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Email the LookOut Staff

LookOut Archives

In This Issue...

- New CSC software will improve service
- Remembering Michigan's fallen
- It's the people ...
- Webinars are here!
- Knowledge Library Project Plan
- WDRA wins Outstanding Program award
- Where are those files?
- Thank-you Green Team!
- Spring Cleaning
- Web Self-Service under way!
- A day in the life of Sandy Ball
- DMB Employee Excellence Awards
- Free Civil Service training
- Staff put on their walking shoes
- Block spammers
- Blast from the past

Calendar

May

New CSC software will improve service

CSC is implementing new software to help predict call volumes. The Genesys Workforce Management (WFM) software uses historical account data based on the time of year and on business cycles to predict future customer demands. CSC will then be able to match staff schedules to the forecast.

Many call centers use WFM software as a standard tool. The software can forecast call volumes on any time interval, from monthly to fifteen-minute increments. It can then schedule nonphone activities like email, correspondence, and account processing during low call volume periods.

The software brings many financial benefits as well as improved customer service. By predicting demand, it will help supervisors and managers make the most efficient use of staff resources and support CSC's commitment to being flexible to meet customer needs.



Remembering Michigan's fallen

Alpena, Atlantic, Battle Creek, Bay City, Clio, Concord, Davisburg, Eaton Rapids, Fraser, Gwinn, Hesperia, Hillsdale, Ironwood, Laingsburg, Luzerne, Merrill, Midland, Paw Paw, Pentwater, Petersburg, Saginaw, Saint Johns, Silverwood, Southgate, Temperance, Vassar

What do these towns have in common? They have all lost soldiers, Marines, or airmen in Iraq since 2003.

So while you enjoy your burgers, ribs, or a bottle of suds this Memorial Day, give our heroes and their families a thought and maybe a nod.

Then enjoy your picnic or outing, enjoy your friends and family. They would if they could and they would not hold it against you.



Michigan Veterans' Memorial Park

For more information on Michigan's fallen go to <http://info.detnews.com/michigansfallen/index.cfm>

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Memorial Day | 28 |
| June | |
| DMB Excellence Awards Deadline | 8 |
| Flag Day | 14 |
| Public School Employees Board Meeting | 14 |
| Father's Day | 17 |
| Blood Drive | 20 |
| 9th Annual Tiger Baseball Outing | 26 |
| State Employees Board Meeting | 28 |

On the Horizon

- WDR A Staff Picnic August 16

Balanced Scorecard

[Click here to view the latest Balanced Scorecard.](#)



Quick Links

- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Policies and Procedures](#)

Commonly Used Acronyms

| | |
|-----|--|
| AST | Application Support Team |
| BLA | Business Leadership Assembly (EPC, BPOs, and BPLs) |
| BPD | Benefit Plan Design |
| BPL | Business Process |

It's the people ...

It's the people who make the difference ... a recurring comment heard in the recent WDR A Employee Survey.

People from all walks of life frequently say the enjoyment they receive from their work comes from the people they work with. WDR A is no exception. Staff never seem shy when it comes to talking of the remarkable people working here. Perhaps more than anything else, "it's the people" is instrumental to our continued employee satisfaction rate of over 80 percent.



April's survey showed employee satisfaction at 85 percent (95 out of 113 respondents). This is a rise from the previous score of 81.9 percent. When you consider the changes and uncertainties in WDR A and state government, such a score is very encouraging.

Over half of the 55 comments received from staff referenced people with whom they work, most of these focusing on what a great group of people work for WDR A.

A new question to assess organizational health appeared on this survey: Would you recommend WDR A to a friend as a good place to work? Of the 88 people who responded to the question, 77.2 percent said they would recommend WDR A to a friend.

The number of responses to the April survey was the highest of all of our employee surveys, with 115 people (64.2 percent) responding. The most responses previously received were the April 2005 and September 2006 surveys, where 95 responses were received.

What's next?

The survey responses have been shared with the BLA. When possible, information has been broken out by process to help BPOs and BPLs analyze their own data (note: no names were collected and the survey results remain anonymous). Once the data is reviewed, BPOs and BPLs will compare this survey with previous results and with their perception of how things are going within their processes, and determine the need to address any particular issues.

