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Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

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CS and AST seeking new efficiencies in application processing

Staff can't finish processing a retirement application until the applicant submits all required documentation and proofs. But, figuring out which proofs are missing can take time – time that could otherwise be used for processing or answering calls in the queue.



As part of a future application processing project, CS and AST are creating a checklist document in Clarity which will simplify tracking which documents have been received and which are missing. CS phone representatives and processors view with longer-term plans to connect it to the IVR (telephone voice response system) and miAccount so applicants can see what's been accepted and what's still pending.

During application set-up, the processor will use the checklist to indicate which proofs and other documents are required for the applicant, based on marital status, insurance coverage, and chosen pension option. The processor will review the images received from the applicant and check the appropriate boxes. This new checklist will provide a single place to determine how close the application is to being finalized. When the checklist is fully implemented, CS will see improved efficiencies in many different areas.

CS and AST are on target with this enhancement in time for July application closeouts. Stay tuned for update!

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Calendar

March

First day of Passover	26
Easter	31

On the Horizon

- Tax Day - April 15
- State employees board meeting - April 18

AST honored for public school reform IT work

The Michigan Information Systems Association (MISA) awarded AST with the MISA IT Excellence Award on March 13 for their work on the public school reform election project. They received this award for all the pre-work to get ORS systems ready for the reform election. The project included:



- State police board meeting - April 25

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

- Making elections available in miAccount
- Employer reporting updates
- Performance testing and reinforcing to ensure that miAccount would be able to handle heavy system loads during the election window.

MISA is a group of State of Michigan employees that is dedicated to finding innovative ways to apply technology. Two awards are given annually: an individual and a project award. According to the MISA nomination criteria, the winning project would have "provided a substantial enhancement or improvement to Information Technology services within the related state agency or the State of Michigan as a whole." The award was given to the project for demonstrating outstanding service or a continuing excellence in the performance of their official duties, which results in a significant benefit to Information Technology.

Please make sure to congratulate the team on their award!

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Your voice was heard! Recap of the employee Engagement Survey

Our EPC created the employee Engagement Survey to develop concrete methods for improving employee satisfaction and overall morale. They want ORS to be a great place to do great work.



Over 85 percent of staff responded to the survey. You pointed out ways that ORS can improve, such as making sure you have the training you need, making sure that everyone feels their opinions and ideas are respected, and having the opportunity to do interesting work regularly.

Here are high points from the survey.

Recognition: We asked if you had received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last month.

- 68.8 percent agree or completely agree.
- 12.3 percent somewhat agree.

Your work makes a difference: We asked if the work you do makes a difference to our customers.

- 87.0 percent agree or completely agree.
- 1.4 percent disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 0.7 percent completely disagree.

Commitment to quality work: The vast majority of you said your teams are committed to delivering quality work.

- 91.2 percent agree or completely agree.
- No one chose disagree or completely disagree.

Future Engagement Surveys are scheduled for the first week of May and the third week of September.

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- 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



FLB Refresher training

CS staff that process customer correspondence attended Forms, Letters, and Barcodes (FLB) refresher training the weeks of March 12 and 18 hosted by **Rosemary Baker** and **Carolyn Parkinson**. The hour-long trainings covered the basics of FLB, why ORS uses it, and how to generate a letter in Clarety. The refresher training enables CS and CE staff to come together and examine opportunities to use the tool to maximize efficiency. With the Office Automation function, it's now possible for CE to update some forms and letters without having to open a PIR. If you are generating letters in Clarety and something isn't working for you, let your supervisor know.

For other training offered by CE, visit the CE page in the [ORS KL](#) and click on the QCI tab.

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SharePoint Palooza comes to ORS

Evelyn Stora, from DTMB eMichigan, conducted several days of SharePoint 2010 Administration training for ORS staff members the weeks of March 11 and March 18.



The purpose of the training was to help staff get a solid foundation of how SharePoint 2010 works. Training topics included:

- an overview of the basic structure of SharePoint 2010
- how to create a team room
- how to add web parts to a room and change the look and feel
- how to add content to the room such as document libraries, documents, lists, and calendars
- how to add, change, or delete columns in libraries and lists
- how versioning works

A smaller training on how to manage permissions was offered as well.

Evelyn shared a comprehensive 164-page SharePoint manual as part of the training. For staff who attended the training, or any staff who are interested in learning more about SharePoint, a PDF copy of the manual is available on the [Inside DTMB SharePoint](#) site.

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Social Media initiative update

ORS is wrapping up the 10-week assessment phase of our social media initiative. We have been working with Accenture to analyze our ability to launch social media as part of our business. This phase of the project has provided us with a social media strategy to target the six business outcomes that we identified:

1. Improve pre-retirement knowledge
2. Increase online self-service
3. Improve post-retirement knowledge
4. Support existing processes
5. Reduce volume of existing processes
6. Provide internal business metrics





In addition to the strategy, ORS has also received an implementation and maintenance plan. This plan details the steps and efforts necessary to launch and maintain a social media presence, which will enable our external and internal customers an additional way to stay connected and interact with ORS and each other.

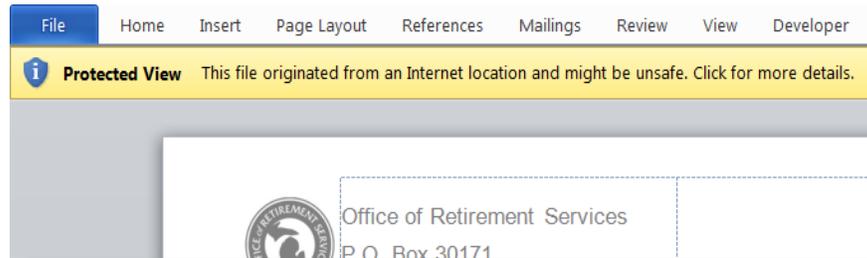
If you have any questions about the social media initiative, contact [Ian Broughton](#).

