



# ORS Look Out

June 4, 1999

Volume 2, Issue 22

## ORS focuses on Strategic Planning

By now, many of you have had a chance to hear more about the ORS Strategic Plan and how it will benefit you. One challenge to moving this plan off the launching pad and into orbit is to define our Mission and Vision statements. The drafts of these two statements follow. Strategic Team Members will be seeking your comments and suggestions before June 16th on how these statements can be revised to accurately reflect who we are, what we do, and where we are going.

**Mission – The Office of Retirement Services plays a key role in the future financial security of employees, retirees, and beneficiaries covered by the State Employees, Public Schools, State Police and Judges Retirement Systems by delivering pensions and related benefits as provided by law.**

**Vision – Immediate access to the best knowledge, tools, and service for a successful retirement.**

Thirteen Strategies have been identified by the Leadership Team. These areas were selected because they focus on improving internal processes, skills, and expertise while building partnerships with other State service providers in order to meet our customers' current and changing needs.

Because of the size of this undertaking it was determined that teams would be

*See Strategic Team on Page 5*

## Customer focused organizations use technology as a tool

*This is part five of a six-part series highlighting the message Chris DeRose brought to us at the March 30th All-Staff meeting. Previous installments covered the future of ORS, our progress towards meeting our Organizational Goal, the need for excellent customer service, and the function of Strategic Planning. This segment focuses on another one of the important initiatives that have begun. Take some time to review his message and see how you can be a part of implementing some of the key initiatives he discussed.*

"The next key initiative has to do with Technology. We

started with reengineering our major processes. Much progress was made. My thanks to all who were involved in the reengineering processes – whether on the teams or implementing the changes. Or those folks that reengineer as a part of their daily business. It is now time to apply one of the rules of reengineering: 'Apply Technology Creatively.'

"Thomas Edison, said 'Nothing that's good works by itself just to please you. You have to make the darn thing work.' Using technology to

our advantage is a difficult thing. One more story to make this point. There was a lumberjack who cut down trees by hand all his life in order to send his son to college. The son was so grateful he saved his own money and bought the finest chain saw he could find and gave it to his Dad. But when the son returned home on spring break, his Dad said that cutting down trees was harder with the chain saw than with an ax. The son checked the machine to make

*See Director's message on Page 4*

## DMB Team information available on Intranet

In the past few issues we highlighted the five Department of Management and Budget (DMB) teams that contain members of the ORS Leadership Team. Now, more detailed information on these teams and their progress is available on the department's Intranet site at <http://intranet.dmb.state.mi.us/dmb/director/vision/index.htm>.

This dynamic site provides a wealth of information including team members, team e-mail contacts, team activity summaries, and presentation materials from "All Team Updates." The site will be

updated on a regular basis. Future plans for the site include a "What's New" page



that will lead you to the most current updates.

If you have suggestions, comments or concerns on a team topic, there are several ways you can communicate with the teams including: via the e-mail address identified on the web site, accessing the

"open chair," contacting any team member or your division/office director. Your input is essential to the success of DMB!

If you do not have access to the Intranet from your computer, you may use the computer in the Resource Library to access this web site. Additionally, a printed copy of the materials presented on the web site will be maintained in the Resource Library. Feel free to check it out.

### Thought for the Day

Negative thoughts are like birds, you can't keep them from flying around your head but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.

— Kenneth Hagin

## CIC receives direct access to Blue Cross/Blue Shield data

A new computer program has been networked onto the PCs of Operations and Customer Information Center (CIC) staff members to help determine Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance coverage. CIC members will be able to determine when a retiree's insurance was/will be effective, who the dependents are, whether the address is correct, dates of birth for retiree and dependents, and if cards have been issued.

Previously the information was available only on a single terminal located in the Operations Division. Staff would have to go to it to access the information, write up a customer action sheet or transfer the call. The other alternative was to call Blue Cross/Blue Shield to ask a representative what coverage the retiree or dependent had. The new system saves staff time and provides a valuable customer service.



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## Spotlight on Office of Retirement Services Board members

**Jack B. Anson, Public School Employees Retirement System Board Member**



**Jack B. Anson** As a member of the Board since 1991, Mr. Anson believes that "boardsmanship" is a skill that he possesses. He enjoys the association of professional interest in representing his constituents, including board watchers.

Although he is retired, Mr. Anson serves on a variety of boards. He has served on the Mental Health Facilities Board for 30 years, the Isabella Child Development Board for 28 years, the Pension Roundtable - National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) Conceived Advisory Pension Experts from 12 states, and he is the President of his condominium association. He was also President of the Paul Harris Fellow Rotary for three terms.

Mr. Anson was nominated as a career volunteer in a program sponsored by Michigan First lady, Michelle Engler. Another special interest is "serving as an enabler for social science activity." He added, "I think I can be of service as a catalyst."