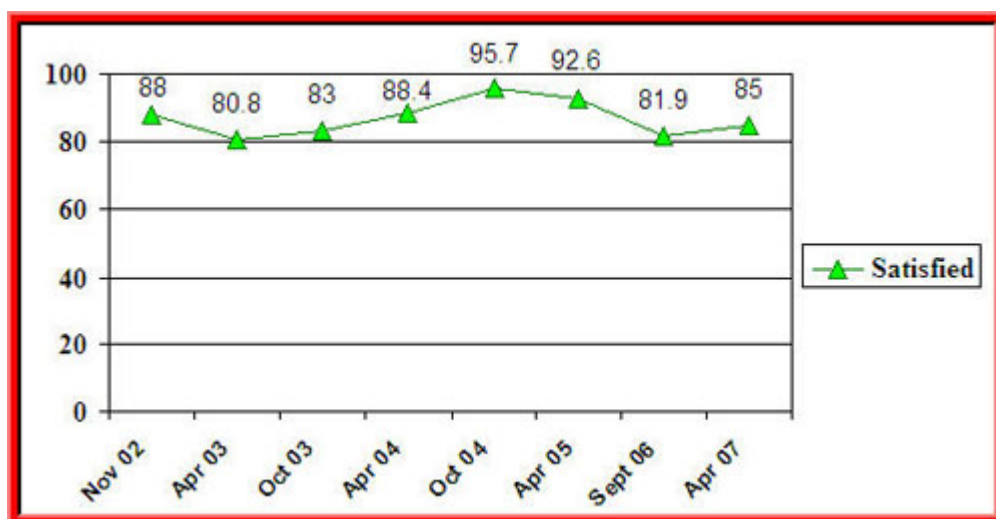
The satisfaction scores and willingness to recommend WDR A to a friend will be used as a reference point for future surveys. When significant changes occur or when trends are seen over time that suggest action is needed, WDR A leaders will then put a plan together to respond appropriately.

Click here to view the [comments](#) received from the survey.

Chart of Employee Satisfaction



| | |
|------|--|
| | Leader |
| BPO | Business Process Owner |
| CED | Customer Education and Development |
| CSC | Customer Service Center |
| DIT | Department of Information Technology |
| DMB | Department of Management and Budget |
| EPC | Executive Process Council (<i>Phil, Laurie, Tim, Anthony, and Kathy</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 |
| T&T | Tools and Technology |
| WDRA | Workforce Development and Retirement Administration |



Webinars are here!

We've talked about them in all-staff meetings and in *LookOut* articles, and finally, WDRA webinars have arrived. A webinar is an internet-based seminar that is a live, "in-person" meeting customers can attend from the comfort of their offices or homes.

CED's **Pam Kenney** delivered the very first WDRA webinar for our public school employers yesterday on the very current topic of How to Complete a Final Salary Affidavit (FSA). Audience response was enthusiastic and unanimously positive.

Demand for the new presentation is high. CED scheduled eight inaugural sessions from May 24 through June 5, with 20 "seats" in each session. Pam advertised them last Friday and all eight sessions were sold out by Wednesday afternoon. Additional sessions are being scheduled to provide our employer customers this important and relevant presentation. A bonus feature of webinars is that they can be recorded and viewed after the session. We will soon place one of the recorded sessions on the website so those who couldn't participate can still benefit from the webinar.

Lots of WDRA staff helped get this presentation to our customers. Pam worked closely with FSA expert **Sandy Blommer** to develop the presentation. Together they conducted several test runs with other WDRA participants including **Raini Majeski**, **Bernie Lucas**, and **Connie Morse**, who provided valuable feedback on the pilot presentation.

Ray Fleming and **Robert Glennon** worked tirelessly to implement the Microsoft LiveMeeting tool used to run the webinars, and to get the registration website running efficiently. To see how employers register, click the [link](#) found on the employer website at www.michigan.gov/psru.

CED is offering a regular slate of FSA webinars in the coming month, with plans to offer a laundry list of additional topics identified by ER staff as particularly relevant for our public school employers over the coming year.

During each session, we survey our customers to learn their opinions on the tool, the presentation, and other topics of interest. As we evaluate our customers' response to webinars, additional presentations to different customer groups will be considered.



Knowledge Library Project Plan

Remember all the hard work done during the reengineering effort and creating the step-by-step procedures? All those procedures (over 150 of them) have been loaded into the Knowledge Library (KL) as “drafts” and now need to be formatted, tested, edited, and finalized.

