



Up To Now!

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Phone (605) 886-3604

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September 11, 2025

Sep 13 District 2 Meeting, Hermosa Post 303, 11am social, 12pm meal, 1pm meeting
Sep 14 District 1 Meeting- Registration and Social 10:00am-10:30 am, Joint Meeting 10:30-11:30am, Lunch 11:30 am-12:30 pm, Meeting 12:30pm to 2:30pm
Sep 16 SD Vets Council Meeting, Yankton VFW Post 1pm
Sep 17 Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, PVT Elmer Albertson, Harding County School 2:30pm
Sep 17 Constitution Day, **Fly the Flag**
Sep 18 Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, PFC Peter Ommen, 243 Central Main Street, Central City 1pm
Sept 19 National POW/MIA Recognition Day, **Fly the Flag**
Sep 20-21 SDAL Golf Tournament, Wakonda
Sep 23 Midwest Honor Flight Mission 27
Sep 25 Rapid City Vets Stand Down, DoubleTree by Hilton 10am
Sep 27 District 3 Meeting, Pierre Post 8, 1130am social, 12pm meal, 1pm meeting
Sep 28 District 6 Meeting, Beadle Co Sportsman Club, Huron, Social 11:30, meal 12:00, meeting 1:30
Oct 3 Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, SGT Dirk Abbas, Britton Event Center, 2pm
Oct 6-9 National Fall Meetings, Indianapolis
Oct 7 Midwest Honor Flight Mission 28
Oct 8 Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication, PVT Leroy Goosen (location and time to be determined)
Oct 11 District 4 Meeting, Stratford Post 207, Meeting 1pm social and meal to follow
Oct 12 District 5 Meeting Rosalie's Restaurant Sisseton 1230 meal (pay for yourself), 2pm Meeting
Oct 13 Native American Day, **Office Closed, Fly the Flag**
Oct 15 SD Vets Council Meeting, Virtual, 1pm
Nov 8 Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair, Sturgis Community Center, 11am-2pm
Nov 8 Day County Vets Banquet, Webster Armory, 5pm
Nov 8 Northern Hills Vet Appreciation Fair "We've Got Your Six" Sturgis 11am-2pm
Nov 11 Veterans Day, **Office Closed, Fly the Flag**
Nov 19 SD Vets Council Meeting, DAV HQ, Sioux Falls, 9am
Nov 19 Legislative Round Table, Sioux Falls DAV HQ 1-4pm
Nov 20 Legislative Round Table, (North East)
Nov 21 Legislative Round Table, Rapid City
Nov 22 Legislative Round Table, Pierre
Nov 27-30 Thanksgiving, **Office Closed, Fly the Flag**
Dec 2 Governor's Budget Address 1pm
Dec 13 Wreaths Across America Ceremony, SD Vet Cemetery, Sioux Falls, 11am
Dec 24-26 Christmas, **Office Closed**
Dec 31-Jan 2 New Year's, **Office Closed**
Jan 13 SD Legislative Session Opens
Jan 14 SD Veterans Council Meeting, Pierre Post 8 2-5pm
Jan 14 SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception 5:30-7:30pm
Jan 19 Martin Luther King Jr Day, **Office Closed**
Feb 19-22 MidWinter Conference
Mar 7 Dist 5 Meeting
Mar 8 Dist 4 Meeting
Mar 14 Dist 6 Meeting
Mar 15 Dist 3 Meeting
Mar 28 Dist 8 Meeting
Mar 29 Dist 7 Meeting
Apr 11 Dist 1 Meeting
Apr 12 Dist 2 Meeting

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear Legionnaires,

I am writing this month's column while at the 106th American Legion National Convention in Tampa, FL. We arrived Friday, August 22 and today is August 27th. I am happy to report we finally have a day that it has not been raining since we arrived. The South Dakota delegation has been busy attending meetings, caucuses, luncheons and the convention as well as some down time enjoying the sights and local cuisine. Look at the Department's facebook for a lot of photos being posted.



