



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 17 – Lewis County

Kathie Mills, President: (360) 219-3779

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Meeting Date: Wednesday, August 6th, 2025
Meeting Time: 11:30 AM
Meeting Place: Borst Park
Meeting Address: 2020 Borst Ave, Centralia, WA

Hello fellow Chapter 17 members,

Wednesday, August 6, 2025, is our Annual Picnic starting at 11:30 am potluck lunch. RPEC Chapter 17 will provide fried chicken and soda, the rest will be provided via potluck. We have invited RPEC Associate Director Derek VanSpor, Membership Coordinator Jakob Canup, and Finance & Operations Specialist Jane Hewitt, to join us.

We start with lunch at 11:30 am and there will be no meeting – just food, conversation and relaxation. We will be glad to answer any and all questions.

Please come to Borst Park at 2020 Borst Ave, Centralia, WA, Exit 82 on I-5. We will meet at Shelter #1, just behind Kitchen #1. Bring chairs if you like.

Kathie Mills
360-219-3779

Save the Date: September 3, 2025 – guest speaker at our regular RPEC meeting will be Ally Pickard, Port Commissioner District 2 candidate.

JULY 2025 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Rite Aid Closing 700 Locations

Rite Aid plans to close hundreds of locations, according to the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA). These closures may impact you if your prescriptions are currently filled at a Rite Aid pharmacy. The list of Rite Aid locations closing in Washington has not been announced. HCA has indicated that Rite Aid is required to notify the public of the impending closures through public notices, such as posted information at the location and through at least one newspaper announcement. Patients currently using the impacted pharmacies may request information about how to transfer their prescriptions to another pharmacy.

RPEC members who receive their healthcare benefits through the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), are covered under Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare with Part D, and who currently fill their prescriptions at an impacted Rite Aid location, will be notified of alternative pharmacies by Moda, the healthcare plan's pharmacy manager.

HCA also plans to keep members informed through its website. More details will be available soon at www.hca.wa.gov.

Your retirement security is a non-partisan issue; RPEC is non-partisan

RPEC exists to protect and enhance your retirement security. Your pension and healthcare benefits from Washington state employers and your earned benefits through the federal government (Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid) are vital for your quality of life in retirement. We wholeheartedly believe that your retirement security is not a partisan issue.

Whenever we learn of a potential detrimental policy that is under consideration by a state or federal agency or the state Legislature or Congress, we will step in and voice our concerns. We have an obligation to our members to act on your behalf. Our efforts are non-partisan. We will act on any proposed policy that could threaten your retirement security.

An example at the federal level relates to the threats to Social Security. Our concerns relate to policy decisions that have and are impacting staffing levels and the quality of customer service in the Social Security offices in Washington. In addition, Congress is considering additional cuts to Social Security and is postponing necessary action to properly resource the Social Security Fund, which will sustain your benefits beyond 2034. We continue to express our concerns to members of the Washington Congressional Delegation and join other retiree groups hosting rallies in support of full funding for Social Security.

At a state level, for instance, we learned in the early spring that the Health Care Authority (HCA) had advised Governor Bob Ferguson to reduce the Medicare Explicit Subsidy that applies to the healthcare plans managed by the Public Employees Benefits Board. This subsidy helps to keep the most expensive healthcare plans within the financial reach of RPEC members. HCA wanted to cut this subsidy in half. We acted immediately, communicating with legislators and the Governor about why this proposed HCA policy change was a bad idea. If we had not acted when we learned that this policy recommendation was under consideration, it is possible that the subsidy would have been reduced or eliminated in the 2025 Budget Act.

Every advocacy effort we undertake on your behalf is aligned with the Legislative Priorities document available at www.rpecwa.org. This guiding document, which outlines our federal and state priorities, is developed by our members and approved at our biennial Convention by statewide delegates.

As a non-partisan organization focused on preserving and expanding your earned retirement benefits, we have an obligation to our members to step in and fight for you when we learn that potential detrimental policies are under consideration by state and federal agencies, the Washington Legislature and Congress.

Vote by mail by August 5

For decades, RPEC has had a robust Political Action Committee (PAC), which endorses candidates for the state Legislature and state offices. Endorsements are made for candidates who demonstrate support for RPEC's legislative and policy priorities. RPEC's endorsements are not based on party affiliation. The PAC endorses retiree-friendly candidates. You will be receiving your mail-in ballots in mid-July for the August 5th primary election. If you live in Legislative Districts 5, 26, 33, 34, 41 and 48, please refer to the RPEC candidate endorsement list before voting. It is available at www.rpecwa.org.

July Monthly Legislative Update Call – Moved to July 11th

The Legislative Update Calls are held monthly on the first Friday of the month during the interim legislative session from 2-3 p.m. The July meeting will be held, instead, on July 11th. Visit the calendar at www.rpecwa.org for the Zoom link.

Important Dates

Visit the RPEC website at www.rpecwa.org for the full calendar:

July 21 – Senior Lobby (10:00 am)
July 22-24 – Washington State Labor Council Convention (Vancouver)
July 24 – Public Employees Benefits Board (9:00 am)
July 31 – Public Employees Benefits Board (9:00 am)
Aug. 1 – Monthly Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
Aug. 4 – Executive Board meeting (9 or 10:00 am; TBD)
Aug. 5 – Primary Elections
Aug. 15 – Political Action Committee meeting (10:00 am)
Aug. 18 – Senior Lobby (10:00 am)