR. After the testing, I will make sure the FA knows if it's a go or no-go. If it's a go, I'll let the business know that the fix will be deployed this weekend, and I make sure the necessary batch is requested. If it's a no-go, I need to give the business our next plan on fixing this particular issue. Today's was an easy fix and it's a go.</p>
3:00	<p>Last week some of the FLB letters failed testing, and now the fixes have been deployed to the test environment. This means that everything that failed on my testing last week must now be re-tested. I will begin to re-test the FLBs and hopefully, I'll be able to complete them today. If not, I'll be back at it first thing tomorrow morning.</p>
4:30	<p>I will review what must be done before I leave. Business critical PIRs must be tested today or they will not hit production on time. I evaluate what I need to concentrate on first thing in morning, and I go home.</p>

Not just all work...

While at work, ORS leaders appear to be very busy people, but, believe it or not, they have lives outside of the office! Our leaders have vacationed all over the world and participate in many interesting hobbies. Scroll down to see which ORS leader suits up as a medieval warrior; plays compositions by Beethoven; or describes himself as the "prince of foosball."



Fred Covert
Customer Education Business Process Owner

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Torch Lake, Michigan is the most beautiful place in all the world! (In July and August...)

Favorite Hobbies:

Watching high school and MSU sports. Playing golf and tennis. Fishing. Just hanging out with my family.

Relaxes by:

Watching television, reading, and getting out of town as much as possible.

Unique Talents:

I am the king of asteroids (an original video game), the prince of foosball, and can skip rocks with the best of them.



Steve Crippen
Tools and Technology Team

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Isle Royale or Mackinac Island.

Favorite Hobbies:

Bicycling, running, hobby farming.

Relaxes by:

Running, bicycling with my kids, listening to books on tape in the car, and walking.

Unique Talents:

Probably not, I'm a fairly average guy.



John Donovan
Employer Reporting and Process Support Business Process Owner

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Western Mexico vacation was the best vacation so far.

Favorite Hobbies:

Golf (handicap of 4 for 18 holes)
Fantasy Football
Reading mystery/adventure novels

Relaxes by:

Watching American Idol



Anthony Estell
Executive Process Council

Favorite Vacation Spot:

My family regularly vacations in the Traverse City area.

Favorite Hobbies:

Sports, especially basketball; running; weightlifting; fishing; reading.

Relaxes by:

Spending time with my family, and enjoy my hobbies whenever I can.

Unique Talents:

I wish that I did. I am largely devoid of any artistic or musical ability.



Deb Grescoble
Process Support Business Process Leader

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Italy was awesome—but only a one-time visit.

Every 4th of July we stay with my dad in Whitehall, MI—a great vacation spot. (Of course I visit my dad more often, but this week is a tradition)

Favorite Hobbies:

Theater (Broadway plays), Traveling and Reading—All of which I don't do enough of.

Also watch MSU basketball and football games and attend a game or two. GO GREEN!!

Relaxes by:

Spending time with family and friends. This isn't always relaxing, but always reminds me of what's important in life.

Going to a hotel with a Jacuzzi—since I don't have one at home. (Brian McLane strongly recommends that everyone get one).

Unique Talents:

I can reach high places, and thus assist people in grocery stores when they want something on the top shelf.



Laurie Hill
Executive Process Council

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Anywhere warm. Having a mall close by would be a bonus!

Favorite Hobbies:

I enjoy shopping, reading, small scale scrapbooking and running although I wouldn't consider running a 'favorite' but a necessary hobby.

Relaxes by:

Family time is very important to me. Either taking a walk with my husband or my mom, shopping with my girls (do you see a theme here?) or watching my son play sports.

Unique Talents:

This is tough. I really can't think of any 'unique' talent. I asked my family for ideas but they were not much help. After having fun at my expense and wiping the tears from their eyes from laughing, I concluded that I am pretty much talentless!



Tim McCormick
Executive Process Council

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Hatteras Island, Outer Banks, N. Carolina—where there's miles and miles of uninhabited beach and no cell-phone service.

Relaxes by:

Play my bodhran, watch "Heroes" with my kids.



Brian McLane
Benefit Plan Design Business Process Owner

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Paris, France

Favorite Hobbies:

Watching soccer, yoga, and medieval reenacting. (the Society for Creative Anachronism)

Relaxes by:

Spending time with my kids, gardening and working on our 1890's Victorian house. Sometimes I like to just sit in front of the TV and flip stations.

Unique Talents:

At one time I was a pretty good singer.





Laurie Mitchell
Tools and Technology Team

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Ocean City, New Jersey. My extended family meets there for a week every summer and just hangs at the beach together. There are 19 of us ranging from age 15 to 73 and it's special that we can all be together.

