



WASHINGTON STATE
COUNCIL OF FIRE FIGHTERS

RETIREES ASSOCIATION

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**Retirees Edition*

July 2026

WSCFF Retirees Association Newsletter

Serving Active Retirees of the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

Protecting the Benefits We Earned

My Fellow Retirees,

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer and finding time to enjoy family, friends, and the activities you love.

In the last newsletter, I shared an update on pension legislation affecting LEOFF Plan 1. Since then, several important developments have taken place and the WSCFF Legislative Team and RA remain committed to protecting the benefits, integrity, and long-term sustainability of the LEOFF System.

During the 2026 legislative session, the Legislature passed E2SHB 2034. The bill changes how LEOFF Plan 1 is funded by transferring \$3 billion in surplus assets to the Pension Stabilization Account and, ultimately, to the State General Fund. If approved by the IRS, the law will take effect in June 2029, leaving LEOFF Plan 1 funded at 110 percent. Most importantly, the legislation does not change member benefits.

The WSCFF Legislative Team successfully amended E2SHB 2034 to include a study of LEOFF Plan 1 governance. The study will examine whether

governance should be transferred from the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) to the LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board. As of this writing, the SCPP has not yet placed the governance study on its agenda.

While E2SHB 2034 was moving through the legislative process, the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) requested relief from their long-standing responsibility to fund LEOFF Plan 1 medical benefits. Their proposal would transfer responsibility for those costs to the State, potentially changing how these benefits are administered. In response, the Legislature directed the SCPP to study the feasibility of the State assuming responsibility for LEOFF Plan 1 medical benefits.

I continue to attend SCPP meetings to stay informed, represent our members' interests, and provide comments whenever appropriate. As of 2025, 3,969 LEOFF Plan 1 members were receiving medical benefits.

Regardless of future discussions about pension governance, it is essential that LEOFF Plan 1 medical benefits continue to be administered at the local level, where members have long received responsive, knowledgeable, and personalized service.

The medical benefits study is expected to continue through the next two legislative sessions, and much can change over that time. The WSCFF Legislative Team and your Retirees Association will continue to closely monitor these developments and advocate for the protection of LEOFF Plan 1 members.



Our commitment remains unchanged: to protect the benefits, integrity, and long-term sustainability of the LEOFF System.

Our members earned these benefits through years of dedicated service, and we will continue to stand up for them at every opportunity. We remain committed to protecting these hard-earned benefits while looking out for one another.

Fraternally,

Roy Orlando

Board Vice Chair

WSCFF Retirees Association

40 Years of Showing Up for Kids



Many of us know George Orr through his work on the WSCFF Retiree Association Board. And if you know George, you know sitting still has never really been his thing.

Back in 1984, George had a simple idea. Spend time with kids who could use a little extra support and have fun doing it. Since it began, the activities have varied, but for nearly 35 years members of Local 876 took the children fishing. George liked to say, *"A bad day fishing is better than a good day at school."* What began with a handful of kids grew into a program that has now touched lives for more than 40 years.

Over the years, the activities evolved, but for nearly 35 years the focus was fishing. Kids spent the day on the water with with firefighters. When changes at the lake meant the program lost its longtime fishing location, it adapted. Many of those early outings took place at Bear Lake, where George always believed the time spent with the kids mattered most. George liked to say, *"A bad day fishing is better than a good day at school."*

When changes at the lake meant the program lost its longtime fishing location, it adapted. George always believed the time spent with the kids mattered most.

This year marked the program's 40th year. To celebrate, members of Local 876 along with numerous volunteers spent the day bowling with the children. They laced up their bowling shoes, shared pizza, laughed together, and enjoyed spending time with the kids. Gutter guards made sure every child could participate and be part of the fun.

Many of the kids are foster children, wards of the state, students struggling in school, or kids with special needs. Some have had a harder road than others. George recognized early on that sometimes kids just need adults who show up, care, and give them a good day.

George has never done this alone. Over the years, schools, teachers, firefighters, volunteers, and community partners helped make the outings possible. During the fishing days, Spokane Federal Credit Union helped provide lunches and White Elephant donated fishing gear; Canopy Credit Union now helps support the bowling outings.

Through it all, George could always count on Local 876.

George is the first to say this was never about him. But somebody had to get it started.

George did.

For more than 40 years, children in Spokane Valley have gotten to spend time with firefighters, feel included, and have a day that was just about being a kid. That's something worth celebrating.

