



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 11 – Walla Walla County

Barry Jenkins, President

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Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 14th, 2024
Meeting Time: 11:30 AM
Meeting Place: Yan's China Buffet
Meeting Address: 1618 Plaza Way, Walla Walla, WA 99362

We've sprung forward through April, and you are invited to the May meeting of your **Walla Walla Chapter of the Retired Public Employees Council**. This will be the last regular lunch meeting before our summer recess, so come and enjoy lunch and the stimulating conversation of your fellow retirees.

Our chapter's get-together is on **Tuesday, May 14th starting at 11:30 AM**. We will meet at **Yan's China Buffet, located next to Safeway at 1618 Plaza Way, Walla Walla**.

GUEST SPEAKER:

The program for May will be a presentation by **Steven Gamble, RPEC District #4 Board Member**. In addition to Walla Walla County, Steve represents South-Eastern Washington from Yakima to Asotin counties. As part of the Executive Board, he is knowledgeable about the current operation of the Retired Public Employee Council and how to get the most out of our membership.

Steve would like to talk about the strategic plan approved by the RPEC Executive Board in November, and about what we can do to increase membership in the Walla Walla area. He would also like to discuss ideas about how to increase participation/attendance at chapter meetings. If you have any questions about our state organization, this will be the perfect opportunity to voice your thoughts.

Guest speakers are still being recruited for our meetings. Suggestions for future programs are always welcome. We try to have informative subjects that are community-oriented and of interest to retirees like us. Also, we typically have either a raffle or RPEC Bingo at each meeting.

NEWS OF YOUR CHAPTER:

At our April meeting, we had no guest speaker, but we had plenty of business, including the election of 3 delegates to attend the State RPEC Convention in September. Our chapter is allotted two more delegates, so please let me know if you are interested in attending. We also reported on the 3% PERS 1/TRS 1 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) signed by the Governor and effective with the July pension check. We voted on our officers for 2024-2025. The slate includes:

Barry Jenkins, President
Mike Vinti, Vice President
Ron Locati, Secretary
Chet Smith, Treasurer

Trustees:
Vernon Elsasser
Jeanette Lightfoot
Vivian Antes

At our May meeting, the nominations will be ratified, and the officers sworn in for the next 12 months. Please attend the meeting to support the new officers.

Sadly, we had another member pass away recently. In March, our chapter lost **Norman Thomas of Dayton**.

We especially enjoy and need new members coming to our meetings, so if you're new to our group, please come and introduce yourself! Also, there is such a thing as a **free lunch** for new members at your first meeting.

Don't forget to invite other retired public employees that you know. If you get two friends to sign up, you can win a check for \$84 (the cost of dues for a year)! *There is no limit to how many members one person can recruit and receive rewards!*

Finally, planning for a summer picnic will be on the agenda at this meeting. If you would be interested in organizing and attending a picnic with us, please bring your ideas on May 14th.

Questions? Call President Barry Jenkins at 509-529-6372 or 509-240-2844.

May 2024 Executive Director's Report

Extend a warm welcome to newcomers

Each year, RPEC works in tandem with AFSCME Retirees on a mass mailing to retirees who have yet to join RPEC. We are beginning to process the new member applications and expect that new members may be joining your chapter's summertime activities. Extend a warm welcome to new members and help plug them into your local advocacy efforts. In addition, we welcome members to attend the Zoom meetings held this month for RPEC's statewide committees, workgroups, and Executive Board. (See events below. Also see calendar at www.rpecwa.org.)

Get to know your legislators and those running for office

This summer, your chapter will be holding outdoor events and will be scheduling meetings with current state and federal legislators and those who are running for office. If you are new to RPEC or have never taken the opportunity to get involved in our advocacy work, now's your chance! The summertime events and meetings are an ideal time for you to build critical relationships that will help us achieve our legislative priorities (available in PDF form at www.rpecwa.org). If you have never met with a legislator, don't worry. Many members of your chapter have been doing legislative advocacy around RPEC's priorities for years. They will help you and can answer your questions. In retirement, we have opportunities to grow and learn new skills. Many seasoned RPEC members, and our staff at the Council Office, are available to help you gain confidence in communicating with legislators. We need all our members joining our advocacy efforts, so that we can be successful in expanding and preserving your retirement benefits at state and federal levels.

Federal Advocacy

Call to action on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82): If you have not already done so, please join your fellow RPEC members and AFSCME Retiree chapters nationwide in urging Congress to pass this important piece of legislation, which repeals the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). These two provisions have unfairly penalized public service retirees for decades. RPEC's legislative priorities are consistent with this legislation. AFSCME Retirees has created an [easy form](#) that will send a letter of support for this legislation to members of the Washington state congressional delegation. Learn more at: <https://act.afscme.org/letters/tell-your-representative-repeal-gpo-and-wep>.

Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Approves New Pharmacy Benefit for UMP Classic Medicare

On April 11th, the PEB Board approved a change to the pharmacy benefit for Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare. Beginning in January 2025, the pharmacy benefit will be a PEBB-managed Part D plan. This change is expected to lower premiums by several hundred dollars per month for many retirees. You can read more about the new benefit in RPEC's spring membership newsletter, which members will receive by mail very soon. RPEC will be partnering with the Health Care Authority (HCA) on an extensive member education effort in advance of open enrollment, which is held November 1-30. Visit www.hca.wa.gov for more details.

Convention 2024, Sept. 24-26, Wenatchee Convention Center

Are you interested in serving as a chapter delegate to RPEC's biennial Convention in September? You do not need to be an officer or chapter committee leader to attend. Any member in good standing is eligible to serve as a delegate. If you are interested in being considered for your chapter's delegation, contact your chapter president. Delegates are chosen by election at a chapter meeting. The registration deadline is July 1. If you are selected to represent your chapter, your Convention registration fee, travel, and lodging will be covered by your chapter. Guests may also attend at their own expense. Visit www.rpecwa.org for more details or contact your chapter president.

State Advocacy

The Legislative Update Calls are held monthly through December. The calls are held the first Friday of the month from 2-3 p.m. Details are available at www.rpecwa.org.

Partner Events

The Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) is hosting a [regional meeting](#) in Las Vegas on Wednesday, June 5 through Thursday, June 6. The \$150 registration fee covers attendance at informational workshops and plenaries, a reception, one lunch and one breakfast. The regional meeting will take place at the Westgate Hotel. ARA has negotiated an \$89 nightly room rate at the host hotel with a special meeting code. More details are available at <https://retiredamericans.org/2024-regionals/>.

AFSCME Retirees will be hosting its annual meeting in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel from Saturday, August 10 through Monday, August 12. The annual meeting aligns with the AFSCME International Convention, which will take place August 12-16. RPEC is entitled to send two Executive Committee officers as delegates. Chapters may send members as guests at the chapter's expense. Guests may attend the International Convention as observers. The annual meeting and Convention call details will be available next month. Save these dates!

Upcoming Events

Visit www.rpecwa.org for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

- May 6 Executive Board Meeting (9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)
- May 7 Executive Board Meeting, Strategic Planning (9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.)
- May 8 Public Service Recognition Week (at Heritage Park, Olympia)
- May 9 Public Employees Benefits Board (9 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- May 9 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- May 17 Leadership Training Registration Deadline
- May 20 Political Action Committee (PAC, 10 a.m.)
- May 21 Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- May 23 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- May 24 Pension Policy Workgroup (tentative, 10 a.m.)
- May 27 Council Office closed, Memorial Day
- June 5-6 ARA Western Regional Meeting, Las Vegas, NV