This month I would like to talk about the "I" in my acronym L.I.S.T. The "I" stands for "involved in our communities". In many of our smaller communities that have a post home, the Legion hall is often the center of activities in the community. It gets a little more complicated in larger communities or locations that do not have post homes. But the Posts can still be very active in their communities. Many posts do honor guards for funerals or color guards for the community's special events such as sporting events or parades. That is all good, but I would ask that you think about hosting or spearheading additional projects. It could be an annual blood drive, hosting a Halloween safety event for kids, periodic clean ups at a city park or helping out at the local food bank once a month. It might also be making a habit of searching out older veterans or families of deployed service members in your community. They might need help with yard work, getting to the store or maybe some home repairs. In our smaller communities, families of deployed service members often do not have access or ready help with issues that might come up. Simply stopping by to check on the families can give them peace of mind that the Legion is looking out for them and they have someone they can contact if they need help. I firmly believe if the community sees the Legion is active and doing good things in the community, the community will actively support the Legion. As a side benefit, many veterans are looking for ways to be involved, and if you show your post is serving the community, the veterans are more likely to decide they want to be a part of an organization that helps out. Also remember we are a Legion Family, so don't forget to include them when you are working in the community. The Auxiliary, Sons and Riders are often looking for ways to get involved. Make it a Legion Family event.

Lastly, while being active or doing those events, don't forget to "Tell our story." Invite the local news organizations so we can tell our story before, during and after your events. News people are often looking for good stories to share with their audiences. As a side note, District Fall meetings are approaching fast. I hope to see a great turn out at the respective District fall meetings. See You there!!

Kevin Hempel
Department Commander
L.I.S.T.

Be The One to make a difference



MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE – SEPTEMBER 2025

As your Membership Chairman for the third year in a row, I want to thank you for the trust and support you've given me. It is truly an honor to continue serving alongside all of you as we begin another membership year.

Our new National Commander has reminded us many times already: **"Better Together."** Those words capture the spirit of our mission. We succeed when we stand shoulder to shoulder, supporting one another as a family.

And as your Membership Chairman, I want you to know this—I **I've got your back**. We in the Department are here to support every Post and every District, but we also need you to **have our back too**.

District meetings will be starting very soon, and I strongly encourage every member to attend. Show up, share ideas, and be part of the energy. These gatherings are more than just business—they are a chance to connect, recharge, and strengthen the bonds that make us who we are.

Let's also make **early renewals** a top priority. Each renewal is a step forward, each renewal is a commitment to our mission, and each renewal brings us closer to a record-setting year.

I challenge every Post: **reach out now** to those who haven't renewed yet—pick up the phone, send a message, or knock on a door. And don't forget your **Buddy Checks!** They aren't just a membership tool—they are a lifeline. A simple call can remind a veteran that they belong, that they are valued, and that they are never alone.

Before I close, I ask that we take a moment to remember—not only the young children who lost their lives or were injured, but also those who were left shaken and scared by tragedy. Let us hold them, and their families, in our thoughts and prayers. They remind us why family, community, and care for one another matter so deeply.

"Family is not an important thing—it's everything."

Now, let's carry that spirit forward.

Better Together. I've Got Your Back. We are stronger. We are united. We are Legion strong!

Until next time—**USA, USA, USA!**

Bill

Bill Peters, Membership Chair

605.360.6547 bpeters0551@gmail.com

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY USA 250 CHALLENGE

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities. The USA 250 Challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

American Legion National Commander James LaCoursiere launched the USA 250 Challenge on July 3, 2025. The year-long initiative offers three categories — fitness, mental wellness and community service — in order to engage more American Legion Family members and others to participate.

Participants may engage in one, two or all three activities as an individual or as part of a team like an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron and/or an American Legion Riders chapter.

For a \$30 registration fee, participants will receive their choice of a USA 250 Challenge tech shirt. The proceeds will go to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF).

