

Council Office News

The Council office in Olympia just underwent a significant improvement. A new server was installed resulting in the Council office having it's own network and now being completely independent. The WFSE (Washington Federation of State Employees) graciously allowed RPEC space on their network for many years, but as they are growing and as RPEC is growing, it was time to move forward for each. The RPEC wishes to thank the Federation for it's assistance in our growth.

Please note that with this network change, email addresses at the Council office are now different also. If you use email to communicate with the office, please note the following changes:

Cassandra de la Rosa - Cass@rpecwa.org
Linda Olson - Linda@rpecwa.org
Barbie Montermini - Barbie@rpecwa.org
Derek VanSpor - Derek@rpecwa.org
Jean Kivi - Jean@rpecwa.org

We would also like to welcome aboard, **Jean Kivi**, our new Office Assistant/Receptionist. So when you call and don't get a burly voice, you will know you're not talking to Derek.

Kudos to Chapter 25!

Doris Israel, president of Chapter 25, succeeded in getting the Grant County PUD to send an RPEC mailing to 239 retirees as a means of getting new members! While the PUD won't give us the retirees' names and addresses, they will label stamped, stuffed envelopes RPEC is providing to them. They have agreed to include RPEC membership information in future retirees' packets. Good job, Chapter 25!

The State legislative site is now updated!

Here are the relevant pages to use:
Washington State Legislature (main page)
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/default.htm>

Especially relevant pages
Find out who represents you - District Finder - use this page to determine member legislative districts (these are the new redistricted districts)!!!

<http://dfind.leg.wa.gov/dfinder.cfm>

JCPP

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/jcpp>

HOUSE MEMBERS

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/hadm/name/htm>

SENATE MEMBERS

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/senate/members/default.htm>

CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/common/maps/congdist.htm>

HOUSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/opr/stcommppg.htm>

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/rosters/senate/scommitteemembersbycommittee.html>

BILL INFORMATION

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/bills.cfm>

LAWS AND AGENCY RULES

<http://slc.leg.wa.gov/default.htm>

CALENDARS & LEG. MEETING SCHEDULES

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm.calendar.cfm>



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

March 2003 www.rpecwa.org Toll-Free: 1-800-562-6097 Direct: 360-352-8262

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President's Message

from George Masten

Webster's dictionary defines priority as something that is "superior in rank or position". RPEC has a list of legislative priorities ranked in order of importance and adopted by the convention delegates. Pension governance and prescription drug costs are the first two on the list, meaning these are the most important issues to our members.

During this legislative session, RPEC's time and effort is targeted at getting the strongest pension governance bill we can. We are investing significant time and energy to develop a proposal and meet with legislators to gain their support. We are also working with the Washington Federation of State Employees and Washington State School Retirees' Association to join forces on the issue. We are helping the Senior Lobby on prescription drug legislation, staying informed on the different bills and coordinating our members' support when the Lobby says it is time. The Senior Lobby will help us on governance when the time comes.

We also need to address a priority from previous years that we thought was solved. The implementation of ESSB 5777, granting those who retire from cities and counties access to their employers' health coverage, is not going well. Although it passed last year, there appear to be problems interpreting whether those already retired are eligible to get coverage and in getting insurance products written where none exist. We've talked to Rep. Cody, chair of the Health Care Committee, who has agreed to schedule a work session on the issue in her committee in March. We also have heard from the Insurance Commissioner and will be meeting with his policy director for help in getting the law to work as was intended.

There are a number of other bills on senior and pension issues and we've been asked why we aren't working to get them passed as well. It's simple. They're not our priorities. That doesn't mean they're not good bills and that we won't support them. We will. What we won't do is expend a lot of energy on them and create confusion on what we consider to be our priorities.

Executive Director's Report

from Cassandra de la Rosa

There is strength in numbers. Nowhere is this more true than in the legislative arena. That's why coalitions and alliances are so important to getting legislation passed, and why each member's voice is so important.

In addition to working with other retiree groups, RPEC is a member of the Senior Lobby, a statewide coalition of over 30 organizations that serve the interest of retirees and senior citizens. Lobby members include, among others, AARP, Area Agencies on Aging, nursing, boarding and adult home groups, and various retiree organizations.

Through our efforts, the Senior Lobby has adopted pension governance as one of its priorities for this session. They are looking to us for direction and are ready to assist us in contacting legislators for support for our governance bill at the appropriate time. Another priority is making prescription drugs available and affordable to all who need them. Through the Senior

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OUR STRENGTH IS YOUR SECURITY!

