



Up To Now!

C.P. Van Delist – Department Adjutant
www.sdlegion.org – Email: adjutant@sdlegion.org

Issued Monthly from State Headquarters in Watertown, SD

Phone (605) 886-3604

No. 33685

December 3, 2024

- Dec 7 Pearl Harbor Day
- Dec 9 Sioux Fall VA Hospital Christmas Party 1pm
- Dec 10 VA Human Services Christmas Party, Sioux Falls 5pm
- Dec 11 Pearl Harbor Membership Target date 75%
- Dec 14 Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, Sioux Falls 11am
- Dec 14 State Veterans Home Christmas Party, Hot Springs 1pm
- Dec 14 The Army-Navy Football Game, Sponsored by The American Legion
- Dec 15 Hot Spring VA Christmas Party 1pm
- Dec 16 Ft Meade VA Christmas Party
- Dec 20 Department Holiday Open House, 12-4pm, at Dept HQ
- Dec 20 Space Force Birthday!**
- Dec 23-26 Christmas Holiday **HQ Closed**
- Dec 31-Jan 2 New Year's Holiday **HQ Closed**
- Dec 31 Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter, & EMT of the Year nominations due to Dept HQ
- Jan 1 Legion Baseball Registration Opens
- Jan 1 Legacy Scholarship Application opens
- Jan 1 Samsung Scholarship Application opens
- Jan 7 Public Safety Committee Meeting, DeSmet 10am
- Jan 8 Commander's Call, 7pm, MS Teams
- Jan 12 Dist 1 Oratory 2pm, Countryside Church, Spearfish, storm date Jan 19
- Jan 12 Dist 2 Oratory 10am at SD Mines, storm date Jan 19
- Jan 12 Dist 7 Oratory 1pm at Humbolt Community Center, storm date Jan 19
- Jan 14 Legislative Session starts
- Jan 14 Governor's State of the State Address, 1:00 pm, Pierre
- Jan 15 SD Veterans Council Meeting & Legislative Reception, 5:30-7:30 pm, Pierre Post 8
- Jan 15 Mid-Winter Membership Target date 80%
- Jan 19 Dist 3 Oratory 2pm at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre
- Jan 19 Dist 5 Oratory 3pm Brookings Post Home, storm date Jan 26
- Jan 19 Dist 6 Oratory 2pm Kimball Post Home, storm date Jan 25
- Jan 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day **HQ Closed**
- Jan 21 MidWinter Go-Getter certification due to Dept HQ
- Jan 27 Legion Day at the Capital & Legislative Reception
- Feb 5 Commander's Call, 7pm, MS Teams
- Feb 14-16 MidWinter Conference, Cedar Shores, Oacoma
- Feb 17 President's Day **HQ Closed**
- Feb 22-26 National American Legion Washington Conference
- Mar 5 Commander's Call, 7pm, MS Teams
- Mar 15 Dist 3 Spring Meeting
- Mar 16 Dist 6 Spring Meeting
- Mar 22 Dist 5 Spring Meeting
- Mar 23 Dist 4 Spring Meeting
- Mar 29 Dist 8 Spring Meeting
- Mar 20 Dist 7 Spring Meeting
- Apr 2 Commander's Call, 7pm, MS Teams
- Apr 4-7 National Vice Commander Visit to South Dakota
- Apr 5 Dist 1 Spring Meeting
- Apr 6 Dist 2 Spring Meeting
- Apr 15 Tax Day!
- Apr 18-20 Easter Holiday **HQ Closed**

HAT IN THE RING

Chester Post 136 endorses Kevin Hempel for Dept Commander
Sioux Fall Post 15 endorses Bill Peters for Dept Commander
Montrose Post 154 endorses Shane Lamer for Dist 3-8 Vice Commander

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings from your Department Commander. It is with a heavy heart that I let everyone know of my mother's passing on November 19th. I'm so grateful I was able to be with her during her final moments on this earth. I'm also very thankful the Department continued to do awesome things during my absence. Want to thank everyone who sent kind words of support and flowers to my family. In the short time I was in South Dakota this past month I was able to attend a few Veterans events to include the Springfield Prison Post, Auxiliary hosted dinner in Tabor as well as children led programs at Piedmont Elementary, Custer Middle/High and Elk Mountain schools.