106TH NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION DELEGATES AND ALTERNATE DELEGATES

The following were the Department's Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention in Tampa, FL 22-28:
Department Commander Kevin Hempel of Chester, Immediate Past Dept Commander Kevin Morello of Piedmont, Department Adju-

tant C.P. Van Delist of Rapid City 22, NEC Fred Nelson of Spearfish (National Call In), ANEC Doug Feltman of Chamberlain (National Call In), PDC Paul Evenson of Garretson (National Call In), PDC Terry Hanson of Arlington (National Call In), PDC Hugh Holmes of Mitchell (National Call In), PDC Tim Jurgens of Milbank (National Call In), PDC Jim Huls of Madison (National Call In), Andy Lyngen of Garretson (National Call In), Warren Aas of Watertown (National Call In), Doug Harris of Rapid City 22 (National Call In), PDC Rick McDonald of Hermosa, PDC Charemon Dunham of Iroquois, Noel Cummins of Milbank, Vern Prickett of Milbank, Andy Lyngen of Garretson, Chris Rendon of Rapid City 320, Annette Dunham of Iroquois, Patrick Branco of Sioux Falls 15, Bill Peters of Sioux Falls 15, Dale Hill of Sioux Falls 15, Jeff Hrabanek of Winner, Brian Dean of Spearfish, Carol Howtiz of Spearfish, Mike Kumm of N. Sioux City, Greg Smith of Gregory, & Sandy Smith of Gregory.

NEW AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL COMMANDER DAN WILEY

During the final hour of the American Legion 106th national convention in Tampa, FL, Dan Wiley of Kansas was elected and sworn in as the new Commander of The American Legion.

An Air Force veteran, Wiley is a retired state district court judge who raises cattle in Leavenworth, Kan. Following his Air Force service, Wiley obtained a bachelor's degree in business at the College of Great Falls in Montana. He returned to his hometown of Lawrence, Kan., and earned a law degree at the University of Kansas.

Wiley has held many leadership positions at The American Legion post, department (state) and national levels. He is a paid-up-for-life member of Byron H. Mehl American Legion Post 23 in Leavenworth and is a past department commander of Kansas. He also represented the state as a member of The American Legion's National Executive Committee.

Appointed by the Kansas governor as a district court judge in 2008, Wiley helped establish and preside over the Leavenworth County Veterans Treatment Court. He has been active in his community and is a past president of the Leavenworth / Lansing Chamber of Commerce, a past chairman of the Leavenworth County Veterans Day Parade Committee and a former member of the Unified School District 453 School Board.

As national commander, Wiley is a strong advocate for The American Legion's Be the One mission to prevent veteran suicide. He emphasizes inclusivity in the American Legion Family through the theme, Better Together! Wiley and his wife, Sonia, have two children, Austin and Christy, and one grandson.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Cards are in the mail!!!

Headquarters has received the 2026 membership cards. Certify your officers **NOW** to receive your cards. The form is in the Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual or you can email the information to hq@sdlegion.org or give Judy a call at Dept HQ.

POSTS THAT HAVE NOT CERTIFIED OFFICERS

10 Lake Andes, 19 Wood, 35 Highmore, 40 Webster, 41 Alexandria, 70 Flandreau, 77 Blunt, 82 Bullhead, 86 Alcester, 96 White Lake, 105 Nunda, 116 Alpena, 117 Viborg, 125 Rosebud, 145 Howard, 147 Buffalo, 148 Conde, 157 Vivian, 229 Big Stone, 238 Oelrichs, 239 Little Eagle, 248 Freeman, 251 Pine Ridge, 256 N Underwood, 257 Greenwood, 258 Andover, 265 Kyle, 269 Wanblee, 273 Frederick, 282 Pickstown, 289 Mansfield, 294 Porcupine, 295 Parmelee, 297 St Francis, 299 Polo, 308 Eagle Butte, 310 Norris, 317 Allen, 324 Rock Creek

BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS SCHEDULE

The schedule for The American Legion 2025 baseball state tournaments is as follows:

CLASS "A" Senior Winner Post 45 Harrisburg Gold
CLASS "A" Junior Winner, Rapid City Post 22 Expos
CLASS "B" Senior Winner, Dell Rapids Post 65
CLASS "B" Junior Winner, Parkston Post 194

BASEBALL BIDS DUE

Bids for the 2027 Regional and State tournaments are due to the Athletic Commission no later than December 1, 2025. If you are interested in hosting one of the tournaments contact Beau Garcia for more information. beau.garcia2@gmail.com or 605-206-0347

LEGION INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion states, "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment." Additionally the National Charter, approved by Congress, stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is never to help or endorse a candidate. As a private citizen and not speaking for the organization, can do whatever is legal and ethical to advance his/her candidacy. If attending a political event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with The American Legion emblem visible, must be removed so as not to imply any endorsement by The American Legion. This includes in person or over social media.