In his spare time, Mr. Anson enjoys playing golf. "I am an avid golfer," he said. "Passionate is a better word."

**George M. Elworth, State Employees', State Police, and Judges' Retirement Systems Board Member**



**George M. Elworth**

Mr. Elworth, a member of the Boards for two years, is the Assistant Attorney General who represents statutory member

Attorney General Jennifer M. Granholm. Mr. Elworth enjoys being a member of the Boards for two main reasons. First, he has an "increased understanding of the State's defined benefit pension plan that provides retirement benefits to over 36,000 retired State employees and their families." Second, he has a "greater appreciation of importance of State pension plans for the more than 49,000 current State employees participating in these plans."

Mr. Elworth is the Assistant in Charge of the Municipal and Military Affairs Division of the Michigan Department of Attorney General, which provides advice and representation to State agencies regarding issues of local government law. In addition, Mr. Elworth serves on the Publications Committee of Public Corporation Law Section, State Bar of Michigan. His special interests

include trends in financial planning and estate planning. Mr. Elworth also enjoys four-wall handball, walking and hiking.

## New Benefits

### Processing system

On May 10<sup>th</sup> the Operations Division implemented the Benefits Processing program, a new tool that enables them to easily process a pension benefit for Public School Employees, and track the status of an application. One of the greatest features of this new system is that it allows a large number of users to access the information in the system all at once.

The previous program allowed only a small number of users to access the data at any one time. The new system allows anyone within ORS who needs the information to access it through their Intranet browser as long as they have authorization.

ORS customers have also benefited from this upgrade. Public School Employees who call the CIC can now receive accurate, up-to-date information on the status of their applications.

Kudos go to **Kathy Hankins, Pam Kibby, Teresa Pilar.** Thanks to **Lillie Wilson** for expert assistance, and ASD Staff members, **Danesh Manik, Tom Shively and Dan Lamb** for their hard work on implementing this new tracking system.



## Director's message

*Continued from Page 1*

sure it had fuel and the chain was oiled. Then he pulled the starter cord and the saw roared to life. His father immediately jumped a foot in the air and yelled, 'What's that noise?!'

"This applies to us as well. There are lots of excellent tools out there that will help us do our job better and will allow us to provide better service to our customers. To do this we need to understand that our business is made up of processes. We need to document what the processes are, get people to take ownership for the processes, change the processes and then with that foundation, find technologies that help the customer and help us help the customer.

"**Ken Theis** has been hired to lead this project. Ken is an employee of the Office of Project Management. One of our partners, as the DMB vision says. He has expertise in helping GM document business processes, change the processes and apply technology to them. Ken will work in partnership with Information Technology & Reengineering Division (ITR), Automated Services Division (ASD) and the entire ORS

staff to bring about these improvements. We also have hired several new staff in ITR to assist with the project. We will all be involved in documenting processes and providing knowledge on how

things work now and how they can work better in the future.

"So, to restate, our two key initiatives

that will affect ORS in a big way in the coming months are Strategic Planning & Using Technology as a Tool. Done well, these will ensure we can handle the workload that is coming our way while continuously being customer focused.

"Change is a very difficult thing. Let me show you what I mean. I need you all to fold your arms. Ok; now fold them the other way. Doesn't that feel strange? How long would it take to get used to it? This is like change. We all resist it at first, but dynamic people and dynamic organizations overcome the urge to resist and use change to better themselves.

Now some say change will either kill you or drive you crazy. But customer-focused organizations have a much healthier attitude. They welcome change. They're not only surviving it — they're

thriving on it.

**"Change is not something to fear or resist - it is the very essence of life itself and central to success in our modern world..."**

**- John Murphy**

"As the quote says, it is important . . . even the very essence of life. But it is important to make the right changes. We don't want to make superficial changes and call it good. We need to be about fundamental change to meet our organizational goal.

"ORS will continue to change. We have been through a lot already. We have made change a part of our organization by making everyone a change agent. This will continue and I hope you will all be part of changing ORS for the better. I can't emphasize enough how we need to be looking for small and big ways to do our business better.

"Through our strategic plan and applying technology to our business, we will have become an innovative, flexible customer focused organization. We will be a model and a leader in the field of retirement and in the public sector . . . and most importantly we will have hundreds of thousands of satisfied customers. So we have made great progress, but you ain't seen nothing yet!

*In the next issue Chris' discusses the "employee of the moment" recognition program.*



## Strategic Team

*Continued from Page 1*

assigned to the first seven strategies for the first year. The remaining six strategies will be worked on by specific individuals or parts of ORS.

The Strategies are listed here in order of priority.

