



May 26, 2006

Volume 10, Issue
10

In This Issue...

- ORS nominated for Medstat innovator award
- Profiles of excellence
- EPC expands
- Summer styles are a go
- FORE!!
- Common courtesies
- EMPAC shuffles
- Comings & Goings
- EMPAC photo contest results
- All-Staff Meeting questions and answers
- The history of Memorial Day

Calendar

May

Memorial Day 29

June

Public School Employees Board Meeting 8

ORS Tiger Baseball Game 13

Blood Drive 21

State Employees Board Meeting 29

ORS nominated for Medstat innovator award

Trailblazer ... pioneer ... groundbreaker ... are just some of the words used to describe an innovator. *Innovator* describes the work ORS did to implement Medicare Part D.

You may be aware the nationwide implementation of Medicare Part D prompted a lot of questions and concerns from many Medicare members. In our implementation, we tried to deliver information to our retirees up front and alleviate the confusion. Our staff along with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) call center handled our member questions, and BCBSM held statewide meetings as well to deliver information. Probably the biggest help of all was that we automatically enrolled our members. Another plus is that it will lower costs to Michigan public schools.

Because of our efforts, ORS was nominated this spring for the third annual Medstat Innovator Award. This is a national award that "honors organizations that tackle the challenges facing the healthcare system with creative, scientifically sound solutions," said Medstat Vice President Carol Diephuis.

Medstat is a healthcare information business that helps employers determine the cost and quality of their healthcare programs. They also provide research services for managing the cost and quality of healthcare.

ORS was one of six nominees that included Alcoa, the Georgia Department of Community Health, Keystone Mercy Health Plan (a Pennsylvania Medicaid HMO), Liberty Mutual, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas.

"To have ORS nominated for this award is a huge honor," said Benefit Plan Design BPO **Brian McLane**. "Making policy is easy. Planning and carrying out the policy, making it work is the hard part. There was a huge amount of effort from a number of people that made us successful in this initiative."

The award was presented last month in Phoenix. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas



This Memorial Day, instead of simply seeing it as a three-day weekend, take time to honor the people for which Memorial Day is celebrated. Attend the community parades held throughout the weekend to honor our war veterans, and join in the National Moment of Remembrance (read *The history of Memorial Day* article below for details).

July	
Independence Day	4
State Police Board Meeting	20
National Hot Dog Day	23
Public School Employees Board Meeting	27

On the Horizon

- ORS Golf Outing
August 15
- ORS Picnic
August 22
- Fall All-Staff Meeting
October 24

Quick Links

- [Email the LookOut staff](#)
- [LookOut Archives](#)
- [ORS Member Website](#)
- [ORS Employer Website](#)
- [Policies and Procedures](#)

Commonly Used Acronyms

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (<i>Consists of the EPC, BPOs, and BPLs</i>)
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process 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

was the winner for its work in reorganizing its Preferred Provider Organization to achieve a more affordable network of providers.

Profiles of excellence

The winners of ORS's very first Employee Excellence Awards were recently announced. However, if you haven't had a chance to work with these people you may not know them very well. To help you out, each of the winners answered a few questions, both serious and silly, so you can get to know them better.

Pam Kenney (Living the Values award)

What was the best thing about winning the ORS Employee Excellence award?

I guess it's being nominated by my peer(s). I am honored that my coworkers feel that I represent these values. I will certainly strive to continue living the values and hope that it will encourage others to do the same.

How many pets do you feed each day?

Well, let's see. There's Tater, an 86-pound lab-shepherd mix, and Sam, an 8-pound toy poodle in the dog category. Then we have Boots, a male tiger cat that rules over all three. Actually, Boots allows all of us to live in his house.

What is your favorite vacation destination and why?

Wow. There are so many! I have enjoyed everywhere I've been, just because I love to travel. It's exciting to see new places, meet new people and do new things. Last August, I spent a week in Washington DC with a large group of family members and had a fantastic time. Spending time with family from all over the country and being in a new place was the best part. I would love to go to Israel, Alaska, and go back to Hawaii.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

Grow up? As Peter Pan says ... I won't grow up. I will never wear a tie or a serious expression in the middle of July. If growing up means it would be beneath my dignity to climb a tree. I'll never grow up, never grow up, never grow uuup! Not me!

