



RPEA Reporter

www.rpea.apea-aft.org

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Message from the President

By Sharon Hoffbeck, RPEA President

As you may have heard, Jay will be stepping down as President of RPEA effective Tuesday, February 16, 2016, and I will be moving into that position from my current position as Executive Vice President.

Although we understand Jay's reasons for stepping down at this time, he will be sorely missed. He has, though, assured me that I can tap into his enormous vault of historical knowledge and experience defending retiree benefits when needed, and Jay – I will take you up on that offer!

Jay has worked with RPEA for the past 16 years, and been President for the past four. During this time, he has always worked hard to support RPEA's mission of protecting retiree benefits. As President, Jay has been a strong leader, which has helped make RPEA the strong, dynamic organization that it is today.

As you all know, RPEA has recently filed a legal action asking the Superior Court for a judgment that the retiree Dental/Vision/Audio (DVA) and Long Term Care (LTC) plans are constitutionally protected in the same way the retiree medical plan is protected. No doubt you have all experienced the reduced

coverage and benefits in the retiree dental plan that occurred with the change in third party administrator in January 2014. Our goal is to establish that these plans are constitutionally protected. We are then in a much stronger position to both negotiate with the Department of Administration or litigate to re-establish the coverage and benefits in all plans that existed before the 2014 amendments made by the Parnell Administration.

I am honored that Jay has the confidence in my ability to lead RPEA through this critical time while we work to protect our vested, constitutionally protected benefits. As Chair of the Retiree Benefits Committee, the committee that is responsible for researching and preparing the information RPEA needed in order to file this lawsuit, I have been involved in every aspect of the project and will assure that the suit continues without interruption, and that we work with the Walker Administration and the Legislature to protect retiree benefits.

Some of you know me, and some don't – I have been in the system since 1970 (Tier 1), and was peripherally involved in the first lawsuit concerning Constitutional protection of benefits


in the late 70s. In 2012 I joined the RPEA Medical Information Committee (MIC), taking the MIC Director's position in late 2012. In 2014 when the state implemented significant reductions to the dental portion of the DVA plan, and hired Aetna with all of the associated problems, I formed the Retiree Benefits Committee and recruited members with the knowledge and experience to help RPEA maneuver through the myriad of problems and reductions we were experiencing, and to prevent the state from continuing to reduce retiree benefits. In July of 2015, I stepped into the Executive Vice President's position, continuing the work I'd been involved in since joining RPEA.

In the early 80s I went to work for the University of Alaska Anchorage, and spent many years doing construction accounting in Facilities Planning & Construction, being one of two people responsible for \$30M in construction contracts. When the University asked me to develop and write curriculum for a self-support occupational training program in professional floristry in the early 90s, I decided to finally use my education, and developed and

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RPEA

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Want to help RPEA save money and the environment? Sign up for an e-mail version of the newsletter. Call or e-mail the RPEA office today!

RPEA Executive Board

President: Sharon Hoffbeck

Executive Vice-President: Brad Owens

Treasurer: Vicki Pedersen

Secretary: Kris Warren

Vice-President Northern Region:
Charles Gallagher

Vice-President Southcentral Region:
Fran Rabago

Vice-President Southeast Region:
Gary Miller

Legislative Affairs Director:
Robert Grove

Medical Information Director:
Vacant

Membership Director: Bill Mans

Communications Director: Ruby Ketola

Important Phone Numbers

Aetna's Health Concierge: (855) 784-8646
Moda Health/Delta Dental: (855) 718-1768
Univita: (888) 320-5824

Retirement & Benefits, Juneau
465-4460 or (800) 821-2251

Meeting Schedule

Southeast Chapter
Second Thursday, September – May,
11:30 a.m., in the Aurora Room at
the airport

Southcentral Chapter
Second Tuesday each month, 11:30 a.m.,
Anchorage Senior Activity Center

Northern Chapter
Third Thursday each month, 12:30 p.m.,
Raven Landing

RPEA Executive Board
Third Tuesday each month, 10 a.m.,
Anchorage AFEA/AFT Field Office
(via teleconference) 274-1720

Contact the editors through the RPEA office.

