



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION Chico Chapter 77

November 2017 Newsletter

Mission Statement:

We are active and retired California public employees working together to maintain and improve the quality of the lives of our members by protecting and improving our earned retirement, medical, and other benefits. RPEA represents the rank and file retired public employees.

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MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2017 - 11:15 A. M.

Manzanita Place (Chico Elks Lodge)

1705 Manzanita Avenue, Chico - (Lunch cost: \$15)

SPEAKERS:

*Natalie Carter, Executive Director
Butte Environmental Council*

*Carol Perkins
Water Policy Advocate*



TOPIC:

“Water Use in CA and the Implications for Our Region”

Natalie and Carol from the Butte Environmental Council will provide a brief survey of water use in CA — past, present, and future. They'll conclude with the pressures and opportunities ahead for our region of the Sacramento Valley. Plan to attend this meeting and listen to this interesting presentation! We are trying to increase our membership, so hopefully you will bring a prospective member with you.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – By Margaret Ballinger

Have you had someone ask you “Why should I join RPEA?” If you check the Membership Application form, the top reason on this form says, “RPEA protects the interests of retirees at the State level to ensure your retirement remains secure.” Hopefully everyone reads this when completing their form. We also have many benefits; and if you start telling them about RPEA, you can also share the other benefits we have. Just try it and see how it turns out!

Hopefully you read the report by Al Darby (VP Op/Ed) in the July-August RPEA magazine. He reported on the “good return on investments this year – 11.2% return on investments (ROI).”

Al then reported: “The next piece of good news is the fact that our membership is growing again. We now have close to 23,500 members; that’s up from 21,800 one year ago.” Fortunately, our Chapter has been able to stay pretty close to the same level of members. September 30, 2016 our membership was 330, and September 30, 2017 is 329. This seems as if we have not increased in number. In fact, lost one! However, there are many things to consider. We have lost several members due to death, moving from our area, or simply just not renewing their membership. We have been concentrating on those who have not renewed their membership. Usually they are sent a letter, and sometimes they respond. If no response, I try calling; and if the phone number is no longer current, I have sometimes driven to their home to see if they still live there. This does take time, but is very important for keeping members.

Attending our meetings regularly keeps you “in the know” as to what is going on, and hopefully keeps you interested in staying a member. Let’s all continue to keep our membership up and our members “in the know” as to what is going on. If you see a new member (we try to introduce them when they attend), give them a smile, shake their hand, and talk to them. Make them feel welcome so they will come back!

Here’s a Burma Shave for you! Don’t stick your elbow out too far.
It may go home in another car!!!

HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT – BY AL RAITT

Now that the September 11 to October 6, 2017 open enrollment period is over, this is an appropriate time to consider the health insurance plan monthly premiums which will be effective Jan. 1, 2018. There were relatively small increases and decreases in many of the plans. There was a 4.27% average increase for the four HMO Medicare plans (Anthem Traditional, Kaiser California, Kaiser Out-of- State, and United Health Care). The monthly premium amount for United Health Care, for example, is going from \$648.42 in 2017 to \$661.52 in 2018. For the 3 PPO Medicare programs (PERS Choice, PERS Select, and PERS Care), there was a 2.04% decrease. The monthly premium amount for PERS Choice, for example, is going from \$707.26 in 2017 to \$691.94 in 2018.

Staff at CalPERS is already beginning the process of planning for negotiating health plan coverages and premiums for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2019. A development that will have to be factored into these negotiations is the recent signing of an executive order by our current President eliminating the government subsidies for low-income families that were paid to the insurance companies to make up the difference that these families could not afford. This will leave the health insurance companies with three basic options: (1) Increase the direct cost charged to these low income families which will cause them to lose their insurance because they can no longer afford it; (2) Increase the cost of premiums to those families who earned enough money that they did not qualify for the government subsidy, but will now be charged more in order for the insurance company to get more money to make up for the loss of government subsidies; or (3) Pull out of the market altogether. Options (1) and (2) were the same ones that were being used by health insurance companies prior to implementation of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), and there is every reason to believe that they will again invoke these approaches. This will drive up health insurance premium costs for both low income families that were benefiting from the government subsidies and middle income families who were already paying the full premium cost. This is going to complicate the process of negotiation

that CalPERS staff will be having with the insurance companies for 2019 coverage and premium rates.

Preliminary estimates are that 6 million families in the U.S. will soon lose their health insurance because of this change. If you favor less government involvement in the delivery of health care, then you support the elimination of government subsidies and a move back towards the private health insurance programs. If, however, you favor continued government involvement, then you are dismayed. But the choice now seems clear: Pay more money to the insurance companies in the form of increased monthly premiums, or pay more money to the government to continue the subventions. This is just another example of two fundamentally different views about how to provide health insurance coverage for citizens in the U.S. There are two long lines at the "health insurance program window": one window for supporting the private insurance programs and another window for supporting the government-sponsored programs. What's also there are very few, if any, people in the line at a third window for eliminating their Medicare insurance and asking to be switched to a private insurance program. Ever wonder why that line is so short?

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR HANK AND DORIS PETERSON

There will be a memorial service for Hank and Doris Peterson on **Saturday, October 28, at 3 p.m.** at Trinity Methodist Church (285 East 5th Street). Hank passed away on March 21 at the age of 90, and Doris passed away shortly thereafter. Hank was active in RPEA and served as President of our Chapter 77. Hank was a retired Psychology professor from Chico State and made many positive contributions to our Chapter 77. Hank and Doris will both be dearly missed!

NOTE: There has been no published article about this memorial service, and Jim Gregg received this info from the Peterson's daughter.

ONLINE DIRECT DEPOSIT STATEMENTS

"RPEA is asking us to advise you that if you wish to opt-out of the online direct deposit statement service, please call 888-CALPERS and the contact center agents will assist you right away."