



# ORS Look Out

Year 2000



266 Days

April 23, 1999

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## ORS Organizational Goal is Customer Focused

*This is part two of a six part series highlighting the message our Director, Chris DeRose, brought to us at the March 30th All-Staff meeting. This segment continues on our progress towards meeting our organizational goals. Take some time to review his message and see how you can be a part of implementing some of the key initiatives he discussed.*

"Our first step was to establish an organizational goal. We also reorganized, reengineered our major processes and began retooling. We reorganized to create an

efficient organization that was using all of its resources for the most pressing needs. We reengineered to get our processes to be as streamlined as possible.

Our Organizational Goal is 'To become an innovative, flexible, customer focused organization with a proven record of success in less than five years.' We set this 16 months ago. How are we doing?

"You have accomplished a lot. Let's take the four con-

cepts separately. We are more *customer focused* . . . the Customer Information Center, the *Connections* newsletter, the new Web site and the many

letters and phone calls I get show this. I do want to make special mention of our Outreach staff. Like many of you they are the front line of

our business, but *we* don't see them much. They have been cross-trained and now serve all ORS customers. They are meeting with customers...

*See Director's speech on Page 3*



## ORS Web Site is well received by customers

The new ORS Web site was launched earlier this year, the result of work by ORS and Automation Services Division Staff. One of its features was a feedback form that allows a visitor to give us comments about navigation of the site, the flow of information, the ease of finding the information needed, and the look of the site.

Since February 11th, more than 100 visitors have used this form to send us feedback. More than half of these visitors have used it to send retirement-related questions instead of using the [ORSCustomerService@state.mi.us](mailto:ORSCustomerService@state.mi.us) e-mail address.

Nonetheless, some visitors have used it for its intended

purpose and here's what some of them have to say.

*See Web site on Page 4*

### Thought for the Day

*Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.*

*- Albert Einstein*

## Six Weeks to Wellness kicks off successfully

Six Weeks to Wellness (6W2W) is a health initiative for all State employees. This year 33 ORS employees have signed up to focus on a healthier lifestyle for the next six weeks. There are six four-person teams, and nine who have signed up as individual participants. Two participation levels are avail-

able – a basic level concentrating on exercise and eating habits, and a more intensive level designed for those who practice healthy living on a daily basis year-round.

Participants will earn points for practicing healthy habits. Those who pay an entry fee can compete for prizes. If you haven't signed up, it's too late

for prizes, but you are still welcome to participate in 6W2W activities. Contact 6W2W Coordinator **Lisa Schmidt** if you have questions.



Pictured at left:

Back row, from left to right: Deb MacGregor, Suzanne Wright, Celine Harr, Cheryl Moore, Samuel Williams. Second row: Gretchen Wojtysiak, Brenda Moore, Barbara Kirkland, Janet Graham, Rosemary Baker, Robert Glennon, Sylvia Maat. Front row: Pam White, Lisa Schmidt and Norma Simon. Not Pictured: Eve Baumgart, Matt Beha, Rita BeVier, Grace Bonofiglio, Pam Cook, Carol Haynie, Carol Keyes Baubie, Suzi Luis, Ruth Nixon, Denise Omo, Lori Powell, Tom Schaefer, Jennifer Schulert, Jim Thelen, Michelle Twichell, Brad Ward, Pam Ward and Michael West.



## Health Screening Unit gets toll-free telephone number

In keeping with its commitment to improve customer service, the Office of the State Employer is pleased to announce the Health Screening Unit now has a toll-free phone number: (877) 381-0225. Persons enrolled in the State Health Plan who live in the Lansing area should continue to use the local telephone number 373-2813.

Questions concerning this message can be directed to **Rita Swanson**, Director of Employee Benefits, at (517) 373-1846.



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## Director's speech

Continued from Page 1

...every day showing what ORS and customer focus is all about.

"Sometimes it is helpful to have examples from other businesses to help us see what good service is. One of our retirees went into a Meijer store and asked the person stocking the shelves for half a loaf of bread. The Meijer employee walked over to the manager and said, 'Some nut wants to know if he can buy half a loaf of bread . . .' Seeing over his shoulder that the

man had followed him, the clerk quickly added, 'And this nice gentleman would like to buy the other half.'

"I am just joking of course, but wherever I go in this organization, and you might

have noticed, I walk around a lot... I see people giving good customer service.