With Christmas just around the corner, I plan to visit as many events as possible, I really look forward to seeing as many of you as I can. Cross our fingers the weather holds out.

Shout out to the Department on Membership. We are currently first in the Continental US with 77.02% - huge kudos to our Membership Chairman (Bill) and especially you all for staying on top of it - couldn't be PROUDER!!!

Last month's inaugural South Dakota Department Commander's call wasn't a barn burner for attendance but that's to be expected until the word gets out. First Wednesday of the month at 7pm Central time. Open to every Legion member in the Department. Check with your District Commander or the Department Adjutant for the MS Teams link. If you're not computer savvy - call in on 872-239-6022, when prompted, enter conference ID 532867600#. Your chance to have direct access to the Department Commander monthly - get the word out!!!

Continue to work on expanding your post Legion family and engaging with the local community. I also ask each post to continue doing buddy checks, especially around the Holidays. Then follow up after the Holidays. Let me know if you want me to visit your post or event. The calendar is still open but starting to fill up.

Kevin Morello, Department Commander
"Legion Family Uniting Communities"



CAMPING SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SCOUTS

Commander Morello's program this year is to support Scouts to go to Camp. It costs \$400 to send a Scout to camp and the Commander is encouraging all Post to send at least one Scout. Total raised to date is **\$5,780.25**. Send funds to Dept HQ marked "For Scouting"

COMMANDER'S CALL

Commander Morello is hosting a monthly "Commander's Call" open to all Legionnaires the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm central time. This will be an town hall style gathering over MS

Teams to give all an opportunity to talk directly to the Commander. The video link and call in number are below.

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 225 775 090 784 Passcode: N2jZoD
Dial in by phone +1 872-239-6022 Conference ID: 532 867 600#

DEPT COMMITTEE & COMMISSION VACANCIES

The Commander looking to fill the following positions:
Employment Committee one position

POST THAT HAVE NOT CERTIFIED THEIR OFFICERS.

30 PARKER, 44 ALSEN, 82 BULLHEAD, 86 ALCESTER, 89 PRESHO, 125 ROSEBUD, 158 OLDHAM, 201 PUKWANA, 238 OELRICHS, 239 LITTLE EAGLE, 251 PINE RIDGE, 256 NEW UNDERWOOD, 265 KYLE, 269 WANBLEE, 269 PORCUPINE, 295 PARMELEE, 301 DRAPER, 302 MANDERSON, 310 NORRIS, 317 ALLEN, 324 ROCK CREEK

AMERICAN LEGION SPONSORING ARMY-NAVY GAME

The American Legion is proud to announce an official partnership with the Army-Navy Football Game presented by USAA, which will be played for the 125th time on Dec. 14, 2024. The American Legion becomes the first veterans service organization (VSO) to sponsor “America’s Game” in its history. The American Legion will also be participating in year-round sponsorships of both Army and Navy Athletics. **Go Army Beat Navy!!!!**

DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE FOR THE HOLIDAY

The Department Headquarters will host an Open House for the Holidays on December 20th from 12-4pm in the HQ Office (14 1st AVE SE, Watertown.) All available are welcome to attend there will be hot cider & coco, eggnog and snacks. Join us in your favorite ugly sweater or holiday costume.

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER/EMT OF THE YEAR (NFY).

This award recognizes the professionalism and dedication of a firefighter. The Department winner is submitted to compete at the National level. Nomination packages cover the time period of 1 July to 30 June. Nominations should be submitted directly to Department Headquarters by December 31st. <https://sdlegion.org/firefighter-of-the-year>

DEPARTMENT EMT OF THE YEAR.

