



## Retired Public Employees Council SPOKANE AREA CHAPTER 13

### NEWS MAY 2024

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**IMPORTANT:** Spokane Area Chapter meets the second Thursday of every month, except that there are no meetings in July or January. Our meeting place is the **Longhorn Barbecue, 7611 W Sunset Highway, Spokane.** **Upcoming meeting dates are May 9 and June 13, 2024.** We meet at 11 am for lunch and the meeting starts at 12 noon. At the May meeting, we will open nominations for delegates to our RPEC Biennial State Convention to be held September 24 through 26, 2024, in Wenatchee at the Wenatchee Convention Center. You may nominate yourself or ask someone else to nominate you. The election of delegates and alternates will be held at the June meeting. The only requirement to be a delegate is to be a member in good standing (up to date in paying your dues). Members are encouraged to consider serving as a delegate. We especially invite and encourage those members who do not live close to Spokane and may not attend meetings to consider becoming a delegate.

**WHY A CONVENTION?** Our Convention is the time when members can affect the policies of our organization. Our Convention is where and when members, through their elected representatives—the delegates—have full power to direct policies of this organization, including all areas of our activities. The Constitution clearly states that RPEC delegates have this power when in Convention. We exercise this power by submitting resolutions for action, considering them in Committees, and voting to amend, accept, or reject said resolutions. Delegates also elect by ballot our Executive Board members for a term of two years.

This year, the Convention begins with the Committee meetings on Tuesday, September 24, from 12 noon to 5 pm. The General Session begins at 9:00 am on Wednesday, September 25, and 9:00 am on Thursday, September 26, 2024. The Convention ends at 12 noon on September 26. Delegates are responsible for their own hotel reservations and paying for them. The chapter reimburses delegates for expenses based upon a travel voucher and receipts including hotel room, mileage at 50¢ a mile, and meals outside of those already provided as part of the convention. Included in the Convention registration fee, which the Chapter pays for each delegate (\$150), are three meals, lunch, and banquet on Wednesday, September 25 and breakfast on Thursday, September 26. You may bring a guest, however, their meals must be ordered and paid for in advance. \$139 for all three meals, or \$43 for lunch, \$65 for banquet, and \$35 for breakfast. Or, alternatively, \$150 for all three meals and a Convention packet.

At each Convention, we are entertained by great music. Last Convention, the band playing after the banquet enticed many up to dance and we had a very good time.

More information for delegates: The host hotel is the Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel at 201 N. Wenatchee Avenue, Wenatchee. A block of rooms has been reserved at the rate of \$116 plus tax (single or double) for September 24 Tuesday and September 25, Wednesday. Please follow these steps to reserve your rooms. All delegates are responsible for their own reservations and payment. Again, you will be reimbursed by the chapter for Convention expenses with receipts. The hotel telephone number is (509) 662-1234 and their email is [fom@wenatcheecenter.com](mailto:fom@wenatcheecenter.com). Tell them you are with the Retired Public Employees Council of Washington Convention. Make your reservations early to be guaranteed a room; the deadline is September 8.

**LOCAL LEGISLATURE:** Third Legislative District Senator Andy Billig has decided not to seek re-election, and longtime 3<sup>rd</sup> District Representative Marcus Riccelli has announced his intention to file for 3<sup>rd</sup> District Senator. This leaves an open seat in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District for which more than one person has stated they intend to file. Senator Billig, Representative Ormsby and Representative Riccelli have been very supportive of our (RPEC's) issues and voted for legislation which favorably affects our benefits. RPEC may make endorsements of candidates and may donate money toward their campaigns depending on candidate interviews. We will discuss this and other issues at our membership meetings.

On behalf of the officers of our Chapter, again we invite you to take part in our regular meetings. Thank you for your membership.

In Solidarity,

Gail Spaeth, President, Spokane Area Chapter RPEC

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### **April 2024 Executive Director's Report**

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

Are you interested in serving as a chapter delegate to RPEC's biennial Convention? You do not need to be an officer or chapter committee leader to attend. Any member in good standing is eligible to serve as delegate. If you are interested in being considered for your chapter's delegation to Convention, contact your chapter president. Delegates are chosen by election at a chapter meeting. If you are selected to represent your chapter, your Convention registration fee and lodging will be covered by your chapter. Guests may also attend at their own expense. The registration fee is \$150, which covers the Convention packet and all meals. The Convention hotel is the Coast Wenatchee. The RPEC rate is \$116.00 per night before taxes and fees. Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for more details or contact your chapter president.

#### **Federal Advocacy**

**Call to action on The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023:** If you have not already done so, please join your fellow RPEC members and AFSCME Retiree chapters nationwide in urging Congress to oppose The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 (H.R. 5779). If this legislation is approved, your federal benefits will be at risk. [The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 \(H.R. 5779\)](#) will create a 16-member fiscal commission to search for ways to

reduce the national deficit and balance the national budget. Funding for Social Security and Medicare will be targeted for cuts. **Call 844-331-0441 today! Tell Congress to vote NO on this bill and similar proposals calling for fiscal commissions that aim to reduce your hard-earned retirement benefits.** A detailed [position paper](#) about the proposed debt commission is available at <https://retiredamericans.org>.

**Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) To Vote on Potential New Pharmacy Benefit, April 11**

On April 11, the PEB Board will act on a resolution that will change the pharmacy benefit for Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare. RPEC's Legislative Committee supports this change, as it will lower monthly premiums for most plan subscribers. The medical benefits in the plan will remain unchanged. The new pharmacy benefit will continue to be administered by Moda to provide continuity of service and care for retirees. By making this plan more affordable, the new benefit, if adopted at the April PEB Board meeting, will help to ensure that an employer-managed plan remains in the mix of healthcare plan options available to public sector retirees. Currently, all but two plans are privatized. Preserving traditional Medicare continues to be a key federal priority for RPEC, in addition to preserving these options for the public sector retirees in Washington. Members are encouraged to attend the April 11 meeting and offer comments during the Public Comment period. Visit [www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov) for more details.

**State Advocacy**

Beginning this month, the Legislative Update Calls will be held monthly, the first Friday of each month. Please join us on April 5 from 2-3 p.m. Details are available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

**Council Welcomes New Team Member**

Jane Hewitt joined RPEC in mid-March as our new Finance and Operations Specialist. Jane brings more than 40 years of relevant work experience to RPEC. She is married with grandchildren, originally hails from Great Britain, and is an animal lover with three rescue pets. Jane can be reached at [jane.hewitt@rpecwa.org](mailto:jane.hewitt@rpecwa.org). Please give her a warm welcome to RPEC!

**Upcoming Events**

Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

- April 19 Pension Policy Workgroup (10 a.m.)
- April 25 Membership Committee (10 a.m.)
- April 25 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- May 3 Legislative Update Call (2:00 p.m.)
- May 6 Executive Board Meeting (9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)
- May 7 Executive Board Meeting, Strategic Planning (9:00-12:30 p.m.)
- May 8 Public Service Recognition Week (Heritage Park, Olympia)
- May 9 Public Employees Benefits Board (9 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- May 9 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)