Favorite Hobbies:

I have a horse and spending time with her is really peaceful.

Relaxes by:

I read—a lot.

Unique Talents:

Other than being extraordinarily good at keeping track of my busy family's schedule, I'm extremely ordinary!



Connie Morse
Customer Education Business Process Leader

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Upper Manistee River

Favorite Hobbies:

Geocaching, fly fishing, and canoeing during the summer. Arts (glass and fiber and mixed media) during the winter.

Relaxes by:

Wielding a red pen while editing the classics, NY Times crosswords, renting movies, and wine tasting.

Unique Talents:

Can spot an inappropriate apostrophe from the next room.

Cooking:

- Burnt brownies in a 250 degree oven
- Melted a gas grill
- Split a Formica countertop in half while trying to fry an egg.



Ann Schneider
Employer Reporting Business Process Leader

Favorite Vacation Spot:
Mexico, Switzerland, Munich

Favorite Hobbies:
Running, spending time with my children, reading, and attending sporting events.

Relaxes by:
Running, spending time with my children, watching movies, and going out with friends.

Unique Talents:
Not unique, but baking and cooking.



Jon Seeger
Customer Service Center Business Process Owner

Favorite Vacation Spot:
Mackinac Island

Favorite Hobbies:
Volleyball, golf, skiing

Relaxes by:
Reading, camping, spending time with the kids.

Unique Talents:
I occasionally play the trombone.



Phil Stoddard
Executive Process Council

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Washington DC—I like the city and its historical backdrop.

Favorite Hobbies:

I like to putter, industry reading, and yard work.

Relaxes by:

Reading and running (if you can call it that...)

Unique Talents:

I have concluded that the talents I may have are not all that unique.



Kathy Tober
Executive Process Council

Favorite Vacation Spot:

I guess there are two:

First, we have always loved going as a family to Walt Disney World— we splurged one year and stayed at the Polynesian—it was great.

Second, we bought a travel trailer last year and have loved every minute of camping at the state parks—Hoffmaster is our favorite so far.

Favorite Hobbies:

Reading is a big favorite—mysteries and science fiction. Same goes for movies.

My other favorite pass time is wildlife—we have a ton of creatures in our back yard where we live—they are a lot of fun to feed and watch. Take a look at my pictures below.

Relaxes by:

Two things come to mind:

First, I started practicing Yoga a little over a year ago and I was nervous about trying it out but from the moment I started, I really enjoy it.

Second, going hiking at the state parks has become another favorite.

Unique Talents:

I can play the piano—compositions by Beethoven or by Rachmaninoff are my favorites.





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 Management and Budget, State of Michigan

Director:
 Phil Stoddard
 Edited by Customer Education

Thanks for reading!!



Kerrie Vanden Bosch
 Benefit Plan Design Business Process Leader

Favorite Vacation Spot:

Cinque Terra, Italy (but that's probably a once-in-a-lifetime kind of place to visit). In terms of places I might actually make it back to – house boating on Lake Cumberland, Kentucky.

Favorite Hobbies:

Watching movies, scrapbooking, shopping.

Relaxes by:

Spending time with my family.

Unique Talents:

When I blink, my nose twitches. Does that count?

Super Bowl facts

This Sunday, the New England Patriots will battle the New York Giants in Super Bowl XLII. While many of us will travel to, or host a Super Bowl party, did you know that the Super Bowl is the top at-home party event of the year? Here are some other interesting Super Bowl facts:

- More people watched Super Bowl XL (141.4



million viewers) than voted in the 2004 Presidential election.

- There are 7.5 million parties on Super Bowl Sunday.
- 1.5 million TV sets will be sold the week leading up to the Super Bowl, and it's no surprise sales of big screen TVs generally show a fivefold increase during that time.
- Super Bowl Sunday is the second-largest day of food consumption behind Thanksgiving, so it is not a surprise at all that antacid sales increase 20 percent the day after the Super Bowl.
- On Super Bowl Sunday, Americans consume 8 million pounds of guacamole. Rumor has it nearly two thirds of all the avocados sold in the United States are purchased during the three weeks leading up to the Super Bowl.
- Super Bowl weekend is the slowest weekend for weddings.
- There are more pizza deliveries made during Super Bowl Sunday than on any other day of the year.
- 75 percent of the time, the winning conference of the Super Bowl predicts the direction of the stock market the following day. If the NFC (New York Giants) wins, the market tends to rise and if the AFC (New England Patriots) wins, the market tends to fall.

Source: <http://superbowl.about.com/>

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.