ORS LookOut

ORS Calendar

February

Valentine's Day ----- 14th
Public School Employees Board Meeting ------ 17th
President's Day Holiday ------------- 21st
State Employees Board Meeting -------------- 24th
Pension Paydate ---- 25th

March

St. Patrick's Day ---- 17th
Public School Employees Board Meeting ------ 23rd
Pension Paydate ---- 24th
ORS All-Staff Meeting -- ---------------------- 30th

DMB Strategic Plan 2000 update

DMB Director **Janet Phipps** held a series of meetings last week and earlier this week to inform DMB employees of the current status of the Department's Strategic Plan 2000. She explained that from customer focus groups, discussions with employees and other input, the DMB Leadership Team identified five drivers or critical business issues of the Department: Invest in the Workplace, Measure Organizational Performance,

DMB Director Janet Phipps displays the Strategic Plan 2000.

Maximize Customer Focus, Deliver Excellent Service, and Optimize Technology. From these, Strategies or subsets of the drivers were outlined to detail the key methods of addressing the critical business issues. Then Action Items or specific steps required to implement each strategy were identified.

All of the Action Items cannot be examined and acted on at once, so the Leadership Team selected those most critical to the

ORS phone rings off the hook in January!

The month of January 2000 was a record-setting one for ORS. The first month of the 21st Century saw a new record number of calls for any month—25,255 calls. The previous highest total was 25,086 in March, 1999. Of the 25,255 calls to ORS in the month of January, 7,153 were taken by Operations.

While the Customer Information Center (CIC) didn't break the previous daily record of 1,266 calls in 20 working days, CIC did have six days of 1,000+ calls, and five days of 900+ calls. A record was set for three consecutive days—January 25, 26 and 27—of more than 1,000 calls. It was also unusual that a Monday was not included in this string. During the three-day "run", Operations took 1,918 calls. CIC closed out the first month of the new year with 1,162 calls on Monday, January 31.

The large volume of calls in January was due to many customers' questions related to income tax matters, in addition to the typical questions about when pension payments would be mailed, death notifications, and address changes.

DMB Strategic Plan

Continued from Page 1

Department's success as priorities for Fiscal Year 2000. Some Action Items will require three to six months to explore and bring into focus; others will require as much as 12 to 15 months. The Items include: Develop Structured Communication Plan, Create Workforce Development Strategy, Reward and Retain Employees, Adopt and Support Competency-Based Training, Develop and Implement Competency-Based Training, Identify Key Indicators of Organizational Health, Identify Significant/Critical Services, Survey Model, Establish Employee Job Expectations, Establish Employee Evaluation Process, Identify Customers, Determine Needs, Collect Data, Assess Service Level Gaps, and Identify Business Requirements.

Director Phipps said, "Group leaders are accountable and responsible for their Action Items." She noted that Group members represent a cross-section of DMB. As the groups begin to work and issue reports, the information will be placed on the Department's web site (http://intranet.dmb.state.mi.us/dmb/director/vision/), and will also be reported in the DMB newsletter. Additional meetings may also be held to detail progress.

She emphasized that she wants feedback if people think they need more information. **Kathe Rushford Carter**, Senior Executive Assistant, reiterated, "If you have any ideas that you think would be helpful, please share them with us."

In a related vein, Janet Phipps noted that work on the Balanced Scorecard, a navigational tool to assess how well DMB is doing, is progressing. It deals not only with Financial measurements, she noted, but also measurements related to Process, Learning & Growth, and Customers. She expects that the first Scorecard will be out sometime this coming summer.

In closing, she noted that "We are asking every employee in the Department to change. That is harder for some than others. I think it's best that we create an environment where people can sit down and talk. We need to support one another." She noted that, "Today the public sector is a very difficult environment, nationally, not just in Michigan. Customer expectations and demand for service are higher than ever. The demand is growing but the electorate's desire to give resources to the public sector is very difficult to realize."

Six from ORS play role in DMB Strategic Plan

Six from ORS will play an integral role in the Strategic Plan Execution Groups. **Linda Mahlow** is on the Action Item Group to Develop Structured Communication Plan. **Grace Bonofiglio** and **Deb Gearhart** are part of the Groups to Adopt and Support Competency-Based Training and Develop and Implement Competency-Based Training. **Laurie Hill** is a member of the Group to Identify Key Indicators of Organizational Health. And **Sam Williams** is on the Group to Identify Significant/Critical Services, Identify Customers, Collect Data, Determine Needs, and Assess Service Level Gaps. In addition, **Chris DeRose** is the Group Leader of the Create Workforce Development Strategy Group.

Wave of the future—online form debuts

ORS staff now has a choice of using a paper version of the Death Notification form (R395X) or an on-line version on their computers. The on-line version is a Word template with specially designated fields in which you can enter data without changing the background form design. It's real easy to tab from field to field to enter the information about a member or beneficiary's death. When you print the form, it prints the background form document filled in with the information you entered on the screen.