If you could give your ORS Employee Excellence award to one person, who would that be and why?

There are so many people here that I work with and each one shines in their own way. It would be very difficult to single out just one person. Just to name a few: Mary Anderson, Joy Bartell, Phyllis Bradley, Fred Covert, Ed Helzerman, Raini Majeske, Deb McGregor, Lois Musbach, Tim Simpson, Joyce Weber, and more. Why, because each in their own way lives the values. Helping internal and external customers, keeping their coworkers motivated and positive, and going above and beyond what is asked of them.

Judy McLean (Customer Service award)

What was the best thing about winning the ORS Employee Excellence award?

During the all-staff meeting I was looking at the list of nominated names and chose whom I thought should be the winner. Then they said MY name.

What is your favorite vacation destination and why?

Hawaii—because its beautiful.

Do you have a favorite ORS tale to tell?

One of my coworkers offered to fax a document for me. He faxed it to my desk phone number instead of the number on the coversheet. When he came back to tell

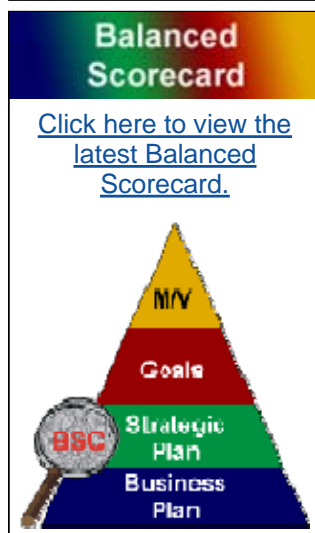


Pam Kenney



Judy McLean

	Council (<i>Anthony, Chris, Kathy, Laurie, Phil, and Tim</i>)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement Services
PS	Process Support
T&T	Tools and Technology



me that it wouldn't go through, it took a while before I stopped laughing to tell him what had happened.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

Retire!

If you could give your ORS Employee Excellence award to one person, who would that be and why?

Dan Harry. He quietly does his job without complaint regardless of what is thrown at him. He is always willing to assist both internal and external customers.

Alice Semevolos (Everyday Hero award)

What was the best thing about winning the ORS Employee Excellence award?

It feels like a thank you.

How does winning this award affect your professional goals?

Obviously I need to work harder at keeping a low profile!

What is your favorite vacation destination and why?

Charleston, South Carolina, because that is where my granddaughters are. However that will change to Myrtle Beach soon, since they are moving. Both are great places.

Do you have a favorite ORS tale to tell?

Since Phil mentioned this in the all staff meeting I can elaborate When Phil started at ORS, I was working as the lead worker in the Records Unit. At that time all new employees were obligated to work two weeks in the records unit to give them an overall view of the kind of incoming correspondence received, and the functions of the various work units in ORS. Most new employees resented having to work as a file clerk for two weeks, and it showed in their attitude and attendance. Phil was one of the very few who actually showed up every day and did everything asked of him. He was pleasant and cooperative during the whole two weeks (thanks, Phil). I trained a lot of people back in those days, and always felt that the two-week assignment in the Records Unit brought out the true character of a new employee.

If you could give your ORS Employee Excellence award to one person, who would that be and why?

Kris Morris, and not just because she nominated me! Her supervisory style is straightforward and direct and at the same time she is cheerful and fun. Kris makes herself available when I need to see her, but otherwise she lets me do my work. I can't tell you how much I appreciate that.

Kerrie Vanden Bosch (Leadership award)

What was the best thing about winning the ORS Employee Excellence award?

I appreciate the fact that I was nominated and selected for this award by my peers. It is one thing to be recognized by your superiors, but it is another thing when the people who are down in the trenches with you think enough of what you're doing to want to call it out to others. Thanks, peers!

What is your favorite vacation destination and why?

My favorite place that I have ever been is Cinque Terra, in the Italian Riviera—it's an Italian National Park made up of five tiny little towns connected by a trail that goes through terraced vineyards along the rocky Mediterranean coast. Natural beauty, food, hiking, food, beaches, food ... Cinque Terra has it all (and they have good food too)!



Alice Semevolos



Kerrie Vanden Bosch

Who put the ram in the ram-a-lam-a-ding-dong?

