



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington Chapter 16 – Yakima Area May 2021 Newsletter

Jack Cooper, President
425-244-8979

opeiu8/aflcio

Please Note: The RPEC statewide Executive Board strongly recommends against holding in-person meetings at this time. Members should consider carefully and attend meetings in-person at their own risk.

Regardless of vaccination status, people should still take steps to protect themselves and others while in public settings. This includes wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.

Chapter President's Message

May is an unusual month because there is hardly a cause or an interest that does not have a designated day of national or international celebration!

We hope that you get a chance to join in the festivities on Lumpy Rug Day, Paranormal Day, Nutty Fudge Day, Mint Julep Day, Root Canal Appreciation Day, Frog Jumping Day, World Fiddle Day, Dance Like a Chicken Day, Polka Day, Give Sharks a Voice Day, No Homework Day, and Get a Piercing Day...

But the most important day for you could be just ahead! Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on May 19th for the last Chapter 16 meeting prior to our usual summer break. There are door prizes to be won!

Chapter 16 Virtual Membership Meeting Wednesday ~ May 19, 2021

Sign on at 11:15 AM ~ Meeting at 11:30 AM

Featured Speakers

Maurice Garrott, Membership Committee Chair
and
Tara Jo Heinecke, Membership Coordinator

Agenda Items

Legislative Session Wrap Up
Other Chapter Business as needed
Door Prizes & New Joke of the Month

To join the meeting online using a computer, tablet, or smartphone, go to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85787936064?pwd=YnVaeHVvS0ppTFJkdklFS3RnSEc1dz09>

Or go to: www.zoom.us/join

Enter Meeting ID: **857 8793 6064**

Enter Passcode: **243495**

To join the meeting by telephone:

Dial: 1-253-215-8782

Enter Meeting ID: **857 8793 6064**

Enter Passcode: **243495**

If possible, given the COVID situation, we will be considering whether or not to hold our annual Chapter 16 picnic late summer. We will resume our normal monthly membership meeting schedule in September. We will send our next Chapter newsletter in July.

We hope that you and your loved ones will have a pleasant summer, your gardens are bountiful, and that you enjoy good health. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out if you find yourself in need of assistance. We care about our RPEC family and will do our very best to help you to find the resources you might need.

-Jack Cooper, President

Joke of the Month

A Texas farmer decided to take a trip to Australia for a vacation. He soon crossed paths with an Australian farmer, and they got talking about their work. Proud of what he had; the Aussie showed the Texan farmer his vast wheat field. The Texan scornfully told his new companion that there were wheat fields twice as huge as that back home.

Not discouraged by the Texan's boast, the Australian farmer took his new friend for a tour of the ranch. As they walked around, he showed off his cattle to the Texan farmer. Once again, the Texan was unimpressed and blasted that back home, they had longhorns at least twice the size of the cows they were looking at.

At that point, the conversation was almost dead until they came across a herd of kangaroos hopping through the field. The Texan was astonished and immediately asked the Aussie what they were. The Aussie looked at his companion incredulously and dead panned, "don't you have any grasshoppers in Texas"?

Please Give: Pacific NW Blood Shortage Prompts "Code Red"

Seattle-based Bloodworks Northwest recently declared a "Code Red" alert in response to a now four-week-long blood shortage. The blood provider says it now has less than a 24-hour supply, far less than the four-day inventory it needs. Only 85% of blood needed by local patients is now available.

Due to the pandemic, Bloodworks is no longer accepting walk-ins; but the Red Cross is accepting walk-in donations in Yakima. You can give blood every 56 days. To donate, just walk-in the door at 302 South 2nd St. in Yakima any time they are open for blood drives. Be sure to wear your mask and arrive at least 15 minutes before closing time. Currently Wednesdays and Fridays have the most openings. They are not open on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Free COVID antibody testing is also available for donors through the end of May. You can make a difference in a very important way!

Call 1-800-733-2767 to schedule an appointment. You may want to ask about getting in on Monday May 17th for the free "cheese sandwich for donors day". To learn more and see how you can save time with "RAPID PASS" go to: www.redcrossblood.org

Why You Should Not Post COVID-19 Vaccination Card on Social Media

Multiple government agencies and viral videos are warning about the risks of posting vaccine card images online. "Photos of COVID-19 vaccination cards should not be shared on social media. Posting content that includes your date of birth, health care details, or other personally identifiable information can be used to steal your identity," according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The cards show medically sensitive information that you do not want to float around the internet for anyone to see. All those details in one place makes you vulnerable to scams and identity theft.

REAL ID Act Enforcement Delayed to 2023

The Department of Homeland Security recently announced that they will delay enforcing the REAL ID Act until May 3, 2023. This decision is expected to promote social distancing in the months ahead by reducing the number of people visiting driver licensing offices to obtain compliant identification. Passed by Congress in 2005 to strengthen security standards after 9/11, the REAL ID Act had been scheduled to take effect October 1, 2020.