1. Improve Leadership and Management Skills – Sponsor: **Deb Gearhart**; Team: **Miriam Bender, Susan Park, and Lisa Reed**
2. Establish Methods to Assess Customer Needs and Expectations – Sponsor: **Laurie Hill**; Team: **Andy Daignault, George Orban, and William St. Amour**
3. Establish Employee Development Plan – Sponsor: **Deb Gearhart**; Team: **Grace Bonofiglio, Robert Glennon, and Ken Wright**
4. Partner with State Service Providers to Acquire Consistently High Quality Service – Sponsor: **Ginger Bomar**; Team: **Fred Covert, Carol Keyes-Baubie, and Carla Price**
5. Prioritize, Plan and Follow-through in Alignment with Strategic Plan – Sponsor: **Chris DeRose**; Team: **Ginger Bomar, Deb Gearhart, Laurie Hill, and Phil Stoddard**
6. Establish Performance Measures – Sponsor: **Phil Stoddard**; Team: **Lila Christiansen, Pam Kibby, Steve Larson, and Judy Simon**

7. Enable Business Processes and Meet Customer Needs through Implementation of Technology Support – Sponsor: **Ginger Bomar**; Team: **Nancy Quick, Ken Theis, Mary Ann Vicini, and Darlene Workman**

8. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

9. Create a Professional, Efficient and Productive Workplace

10. Establish ORS' Records Management Strategy

11. Establish a Comprehensive Customer Education program

12. Establish a Proactive Legislative Strategy

13. Proactively Observe, Plan and Adjust to Social and Economic Changes that Impact ORS.

Within the next few weeks team members will be meeting with their sponsors to draft a plan and lay out the specific steps that are needed to accomplish the strategies.

Perhaps the most important concept to remember is that for ORS to succeed in implementing the 13 strategies, everyone's comments and suggestions are needed. By voicing your thoughts and ideas to members of the Strategic Team you will help prepare ORS for success well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 6W2W Participants finish strong

In a very tight race in this year's Six Weeks to Wellness competition, the 4-Heartbeats (**Brenda Moore, Cheryl Moore, Michael West, and Samuel Williams**) beat out the Rob Roys by just eight points. And the third place team of 3-Women-and-a-Gym was just two points behind. Individual honors this year went to **Norma Simon** with 426 out of 456 available points. **Michelle Twichell** and **Deb MacGregor** earned second and third places, respectively. Additionally, **Grace Bonofiglio, Janet Graham, Barbara Kirkland, Cheryl Moore, Norma Simon** and **Gretchen Wojtysiak** each met their exercise maximum points over the course of the six weeks.

Six Weeks to Wellness is a health initiative for State employees. This year 33 ORS employees signed up – six teams of four members each and nine individuals.

## Comings and Goings in ORS

**Michele Childs** has accepted a Departmental Trainee position in Operations.

**Rick Wilhelmsen** has left the Waterford Customer Outreach Office to join Consumer & Industry Services as a Public Health Consultant.

## New 75% Option begins to take shape

As stated in the April 9<sup>th</sup> Look Out, in the early summer of 1998 the State Legislature approved a 75% survivor option at retirement for Public School and State Employees in addition to the current 50% and 100% survivor options. This new option will go into effect January 1, 2000.

The following forms have been revised to reflect this new option and are at the printers:

### State Employee Forms:

Application for Service Retirement .... (R131G/131 SERS)  
Retirement Pension Estimate Worksheet ..... (R60G)  
Election of Pension Option for Disability Cases .. (R44G)

### Public School Forms:

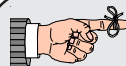
Election of Pension Option ..... (R10C)  
Pension Estimate Cover Sheet ..... (R147C)  
Retiring Applicant's Checklist ..... (R118C)

As these revised forms become available please recycle the old forms and begin using the new versions.

## PC Tips & Shortcuts

Some words shouldn't be separated, like Mr. Townson, or July 1. To keep these words from breaking apart at the end of a line, you need to put a hard space—or nonbreaking space—between them instead of a regular space. A simple keyboard trick will take care of this. To type a nonbreaking space, you press Ctrl + Shift + Spacebar.

To create a non-breaking hyphen, for example to keep a phone number or a compound word with a hyphen from splitting at the hyphen at the end of a line, press Ctrl + Shift + hyphen. From now on, these words or numbers will be joined at the hip and nothing will tear them apart.



### *Please remember...*

- Mark your calendars for the next All-Staff Meeting on Thursday, September 30 at 2:00 PM. The location will be announced at a later date.
- If you need to update your emergency contact information please contact **Janet Graham** in Finance and Administration at 2-1744.

While your friendly Scramble editor was at the beach he traded a seabird for a sausage. In other words, he took a tern for the wurst.

He was never in danger of starving at the seashore because of all the sand which is there. You'll have food for thought when you solve this issue's Scramble. Talk it over with your team mates and see how it applies to your work situation and build upon it.

noyej het tillet singth  
orf noe ayd oyu amy okol abck  
nad codsiver yeth wree eht  
IGB TINGSH!!

You know the drill. The unscrambled posters will be on display next week on first and third floors.