The American Legion values its independence and effectiveness on veterans' issues. This stance is best maintained by neutrality on all individual candidates or political parties. The American Legion, by legal definition, is non-partisan and supports "or opposes as necessary" only issues which impact the Four Pillars.

!!!!!!LEGISLATIVE ACTION NEEDED!!!!!!

The American Legion strongly supports the latest effort to eliminate the unjust offset that penalizes thousands of combat-injured veterans. On July 22, a critical step was taken when Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) announced their intent to file the text of the Major Richard Star Act as an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

This long-overdue reform—backed by The American Legion and more than 60 other military and veteran organizations—would ensure that combat-injured retirees can receive both their Department of Defense retirement pay and the disability compensation earned through their sacrifices. Current law reduces retirement pay by the exact amount of VA disability compensation received, a policy that punishes wounded veterans for their service and injury. We call this what it is: a "wounded veteran tax," and it must end. As of July 22, the amendment had already secured 31 Senate sponsors. The standalone bill has overwhelming bipartisan support, with 294 cosponsors in the House and 76 in the Senate—more than enough to pass if brought to a floor vote.

The American Legion urges Congress to do right by our nation's combat-wounded heroes and pass this amendment without delay. These veterans have already paid more than their fair share.

You can contact your representative through our campaigns located at the National Grassroots Action Center. Share The American Legion's legislative priorities using the Legislative Agenda when you contact their office. While on the Grassroots Action Center page, be sure to sign up for legislative alerts so you can stay up to date on all of The American Legion's legislative campaigns.
<https://www.votervoicenet.com/AmericanLegion/home>

2025 SDAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The SDAL annual golf tournament will be held in Wakonda, SD over the weekend of September 20 & 21, 2025. For more information contact Athletic Commissioner Elton Blemaster 605-280-2023 or Athletic Commissioner Gene Gillen at 605-415-0885

DWIGHT WOOD POST #132 GOLF TOURNAMENT

At Springfield Golf Course Saturday, August 16, 2025 Shotgun Start @ 9:30 a.m. Open to ALL Golfers Four Person Teams \$50.00 per person Includes Noon Lunch Cart NOT included. To Register Contact: Springfield Golf Course 605-369-5525

FUTURE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AND MIDWINTER DATES AND LOCATIONS

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 17-20
2028 MidWinter, Cedar Shores Resort, Oacoma, Feb 18-20

2030 DEPT CONVENTION & MIDWINTER

Bids for the 2030 Convention are being accepted, at this time there were no bids submitted for convention. Posts and Convention Centers who desire to submit bids to host either events should send that information to the Dept Adjutant. Application forms are available from Dept. Arrowwood Resort, in Oacoma was selected for the 2030 MidWinter Conference.

2026 MID-WINTER

The Mid-Winter Conference is being hosted by Potter Post 3, and will be held at the Arrowwood Resort, in Oacoma, 20-22 February 2026. The entire hotel is blocked off for the Midwinter, reservations can be made by calling the resort at 605-234-6376. The rate for the Standard King or Double Queen room is \$104 plus taxes. Be sure to mention you will be attending the American Legion Midwinter Conference. Other details such as the Joint Banquet, Go-Getters, and training sessions will be coming soon. Other lodging available: Chamberlain:

- AmericInn 1981 King Street, (605) 234-0985) \$105. 10 rooms blocked until 2 Feb, must state with The American Legion to get that rate.
- Best Western 220 West King Street (605) 734-5575 2 beds \$98, 1 bed 2 people \$88

Oacoma:

- Baymont 1100 East Hwy 16, 1-888-712-6558 \$119
- Howard Johnson 203 E Hwy 16 (605) 234-4222 \$89
- EconoLodge 400 East Hwy 16 (605) 734-4100 \$69 single queen bed, \$79 2 queen beds
- Quality Inn 100 Hwy 16 (605) 734-5593 single queen bed \$ 89, 2 queen beds \$ 99, one king bed \$94.00

NATIONAL TRAINING UPDATE

The next Training Tuesday will take place on Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. CT. This session continues our Resolutions Training Series and will focus on drafting the "Whereas" portion of the resolution process. All are encouraged to join at: [Microsoft Teams Webinar](#)

National Regional Information Conferences (NRICs)

NRICs are designed to bring Legionnaires together across regions to strengthen leadership, exchange ideas, and expand our shared commitment. Please mark your calendars and share with your members: Indianapolis, IN – January 31, 2026
Atlanta, GA – February 7, 2026
More info to follow...