When enforcement of the REAL ID Act does begin, every air traveler 18 years of age or older will need a compliant form of ID in order to fly within the United States, cross a border between the US and another country, or access certain secure federal buildings including military bases.

Washington state issues 2 types of REAL ID-compliant documents: enhanced driver licenses and enhanced ID cards. These can be obtained only by visiting a driver licensing service office. Right now, driver licensing offices in Washington are by appointment-only, and are for people with urgent needs who cannot go online or get what they need some other way.

Residents with standard driver licenses and IDs who will eventually want an enhanced version can renew online now and upgrade later for only the difference in cost (\$4 per year). For further information, go to: <https://info.dol.wa.gov/real-id-enforcement-date-delayed-again/?ref=morenews>

U.S. State Department Expected to Expand Travel Advisories Due to COVID Risks

On April 19th, the U.S. State Department announced plans to expand travel advisories urging U.S. citizens to stay home as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose "unprecedented risks" around the globe. The updated travel guidelines are intended to curb visits "to approximately 80% of countries worldwide" which are currently experiencing dramatic spikes in cases, the department said in a statement. New guidance is expected be released later this week.

The latest recommendations come as the coronavirus "continues to pose unprecedented risks to travelers," and the new guidelines "better reflect the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's science-based Travel Health Notices," according to the notice.

To view the latest State Department Travel Advisories by country, go to:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html.html>

RPEC Executive Director's Report

State Legislative Update: The 2021 Legislative Session concluded on time on April 25th. The final budget preserved the PEBB Medicare Benefit, fully funded the employer contributions to the pension systems, and will enact a progressive tax on high-end capital gains for the first time ever. These achievements are due in no small part to the advocacy of retirees like you, so thank you for reaching out to your legislators. It has made a difference.

Unfortunately, the proposal to provide a one-time increase to Plan 1 retirees did not survive the budget negotiation process. This is especially frustrating given the modest nature of the increase which was capped at \$22 per month, and the fact that it was included in the house budget with unanimous support.

The RPEC Legislative Committee and Executive Board will be working with our leaders, allies, and Legislative Champions to develop strategy to move a proposal for a substantive and consistent COLA in the upcoming 2022 session.

Monthly Post-Session Legislative Update Zoom Call: During the post-session interim, we will have a monthly update on our Legislative priorities and activities on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 2:00 PM. Please join us on June 2nd for our first update. We will send an email reminder out as the date nears.

The Zoom login information will be the same each week. To join the weekly update calls via computer, tablet, or smart phone, go to <https://zoom.us/join>. You will need to enter the meeting ID: 828 6634 6713, and the passcode: 205507. Or, via telephone, dial 1-253-215-8782, meeting ID: 828 6634 6713, and passcode: 205507.

Leadership Training: Our virtual Leadership Training will be on Monday, June 14th from 10 AM - Noon. This event is designed to help provide Chapter leaders and those looking to get more involved in RPEC with the tools and resources they need to empower and engage their fellow retirees.

Important Dates – RPEC Meetings & Events

May 6, 2021 – RPEC Executive Board Meeting
May 19, 2021 – Chapter 16 Membership Meeting
May 24, 2021 – RPEC Treasurer's Training
June 7, 2021 – RPEC Political Action Committee Meeting
June 14, 2021 – RPEC Leadership Training
June 18, 2021 – RPEC Legislative Committee Meeting
July 27, 2021 – RPEC Membership Committee Meeting
August 16, 2021 – RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
August 25, 2021 – RPEC Executive Board Meeting
August 30, 2021 – Chapter 16 Executive Board Meeting
September 15, 2021 – Chapter 16 Membership Meeting
October 14, 2021 – Chapter 16 Membership Meeting
October 20, 2021 – RPEC Membership Committee
November 8, 2021 – RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
November 15, 2021 – RPEC Executive Board Meeting
November 17, 2021 – Chapter 16 Membership Meeting
December 15, 2021 – Chapter 16 Membership Meeting

For details about meeting times and how to join the meeting, call the RPEC office at 1-800-562-6097 or view the calendar on the RPEC website at:

<https://rpecwa.org/calendar-3/>

All members are encouraged to attend the Leadership Training even if they are not chapter officers.

To RSVP for this event please visit: <https://rpecwa.org/2021-leadership-training/>

Online Membership Application: We have updated the “Join RPEC” page on our website to provide the option for new members to sign up for dues deduction or payment via credit card. Please encourage any fellow retirees to utilize this new convenient and secure option to sign up today at: <https://rpecwa.org/join-rpec/>

Make sure the applicant lists your name in the “Recruited By” field so you can be entered into our membership recruitment rewards program.

Sincerely,



James Cockburn, Executive Director
Retired Public Employees Council of Washington