Staff working with the Death Notification form expressed an interest in having the form available as an electronic form. **Janet Graham**, Finance & Administration, who is assisting with the creation and revision of some ORS forms, started recreating the form as a Word document. Then she did some investigating to see if an electronic form was possible. With some assistance from **Rosemary Baker**, Customer Service, on the form design, and input on content from **Dan Harry**, **Lila Christiansen**, **Karen Dymond**, **Anthony Estell**, **Kristine Morris** and **Jamin Schroeder**, Jan designed the on-line form.
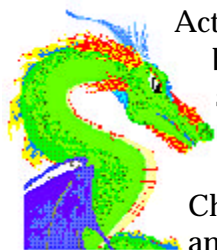
If you'd like to see what it's like, you can access it through Word. Select FILE, NEW, and choose the template titled Death Notification. (Your workgroup templates need to be pointed to one of the two ORS shared drives — the MPSERSFiles@MPSERS@DMBRetirement or the FSRetirementShared@DMBRetirement2).

A New Year with no Y2K worries!

EMPAC, the Employee Activity Committee, brought a little surprise fun to ORS last Friday by celebrating the Chinese New Year and the arrival of the Year of the Dragon, a year of peace and prosperity. Everyone received a placemat describing the Chinese Zodiac, a fortune cookie, candy and a hongbao. What's a hongbao? It's a symbol of many blessings to come and good fortune in the form of a red envelope. Did you open yours? Happy New Year!

Comings & Goings in ORS

Sara Mills retired on February 4 after 25 years of service to the State of Michigan. Sara worked for the Secretary of State for three years before leaving to start a family. She returned to State service in 1978 with ORS.

Customers get 1099-R's

Approximately 175,000 ORS customers received 1099-R's for tax year 1999. The 1099-R is the form showing pension payments and refunds needed for filing income tax statements. The 1099-R Project was completed on schedule, with the final mailing taking place on January 28.

Steve Crippen, Finance lead, **Sheila Patterson**, Information Technology/Reengineering (ITR) lead, and **Tom Shively**, Information Technology Service Division (ITSD) lead, would like to thank all who helped complete the project. They are: **Grace Bonofiglio**, **Deb MacGregor**, and **Lisa Reed** from Operations; **Colleen Daley**, **Denice Hansen**, and **Lori Powell** from ITR; and **Tanuj Raizada** from ITSD.

Thought for the Day

An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success.

—Stephen R. Covey
Principle-centered Leadership

Did you know? Here's the scoop on PPRISM!

Ever had an e-mail pop up that says, "If you DO NOT use PPRISM please disregard this memo" and wonder what PPRISM is? Well, help is on the way, as they say.

PPRISM stands for Personnel Payroll Information System of Michigan. This computer application allows users to view information on active State employees. The information is maintained by DMB's Office of Financial Management.

PPRISM is the State's current personnel payroll system and runs on the Michigan Information Processing Center (MIPC) Unisys A18 mainframe computer. It has statewide on-line access and is used by Human Resource (HR) offices to enter and update different kinds of transactions, such as: actions which would include hires, promotions, transfers, agency changes, position information, etc. It also contains information for employees, such as: addresses, dependents, tax and deduction information. On a biweekly basis PPRISM receives timesheet information for all employees from DCDS (the Data Collection and Distribution System) and does the necessary payroll calculations to produce warrants, EFTs, and Third Party information for payroll processing.

ORS' most frequently used aspect of PPRISM is the Civil Service History or 043 as some folks call it, which shows an employee's dates of service for all positions. ORS employees use the information to figure a person's years of retirement service. Information regarding PPRISM can be found on the web at http://mainweb/.

Work is under way to replace PPRISM with a new system called HRMN, which means Human Resources Management Network. HRMN is scheduled to begin operations in September of this year. More information regarding HRMN can be found on the web at http://info.state.mi.us/hrmn/.

Incidentally, if you use PPRISM, did you know that you can change your own password? Before a password expires (30 calendar days, including weekends and holidays) all you need to do is, from the HOME position, type PSWN. The system will automatically assign a new password. It's suggested that you mark your calendar for approximately 25 days after a new password is assigned, then change your password, rather than waiting until the last day.

Public School Guidelines get an update!

The latest version of the Public School Employees' *Guidelines* was published in January. Changes from the June 1999 version are minor, so copies of that version should be used up first.

Changes include removing footnotes regarding the 75% option, which began January 1, 2000, and changing the phone numbers for the Holland office. In addition, the 2000 *Guidelines* clarifies retiree insurance coverage for deferred members and indicates that deferred members also fall under EDRO provisions.

