



# Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 17 – Lewis County

**Kathie Mills, President: (360) 219-3779**

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**Meeting Date: Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Meeting Time: Noon**  
**Meeting Place: Longview Country Club**  
**Meeting Address: 41 Country Club Dr, Longview, WA 98632**

Hello fellow Chapter 17 members,

For the first time ever, our RPEC Chapter will be guests of the Cowlitz/Wahkiakum County RPEC Chapter 20 meeting/ Christmas Party on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. That is the first TUESDAY of December. The event is at noon at the Longview Country Club at 41 Country Club Drive, Longview, WA 98632. **Carpooling from the south parking lot of the Ramblin' Jack's Rib Eye Restaurant will be available at 10:45am.**

Our guest speaker will be Laurie Weidner, RPEC Executive Director. Lunch is being provided at no cost by the Longview Chapter. Please come and join us!

Kathie Mills  
RPEC Ch 17 President

Did you know? You will be receiving a meeting reminder telephone call about two days prior to our meetings, starting December 4<sup>th</sup>. If you want to opt out of the calls, please call me at 360-219-3779.

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## **November 2023 Executive Director's Report**

What a busy time! Much is happening this month as we approach the end of the calendar year and the launch of the new legislative session on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Today, the Executive Board is due to take action on the 2024 operating budget and the draft strategic plan that will guide RPEC through 2027. Tomorrow, the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) meets to consider a bill for an ad hoc cost of living adjustment for retirees vested in PERS 1/TRS 1. And, our Political Action Committee (PAC) continues to make early endorsements in important state races with much more to come.

It's an exciting time to get more involved in RPEC's legislative affairs activities. Encourage your members to get involved, whether that be by attending the Legislative Committee meeting (next one is December 8<sup>th</sup>) to learn more about our Legislative Priorities, taking part in the "call to action" alerts from the Council Office, or registering to join us in person in Olympia for the annual Legislative Day on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Registration opened early this month. Visit <https://rpecwa.org/2024-rpec-wea-retired-legislative-day/> to register and for more information.

## **Federal Relations**

### **Member legislative advocacy**

Much has happened in the last month in Congress, including the selection of a new Speaker. Without an additional temporary funding bill or bi-partisan support for a comprehensive funding bill, the federal government is, again, threatened with a full or partial shutdown, starting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. This is a fast-moving issue. Keep apprised through the Council's weekly email NewsFlash communication. We continue to work closely with AFSCME Retirees on our collective next steps.

## **State Relations & Advocacy**

### **Register today for RPEC/WEA-R Legislative Day – January 22, 2024**

RPEC's annual Legislative Day, held in concert with the Washington Education Association-Retired (WEA-R), will take place on January 22<sup>nd</sup> in Olympia. The event is open to all RPEC members. The annual event gives RPEC members a chance to meet with their state legislators from their legislative districts in their offices on the Capitol campus. Register at <https://rpecwa.org/2024-rpec-wea-retired-legislative-day/>.

### **New Guide to Open Enrollment now available on RPEC website PEBB Open Enrollment extends through November 30<sup>th</sup>**

Do you receive your healthcare insurance through the Health Care Authority's (HCA) Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB)? If so, you may change healthcare plans this month during open enrollment. To help our members navigate the state's complex healthcare landscape, RPEC partnered with SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) to produce a three-part webinar series to help you understand your options. The three-part series features Tim Smolen of SHIBA and is facilitated by Matt Groshong (Chapter 3 President and Chair of the Healthcare Workgroup). You will also find a detailed presentation by HCA archived on the webpage, as well as links to other valuable HCA resources. Visit <https://rpecwa.org/health-insurance-open-enrollment-2023-2024/> [The Guide to Open Enrollment is also accessible on the RPEC homepage.](#)

### **HCA Update**

The PEBB Stakeholders Medicare Coalition continues to meet regularly with HCA staff regarding outcomes from the listening sessions held this spring to improve service to retirees. As was noted in last month's Executive Director letter, the agency is exploring reconfiguring UMP Classic Medicare to be a medical-only policy with a managed pharmaceutical drug plan. This option is being researched and may be presented at the PEB Board's February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 retreat, which is open to the public. Based on feedback from RPEC's Healthcare Workgroup, the Coalition sent a letter to the Governor and Health Care Authority Director Sue Birch stating that our members want healthcare choices to include the current UMP Classic Medicare plan. If HCA introduces another option in spring 2024, it should not replace the current plan, as retirees overwhelmingly communicated this in the listening sessions.

## **Select Committee on Pension Policy Update**

The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) will be considering a draft bill tomorrow that will grant another one-time 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2024 while the Committee researches and works to draft a proposal for the 2025 legislative session that will fund a recurring COLA.

We thank all members who responded to our Council "call to action" to sign in PRO. Regardless of your retirement plan, we stand in solidarity with our PERS 1/TRS 1 retirees in securing a recurring COLA.

## **Upcoming Events**

Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings:

- Dec. 4 – PSARA Webinar (5:00 pm)
- Dec. 8 – Legislative Committee Meeting (10:00 am)
- Dec. 11 – Executive Board Meeting (10:00 am)
- Dec. 12 – Select Committee on Pension Policy Meeting (10:00 am)
- Dec. 13 – Health Care is a Human Right Meeting (5:00 pm)
- Dec. 14 – Healthcare Workgroup Meeting (3:30 pm)
- Dec. 18 – Senior Lobby (10:00 am)
- Dec. 25 – Jan. 1 – Council Office Closed, Holiday Break
- Dec. 28 – Healthcare Workgroup Meeting (3:30 pm)
- Jan. 2 – Council Office Reopens
- Jan. 3 – Legislative Day Registration Deadline

Best,  
Laurie