

ORS Look Out

Year 2000



126 Days

August 27, 1999

Volume 3, Issue 3

ORS Mission:

We deliver pensions, related benefits and services to promote the future financial security of our customers.

ORS Vision:

Fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service.

CPP passes the test of time

Recently the Common Pension Payroll (CPP) system that generates pension payments underwent the last testing to determine its Y2K readiness. The testing, called CPP Time Machine, checked the electronic scheduling process between computers at ORS, the Michigan Information Processing Center (MIPC) and the Department of Treasury.

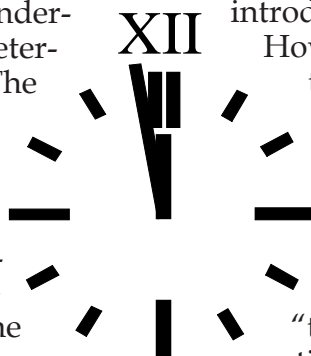
According to **Fred Covert**, this test was based on a previous test com-

pleted in October '98 when Y2K compliant programming code was introduced into the system.

However, unlike the earlier test, this testing actually changed the date on the computers.

The testing began in February and was completed on June 28.

Fred commented that "the entire project finished on-time, was consistently on-schedule, and finished under



See Time Test on page 2

New Foundation Team forges ahead

The New Foundation Team has been working very hard. The team has interviewed many members of the ORS staff, and the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) staff to help identify key business processes and sub-processes. They are also identifying relationships among the processes. This is an important step for work that is done on current information systems. The better we understand our processes, the better able we are to insure that the changes and enhancements to our systems improve our services.

The next step in this initiative is to establish roles and responsibilities, operational processes (how ORS,

ITR and ITSD work together), and metrics to reinforce the operational processes.

The initiative is an important first step in the new system information technology project. Aligning our resources, understanding our responsibilities and how we can effectively work together will help make sure we don't "pave the cart path" when we develop new systems.

Team members, **Fred Covert**, **Murphy Cutler**, **Andy Daignault**, and **Judy Simon**, with the help of **Ken Theis** and **Pat Maltby** (ITSD) are working to meet their goal of having this initiative completed by October 8th.

ORS Calendar

August

Crazy Tops & Bottoms
Day ----- 27th

September

State Employees Board
Meeting ----- 2nd
Labor Day ----- 6th
Public School Employees
Board Meeting ----- 17th
Pension Paydate ----- 25th
All Staff Meeting ----- 30th

One number, one call that's all....

ORS' vision to provide fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service has just been made better with the planned unification of all the 800 numbers.

With this plan to access retirement information or services for any of the four retirement systems, our customers will soon be able to call one number to interact with either

a live voice or automated telephone system. The one number, one call is designed to have script menu options to inform the caller of available retirement system subjects to select or if during normal business hours a live voice will intercept the call.

Since 1995, toll-free automated response telephone



systems have made generic retirement information available to Public School members 24-hours a day. In 1997, live toll-free interaction access between customers and staff

during business hours was made available with the activation of the Customers Information Center (CIC).

After a comprehensive study, a recommendation

was made to consolidate all automated lines (Fast Facts, SERS Info Line and CIC) to the CIC's 1-800 number (1-800-381-5111). New scripts will be developed to meet the needs of the Judges and State Police Retirement Systems. Tentatively these changes are scheduled to occur by January 1, 2000. By consolidating these two systems, continu-

ous retirement information and services are provided 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with better customer service and efficiency. In addition, consolidation maximizes the opportunity for live interaction between a customer and staff, as well as eliminates the need for a customer to know separate numbers to call for retirement information. Thus, best value is added for our customers when ORS personally responds to the customers' needs and expectations.

ORS strives constantly to provide exceptional customer service for today and tomorrow. A goal for the next millennium is for our customers (from the four retirement systems) to use one number to make one call and that's all for complete retirement information and services anytime and any day.

Time test

Continued from Page 1

budget." He credits the successful results to a significant amount of planning and the hard work and great attitudes of those involved in the process. ORS staff involved in this process were: **Laurie Abraham, Colleen Daley, Denise Hansen, Margo Keeler, Sylvia Maat, Dick Pennington, Lisa Reed and Norma Simon** with assistance from **Joyce Buchanan, Lisa Naccarato and Michael Zingsheim**. The

team also included Information Technology Service Division (ITSD) staff **Roger Beaton, Ann McCort, Donna Sivaraman, and Diane Wagner**. Congratulations to all for your hard work and success!

Thought for the Day

Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.

- Winston Churchill



Published by:
State of Michigan
Department of Management
& Budget
Office of Retirement Services
P.O. Box 30171
Lansing, MI 48909-7671

Chris DeRose, Director
Rosemary Baker, Matt Beha and
Robert Glennon, Editors

Printed by Authority of 1984 P.A. 431
Total number of copies printed: 350
Total cost: \$59.36 Cost per copy: \$0.17

Judges system is Y2K compliant

The database that keeps track of the Judges Retirement System for approximately 600 members was recently updated to be Y2K compliant. The software was updated from Access 2.0, which was not certified as Year 2000 compliant. The information was also made available to authorized parties via the network. The previous software was only accessible through a single computer.