To accomplish this, BPOs and BPLs will first prioritize all procedures owned by their process. Next, the Knowledge Librarian will schedule weekly meetings with each process to work on a specific procedure, and then format the draft procedure to conform with library standards. The Knowledge Librarian and SME will compare the drafted procedure to the reengineered process, testing the new process to make sure all the steps are valid. Once tested, the document will be edited for consistency, and all obsolete procedures removed from the KL. Then the Knowledge Librarian will obtain the necessary sign-offs, load the final document in the KL, and notify staff by sending a *Changing Times* email.

What does this mean to you? Right now, all the step-by-step procedures written by SMEs as a result of the reengineering effort have been loaded into the Knowledge Library as drafts. You can view, make suggestions, rate, and make comments on these documents. They can be identified by the word DRAFT in the title and also by the DRAFT watermark on the document. As the procedure is formatted, edited, and tested, each new version will be loaded into the KL as an additional draft for you to see. Once signed off and finalized, you will be notified via *Changing Times*.

The Knowledge Library is a cool tool that can help us become more efficient and serve our customers better. Use it, critique it, and encourage others to use it, and we will be a step closer to our vision of *empowering people for a successful today and a secure tomorrow*.

WDRA wins Outstanding Program award

The National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA) has given WDRA honorable mention in its 2007 Outstanding Program Award. NASCA is a national, nonprofit organization that champions excellence and innovation in state government. Its annual award recognizes innovative state agencies that have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills in innovation, originality, effectiveness and applicability.

WDRA was recognized for its journey and successes in becoming a process-based organization. NASCA based our merits on illustrating new methods, devices, or customs advancing best management solutions for state government.



“When we began this process-based journey, we created a vision to provide fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service,” said **Laurie Hill**, Director of Customer Service. “Most staff can still recite that vision and they continue to go above and beyond to meet customer expectations.”

NASCA officials will send us an award plaque which will be displayed in Crossroads. When you see it, take pride in our workplace and your own hard work.

For more information about NASCA, the award, and to see our nomination, go to www.nasca.org.

Where are those files?

As reported in the Business Briefs section of the May 11 *LookOut*, all of the paper files for our members and much of the microfiche records have been moved offsite to

Graphic Sciences Incorporated (GSI), a Royal Oak company. GSI has a master contract with the Michigan History, Arts & Library (HAL).

While WDRA will continue to manage all of the incoming mail and documents, GSI will help us catch up on our “back-files”, which include the materials in the power files as well as microfiche records. WDRA expanded our Statement of Work (SOW) with GSI in April, to speed the imaging of all our back-file documents. The files were all moved to a secure GSI facility within a separate locked space.

GSI is providing WDRA with “scan-on-demand” for all of our materials. This simply means when staff place a request, GSI pulls the file (or fiche), images it and returns it to WDRA on a disk the next day. The information on the disk is then uploaded and indexed into our system. A next step in the plan is to replace the daily disk with a direct file transfer (ftp) to a secure site. WDRA, DIT & GSI are working together on this project.

The ultimate goal is to have all paper documents imaged and indexed by the end of this fiscal year. GSI will continue to provide scan-on-demand service for microfiche materials after September 30. As part of the expanded SOW, GSI hired several temporary staff including some with previous experience working with WDRA documents including: **Jessica Cain, Caitlin Hitchcock, Lauren Holton, Diane Monroe and Aaron Usher.**

Thank-you Green Team!

Make an effort this week to thank the members of WDRA’s Green Team who volunteer their personal time and energy to help make WDRA an environmentally-friendly place to work.

Who is on this team of do-gooders?

- **Erica Waltmire** collects glass for curbside recycling.
- **Joan Schneider** collects plastic bottles for recycling
- **Lynne Bemrose, Steve Crippen, Gordy Hicks, and Joan Schneider** collect styrofoam to recycle. “I really discourage people from using Styrofoam,” **Lisa Schmidt** said. “It never disintegrates and as it breaks down it puts toxic gases in the air.”
- **Mary Anderson** collects magazines for recycling.
- **Kathy Parisian** collects batteries for recycling and calculator and scotch tape centers for the Creation Station, a nonprofit organization that provides a creative outlet for discarded materials, turning trash into treasures.
- **Lisa Schmidt** collects tin cans for curbside recycling.
- **Sandy Ball, Maureen Carden, Elaine Lewter and Elaine Scott** collect bags and egg cartons for the food bank.
- **Mike Goodman** delivers pop can tabs to the Ronald McDonald House, which gets about \$.40 a pound for donated tabs. “I figure we’ve donated 202,860 pop tabs weighing about 210 pounds altogether. This adds up to about an \$84 donation,” Lisa Schmidt said.



