



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION Chico Chapter 077

JULY 2021 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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It's Summer Time! We hope that you have a fun and relaxing summer and that you will finally be able to enjoy a wonderful vacation before Fall arrives. **As usual, there will be no RPEA Chapter 077 meetings in July and August. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, September 2.** We're excited that we can FINALLY begin holding in-person membership meetings again in September at Manzanita Place (Chico Elks Lodge). Because of COVID-19 restrictions, our meals will be served individually in lieu of our usual buffet lunches. Our Chapter 077 will pay for the first in-person meeting lunch on September 2, and we hope that all of you will plan to join us. We've missed seeing our members in person during the pandemic, and it was nice seeing the members on our computer screens who Zoomed with us this past year.

California officially opened up again on June 15! Of course, the coronavirus pandemic isn't over, but the lifting of nearly all of the State's remaining pandemic restrictions is a significant emotional and psychological milestone for California residents. We hope that all of you have been vaccinated and are staying healthy and safe during the pandemic. This has been a difficult time for everyone, and we're ready to start adding some normalcy to our lives and enjoying in-person visits with our family and friends. We are challenging all of our members to recruit a new member or two before our meetings resume in September!

MESSAGE FROM ROGER KLAVES Area II Director (Email written May 31, 2021)

Howdy displaced Paradise Chapter 074 Lunch-Bunchers! This is written on Memorial Day. I hope the day will be pleasant and meaningful for you. Usually the kick-off day for summer, it's also a time for reflection on those who never came home while wearing an American military uniform.

It's a little quiet RPEA-wise. CalPERS continues to try to adjust its interest rates and rates charged to employers. California cities, counties, and contract agencies are clamoring for relief from the costs to CalPERS so as to maintain pensions and pay their own bills. PERS says they expect to meet this fall to decide what they can do to lessen the contribution pressures. Currently the fund is at about 459 Billion dollars. It is hoped that earnings will be at about 15 percent at the end of this fiscal year. That's due to the stock market doing really well this year. It's doubtful there will be a repeat next year. PERS is still trying to hire a new chief investment officer.

Ernie Sandoval, our Assistant Area Director, is feeling much better after a month or better of rehab due to medical issues. I had a recent conversation with him, and he sounds really good and wanting to go home.

Rebuilding in Paradise continues at a strong pace although there are many people who are still hoping for financial help from the PG&E relief fund. The next Chico chapter meeting will be held on Thursday, September 2.

Regards, *Roger*

RPEA CHAPTER 77 WEBSITE

Our rpeachapter77.com website contains information about our upcoming meetings and includes the newsletters and minutes from the board and membership meetings. Check it out regularly to stay updated on our chapter news!

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – By Mary Kowta

The State Capitol reopens to the public on June 15 after the long COVID closure which began on March 18, 2020. For the first few days, up to 500 visitors will be in the building at any given time. The number will be increased to 1000, eventually.

The lawmakers' committees have been perusing the financial plan that Governor Newsom sent to them in May. They now have until June 15, 11:59 PM to pass the State budget framework. The Governor's plan is a \$268 Billion budget that includes Federal COVID 19 funds as well as a surplus, based on taxation, of \$76 Billion. If the legislators do not meet the midnight deadline, their paychecks will be held. They do, however, have the option of adopting a working plan and settling their differences in the days ahead, a likely scenario. Where is all this money going? By law, a large portion will go to education. The Governor has designated funds for both CalPERS and CalSTRS. There will be grants for businesses adversely affected by the pandemic and for health and wellbeing of Californians. At least \$11 Billion has been earmarked for infrastructure projects.

Governor Newsom has mentioned his proposal to fund kindergarten for four-year olds. That could create changes in daycare, freeing up space for two-year olds and enabling working moms to have the help that many need. Maybe not ideal, but it might encourage employers to support daycare convenient for parents.

After legislative activity on budget issues, many bills await the attention of the lawmakers. For example, 6 or more bills (out of many dozen) involve the worsening housing crisis. Many of these bills illustrate how local regulations and their proponents oppose state attempts to change zoning, parking requirements, and "quality of life" issues by State laws.

The Citizens Compensation Committee, a four-member group appointed by Governor Newsom, met recently to approve a 4.2% pay raise for the Governor and the lawmakers.

Other News - Legal Matters

The lawsuit of former CalPERS Board member JJ Jelincic against CalPERS Board continues in court. No action yet on Gallagher and Kiley v. Newsom, State Supreme Court.

Recall Effort

The Governor continues to be in a good position at this time. His opponents have a large war chest, but the candidates do not have wide appeal. No date has been set for the election. It is suggested that sooner would be better than later for Governor Newsom.

New face, same name??

When Assembly member Rob Bonta was appointed as State Attorney General, his wife, Mia Bonta, decided to campaign for the East Bay seat. The couple, married 30 years and parents of two, met as freshmen at Yale; both their families had backgrounds of community service and activism and immigrant roots.

Bad news for Public Safety

US District Judge Roger Benitez struck down California's ban on sale of AR-15 assault weapons. He stated that the gun is a weapon for household safety and anti-crime and compared it to a Swiss Army knife. I have one of those; it is red and has two-inch tweezers, tiny scissors, and the blade is great for peeling an orange. State officials immediately acted to prevent lifting the ban.

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It is official! According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics prices rose 5% in May. Policymakers say it is temporary, but increases may be noted "until the recovering economy recalibrates itself" (*Sac Bee/WashingtonPost* - 6/13).

As Chico's summer arrives, prepare for excess heat and drought. Stay hydrated, stay well!

Mary