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March

Public School Board Meeting	11
Daylight Saving Time begins	13
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On the Horizon

- All Staff Meeting - April 12

Member Statements now in miAccount

Member Statements are now available in miAccount for active and deferred public school, state, and state police members. Members can access their statements through the Member Statement option on miAccount's left navigation bar.

Unlike paper statements printed at the end of the fiscal year, miAccount statements provide information on an up-to-date basis. In addition, they provide significant savings in both print and mailing costs and in staff time previously dedicated to the process.

"The state of Michigan budget has been and will continue to be a topic of discussion," said ER BPO **John Donovan**. "Any time we have a chance to offer enhanced services at a reduced cost, we will do our best to implement those solutions."

Additionally, miAccount will only provide information that is relevant to the member's account. For example, the statements will only display TDP information if the member has a TDP agreement.

With this tool in place, paper statements will no longer be mailed to members (with the exception of judges). State and state police members have been notified of the change and are encouraged to view their statements regularly using miAccount. Public school employers are already aware, and public school members will receive notification on April 1.

Annual savings

\$132,000

We save big on print and mailing costs!

New password security rules take effect in March

Starting March 29, passwords to access state of Michigan computers must be more secure. As part of Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance, the federal regulation that protects credit card information, all state of Michigan agencies must follow new password regulations to reduce the risk of exposing confidential data to unauthorized users.

What you'll need to do.

Beginning March 29, or the next time you're prompted to change your SOM login password, your password must adhere to the following rules:

- State Police Board Meeting
- April 21

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, Tim, and Anthony</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
FLB	Forms, Letters, and Barcode
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
T&T	Tools and Technology
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

- It must be at least 8 characters long.
- It must have at least 3 of the following 4 items:
 - A capital letter.
 - A lower-case letter.
 - A number.
 - A character that is not a letter or a number (for example, !, @, #, \$, %).



Stay tuned for more information about the new security standards.

Process improvement training

Many staff members have started new positions at ORS and have begun learning different processes and procedures. Therefore, it's a good time to use our unique perspectives to evaluate how work is done and how things can be improved.

During the month of January, PS's **Andy Kolp** led 18 staff members from across the business in process improvement training. This training was designed to help staff improve the way things are done at ORS.

The training focused on how to identify opportunities for improving what we do, and about various tools to help with the process. Participants learned about system maps, process maps, and how to perform gap analysis through discussion and group exercises. As a supplement to the course, Andy also gave a quick Microsoft Visio lesson for documenting process maps in Visio.

Andy said, "It's important that we challenge ourselves to improve the products we provide our customers, as well as the processes we use to provide those products. At the ORS Business Meeting on February 24, we learned that different perspectives provide a great opportunity to solve problems and improve processes."

BPLs were encouraged to look for opportunities for recently trained staff to use their new skills and get involved in process improvement. Even if you didn't participate in process improvement training, please let your BPL know if you see an opportunity for improving the way we do things at ORS.

ING campaign gets members online

Today marks the end of ING's Personal Evaluation Statement campaign that began in December. This special series of mailings was sent to active state employees to promote the ING Personal Online Advisor service and get members managing their portfolios.

The customer response was great. ING conducted almost 600 one-on-one planning sessions, and 525 participants logged on to the Personal Online Advisor service for the first time. About 2,000 participants signed up for the trial offer of the Professional Account Manager program — that's a 64 percent response rate!

It can be difficult for members to realize that saving today really does lead to a secure retirement tomorrow. With the help of the online advisor tool, choosing investment strategies to help you meet your retirement goals is easier than ever.

Thanks to **Anthony Estell, Carl Pier, Kyle Seymour, Kerrie Vanden Bosch**, and ING's **Heidi Schiller** who helped craft the messages and design the campaign.

Are you sure you've made
good investment decisions?



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

PURE MICHIGAN™
Your trip begins at michigan.org

Great work, everyone.

business briefs

Office 2010, IE8 upgrades postponed

ORS will not upgrade to Microsoft Office 2010 or Internet Explorer 8 in March as originally planned. A new date is tentatively set for mid-April. Staff will be notified when the dates are finalized.



ORS websites rolled back to old system

On Monday, March 7, e-Michigan migrated all state of Michigan websites, including ORS's member sites, to new servers. That afternoon, it was clear the servers were experiencing performance issues and all websites reverted to the previous servers. CE will keep you posted as more information becomes available about [the WCM migration project](#).

All-Staff EPC questions due March 16

Got a Question? Get an Answer! Submit your EPC questions to your process representative by Wednesday, March 16, or put your questions in the cans located at all main printer and copier stations. These questions will be answered at the All-Staff Meeting on April 12.