The team also collects printer cartridges and occasionally has special collections of cell phones for domestic abuse shelters or eyeglasses for the Lions Club to distribute to those in need.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, recycling and composting activities prevented about 64 million tons of material from ending up in landfills and incinerators in 1999. Today, this country recycles 32 percent of its waste, a rate that has almost doubled during the past 15 years.

When the Green Team formed in 2002, they collected approximately 1,357 plastic bottles, 1,519 pop cans, 900 glass bottles, and 634 batteries. Their ongoing efforts certainly help protect our environment.

Even if you aren't on the team, you can help. Checkout the bins in the vending machine room and make recycling part of your daily routine.



Spring cleaning



Cleaning supplies were placed throughout the office for staff to use

Staff tidy up around the office on cleanup day May 17.

Go nuts!



Can you spot any familiar faces on the cover of the Lansing Lugnuts' 2007 magazine?

Web Self-Service under way!

The designing and building of web self-service took a giant leap forward last week when WDRA, with help from DIT and Purchasing Operations, awarded the development contract to Systems Technology Group (STG) of Troy, Michigan. Many hours were spent last fall with subject matter experts defining the services we want to offer online and how to deliver them. From those discussions, the web self-service requirements were documented and put out for vendors proposals in December.

In February, an evaluation team composed of **Karen Buckwalter** and **Dave Gabler** of AST, **Laurie Hill** and **Laurie Mitchell** of WDRA, and **Joanne Klasko** from DMB Purchasing Operations, reviewed and evaluated the proposals. After oral presentations by the top two vendors, the team awarded the web self-service contract to STG. The team was aided in its effort by **Chuck Baird** (DIT-MDOT), **Mike**

Bilek, Kim LaClear, Marc Olenzek, and Leza Rebera.

“Overall, the evaluation team was impressed with the quality of proposals received,” said Laurie Mitchell. “STG’s proposal and subsequent presentation demonstrated that they took great care to understand our requirements. They are offering very high-quality personnel for the project, a sound project management plan, and strong senior management support.”

STG is a minority-owned, Michigan-based company. Some of their clients include the State of Minnesota, General Motors, and DaimlerChrysler.

A day in the life of Sandy Ball

Even though she modestly gives the credit for all BPD work done to her staff, **Sandy Ball** still manages to accomplish a lot in an average day.

Check out the schedule below for a peek into the typical activities of our BPD BPL.



| | |
|--------------|--|
| 7:00 | Review new emails. “On an average day there are typically 30-40 emails waiting for me on issues ranging from leave approvals for staff, interpretation of the various retirement statutes, DC related questions, to providing data for a number of surveys that BPD administers. I read each one and research the question and respond personally, make a note for action, or forward the message on to the appropriate staff person for action for response.” |
| 9:00 | Prepare for morning meetings with Phil Stoddard and Brian McLane regarding discussions with the Attorney General (AG) on statute interpretations for the upcoming public school employees beneficiary change; reciprocity of service credit in DC for health care; personnel/staffing issues; and status on a DC related project. |
| 10:00 | Meet with BPO Brian McLane to review upcoming business plan items and to discuss project updates for the EPC and upcoming meeting with Phil. |
| 11:00 | Meet with Phil and take any action items back to my staff or to further discuss with the AG’s office. |
| 12:00 | Lunch time. Typically, I grab food that I brought from home and retreat back to my desk to get caught back up on emails and prepare myself for the afternoon. |
| 2:00 | Meet with Leza Rebera for a review and update on the FAQs concerning DC health care, and a briefing regarding the Freedom of Information Act requests she is handling for the DMB Director’s Office. “With all of the media attention on the public schools this has been a major issue for Leza and Andy Oser . Much of the data used in the recent Detroit News articles was provided by our office and the attention staff was required to give in order to validate the data prior to its release was daunting.” |
| 3:00 | Meet with Linda Reznick to discuss revisions to BPD policies and procedures that need to be updated for the Knowledge Library. “My staff and I will be reviewing all BPD related items within the next 30 days. The first items up for review concern contacting our state actuary.” |
| 4:00 | “If all things go well, I leave the office and head home!” |

Whenever she gets a minute between meetings, Sandy works on a request for advice from the AG on DC related issues.