RPEA Continues Fight for Retiree Advisory Board

By Sharon Hoffbeck, RPEA President

For the past nine years, RPEA has been the only significant voice retirees have had concerning their Medical, Dental/Vision/Audio (DVA), and Long Term Care (LTC) benefits.

In 2006, the state and Legislature arbitrarily abolished the long-standing PERS and TRS Boards, thereby denying retirees the ability to directly influence and have input into their constitutionally protected benefits.

Retirees contributed significantly toward their retiree medical insurance during their careers working for the state, and they fund the retiree DVA and LTC plans 100% – the state does not contribute anything toward DVA or LTC. Additionally, there are retirees in PERS Tier III and TRS Tier II who do not qualify for premium-free medical

coverage at retirement, so are required to pay a premium for retiree medical coverage.

RPEA has been fighting very hard since 2006 on behalf of all retirees to force the state to reinstate these boards or something similar. In the summer of 2015, the state finally agreed to begin the discussion of reinstating a retiree oversight board, which would again allow retirees to have a voice concerning their retiree benefits.

Negotiations with the Department of Administration have been difficult, and are still ongoing. We will keep you informed about the progress.

If anyone has questions, please contact me at sharonhoffbeck@gmail.com.

Annual Executive Board Elections

By Gary Miller, Nominations and Election Chair

Nominations are now open for the annual election of executive board members. In even numbered years the president, secretary, director of medical information and the director of membership are elected for two-year terms. The officers serve from July 1 through June 30.

Nominations may be sent (with the consent of the nominee) to Gary Miller. Contact information is gmillr.juneauak@gmail.com or via mail at 20135 Cohen Dr., Juneau, Alaska 99801-8211. A paper trail is needed, so phone call nominations will not be accepted.

Interested candidates may nominate themselves. Nominees must have agreed to run before they can be nominated. Nominations will be accepted for 45 days following the February newsletter mail date. If candidates are unopposed, then the nominees will be declared elected and ballots will not be mailed to save the cost of printing and postage.

Officer duties may be viewed on the RPEA website at <http://www.rpea.afea-aft.org/documents.html>.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Clip and mail to: RPEA, 3310 Arctic Blvd., Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99503
Or join online at http://rpea.apea-aft.org/membership/membership_comm.html.
Questions? Call 274-1703 or (800) 478-9992

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|--|--------------------------|
| _____ New Member | _____ \$35 for 1 Year |
| _____ Renewal of Membership | _____ \$65 for 2 Years |
| _____ Non-Member Subscription \$35 | _____ \$145 for 5 Years |
| _____ Change of Address, Phone or E-mail | _____ \$400 for Lifetime |

Name _____ Spouse _____

Mailing Address _____
STREET/PO BOX CITY STATE ZIP

Home Phone _____ Other Phone _____

E-Mail _____ Send my newsletter by e-mail.

More Tasks After a Death

By Gary Miller, Nominations and Election Chair

Following my article in the October newsletter, RPEA members contacted me about additional tasks that need to be performed when a loved one dies:

- It is a good idea to talk to the HR department of the loved one's former employer. Some companies give a life insurance policy as a benefit.
- Notify the passport office.
- Social media needs to be addressed. A death certificate will be needed to remove Facebook, Twitter and email accounts.
- Refunds often come in the name of the deceased so that has to be dealt with.
- Sometimes only an attorney can solve some of the problems. In my will, my executor is allowed to use my assets to hire legal help to execute the will and to pay bills.
- There are two forms of the certified death certificates in some states, a long one and a short one. A mortuary in Oregon recommended the short one to protect privacy and use it for banks, credit card companies, etc.
- Providing a list of passwords for survivors can be very helpful before you die.





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Message from the President

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implemented the Professional Floral Design Program. I retired from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2003, having spent 12 years managing and teaching that program.

I am looking forward to continuing to help guide RPEA through the difficult time we have ahead in restoring benefits to where they should be. I am very fortunate to have an amazing group to work with on the Executive Board, as well as all of the talented and committed committee members, all of whom make the difficult times much easier.

I will be updating you as things progress with the lawsuit. If anyone has questions, please feel free to contact me at sharonhoffbeck@gmail.com.