



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 11 – Walla Walla County

Barry Jenkins, President

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Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 12th, 2023
Meeting Time: 11:30 AM
Meeting Place: Yan's China Buffet
Meeting Address: 1618 Plaza Way, Walla Walla

Welcome to September from your Walla Walla Chapter of the Retired Public Employees Council. We will have cooler weather to make it more pleasant to leave the house! So come on out to our next meeting and enjoy the company of your fellow retirees.

Our chapter's get-together is on **Tuesday, September 12th starting at 11:30 AM**. We will meet at **Yan's China Buffet, located next to Safeway at 1618 Plaza Way, Walla Walla**.

As of now, we still need a **Secretary**. The **Secretary** needs to be able to attend all or most official meetings and take accurate minutes. Experience is helpful, but not required. You will work closely with and be trained by the President. If you would like to serve your local RPEC Chapter, please consider becoming our next Secretary. In the meantime, we will need to ask at each meeting for someone willing to take minutes for the President.

Our guest speaker this month will be **Chuck Hindman** representing the **Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless**. He will inform us about the latest issues and community response for those without housing. Rev. Hindman is a former United Methodist pastor who retired in Walla Walla with his wife Karen and is still serving our community.

NEWS OF YOUR CHAPTER:

In June, we had our summer picnic at Pioneer Park in the Whitman St. shelter. We had a good turnout and enjoyed fried chicken and tasty potluck side dishes. It was a good opportunity to socialize and enjoy the nice weather before it got too hot.

Don't forget to invite other retired public employees that you know. If you get two friends to sign up, you can win free dues for a year! *There is no limit on how many members one person can recruit and receive free dues for additional years!* **NOTE: Make sure they put your name on the "Recruited by:" line of the application!**

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

August 2023 Executive Director's Report

Did you know that it takes more than 10 exposures to a positive message or piece of information before it registers in our subconscious? Conversely, it takes far fewer exposures to negative messages for them to stick. Unfortunately, our brains are wired to hang onto negative information more than positive. Fascinating and unfortunate. Each day, we are exposed to positive messages and information, but we must be intentional to focus on it.

RPEC has a lot of good going on. Our Council Office team shares our good news and useful information through a variety of channels, including our weekly *Newsflash* eblasts, blogs on the website, social media posts on Facebook, the quarterly newsletter, standing committee meetings and more. When you read or receive positive information about RPEC, please pass it on. When we receive positive information from trusted sources, we tend to remember it. So, share our good news with RPEC members and the active seniors you know in your community. If you are still in contact with your former coworkers, pass along our good news. If you represent RPEC on a central labor council, talk us up! You can be an active part of increasing the positive visibility of RPEC just by sharing our good news. Here are some of the pieces of good news you may consider sharing:

Federal Relations

Washington State Labor Council Convention Votes Unanimously To “Level the Playing Field” for Traditional Medicare

At the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) convention in July, delegates unanimously approved a resolution aimed at expanding Medicare benefits to include vision, dental and hearing like Medicare Advantage plans. The resolution calls on Congress to fully fund Medicare and halt policies that adversely impact the program's long-term stability. The resolution was co-sponsored by RPEC, along with other key partners including Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action and the Washington State Alliance of Retired Americans. [Read the resolution here.](#) As RPEC reaches out to members of the Congressional delegation, we are asking them to “level the playing field,” by safeguarding the Medicare Trust Fund and making Medicare benefits more robust.

State Relations & Advocacy

RPEC accepts 2023 WSLC Mother Jones Group Award on behalf of Coalition

Each year, the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) gives awards to stellar labor champions at its annual constitutional convention. This year, the Public Employees Benefits Board Stakeholders' Medicare Coalition, which was formed and is led by RPEC, earned the 2023 WSLC Mother Jones Award. The award is given to an individual or group that embody and “channel” the spirit of Mary “Mother” Jones, who is considered the founder of today's labor movement. Read more about the award and the Coalition's work in the quarterly membership newsletter, which will be in your mailboxes soon.

Political Action Committee

2024 is going to be a pivotal election year in Washington state. Many key statewide races are on RPEC's radar, including the Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, and Insurance Commissioner. That's why the RPEC PAC is already working with members to bolster its coffers to support pro-retiree candidates for statewide office and State Legislature. Recently, members received letters asking for donations. As of the writing of this monthly letter, 248 members had signed up to automatically contribute a collective \$1,433 per month to the RPEC PAC via pension deduction. Additionally, 70 members made one-time contributions totaling \$3,653. Many contributions were accompanied by written notes explaining why they have donated or increased their PAC contribution. Some have donated in appreciation for RPEC's leadership in safeguarding the Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare while others have noted our work to restore a permanent cost-of-living adjustment for Plan 1 retirees. If you have not already done so but would like to donate, there is still time to do so. PAC contributions can be of any size. Most members donate through a monthly pension deduction. The PAC is also happy to receive one-time contributions through personal checks or cash.

Healthcare

At its June meeting, the Public Employees Benefits Board approved premium increases to all healthcare plans for retirees. Read more about the premium increases in the quarterly membership newsletter, coming to your mailboxes soon. Unfortunately, the Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare premium is increasing by another 22%. As noted in last month's Executive Director letter, RPEC is working with members of the Washington congressional delegation to seek federal subsidies to help lower premiums for plans like UMP Classic Medicare. RPEC also intends to pursue an amendment to existing legislation to increase the explicit state subsidy, which has not exceeded \$183 in more than a decade.

Recurring COLA for PERS 1/TRS 1

Efforts continue to urge the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) to pursue legislation to fund an ongoing cost-of-living adjustment for Plan 1 retirees. Members of the Legislative Committee and the Pension Policy Workgroup continue to attend the monthly SCPP meetings and testify. Meetings are taking place this summer with the legislators who serve on the SCPP and other legislative champions.

Monthly Legislative Update Calls Extend through December

The Legislative Update Calls will be held monthly through December. The next call will take place on August 4th and September 1st from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Visit www.rpecwa.org for the login information.

Free annual RPEC membership – Recruit 2 new members

For a limited time, RPEC is offering members a chance to earn one year's free membership. For every two new members you recruit, you will receive a check for \$84! To get credit, your name must appear in the "Recruited by" field on the new members' membership applications. Associate members do not count until they become full dues-paying members. Checks will only be issued to current members in good standing. If you recruit just two new members, you receive a check worth

a year of dues! In July, there were 3 members who earned a 'Recruit 2, Get Your Dues' reward. Those 3 members were Sharon Etheridge (Ch 13), Colleen McGinn (Ch 3), and District 5 Representative Penny Hall (Ch 20).

Upcoming Events

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

- Sept. 1 – Monthly Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
- Sept. 4 – Council Office Closed, Labor Day
- Sept. 8 – Political Action Committee Meeting (10:00 am)
- Sept. 8 – Protecting Your Email & Avoiding Online Scams Webinar (1:00 pm)
- Sept. 12 – WSARA Convention, Federal Way
- Sept. 14 – Healthcare Workgroup Meeting (3:30 pm)
- Sept. 15 – Monthly Leadership Call (1:00 pm)
- Sept. 18 – Senior Lobby (10:00 am)
- Sept. 19 – Select Committee on Pension Policy Meeting (10:00 am)
- Sept. 22 – Pension Policy Workgroup Meeting (10:00 am)

Best,
Laurie