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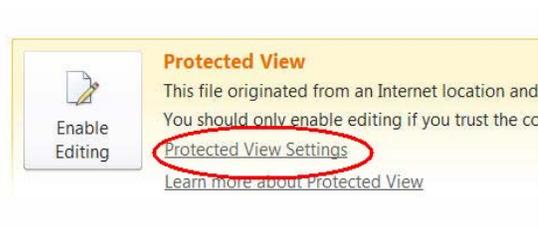


Do you write many letters? Do you always have to click to remove that pesky yellow **Protected View** bar to **Enable Editing**? Do you want to learn how to get rid of it, and never have it show up again? Read on.

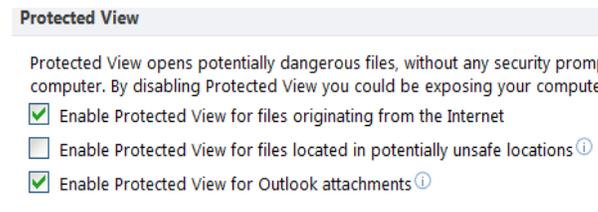
How to remove **enable editing** document link.



Click Protected View Settings



Click the middle check box (Enable Protected View for files...) to deselect it.



Click OK.

You will no longer have to hit **enable editing** each time you have to edit a document on the desktop.

Note: if it still shows up, repeat the process but uncheck **all three** check boxes.

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business briefs

March *Connections* live on website

The latest issue of ORS's retiree newsletter *Connections* is available to view on the public school, state employees, state police, and judges websites. The March issue of *Connections* provides retirees with a report on the financial health of their retirement system. It will also be sent to retirees with their March direct deposit statements.

Attorney General staff visit ORS

Bianca Torres and **Tim Simpson** from CS met with **Joyce McCauley** and **Daniel Sonneveldt** from the Attorney General's office on March 14. They shared with them how our call center works, metrics, logistics, and the programs used in our call center, including the Knowledge Library. "We also gave them a tour of CS so they could view the office set-ups for the different types of business we do in CS," explained Bianca.

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comings + goings

Coming

On March 18, AST welcomed **Abilasha Papala** as an IT Programmer/Analyst.

Abi moved to Okemos about ten years ago where she lives with her husband, 8-year old son, and 18-month old daughter. She has a degree in mechanical production engineering and most recently worked as a computer programmer for MSU Federal Credit Union.



Staff on the move

Angella Miller is temporarily stepping out of the BPL role in BPD to work on a special project developing a comprehensive program to ensure ORS plans, policies, and processes are compliant with regulations, audit standards, and contract management. This project will be completed by September 30, 2013.

Tim McCormick will be temporarily filling in as the BPL for BPD through September 30, 2013.

CE welcomes **Krystal Strachan** from CS to the team as a WOC analyst. Her first day with CE will be April 1, 2013.

Going

AST wished the best to project manager **Karl Kusky**. His last day was March 8.

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sounding out

from you for you

Sounding Out is a way for ORS staff to share ideas, viewpoints, gripes, praises, and concerns. Email your

opinion (300 words or less, if possible) to ORS-LookOut@michigan.gov.

Lisa Schmidt reflects on the time in her life where she made changes that led to positive results.



A few years ago, I read an article about a man who lost his job and was trying to sustain a family of four on his wife’s meager income. He decided to use his time of unemployment to enjoy his kids at minimal monetary cost so he had a great adventure in finding “free.” He’d take his son to Sam’s Club on a guest Saturday to eat food samples till they were stuffed, they attended community plays and enjoyed venues they never went to before. It turned out to be a rewarding and fun experience for this man and his family.

Around the time I read this article, I was going through an era in my life where I felt I needed to get out more and meet people. Being of a frugal nature, I decided to follow his example. I went on the Lansing State Journal (LSJ) event calendar, the Capital Area District Library (CADL) event calendar, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website, and the Delta Twp. Library calendar. I found a plethora of things to do at no or very low cost: yoga classes, library talks, adult game nights, nature walks, knitting groups, tai chi in the park, craft seminars, book groups, free exhibits at local museums, festivals, the list went on and on. I saw that many churches offered classes or gatherings. The DNR has many things going on including a Park and Read program. Borrow a book from a participating library in the summer; get a free pass to a state park of your choice.

I got my lazy self out and about and learned our community has a lot to offer. Through this experience, I met WWII vets who helped me understand what it was like to be in Pearl Harbor on that fateful day and found out how a German POW fell in love with our country then became a proud American citizen. I learned Charlie Sheen is a good (and very funny) answer for a lot of questions in a game where you try to fill in the blanks. I found out that yoga is really cool and Warren Harding wasn’t as boring as one would think. I had never been to a state park before, now I can say I’ve been to three.

I went away for my birthday that year. By typing in “birthday freebies” on a search engine, I had a fabulous time. Free breakfast at Denny’s, free meal at IHOP and a free hot fudge sundae cake at Big Boy for dinner. Then, being a thrift store devotee, I found out a Salvation Army store in Grand Rapids gives 25% off on your birthday! What a bonus!

I met new friends (the librarians now know my name!), gained new insight, received new volunteer opportunities, found a church I liked and got a great part-time job all because I decided to go do something different. In this time of people stretching their dollars as far as they can go, I encourage you to visit these websites or those of your local papers and libraries to see if you can have a lifetime of fun and educational activities at no cost. You never know what life has to offer you unless you try to find out!

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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.

**ORS Purpose:
We are an innovative
retirement
organization driven to
empower our
customers for a
successful today and
a secure tomorrow.**

The *LookOut* is
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Thanks for reading!!