



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 9 – Vancouver Area

Walt Smick, President (360) 513-5703

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Chapter President's Message

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on May 20th, the last meeting prior to our usual summer hiatus. We will resume our normal Chapter 9 monthly membership meeting schedule in September.

In the meantime, I have made the decision to step down from my role as your Chapter President. I have appreciated the support, encouragement, and friendship that you have all extended to me over the years,

I hope that you will join me in providing that same level of confidence and assistance to Sam Arola, who will be moving up from the Vice President position to assume the duties of the Chapter President for the remainder of my term.

We hope that you and your loved ones will have a pleasant summer, your gardens are bountiful, and that you enjoy reasonably good health and wellbeing.

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.

-Walt Smick, RPEC Chapter 9 President

P.S. For future reference, Sam Arola can be reached at (360) 606-1806 or searola@tds.net.

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

Chapter 9 Membership Meeting

Thursday – May 20, 2021 at 1:00 PM

**Immanuel Lutheran Church
Social Hall
8310 MacArthur Blvd
Vancouver, WA**

Guest Speaker

Maurice Garrott, District 5 Rep

Agenda

Legislative Session Wrap Up
Routine Chapter Business

24-hour supply, far less than the four-day inventory it needs.

Only 85% of blood needed by local patients is now available, according to a news release. As of April 23rd, donations were short 700 units a week compared to the need, according to the release. About 35,000 donors would need to fill appointments by Memorial Day and 78,000 by Independence Day to meet the demand.

Due to the pandemic, Bloodworks is no longer accepting walk-ins. Residents can book appointments to donate blood every 56 days, the release says. Notably, there is no waiting period before giving blood after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination.

Blood shortages are being felt nationwide, according to the release, meaning the Pacific Northwest cannot rely on other regions to help.

There is a vital need for blood and plasma donors right now! Use your favorite search engine or contact your medical provider to find a local blood bank near you.

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 to 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. 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 they list your name in the "Recruited By" field so you can be entered into our membership recruitment rewards program.

Sincerely,



James Cockburn
RPEC Executive Director

Important Dates – RPEC Meetings & Events

- May 6, 2021 – RPEC Executive Board Meeting
- May 20, 2021 – Chapter 9 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
- September 16, 2021 – Chapter 9 Membership Meeting
- October 21, 2021 – Chapter 9 Membership Meeting
- October 20, 2021– RPEC Membership Committee
- November 8, 2021 – RPEC Finance Committee Meeting
- November 15, 2021 – RPEC Executive Board Meeting
- November 18, 2021 – Chapter 9 Membership Meeting
- December 16, 2021 – Chapter 9 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/>