John Farrar and Barry Gibb, the same people who put the boom in the shoo bop shoo wadda wadda yippity boom da boom.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

Who says I have to grow up? Is that negotiable?

If you could give your ORS Employee Excellence award to one person, who would that be and why?

I would give my award to Laurie Hill. While I'm REALLY not trying to "kiss up" to the boss, she truly has been a great example to me of the kind of leader I want to be—an authentic, caring, logically-thinking person who is constantly trying to improve herself, who cares about others as people, and who inspires people to WANT to produce excellent work.

Jon Seeger (Innovator award)**What was the best thing about winning the ORS Employee Excellence award?**

It was nice to be recognized. There are many people at ORS that are just as deserving.

How many pets do you feed each day?

Nine. One cat, one dog, and seven goldfish.

How does winning this award affect your professional goals?

I try to do the best I can every day. It confirms that you are doing something right when you are recognized for your efforts.

What is your favorite vacation destination and why?

Mackinaw Island. In the evening after most of the tourists leave, it feels like going back in time over 100 years.

Do you have a favorite ORS tale to tell?

How the office pulled together during the Early Out.

Who put the ram in the ram-a-lam-a-ding-dong?

??

What do you want to do when you grow up?

I never want to grow up.

If you could give your ORS Employee Excellence award to one person, who would that be and why?

Since it is the innovator award I would want to give it to the person who developed the insulin pump. My daughter is using it now. It has made it much easier to control her diabetes. It was very hard to have to give a six-year-old four shots of insulin per day.

You're on a selection committee

... and you are reviewing nominations for employee excellence. Which one are you more likely to award?

"He exhibits a professional demeanor when conveying potentially unfavorable information or attempting to correct undesired behaviors."

— OR —

"When I make a mistake, he tells me in a way that doesn't hurt my feelings but still is straight and to-the-point."



Jon Seeger

The lesson? *Tell your story with plain language.* It tells a reviewer you are sincere and your nomination is heartfelt. Fancy, stuffy language only impresses fancy, stuffy people.

Remember, nominations for DMB Excellence Awards are due June 9!

EPC expands

Congratulations to **Anthony Estell** and **Kathy Tober**, project leads, who have joined the EPC during this transition year. In their new roles, Anthony and Kathy have taken on additional responsibility and accountability as far as closing down the project and establishing a “normal” state of operation. As ORS attempts to broaden opportunities and broaden inclusion, the EPC felt it important and logical to expand their group to include Anthony and Kathy.



Anthony Estell



Kathy Tober

Summer styles are a go

Don't forget—the summer dress code will go into effect on Tuesday, May 30, and will end on Friday, September 1. What does this mean? It means that for the next three months there are a few minor changes to the regular dress code that we uphold each day; hosiery is optional and capri-style pants are allowed.

Please keep in mind that all other appearance guidelines remain in place and that we must all dress appropriately for a business environment.



[Click here to review the dress code policy.](#)

FORE!!

It's time to mark your calendars for the 16th (not quite annual) ORS Golf Outing. This year's four-person scramble will be held at the Grand Ledge Country Club on Tuesday, August 15, with a 12:30 shotgun start.

Following a familiar format, the outing will feature lunch at 11:30 a.m., a couple aimlessly wandering beverage carts with complimentary pops and water, dinner with all the fix'ns and a chance to win a variety of prizes. And, of course, 18 holes of golf! Watch for details in future issues of the *LookOut*. Please contact **Bill Motz** or **Fred Covert** if you would like to help with the outing.



Common courtesies

You're meeting someone in one of our common areas. When you arrive, you find spills and litter on the tables. Who left this mess for someone else to clean up?? Certainly not one of your ORS coworkers!

Wherever you meet, whether a breakout area, the resource library, Central Perk, Crossroads, or one of the conference rooms, please take responsibility for leaving the room clean and ready for the next users. Several of the conference rooms have cleaning materials in the cabinets so you can wipe down the tables.

We've just finished cleaning up our personal work areas. Let's pitch in to keep our common areas clean as well.

EMPAC shuffles

EMPAC, which is comprised of one representative from each process, recently said goodbye to **Jim Rademacher** and **Peggy Shinn**. Because the two had been assigned temporarily to the reengineering project they are technically CED staff, and since CED already has a representative on the committee (**Pam Kenney**), they were no longer able to fulfill their term.