Rosemary Baker of Customer Service is the lead for the publication of the *Guidelines*.

Updated Policies and Procedures

Add these new and revised Policies and Procedures to your list.

OPER357 SERS Disability Retiree Earnings Limit Letter

OPER358 Calculation of Defined Benefit (DB) Supplemental Benefit and COLA for Defined Contribution (DC) Plan Participants

Lots of info is right on your computer!

No need to wonder where to get the information you need to do a certain task. It's probably already available, and you'd be surprised at how much information there is. And it's available right on your computer! Procedures and policies can be accessed in the FSRetirementShared@ DMBRetirement2 in the pol_proc directory. Procedure ORS20 tells you how to access policies and procedures.

Some common procedures are:

ORS3 Writing and Submitting a Policy or Procedure
ORS10 Processing State Car Requests
ORS18 Electronic Equipment Cart
ORS19 Equipment and Conference Room Reservation
ORS20 Accessing On-Line Policies and Procedures
ORS49 Civil Service Training Registration
ORS55 Non-Civil Service Training Registration
ORS60 Non-Civil Service Training over $500 or out-of-state
ORS61 Using the Electronic Copyboard (White Board)
ORS63 Restoring the Phone List Icon using Office 97
ORS67 Registering for Classes at LCI

Policies:

ORS15 Correspondence Format
ORS16 Appearance Guidelines
ORS70 Bring Your Child to Work Day

Alternative Work Schedule Policy announced for DMB

The Department of Management and Budget (DMB) has announced an Alternative Work Schedule Policy for each office to consider implementing in their work areas. The ORS Leadership Team supports this effort.

"In anticipation of this policy announcement," stated ORS Director **Chris DeRose**, "we solicited nominations from each division for employee representation on a team that would develop this program for ORS. There are some challenges this team faces to roll out this policy in the best interest of our customers and staff. I am confident we will be successful."

The team that will be working on this effort consists of **Laurie Abraham**, **Carol Keyes Baubie**, **Sue DeBor**, **Cathleen Curran**, **John Donovan**, **Deb Gearhart**, **Janet Graham**, **Terry Jacobson**, **Pam Kenney**, **Deb Mosher**, **George Orban**, **Mary Sheltraw**, **Audrey Smith**, **Carol Wheaton**, and **Ken Wright**.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this policy, please feel free to share them with any member of the team. They will be communicating their progress as they go along.

IRS Boosts 401(k)/457 Limits

The Internal Revenue Service has increased the 401(k) contribution limits for 2000. Employee and employer contributions to the 401(k) may total up to 25% of your gross salary, and your own contribution to the 401(k) plan is limited to $10,500. 457 regulations let you defer up to 25% of your gross income or $8,000, whichever is less. If you participate in both plans, your combined contributions cannot exceed $8,000.

Computer tip—a computer is not a typewriter!

Maybe some of you remember a machine called a typewriter that was used to put words on paper before computers came along. In those days, there was a typing rule that said you put two spaces after the end of a sentence. If you forgot to put two spaces after a sentence, your typing teacher would take points off your grade.

That was then; this is now. Each character on that typewriter occupied the same amount of space on a line. But the characters on your computer occupy different amounts of space, proportion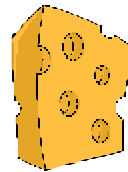al to the width of each character. For example, an "i" occupies less space than a "w." The period occupies very little space, so it tucks in close to the last letter of your sentence. Because of this, one space after the period is plenty.

Microsoft Word and other word processing programs expect you to type just one space between sentences. When you type two spaces, the program treats the second space as a new word and sometimes you'll end up with a space at the beginning of a line. So break your old typing habits and type just one space after a period, not two. Your thumb will enjoy the rest!

Time & Attendance easier to use

Every new year, staff look for a form called the Time and Attendance Record. Good news! Staff have created an official form. It's located in the template directory under LeaveSheet.xls. This can be accessed by opening Excel and choosing File/New in Excel. A few hard copies are available in the forms library.

Denise Omo of Finance & Administration created the new form. **Rosemary Baker** of Customer Service and **Janet Graham** of Finance & Administration made some refinements. A big "Thanks" to all three for creating this form.

Cheese Corner Answers

We know you got 'em. But just in case you were having a bad day, here are the answers to the brainteasers from last issue's *Cheese Corner*.

YY guy guy = Wise guys
the past you = Put the past behind you
Chawhowhorge = Who's in charge
Math The = The aftermath

This Scramble is the reel thing!

There's nothing fishy about this Scramble. We're not feeding you a line; we hope you will fall for it hook, line and sinker! If you take this thought to heart, not only you and the organization, but everyone we serve will be better off. So get out your favorite pencil and give it a shot.

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If you get stumped, the answer will appear in the next issue of the *LookOut*.

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si clubip slateroni.