All-Staff process representatives:		Pam Kenney-Garver	CE
Amita Das	AST	Juren Ekwejunor-Etchie	BPD
Tony Mills	CE	Nicole Podgorski	CS
Katelyn Henika	ER	Martha Mackie	PS

LookOut survey coming soon

In order to continue providing relevant information in the *LookOut*, we need your feedback. Next issue, we'll link to a *LookOut* survey that asks questions about reading frequency and timing, the relevance of content, your use of the archives, and if there are better ways to present the information. Your input is very important — please take a few minutes to complete the survey before April 1.

Turn your clocks forward Saturday night

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 a.m., Sunday. Don't forget to turn your clocks one hour ahead before bed Saturday night.



Explaining postretirement earnings limits

A Google search consisting of the words "pension" and "double-dipping" returns about 56,000 results. Most are links to articles published in magazines and newspapers across the U.S. in the past three years. Lawmakers in Michigan have listened to the public's opinion; last year, new subsections were added to the public school employees' retirement law that do the following things:

Clarify bona fide termination. A bona fide termination must be in place before a member's pension begins, as mandated by IRS rules for a qualified defined benefit pension plan.

Save money. Reduce the cost of public school pension and retiree health care benefits.

Eliminate double-dipping. Double-dipping occurs when a member retires and begins receiving a pension, and then returns to work in the same system and receives both full pension benefits and a full salary. This is contrary to the purpose of the retirement system and can result in major public relations problems with taxpayers.

Studies show that when employees know they can return to work after retirement (typically to the same job they had before retirement), and receive both full pension and full salary, the employees will retire earlier. While employers sometimes use this tactic to deflect their own pension costs, they're actually increasing the costs of both pensions and retiree health care for other employers.

Public retirement plans across the nation, including Michigan's public school retirement system, are changing the rules for retirees who return to work. Now, Michigan retirees can return to work in a public school and make up to a third of their preretirement earnings without penalty. This is not considered double-dipping — it is a responsible way for the retirement system and employers to address legitimate short-term gaps in school employee rosters.

The new rules end open abuse of the system and help to maintain financial integrity of the retirement fund for future retirees.



ORS Director makes national news again

ORS Director **Phil Stoddard** was quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Institutional Investor* recently. Check out Phil's words about Michigan's switch to a 401(k) plan in [States Eye Shift from Pensions to 401\(k\)-Style Plans](#), and about the public school employees' transition to a hybrid plan on page ten of [State Pension Plans Scramble to Avoid Bankruptcy](#).

Comings & Goings

On March 7, AST welcomed contractor **Bhaskar Yerra**. Bhaskar has lived in the U.S., for about five years; however, he grew up and went to school in India. Before joining ORS, he was a java developer for a company in Illinois. His hobbies include swimming and listening to music.

Temporary employee **Elisabeth Richardson** joined CS on March 7. She is a Lansing native who received her business management undergraduate and graduate degrees from Western Michigan University. Elisabeth previously served as business manager at The Summit, and has traveled to Ireland, Scandinavia, Canada, and more.

Temporary employee **Beatrice Barajas** arrived in CS on March 8. Bea is the proud mother of a six-month old boy and previously worked for the president of Westminster College. She studied office administration at Lansing Community College.



Bhaskar Yerra	Elisabeth Richardson	Beatrice Barajas
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Nathaniel Loveland's last day was February 28. He worked for CE and most recently in BPD.

AST bid farewell to **Radhakrishna Lingamgunta** (March 3), **Deepthi Chigurupati** (March 4), and **Praveen Kamsali** (March 10).

Staff updates

AST welcomed **Jaya Tamrakar** in November 2010. Jaya, a Nepal native, has been living in the Midwest since 2003. She attended Bemidji State University in Minnesota for her undergraduate degree and University of Virginia for her MBA. She enjoys new adventures like sky diving, ice skating, and hopes to bunji jump soon. If you catch her in the halls, be sure to say hello because she, "loves talking all the time."

Temporary employee **Becky Davis** is currently working on a BPD project. She was hired in May 2010, during last year's public schools incentive, to assist CS. Becky obtained her degree from Lansing Community College and enjoys collecting key chains, listening to music (mostly rock-and-roll and R&B), watching NBA games, and spending time with her "kids"—two cats and a dog.



We continue to ensure accuracy of our staff reporting and photo board. Notify **Erica Quealy** at 2-5703 or quealye@michigan.gov if you know of a photo that needs to be added or updated.

EMPAC fun rolls on

Thanks to all who have supported EMPAC! The Fat Tuesday/Mardi Gras Bake Sale raised \$109.67.

On March 17, EMPAC is sponsoring a garage sale to raise money for fun events at work, like the ORS Picnic in August. Bring in your old yet somewhat valuable stuff for auction now through March 17; deliver them to your EMPAC representative.