"Back to the Organizational

Goal, *we are more flexible . . .*

Many of our staff are cross-trained which required lots of flexibility on your part. Look at our ability to bring up the Tax-Deferred Payment (TDP) work-around and then the automated solution. Look

### 1998: A Year of Successes

In 1998, the Office of Retirement Services put an organizational goal into action. Staff stepped up to the challenge to move ORS towards a more innovative, flexible, customer-focused organization. With the reorganization of ORS into three Divisions: Customer Service, Finance and Administration, Information Technology and Reengineering, and Operations, the Divisions worked together toward the common goal of improved customer service. Numerous accomplishments have been highlighted here.

1998 was truly a Year of Successes for ORS.



Office of Retirement Services  
Department of Management and Budget  
State of Michigan

orientation program for new staff and all of the reengineering ideas we have implemented from report

processing to disabilities.

"We are establishing a **proven record of success**. In addition to the items I have already mentioned, we

have plans in place for each division and we are meeting these objectives day in and day out. I also wanted each of you to have a list of our accomplishments. Too often we forget, in the press of business, how much we have done. I applaud you for this. Most importantly from my perspective is the enthusiasm and determination I see to continue to make us a better organization. I draw energy from this. Maybe we are starting to untie ourselves from the tracks."

In the next issue Chris' message will focus on how we play a vital role in the success of DMB.



at how the number of days it takes to get on the retirement payroll continues to be reduced. Look at the backlogs

that are gone.

"Third, we are more *innovative* . . . new spread sheets to calculate the 13th check, our

## Tracking of school retiree death files becomes easier

**Anthony Estell** recently notified the CIC that a spreadsheet containing the status information of a death file can now be accessed right from a representatives desktop. The spread sheet was developed by **Ben McIntire**,

and allows the CIC to track the status of the file from time of notification to the time the file is closed out and sent to microfilm. It is updated fairly frequently. The spreadsheet available at E:\rss\death2\dead99 is

updated frequently. There are several other categories regarding death information that will allow the CIC to review and disperse to customers when accessing this file.



## Web site

*Continued from Page 1*

"It is great to see the great info that you are providing for your members. Thanks and keep it up!" wrote one member.

Another visitor to the site stated, "Sure helps with financial planning."

Still another used the form to say, "This is an excellent service that you are providing, especially given all your other duties."

Several Web-surfing board members filled out the feedback form. **Marsha Smith**, Public School Board member wrote: "This is a great and informative site. I wish I had more time now to browse it. This is a great service to Public School members and

will save them and ORS lots of time! Thanks! Great Service."

Another board member, **Jim Snody**, retiree member, State Police Board, wrote: "Chris, you and your staff are to be commended for providing an outstanding Web site. While I did not look at the other retirement sites, I am sure they are as professional and understandable as the State Police site. Looks great. Thank you. Good job!"

Other typical comments include: "Like the site very much. Great flow. Thank you." and "Nice site."

Three comments highlight good reasons for placing information on the Web. Wrote one member, "I did find the site helpful and I am sure that it saved you a phone call. Thanks." Another wrote, "Please email me back with

info. I would appreciate doing this over the Internet as it is much easier for me to conduct business in the evening hours." And a third noted, "Thanks. A great site for us 'Out of Staters'."

One futuristic individual commented, "Think this site is great. Will be happy when one can submit retirement forms, etc. via this site."

Other comments included, "GREAT looking site. Much improved over the old format. Loads fast, nice 'feel' Keep up the great work."

Wrote another, "The new format is really impressive. You provide information I've asked about but didn't know where to obtain. It is really easy to use also."

Another site visitor succinctly summed things up with: "The site had great information. Good job!"



## All Staff Bulletin Board

A bulletin board has been hung outside the Resource Library on 3A for all ORS employees to post notices of interest to other ORS staff. This employee bulletin board can be used to announce charity events and for selling personal items (and those items of ORS family members).



Guidelines that govern State Office Building postings require that no personal business advertisements, religious or political items can be posted on the board (church sponsored fund-raisers and special non-religious events are acceptable). The board can also be used as a sign-up for community

projects or volunteer services.



Items should be sent to ORS Finance & Administration Division to date and post. Items can remain up for 30 days unless a different time period is requested by the posting party.

Contact the Finance & Administration Division if you have any questions.

## Comings and goings in ORS

Effective Monday, May 3 **Greg Gates** will be working in Finance & Administration. He will assist with auditing schools and other internal audit functions.

The following new employees will be working in Information Technology & Reengineering (ITR).



