



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington Chapter 18 – Grays Harbor County

Johanna Standish, President
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" Our strength is your Retirement Security"

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.

About our May Guest Speaker

Vaccinated, but unsure what to do this summer? Join fellow retirees at our May 11th Zoom Meeting for an intimate view of the gems among Washington State's parks; then get out and visit your favorites over the summer!

Our guide to Washington's Parks is our own Mark O. Brown, who is currently serving a second term on the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission.

As a Commissioner, Mark's goals include reducing the agency's deferred maintenance log, enhancing preservation and re-use of historic park facilities, increasing youth visits, and creating partnerships with public and private organizations to enhance visitor experiences while raising needed revenue.

Mark presently works as President of Connections Public Affairs, a governmental affairs firm he established following a storied career in both the public and private sectors. In

RPEC Chapter 18 Virtual Membership Meeting

Tuesday ~ May 11, 2021 at 10:00 AM

Guest Speaker



**Mark O. Brown, Commissioner
WA State Parks & Recreation Commission**

**Go to: [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us)
Click on: "Join Meeting"
Enter Meeting ID: [891 3356 8018](#)
Enter Passcode: [522113](#)
or
Dial: [1-253-215-8782](tel:1-253-215-8782)
Enter Meeting ID: [891 3356 8018](#)
Enter Passcode: [522113](#)**

the past, he worked in numerous elected and appointed positions including posts such as Mayor of Lacey, Director of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (LNI), and Executive Director of the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE).

Mark is an active member of RPEC Chapter 2 and serves on their Executive Board. He and his wife Julie enjoy travel, visiting parks all over the state and spending time with their children and grandchildren.

Chapter President's Report

Summer Break: Chapter 18 does not generally meet June through August. Chapter leaders wish you the best summer ever. **Our first meeting following the summer break will be on Tuesday September 14, 2021** when we return to our usual 2nd Tuesday of the month schedule. Please add the meeting to your calendars today! Time, place, and meeting details will be announced in our August newsletter.

Our second-ever District 6 event is scheduled for May 13, 2021 at 2:00 PM. Members from RPEC Chapters 18, 19, 22, 23 and 24 are invited to participate.

Social Security and Medicare are critical resources for the nation's retirees. Both programs must constantly be on our radar. We need to understand and speak up on issues that affect our benefits as well as the agency policies, leadership, and staffing levels that impact the quality of service and the fiscal health of both programs. Several issues need action right now!

Steve Kofahl will be on hand to share a presentation titled, The Status, Strengths and Threats to Social Security & Medicare.

Prior to his retirement from the Social Security Administration, Kofahl testified before Congress on SSA matters. He is a lifetime President Emeritus of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 3937 of and currently serves as their Retiree Coordinator.

If you have questions for Mr. Kofahl about Social Security and/or Medicare, please submit them to me in advance at 360-538-0826 or lacerta123@comcast.net.

RPEC District 6 Special Event

Thursday ~ May 13, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Steve Kofahl

"The Status, Strengths and Threats to Social Security & Medicare"

To join the meeting online, go to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82350556767?pwd=UUpGSUNaaVpDMIFPcitwWnFoZ3RuZz09>

Or go to: <https://zoom.us/join>

Enter Meeting ID: **823 5055 6767**

Enter Passcode: **476258**

To join the event by Telephone:

Dial: (253) 215-8782

Enter Meeting ID: **823 5055 6767**

Enter Passcode: **476258**

State Legislature: Our RPEC Contract Lobbyist, Emily Murphy reports that as of April 16th, there are no signs that there will be a need for a special session. If this newsletter reaches you while the session is still in progress, it is not too late to contact our state representatives in the 19th and 24th legislative districts and ask that they keep 1.5% one-time COLA for PERS/TRS 1 in the budget and raise the cap implementation amount to \$25,000, which is the pension level that has been used for all previous Plan 1 COLA caps. The Legislative Hotline number is 1- 800-562-6000. When you call, be sure to thank your Representatives for getting the ball rolling by including a COLA in their House budget.

Why does RPEC support new revenue streams in Washington State? The simple answer is that the most common legislative response to our request for a permanent PERS/TRS 1 COLA is, "there isn't enough money". New revenue streams may provide the resources needed to achieve the long sidestepped permanent COLA.

Federal Issues: In addition to payments to citizens, the **American Rescue Plan** included dollars for state and local governments. That fact is key to the Washington State House of Representatives' ability include a 1.5% COLA for PERS/TRS 1 in their biennial budget. Let us be sure to thank Congressman Derek Kilmer and Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray for supporting the American Rescue Plan with needed fiscal support for our state.

The American Jobs Plan is broad-sweeping legislation with many components, including investments in homecare for the elderly. \$400 billion would expand caretaking services as the country faces the surge in an aging population. This is a significant focus on jobs critical to the wellbeing of every American senior!

You can get to know more about the legislation by reading the **White House Fact Sheet on the American Jobs Plan** at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/>

Have a wonderful, safe, and healthy summer!

Johanna Standish, Chapter President

RPEC Executive Director's Report

State Legislative Update: The House and Senate released their proposed 2021-2023 budgets in late March. **In a surprise move, the House included a provision for a one-time 1.5% increase for PERS/TRS Plan 1 Retirees (capped at \$22 per month) which would take effect in July.** We expect the House to approve that budget provision and will encourage budget leaders in both chambers to include it in the final budget which will be negotiated prior to the April 25th end of session date.

RPEC was pleased to see that both budget proposals preserved the PEBB Medicare Benefit, fully funded the employer contributions to the pension systems, and enacted a

progressive tax on high-end capital gains. This is due in part to the advocacy of retirees like you, so thank you for reaching out to your legislators. It has made a difference.

As retirees, RPEC members have an important role in the discussion around the tax code and it is important that your Legislators continue to hear from you. A full list of the bills we are tracking, and their status can be found on the RPEC website at: www.rpecwa.org.

We encourage our members to join our weekly Legislative Update Zoom Meeting every Friday at 1:00 PM. To join us via computer or tablet visit: www.zoom.us/join and enter the Meeting ID: 828 6634 6713, then enter the Passcode: 205507. You can also dial in by telephone at 1-253-215-8782 and enter the same Meeting ID and Passcode

Save the Date for Upcoming RPEC Member Trainings!

May 24th, 10 AM – 11 AM: Chapter Treasurer’s Training via Zoom

June 14th, 10 AM -12 PM: Leadership Training via Zoom

Registration and additional information will follow. All members are encouraged to attend the Leadership Training even if they are not chapter officers.

Member Only Benefits: We have added a new section to the RPEC website with information on resources available to our members. Please visit the link below for details on the many discounts available to retirees and their family members, such as hearing and dental services, the AFSCME Free College benefit, and the Foundation for Working Families relief program for members in need. <https://rpecwa.org/member-only-benefits/>

Sincerely,



James Cockburn
Executive Director
RPEC of WA

Important Dates – RPEC Statewide Events

April 26, 2021	RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
April 27, 2021	RPEC Membership Committee Meeting
May 6, 2021	RPEC Executive Board Meeting
May 24, 2021	RPEC Chapter Treasurer's Training
June 7, 2021	RPEC Political Action Committee Meeting
June 14, 2021	RPEC Leadership Training
July 27, 2021	RPEC Membership Committee Meeting

Meetings will be held virtually until it is safe to meet in person

For details about meeting times and how to join a meeting, call the RPEC office at 1-800-562-6097 or view the calendar on the RPEC website at: <https://rpecwa.org/calendar-3>