



April 1, 2013

Volume 17, Issue 6.5



Email the LookOut Staff



LookOut Archives

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Calendar**April**

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State employees board meeting	18
State police board meeting	25

On the Horizon

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- Mom's Birthday - May 25

Quick Links**Walk-in office goes automated**

As part of the DTMB goal of Customer Service Excellence, the downstairs walk-in office is getting an upgrade.

ORS is spearheading the launch of the Fleet of Automated Responsive Customer Engines. The robots, designed and built by DTMB, are programmed to resolve a myriad of customer issues including service purchases, excess earnings, disability retirements, and more.

Walk-in staff have been phased out slowly, and for the past two weeks the Customer Engines have been running the downstairs office on their own.

"There have been some glitches, but we're working through them," reports **Andrew O'Keefe**. "A few customers have come in with insurance concerns and the robots just sort of shorted out. There were sparks and everything."

The Customer Engines will continue to provide customers with quality service, at least until the next Microsoft software upgrade.

[back to top](#)**ORS raises the bar with space innovations**

As we reported last December, ORS hosts many visitors from other state agencies who come to admire the efficiency, functionality, and durability of our office space. Now, Customer Service has gone a step further with innovative space designs: the bunk cube.

Not only do bunk cubes allow ORS to house more people per square foot, but it also increases the efficiency of teams who are working



- [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

ORS Strategic Goals



- Innovate and

together on a project.

"I can just tap on the ceiling to get Mike's attention, even if he's wearing headphones," raves **Johnny Moore**. "I don't have to wait for him to respond to my email."

"Johnny's always banging on my floor, it's annoying," reports **Mike Goodman**. "I need to install some foam padding or something. Do you think they make that?"

Employees on the top cube have their choice between a ladder and a mini-elevator.

To further improve the space, **Pam Ward** is working with Fred Brock to design a catwalk that spans the length and width of Wing A, so those with top cubes never have to come down to our level.

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New PoP tool debuts: PoP ThrowDown

A new tool in the Power of Perspectives arsenal will help ORS staff come down from their ladders of inference, literally.

The PoP ThrowDown will be a biweekly physical competition between two staff members. Conference Room J will be set up with two platforms and cushioned mats. The contenders will don headgear and large foam sticks, and swat at each other. Whoever stays upright will have their idea entertained.



"This is designed for those real thorny Advocacy Loops where each side keeps stating their position without forging breakthroughs," said **Tim McCormick**. "Hopefully it will knock some sense into people."

Staff can challenge someone to a ThrowDown, or nominate others.

PoP team member **Carolyn Parkinson** added, "I'm really looking forward to this new tool. It'll help me sharpen my advocacy and inquiry skills, and I'll get to use my aikido training outside the dojo. I'm already thinking of challenging my BPO over agency-specific retention schedules."

Email ORS_PoP_Throwdown@michigan.gov to initiate a challenge or nominate someone for a ThrowDown.

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Kristina Rae's to offer patio seating

Kristina Rae's, the cafeteria of the GOB, just keeps on innovating. First, the Thunder From Down Under macaroni and cheese/chili combo. Then, adding debit as a pay option. And now that the weather is warming up, patio seating.

"Several customers have mentioned to us that the space above the cafeteria isn't being used, and thought it would make a great place for outdoor seating," said Roxanne, the proprietor of



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**

Kristina Rae's. "We love getting customer input, and try to use it whenever we can. Now that the weather has warmed up, we can!"

The cafeteria has already started moving chairs, tables, and umbrellas to the location. They should be ready to take reservations by the end of the month.

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business briefs

New AWS schedule to begin this summer

To help with application processing, project management, and Message Board volumes, ORS will be adding a new twenty-hour day AWS schedule this summer. Those who opt for this schedule will be automatically added to EMPAC recycle duty, to accommodate the increase in Monster energy drink cans. Speak with your supervisor if you're interested.

GOB building note for April 1

On April 1, oxygen will be removed from the GOB beginning at 6 p.m. to assist facilities with infrastructure upgrades. During this time the GOB will not be suitable for human habitation. Normal atmosphere will resume the morning of April 2.

IVR workaround implemented

Following last week's unplanned replacement of the IVR recordings by a Sean Connery impersonator, AST has completed a network of tin cans and strings to piggyback on the MDOT phone system. IVR repairs are expected to be complete by April 1, 2014. If anyone has seen **Nate Parrish**, please report his whereabouts to **Meg Leonard** for a casual day pass.

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comings+goings



Winnie the Pooh

Coming

On April 1, CS welcomes **Winnie the Pooh** to the insurance team. Winnie comes to ORS from Treasury and enjoys having adventures and eating honey straight from the pot.



Going

Anthony Estell has accepted a new position on the 107.3 morning show opposite Ray Bentley. His last day at ORS is April 1.

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sounding out

from you for you

Ben Southwell shares his experience growing up in Canada

Each spring I grow a beard to get in touch with a part of myself I have all but forgotten, a simpler time that I can't help but look back on with a poignant smile. Spring is a period of growth, a time to start anew, and to me it is closely associated with the five years I spent as a child among wolves in the Canadian forest.

I can't say that I blame anyone for my disappearance; I hitchhiked my way to the boreal forest at the age of seven after watching Donahue and worrying about the direction our culture was headed in the mid-1980's. I didn't have the foresight to pack for the trip, but luckily my inherent ability to locate water led me to a friendly pack of Canadian wolves that took me in and raised me as their own.



Ben Southwell shares a moment with his second family

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 Technology,
Management and Budget,
State of Michigan

Director:
Phil Stoddard
Edited by Customer
Education

They taught me to swim (dog-paddle of course), hunt, and howl. In return, I taught them to sit, shake, and play fetch (no dances- sorry Costner). We had some wild times, but I can say I really don't miss the cold nights, raw food, and incessant growling.

I will never forget my wolf family, but I am forever indebted to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for finding me near Surprise Lake in western Ontario and bringing me back to be a part of society again. Although I wouldn't go around bragging, I am not ashamed of my upbringing and am proud that I will always be part of something bigger than myself: a wolf pack.

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Thanks for reading!!



Note: None of the stories in this edition are real. Any resemblance to actual events or people is purely coincidental. Reader discretion is advised.