*Sheila  
Patterson*

**Sheila Patterson** comes to us from Citizens Banking Corporation where she worked as a Personal Banker.

**Lori Powell** has experience in Management and Business Administration. She joins ORS from Ameritech where she managed their Customer Care Call Center.



*Lori Powell*



*Linda Sanchez*

**Linda Sanchez** comes to us from the State of Michigan Employees Local Union where she worked as an Office Administrator.

**Meg Skelley** was most recently with the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission where she worked in Research.



*Meg Skelley*

The following new employees will be working in Finance & Administration.



*Ruth Nixon*

**Ruth Nixon** has worked the last 10 years for Beckum America Corporation in Williamston as Administrative Service Coordinator.

**Michelle Beckwith** joins us from the Department of Treasury where she assisted in editing income tax returns.



*Michelle  
Beckwith*



*Nancy  
Zalewski*

**Nancy Zalewski** has been a Financial Service Representative for Michigan National Bank since 1996. In that position she processed loan applications and opened new accounts.

## Report Processing changes Divisions

On April 21, 1999 the Report Processing Unit moved from working under the Operations Division to Finance and Administration Division. This change will more closely align it with the finance functions including cash processing and the auditing of reporting units. This is part of a continuing effort to make ORS a customer focused organization.

## 1999 MIP Window

In February the *Look Out* reported Public Act 300 of 1980 was amended to allow a limited window of opportunity for about 3,000 to 5,500 eligible Public School employees to switch from the Basic Plan and enroll in the Member Investment Plan (MIP). This has been referred to as the 1999 MIP Window.

Before the 1999 MIP Window can start, statute requires the Retirement System to receive approval from the IRS that the 1999 MIP Window will not cause the plan to lose its IRS qualification. Preliminary response from the IRS has been positive, but there is a remaining issue on whether to treat the MIP buy-back contributions as tax-deferred or as after-tax contributions. ORS has asked the IRS for clarification and requested that 1999 MIP Window enrollees enjoy the same tax advantages currently available to our members who purchase service credit through the Tax-Deferred Payment (TDP) Program.

Upon final response from the IRS, the 1999 MIP Window will be open for 180 days. Approximately two weeks following the IRS response a letter will be mailed to all identified people notifying them of the 1999 MIP Window and explaining the eligibility rules.

## PC Tips and Shortcuts



Tired of trying to grab hold of that tiny little button (in the upper-right corner of your window) every time you want to maximize or shrink a window? Believe it or not, the title bar performs the same function. Best part is, it gives you a whole lot more area to grab onto!

To maximize a window that currently takes up only a portion of the screen, double-click its title bar. To size the window down again—you guessed it—double-click the title bar. Who knew?

If you have discovered a computer shortcut you think might help others, or if you have a computer problem that bugs you, pass it along to the *Look Out* staff for possible inclusion in a future issue.

### ORS Calendar for May

State Employees Board meets .....	May 6
ORS Casual Days .....	May 7, 14, 21, 28
ORS Clean-Up Day .....	May 14
State Police Board meets .....	May 20
Public School Board meets .....	May 21
EFT Statements to	
State Employees & State Police .....	May 25
Pension Paydate .....	May 25

## Ships-a-hoy, Mate

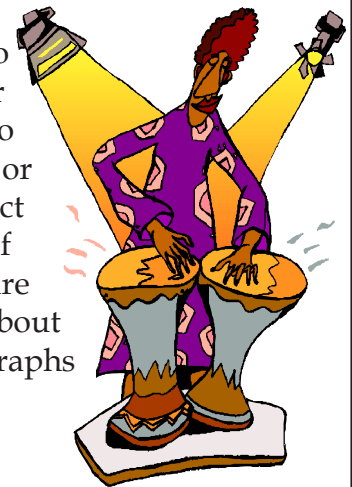
Your friendly Scramble editor is confused! Why is merchandise that's transported by truck called a "shipment", yet something sent by ship is called "cargo"? He hopes you won't be confused about this issue's Scramble and it will be smooth sailing for you.

Put on your thinking cap and unscramble it. Then discuss its meaning with your team members. Look for the unscrambled version next week on first and third floors.



In the epitome of Employee Recognition, the *Look Out* staff is requesting your help to develop a new column that will highlight individual employees and their activities outside of work. You may nominate yourself or one of your co-workers to be featured in an upcoming edition. The employee who is being "Spotlighted" will have a chance to review the information being presented before it is published.

If you would like to be "Spotlighted" or know someone who has a special talent or hobby please contact one of the editors of the *Look Out*. Be sure to include details about the person. Photographs are welcomed!



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