This award recognizes the professionalism and dedication of a Emergency Medical Technician. Nomination packages cover the time period of 1 July to 30 June. Nominations should be submitted directly to Department Headquarters by December 31st. <https://sdlegion.org/south-dakota-emt-of-the-year>

THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR (NLEOY).

This award recognizes the professionalism and dedication of a law enforcement officer. The Department winner is submitted to compete at the National level. Nomination packages cover the time period of 1 July to 30 June. Nominations are submitted directly to Department Headquarters by December 31st. <https://sdlegion.org/law-officer-of-the-year>

FUTURE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AND MIDWINTER DATES AND LOCATIONS

2025 Convention, Crossroads Hotel, Huron, June 19-22
2026 MidWinter, Cedar Shores Resort, Oacoma, Feb 20-22
2026 Convention, Ramkota, Aberdeen, June 18-21
2027 MidWinter, Cedar Shores Resort, Oacoma, Feb 19-21
2027 Convention, Ramkota, Sioux Falls June 16-19

2025 MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

The Mid-Winter Conference is being hosted by Potter Post 3, and will be held at the Cedar Shore Resort, in Oacoma, 14-16 Feb-

ruary 2025. All the rooms are full at the hotel but you can request to be placed on the waiting list by calling the resort at 605-234-6376. Other lodging in the area are:

Best Western Lee’s Motor Inn 605-234-5575 (2.4 miles)
A Bridge View Inn 605-234-5566 (2.5 miles)
Bel Aire Motel 605-234-5595 (2.7 miles)
Baymont 605-215-5766 (2.8 miles)
Oasis Inn 605-734-6061 (2.8 miles)
Econo Lodge 605-734-4100 (3.3 miles)
Howard Johnson 605-679-6367 (3.4 miles)
Quality Inn 605-7354-5593 (3.5 miles)
Super 8 605-299-1059 (3.6 miles)
AmericInn 605-496-9493 (5.6 miles)

2025 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE AGENDA

Cedar Shore Resort & Conference Center, Oacoma, SD

Friday, February 14, 2025

10:00 a.m. Department Finance Commission Meeting
12:00 p.m. Registration Desk Opens
Boys State Board of Directors Meeting
1:00 p.m. Department Executive Committee Meeting
3:00 p.m. SAL Detachment Executive Committee Meeting
4:30 p.m. SDAL Foundation Meeting
5:30 p.m. No-Host Social
6:30 p.m. Joint Legion Family Banquet

Saturday, February 15, 2025

7:30 a.m. Registration Desk Opens
8:00 a.m. Joint Opening Session
9:00 a.m. Boys State Planning Session- Board Room
9:55 a.m. Recess Joint Session
10:00 a.m. BREAKOUT SESSION 1:
Be the One Training
Post Constitution and By-Laws
Navigating the new Websites
Legion+ App Training
11:30 a.m. BREAKOUT SESSION 2:
Be the One Training
American Legion Reports & Awards
Navigating the new Websites
Legion+ App Training
1:00 p.m. LUNCH BREAK
1:00 p.m. SAL Business meeting
1:30 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION 3:
Be the One Training
American Legion Reports & Awards
Post Constitution and By-Laws

3:00 p.m. Department Reconvene
4:15 p.m. Sweepstakes Drawing
4:25 p.m. Announcements and Adjourn Assembly
4:30 p.m. American Legion Rider meeting
4:30 p.m. Membership Meeting
6:00 p.m. Go-Getter Reception & Smorgasbord

Sunday, February 16, 2025

8:30 a.m. Non-Denominational Service Four Chaplains
10:30 a.m. SD American Legion – Oratorical Contest

2025 MID-WINTER LUNCH & BANQUET TICKETS

A taco bar lunch buffet will be served at noon on Friday Feb 14th and a burger bar (beef burger or grilled chicken breast) on Saturday Feb 15th of the Mid-Winter Conference. Ticket cost will be \$20 per person each day.