Thank you Jim and Peggy for all of your hard work and dedication. Stay tuned to future issues of the *LookOut* for an announcement and welcome to the new EMPAC members.

Comings & Goings

Welcome to **Jessica Cain**, who is working in Process Support. Jessica has an associate's degree from LCC and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in business marketing and management. Outside of work she enjoys spending time with her two younger brothers, Joe and John. Jessica has two cats and loves to read and cheer on her favorite football and baseball teams.



Jessica Cain



Brandi Moore



Heather Dyer

CSC welcomes **Brandi Moore**. Brandi has studied psychology and medical ethics and terminology with LCC and is currently attending Career Quest to specialize in Microsoft software. She previously served as manager at AmeriHost and is also currently working with a local Marathon station as an advisor in sales. She is a mother of three children (ages five, four, and eleven months) and enjoys reading, writing poetry, and crocheting in her spare time.

BPD welcomes **Heather Dyer**. She received a BA in criminal justice from MSU several years ago and is currently working on her MBA in accounting at Davenport University. Heather has been married for 16 years to husband Ken; they have two children—son TJ is eleven and daughter Meghan is six. Heather is also an animal lover. They have three dogs, three cats, a ball python (which belongs to her son), and a tropical fish tank. In her spare time she enjoys reading, running/working out, and spending time at her cottage with friends and family.

BPD bid farewell to **Duane Gladstone** on Friday, May 19. Also, PS said goodbye to **Leigh Ann Shaver**, who left ORS to pursue an out-of-state move.

Monica Velasquez of BPD is moving to Wisconsin. Monica is making the move with her boyfriend and is excited to explore new surroundings. Her last day is June 1. We wish her the best!



Monica Velasquez

EMPAC photo contest results



The photo of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Montreal by **Sean Evans** took first place in the EMPAC photo contest. The contest brought in almost 50 pictures ranging from a “hypnotized” frog, a bug on a cute nose, to a lighthouse, firefighters, and a majestic swan. **Catherine Jones** took the second place photo, her daughter being talked to by a wrestling official, and third place went to **Julie Myszak** for the photo of her son in the leaves. Sean received a \$15 gas card; Catherine and Julie got \$10 gas cards. Congratulations to the winners and thank you for all the submissions.

All-Staff Meeting questions and answers

Answers to questions that were presented at the ORS All-Staff Meeting on May 2 have been compiled, along with answers to questions that were asked during the All-Staff Survey. [Click here to view all of the questions and answers.](#)

The history of Memorial Day

Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans — the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) — established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead. General John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day should be observed on May 30. It is believed that date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country.

Gen. Logan’s order for his posts to decorate graves “with the choicest flowers of springtime” urged: “We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. ... Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic.”

The first large observance
was held that year at

--

Arlington National Cemetery. The crowd was about the same size as at today's observances, about 5,000 people. Small American flags were placed on each grave — a tradition followed at many national cemeteries today.

The ceremonies centered around the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of General Robert E. Lee. Various Washington officials, including General and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, presided over the ceremonies. After speeches, children from the Soldiers' and Sailors'

Orphan Home and members of GAR made their way through the cemetery, strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves, reciting prayers and singing hymns.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held throughout the nation. Most state legislatures passed proclamations designating the day, and the Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities.

Declared a national holiday

After World War I the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated the last Monday in May.

National moment of remembrance

To ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten, in 2000 Congress passed "The National Moment of Remembrance Act," creating the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance. The commission's charter is to "encourage the people of the United States to give something back to their country, which provides them so much freedom and opportunity" by encouraging and coordinating commemorations of Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance.

The National Moment of Remembrance is at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day, when all Americans are encouraged to pause for a minute of silence to remember and honor the more than 1.1 million Americans who have died in service to their nation. As Moment of Remembrance founder Carmella LaSpada states: "It's a way we can all help put the memorial back in Memorial Day."

Note: Images and information presented in this article was taken from the following websites:

- [Department of Veteran's Affairs](#)
- [The History Channel](#)

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.

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.

The *LookOut* is published by the Office of Retirement Services, Department of Management and Budget, State of Michigan
Director: Chris DeRose
Edited by the Communications Staff, Customer Education

Thanks for reading!!