Also, be on the lookout for a just-for-fun-at-work event between March 15 and April 4. Watch for further details in your email.



We all love paczkis! But did you know that these delicious sweets were brought to the U.S. by Polish immigrants, and were typically eaten the Thursday before Lent -- not on Fat Tuesday?



Email dos and don'ts

Most of us use email to communicate with our coworkers regularly. Despite its many positives, email can be incredibly inefficient. Here are some tips to improve your email communications.

DO:

- **Make sure that email is the right tool for the job.** If you need an immediate response or think you'll have many follow-up questions, you're better off picking up the phone. If you need to convey a complex topic using visual aids, or if you need to deliver bad news (to/from a supervisor or boss, for example), visit the person directly.
- **Use clear language in the subject line.** The subject line should summarize the message's subject matter and, if necessary, help the recipient easily find your email in their inbox later.
- **Get to the point immediately.** Whenever possible, ask your question or provide your response within the first few sentences. Tackling major points at the beginning decreases the chance of losing your reader's attention, confusing them, or irritating them.
- **Specify if a response is needed, by whom, and when.** If you send an email to a list or group of people, you may not receive a response unless you specify who in that group is responsible for following up. Group emails make it easy for all recipients to assume someone else on the list will handle the request. Save yourself frustration by setting a deadline for a response.
- **Limit your emails to one subject per message.** This decreases the chance that some of your questions or responses may be overlooked, and allows recipients to use the subject field for managing emails they receive.

DO NOT:

- **Put something in an email message that you would not want everyone to read.** Email can be misdirected, even when you're careful. Remember that all emails are subject to FOIA, the Freedom of Information Act.
- **Send attachments unless it's necessary.** It's much quicker to read text in an email than to open an attachment.

- **Use fancy fonts, background images, or layouts.** These can distract from your message, obscure the text, and make the content hard to read.
- **Turn an email into a book.** Just like official letters, keep your emails concise. Avoid lengthy messages where the reader has to scroll.



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 (otherwise known as Lisa d'Amboise) tells us about her exciting experience seeking her family tree and finding her castle using Ancestry.com.

Finding my castle.

You've all seen the commercials. Ancestry.com entices us to shake our family tree and see who falls out. My mom's family name leads to a castle in Amboise, France, and I intended to lay claim to it. When I saw a 14-day free trial on the website, I bit.



Lisa Schmidt

Sure, there were obstacles. Using my high school French to decipher hand-written church records. Trying to figure out what name a French-Catholic child went by after being baptized Joseph or Marie with at least four more names (my 90-year old Aunt Jeannine was surprised to learn her given name was Ida Patricia Jeannine Marie and it took me a while to realize every man named Napoleon went by Paul ... go figure). Sorting out who was who since almost everyone named their kids after their siblings. The biggest doozy of them all was finding out that one branch of the original d'Amboise clan (way back many centuries ago) took on the name Bergeron. My family is part of that branch and people within the same family unit took either one last name or the other or went by both - Bergeron dit d'Amboise.

Sure, I got tired. I look at birth and death certificates all day at work, why was I doing it in my free time?? The good thing was Ancestry offers the option of making your tree public so you can "hook" into other public trees and usurp all their hard work. This leads me to my castle.

There is a die-hard genealogist in Minnesota who took French classes for two years just so he could read the documents. His d'Amboise tree went back to 8th century France and it included Bartholemy Bergeron dit d'Amboise who, in the 1600s, came to what was then known as Arcadia in Canada from Amboise, France. It is him from whom all French-Canadien (yes, with an 'e') d'Amboise descend. He is my 7th great-grandfather and my key to the castle! I can now prove that castle belongs to my family. I've told my cousins, "I worked to prove it, it's mine. But feel free to visit."



Chateau Amboise in Amboise, France

I didn't find any relatives to jump up and down like Louis the XIV's court jester or anything but I did find my poor great-grandpa Arthur, the one many people were led to believe "died young." Let's just say he didn't and I'm FOIAing some records to prove it. I did locate relatives in Sudbury and Massachusetts, my elderly aunties got to see their baptismal records that they never saw before, and my mom started

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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Director:
Phil Stoddard
Edited by Customer Education

Thanks for reading!!



remembering stories she never shared about her cousins. Once her floodgates opened, I just grabbed a pen and paper and took notes.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the free trial. They aren't lying when they say they have millions (and millions and millions ...) of records. You can print and save them, too. Just like they advertise: "You don't have to know what you're looking for. You just have to start looking." See what I found!?

If you'd like to see my castle, please stop by my cube.
Oh, and, when you do, you may call me Baroness.



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.