In addition to the sample day above, Sandy’s daily duties also include managing a staff of 11, keeping on track with BPD business plan items, attending leadership staff meetings, assisting staff with addressing Section 218 Social Security issues, and ensuring staff have the resources necessary to do their job and much more!

DMB Employee Excellence Awards

You have until June 8 to submit a nomination for the DMB awards. Visit the [DMB intranet](#) for nomination samples and details. If you previously submitted a nomination for a very deserving coworker, feel free to revise and resubmit.

Free Civil Service training

Civil Service is now offering several [classes free of charge](#). There will also be some sessions scheduled in the Detroit area very soon. Check dates for these courses on the Civil Service web site at <http://web1mdcs.state.mi.us/HRTDTrain/ByDate.asp>.

Staff put on their walking shoes

After participating in a brown bag Health and Safety fitness lunch in Crossroads nearly 80 people are on board to start the WDRA walking challenge on May 29!

Each person that signed up to participate in this fitness endeavor will proudly sport their green pedometer for the six-week walking challenge. During the six-week time frame the Health and Safety Team will sponsor motivational programs to keep everyone moving. Keep your eyes peeled for initiatives such as lunch hour group walks, complete with free bottled water, and many more fun tactics!

A special thank you to the Health and Safety Team for putting this wonderful event together. We'd also like to thank Mila Padgett, Assistant Director, Oakland University, for volunteering her time to speak with staff and hand out the free pedometers.

If you have any questions, please contact **Michelle Thompson** at 322-1842.

Block spammers

The state of Michigan is currently testing products that will help filter out known spammers.

In the meantime, here are a few things you can do:

- Do not respond to the emails, even to ask to be taken off from the mailing list. By doing this you are letting the spammer know the email address is valid.
- GroupWise 6.5 and above has a junk mail handling feature that simplifies spam blocking. Junk mail options will automatically delete email from certain senders. If you need assistance with junk mail settings, refer to What's New in GroupWise 6.5 Help menu.
- Rules can also be created that will delete mail items containing certain words.
- Be careful of what internet sites you visit and where you voluntarily give your email address.

There is no technology available yet that filters out all spam email, but these tips should help cut down on the numbers you receive.

Blast from the past

The following article ran in the 9/10/99 issue.



- 4 -

It was Crazy Tops and Bottoms Day at ORS!!

Friday, August 27, ORS was energized by a number of staff who used their imaginations to make the first annual ORS Crazy Tops and Bottoms Day a success! We captured a few of these folks for your

viewing pleasure! Clockwise from below left, it's Michael Zingsheim from ITR; Fred Doll from CIC; Joyce Buchanan from ITR; and Janet Graham, Mary Sheltraw, and Lisa Schmidt from Finance and Administration.



Staff also identified what they've done this year to complete the ORS business picture. Following are some excerpts.

I helped with implementation of the diskette program for quarterly reports.

— Annette Ruiz

I got back \$1,300 owed from UPS for our office and re-engineered the Judges Supreme deposit.

— Al Juderjohn

I reengineered the telephone coordinator duties to eliminate redundant processes, apply technology creatively, eliminate unnecessary audits and save ORS money along the way!

— Lisa Schmidt

I come to work with a positive attitude every day and treat others with respect. I try always to keep an open mind.

— Michael Zingsheim

I was involved in the Orientation Manual and the Health and Safety program.

— Carol Keyes Baubie



I organized the Administrative Hearing process.

— Terry Jacobson

CPP is Y2K compliant, a new foundation is on its way, and ITR is nearly fully staffed.

— Fred Covert

I complied with all the deadlines given to report processing even when the deadline was shortened.

— Pat Jorae

I created the DMB Celebration video and tabloid.

— Matt Beha

I learned the Board mailing procedures for four Boards.

— Jaime Mosley

I have filled a void and am busy helping ORS to reach its goals. I am happy to be a part of the ORS team!

— Michelle Beckwith

I edited the Reporting Instruction Manual and the new versions of the Retirement Guidelines for both public school and State employees.

— Rosemary Baker

I'm always bringing a little ray of sunshine.

— Charla Clifford

ORS Mission:
We are a customer-focused organization that serves members and employees today and prepares them for tomorrow.

ORS Vision:
Empowering people for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

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Phil Stoddard
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Thanks for reading!!

Note: Because some of the links in this newsletter point to resources within ORS, some of the links may not work if you are outside of ORS.