Roast pork loin with loaded baked potato, house salad, vegetable Du Jour and dinner roll will be served at the banquet Friday evening Feb 14th with a ticket cost of \$30 per person.

Ticket requests for all Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members must be received no later than February 1, 2025. No tickets will be sold at the event. Tickets can be picked up at the conference registration table. One check can be made for the total lunch and banquet ticket costs. Please make checks payable to Potter Post #3. Ticket requests should be sent to:

John Payer
25120 344th Ave
Chamberlain, SD 57325

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

FOOD ALLERGIES _____

EVENT	PRICE	NUMBER OF TICKETS	COST
Friday lunch	\$20	x	= \$
Saturday lunch	\$20	x	= \$
Friday banquet	\$30	x	= \$
TOTAL			= \$

GO GETTER CERTIFICATION

Please send your Go Getter Certification to Dept by Jan 21 for Mid -Winter. judy@sdlegion.org The form is available online in the Post Adjutant Manual Forms <https://sdlegion.org/post-adjutant-manual-forms>. *The requirement has changed to signing up three new members or getting three renewals.* Go out and Get them, all!

THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

This needs-based scholarship designed to fulfill a financial gap remaining after all federal and state educational grants/scholarships available to an eligible applicant have been utilized. Children of post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a combined disability rating of 50 percent or greater or who died while on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001 are eligible. All applications new or renewal must be submitted using the online scholarship submission system beginning January 1 and NO LATER THAN Wednesday, March 26, 2025. *Total amount of funds awarded in 2024: \$1,645,558*

CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS CAN HELP BRING HOPE

Has your Post/Unit/Squadron been active lately to support the youth in your communities? I know some of you have been. I wanted to give a “Thank you” shout out to some the Posts that participated in the “Safe Halloween” program this year by hosting Halloween parties in their communities. Some nice photos can be found on Facebook pages from Rapid City, Madison, and Arlington. TFAs are coming in too – we’re making a difference!

There are some exciting things happening with Operation Homefront that you can share with others in need.

The Military Child of the Year scholarship contest for 9th - 12th graders is accepting applications now through December 15th for the child of any active duty military and National Guard service members. To apply, applications can be found at www.operationhomefront.org/military-child-of-the-year/

We are looking for assistance to collect Holiday items from the following Dollar Tree Locations: Watertown, Aberdeen, Pierre, Brookings, Sisseton, and Vermillion. To sign up to become a volunteer to collect at one of these stores, please create an account at www.my.operationhomefront.org/Account/Register and then complete the background check application. Once accepted, you can choose the store you would like to help with.

For any questions regarding what’s happening with the C&Y program within the Department of South Dakota, contact me anytime. Thank you again to all your help within the state to support our C&Y programs.

Submitted by,
Harry Boner, SD C&Y Chairman, 605-691-4571

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING COURSE

Basic Training is a great way to better understand your American Legion. The course covers five topics: history and organization; Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; National Security; Americanism; and Children & Youth. Take the Basic Training course online at www.legion.org/training.

2025 SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

The 2025 South Dakota American Legion College will be April 26 & 27th. More details to come soon but mark your calendar. Class size is limited to ten (10). Applications can be found at <https://www.sdlegion.org/department-training-tools/>

SOUTH DAKOTA EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

The Dept Education Committee is asking all locals Posts to coordinate with their local Schools to identify potential candidates for the South Dakota Educator of the Year for School Year 2024-2025. Posts must submit nominees to their District Commander prior to Spring District Meeting. District Commander will submit to the Dept HQ no later than May 1, 2025. For more information visit <https://sdlegion.org/educator-of-the-year> or contact Mike Pauling at 443-619-2049.