The project began in November 1998 and was finished before the expected completion date of July 16, 1999.

Audrey Smith from ITR was the ORS lead on this project with team members **Dan Norberg**, **Patty Wethy**, **Carol Wheaton**, **Darlene Workman** and ITSD Analysts **Tom Shively** and **Srinivas Trichinapally**. Thanks to all those involved in accomplishing this large task!

Administrative Hearings

In the November 6, 1998 edition of the *Look Out*, we reported that the Administrative Hearing backlog of cases needing to be scheduled for hearings had been eliminated. Cases were finally being scheduled within 90 days of the hearing request. The number of cases in the hearing process at that time was approximately 180. Today, cases are still being scheduled within 90 days unless the petitioner, attorney or Attorney General request an extension on time. We currently have 59 cases in the hearing process (50 State Employees, 9 Public Schools, 0 State Police, 0 Judges.) Ten more cases are scheduled to go before the State Employees Retirement Board on September 22nd.

Terry Jacobson, Administrative Hearing Coordinator, stated, "This result is due to the reengineering of the disability process, and the hard work of many people including the disability staff, their supervisor, **Pam Kibby**, Director's office staff, Attorney General's staff, Administrative Law Judge, **Betty Schwartz** and the Retirement Boards." Kudos to all involved in this process.

Claims processing sets new records

Applications for Public School retirements with effective dates of July 1, 1999, received by July 1 this year are up by more than 400. Even with this 11% increase Claims Processing was able to place 92.4% of these applicants on payroll within 60 days, exceeding their goal of 90%.

Four thousand retirees were added to the payroll in July and August. **Pam Kibby**, Claims Processing Supervisor, said this was the largest combined payroll ever and the largest August payroll ever. This success is coupled with the fact that the Claims Processing error rate decreased from previous months. Congratulations to all involved for a job well done!

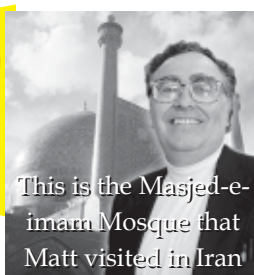
ORS encourages EFTs

Pension recipients who still receive a printed warrant will also receive an application to sign up for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) with their September check. Here are just a few of the benefits our customers enjoy when using EFT:

- No risk of check being lost or stolen in the mail
- Funds are deposited timely
- Funds are deposited directly into member accounts even when they are sick, on vacation, or traveling
- No more waiting in line to deposit a pension check
- Members still receive a pension statement
- Recipients are less likely to have a problem with a payment

EFT also benefits the Retirement System because EFT payments are less costly to process than check payments. According to **Darlene Workman** of Finance and Administration, it costs 55 cents to print a warrant, and less than a penny to process an EFT. Full implementation of EFT could result in saving thousands of dollars each year.

SPOTlight On Matt Beha



In spite of the horrible puns, your friendly Scramble editor really does love words. In fact, **Matt Beha** was an English teacher for two years. As a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer he taught high school English as a foreign language in Ghuchan, a town in northeastern Iran.

A circus from India came to Ghuchan one day and the Iranian teachers invited Matt to the show. It was obvious this was no typical circus when the band struck up "Ave Maria" to a rock 'n roll beat. A man stepped into the ring, set down two buckets, and began drinking large quantities of water from one. Then he reached into the other bucket, taking out a two-foot-long black snake. He folded the snake up and with the help of more water, swallowed it. After consuming four or five snakes, the performer brought them back up into one of the now empty buckets. Matt says he never expects to see a circus act to top that one.

The second year he lived in a larger city, Mashad, where a gold-domed mosque was the focal point of the city. Matt traveled through much of Iran and saw many beautiful mosques, some 400 years old and older.

During 25 months in Iran, Matt learned enough of the language, Farsi, to court a bride. He and his wife were married in Iran. Upon returning to the U.S., Matt resumed his career in communications, working for Mutual of Omaha and several other large insurance companies. In 1981 the family moved to the Lansing area where Matt worked for Jackson National Life prior to joining the State. Before coming to ORS Matt worked for the State Board of Education and was editor of the Michigan Women's Commission newsletter.

Comings & Goings in ORS



Amanda Schoeler

Amanda Schoeler is working in Finance & Administration. She attended Grand Rapids Community College where she played softball, and will be transferring to LCC this fall.

Elaine Lewter has joined the ORS staff as the new Deferred Compensation/Defined Contribution Administrator. She previously worked for Copper Mountain Trust and Key Bank in Oregon.



Elaine Lewter

Steve Larson's last day was Friday, August 20th. He left ORS to attend training at the FBI Academy in Quantico.

Jennifer Schuler's last day was Thursday, August 19. She accepted a position with Coca Cola as a sales representative.

Put on your thinking cap and solve this Scramble!

Halloween is just two months away and your friendly Scramble editor is already thinking about what costume he can devise this year. Once he let his imagination run wild and came up with a cowboy costume made out of newspapers. He was a rustler, obviously. This year he might go as a electron, but he's not positive yet.

Solving this issue's Scramble is not rocket science. Just use a little imagination. And if you get stuck, look for the de-scrambled posters next week.