Life After the Fire Service

By Pat Hepler

Local 1828 • WSCFF Retirees Association Advisory Board Member

As retirees, our careers in the fire service may have come to a close, but life continues to change. Our retirement income may be predictable, but life rarely is. Most of us spent years planning for our pension, health coverage, and financial security. Some have a spouse who is still working and contributing

income or helping with medical coverage. These are the kinds of things we tried to prepare for before leaving the job.

Life does not stop changing once we retire. A health issue involving you, your spouse, a family member, or a close friend can quickly change what you had planned. That trip you have been looking forward to, a project around the house, or time spent enjoying your hobbies may have to wait.

Most of us came out of the fire service with a few aches and pains. Some have old injuries, others deal with chronic pain, and for many it is simply the wear and tear that comes from years on the job. Those things do not disappear in retirement, so it makes sense to stay on top of them.



Retirement may take us in different directions, but we are still part of the same fire service family.

Talking with other retirees is one of the best ways to stay connected. Our circumstances may be different, but many of the challenges are familiar. Someone else may have dealt with a similar health issue, financial concern, home repair, or change in family life and may have useful experience to share.

Even the best retirement plan cannot account for everything that comes our way. Plans change, priorities shift, and we adjust as we go.

Keep in touch with the people you worked alongside. A phone call, a cup of coffee, or getting together once in a while is often all it takes to stay connected.

RA Advisory Board Election Results

Nominations for the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (WSCFF) Retirees Association (RA) Advisory Board closed on April 24. Seats 1, 3, and 5 were up for election in 2026. All incumbents were nominated for another term and ran unopposed.

As a result, the following individuals were re-elected by acclamation:

- **Roy Orlando**, LEOFF 1, Local 31, Tacoma – Seat 1
- **George Orr**, LEOFF 1, Local 876, Spokane Valley – Seat 3
- **Pat Hepler**, LEOFF 2, Local 1828, South County – Seat 5

Congratulations to all on their continued service to the RA Advisory Board.

In Memory

Jim Hill, IAFF Local 31 Tacoma

June 7, 2026

James “Jim” Hill dedicated his life to service, leadership, and the labor movement. After serving in the U.S. Coast Guard and joining the Tacoma Fire Department in 1963, he went on to serve as President of IAFF Local 31 Tacoma, Vice President of the WSCFF, and IAFF 7th District Vice President until his retirement in 1998.

Jim’s decades of advocacy helped strengthen the fire service and the labor movement throughout the Pacific Northwest. His legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

Celebration of Life will be held August 29th at 1pm at the Tacoma Yacht Club. If you plan on attending, please RSVP Chris at oldyeller351@hotmail.com.

Greg Reinke, IAFF Local 3520 East Pierce

June 15, 2026

Greg Wayne Reinke dedicated 37 years to the fire service, spending most of his career with Sumner Fire before retiring from L3520 East Pierce. He also served his community as a Sumner City Council member and was known for his leadership and commitment to helping others.

Greg's impact on his community and the fire service will be remembered by all who knew and served alongside him.

Thank you for reading!

Our active retirees keep the spirit of the fire service alive.

Stay safe, take care of one another, and feel free to **reach out** with any updates or stories to share.

– The [WSCFF Retirees Association Advisory Board](#)

Retirees Association

Roy Orlando

Mike Cooper

Pat Hepler

Steve Hostetter

George Orr

Curt Vandver

- Roy Orlando, Co-Chair, served 39 years with Local 31 Tacoma and actively monitors pension legislation and union benefits to support retirees.
- Mike Cooper served as a Shoreline Fire Department Lieutenant and a state legislator, continuing his commitment to the community in retirement.
- Pat Hepler retired as a Battalion Chief after many years with Snohomish County Fire District #1 and has been a longtime advocate for firefighters and their families.
- Steve Hostetter retired as a Battalion Chief from Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue and enjoys sharing his knowledge on retirement planning.

- George Orr has over 50 years with Local 876, including leadership roles and time as a state representative focused on firefighter issues.
- Curtis Vandver retired as Deputy Chief from the Puyallup Fire Department after 34 years of service and has been a 55-year member of Local 726, remaining active on LEOFF and fire pension boards. He also serves as West Vice President of the LEOFF Association and continues to advocate on pension and firefighter issues.



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