TRAINING TUESDAY UPDATE

There is an exciting lineup for National’s Training Tuesday sessions. Below is the current schedule:

- Jan 28, 2025: Membership - *Managing the Post*
- Feb 25, 2025: Programs - *SAL*
- Mar 25, 2025: Resolutions - *Workshop Ideas to Resolutions*
- April 29, 2025: Be The One - *Addiction Resources*
- May 27, 2025: Membership - *CPR/CSR*
- June 24, 2025: Resolutions - *Socializing Resolutions*
- July 29, 2025: Be The One - *UPDATE*

Get more info at www.legion.org/information-center/training/training-tuesdays

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE BAR VETERANS' COMMITTEE

Provides legal services and referrals to active-duty military, Veterans and their dependents, for service-related legal problems.

The SDSB Veterans' Committee also works with the Veterans' Legal Education Group (VLEG) at USD School of Law. Together, they host several clinics each year throughout the state. These clinics **DO NOT need to be service related** and is not formal representation. However, they do provide guidance and the ability to draft simple estate planning documents at no cost to the Veteran. For more info call 605-224-7554 or email info@sdbar.net

GROUPEE FOR THE AMERICAN LEGION

South Dakota American Legion and Grouper partnered to cover the group activities that provide social connection and keep you healthy. Eligible Legionnaires age 65+ could qualify for a \$50 check plus \$20 ongoing activity payments just for staying active with your community. Check your eligibility today!

If a Legionnaire's Medicare coverage is not affiliated with Grouper and they want to switch to a plan that does have it, they should contact their doctor and/or health care facilities to make sure the switch will not impact current coverage – a lot of SD healthcare providers/facilities do not take Medicare Advantage

For more info go to American Legion link to register - <http://GrouperGroups.com/SD-Legion> or call (833) 445-2400 or email info@hellogrouper.com

LEGION HISTORY

CHILD WELL-BEING FOUNDATION (CWF)

Departments and posts are asked to update their materials and websites related to CWF, as it is now being promoted as the “Child Well-Being Foundation.”

CWF is offering a CWF 100% Per Capita Banner to all posts, units, squadrons, and chapters, that donate \$1 per member based on

their membership as of June 1, 2024. For the CWF Per Capita Banner form go to www.legion.org/advocacy/youth-support/youth-support-publications

NATIONAL COMMANDER POST EXCELLENCE AWARD

To qualify for the Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas:

- 1) Membership: Attain at least 103% of their membership goal. At least one post officer attends district meetings.
- 2) Consolidated Post Report: CPRs submitted by July 1.
- 3) 90% Renewal Rate: Renew at least 90% of their 2024 members
- 4) Conduct an event that connects the community and Post.

The district commander responsible for the post will certify a post as having achieved the four specified criteria and submit to Dept HQ. List should include the post name, phone number, address, and commander's name. If possible, attach copies of press releases. Dept HQ will send Posts that qualify to National HQ.

NATIONAL COMMANDER 103% MEMBERSHIP GOAL DOG TAG COIN

Any Post, District, County, Department Commander or Membership Chair who achieves 103% of their member goal in 2025 can receive a dog tag coin. Complete the form online at www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/103-percent-membership-award & send it to Dept HQ hq@legion.org for verification.

NATIONAL COMMANDER'S MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE DOG TAG COIN

A National Commander's "Be the One" dog tag coin will be awarded to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members. A new member is anyone who was not a member during the 2024 member year.

Transfers, Auxiliary and Sons members don't count. Only one coin per individual. Complete the form online at www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/national-commanders-incentive-program and send it to National HQ kadams@legion.org

2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2025 dues are \$38.50 for each member sent to HQ.

DEPARTMENT DUES INCREASE!

At the 2024 Department Convention a \$5 dues increase was passed that will take effect July 1, 2025. This increase will require all Posts to charge more for membership and makes submitting **Post Data Reports** critical this year. 2025-2026 minimum dues will be 43.50 for each member. More information to follow in future UTNs.

LEGION+ APP NOW AVAILABLE

Stay connected with your American Legion community, get the latest news, find ways to help, and manage your membership, stories, and podcasts while also finding ways to support others. Legion+ helps you manage your membership, stores your membership card, and has tools to encourage users to reach out to recruit, advocate, and assist other members. **The app will let you recruit new members directly into your Post.** Download at **your app store**, search for Legion+.

NEW DEPT ONLINE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Department has created a membership application online to allow members to join or renew directly into the post of their choice. Simply go to sdlegion.org and click on the Join Today button. Cost is \$50 using credit card, Venmo or PayPal.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

As we approach the end of the year, I wanted to provide you with a quick update on our current status and remind you of some important information.

Membership Update: We had a great November we signed up and renewed 1232 members. Our membership currently stands at **77.43%**, with a total of **12,079 members**. This is a significant

achievement, and I want to thank each and every one of you for your commitment to the Legion. I would ask you all to help us as a team to reach the goal that we have set for 2025. As a coach would ask his team, I ask you also to do your best and leave it all on the field. At the end, that is all I can ask of you. Let's be that "Eye of the Tiger" and go get it done.

Membership Renewal Reminder: If you have not yet renewed your membership, please be aware that it will expire on December 31, 2024. Your continued support is vital to our mission, and we encourage you to renew your membership as soon as possible.

Holiday Wishes: As we enter the holiday season, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your dedication and hard work throughout the year. I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May this festive season bring you joy, peace, and cherished moments with your loved ones.

I hope everybody stayed warm over the last couple of weeks. I'm looking forward to a little warm-up by the weekend and hopefully for awhile.

As a reminder, let's not forget our veterans we haven't heard from. Please make sure to do our Buddy Checks during these times. Reaching out to our fellow veterans ensures they feel supported and connected, especially during the holiday season.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support. Together, we are making a difference and building a stronger community.

Warm regards,
Bill

COMMANDER MORRELLO CALLS FOR BUDDY CHECKS

While Buddy Checks can be conducted year round, Commander Morello asks that during the Holiday Season each Post make a special effort to check on their members and Veterans in their community.

Buddy Checks are not membership or fundraising calls; they are simple check-ins with veterans in the community to see how they are doing and to learn if the local post can help with anything.

How do you organize a Buddy Check? Where to start can be daunting but it is not Rocket Surgery here are some tips.

1. Gather a team to make phone calls or visit the veterans in person.
2. Use MyLegion.org to get contact information.
3. Divide up the contact list among your team members.
4. Make a list of resources like, Service Officers, financial aid, employment, and other resources for veterans and families.
5. Start calling.
6. Make a record of your calls, and identify who may need a follow up.
7. Thank the veteran in the beginning and end of the call.
8. Leave contact info in case the Veteran needs to follow up later.

Remember you are not alone in doing Buddy Checks, others have done them and they work. For more resources check out <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/be-the-one/buddy-check> or contact the Dept Adjutant.

Buddy Check Sample Script

Hi, [VETERAN'S NAME]. This is [YOUR NAME] from your American Legion Post [XYZ]. First I would like to thank you for your service to our Nation.

I'm calling to see if there is anything that your American Legion Family can assist you with. American Legion is joining forces with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide information and resources, as well as a welcoming environment to all veterans.

Your fellow veterans are here for you. Less than 1% of Americans ever serve in the Armed Forces, so we understand each other's needs perhaps better than anyone. I may be able to direct you to resources that aid in critical matters such as health care, counseling, financial assistance and VA claims if you need them, or know someone who does. ***Is there anything we can do to help you or a fellow Veteran?***

In the future, if you ever need anything from The American Legion, do not hesitate to ask. We may not personally be able to help, but we can get you to the right resources. Thanks again for your service. If you need anything, call me anytime at [PHONE NUMBER] or email me at [EMAIL ADDRESS] Let's stay in touch!