ALL AMERICAN LEGION POSTS TO FILE IRS FORM 990

Federal tax regulations require every Post to file IRS form 990. This must be filled out by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your organizations accounting period. If the IRS does not receive this form, they will revoke the tax-exempt status of the Post. To get your Tax-exempt status back you have to apply and pay a fee. This process takes months and can be challenging. Download at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f990.pdf>

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST (LIT)

This Year the Department received \$22,500 from the LIT Program.

Every legionnaire who signs up for any of the LIT programs brings money right back here to our Department.

As a member of the Legion Family, you're eligible for No Cost LegionCare Insurance. \$5,000 NO COST To You Accidental Death Protection if traveling on official American Legion business. \$1,000 Accidental Death Protection for all other covered accidents. Activate your NO COST To You insurance coverage today.

<https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare/>

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust is a trusted provider for Medicare Supplement and Medicare solutions, offering protection designed for American Legion members. Upcoming Medicare Open Enrollment period is October 15 - December 7, 2025

For those turning 65, or already eligible, this is your time to review and enroll. [e-Health Medicare](#), through LIT, connects members to: A+ rated Medicare Supplement & Advantage plans Nationwide access to top carriers.

BOYS STATE AND YOUTH TROOPER

Applications are now being accepted for Boys State and YTA. Applications can be found at <https://sdlegion.org/programs>. Now is the time to get out and start recruiting for these great programs.

SDAL FOUNDATION

Did you know that the SDAL can facilitate donations directly to your Post or programs. Many donors are reluctant to donate to a Veteran Non-Profit 501c19 and only want to donate to a 501c3 for various tax reasons. Well that is where the SDAL Foundation can help. Call or email the Dept Adj for the application and more information.

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING COURSE

Have you completed the Basic Training Course? It 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. Each topic offers ways in which American Legion Family members can advance the organization's values and services in their local communities. Following the Course Conclusion, a 40-question exam is provided. Graduates can download and print a certificate of completion and order a Basic Training Graduate pin from Emblem Sales. Take the Basic Training course online at www.legion.org/training.

SEPTEMBER HISTORY

Sept 3, 1783 The Treaty of Paris was signed by John Adams, Ben Franklin and John Jay, formally ending the American Revolutionary War between Britain and the United States.

Sept 23, 1804, the Lewis and Clark Expedition made contact with the Lakota Nation for the first time.

Sept 5, 1915, Known as 'Little Willie', the world's first tank rolled off the production line in England.

Sept 16, 1919 Congress charters The American Legion.

Sept 1932 The Sons of The American Legion is officially recognized during the 1932 National Convention in Portland, Ore

Sept. 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland, starting World War II.

Sept 2, 1945 Japan formally surrendered to the Allied forces on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, ending World War II.

Sept 18, 1947 The US Air Force was established.

Sept 5, 1972 Eight terrorist extremist of the Palestinian group 'Fatah' - stormed the housing of Israeli athletes during the Munich Olympics. The attack led to the deaths of 11 Israelis.

Sept 22, 1980 Iraqi invasion of Iran began sparking the Iran-Iraq War, and lasted until 5 December 1980.

Sept 11, 2001 Nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four airplanes, crashing two into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center and a third plane into the Pentagon. After learning about the other attacks, passengers on the fourth plane, Flight 93, fought back, and the plane crashed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania. The attacks killed 2,977 people from 90 nations; 2,753 people were

killed in New York; 184 people were killed at the Pentagon; and 40 people were killed on Flight 93.

SD STATE FAIR UPDATE

On Thursday of the South Dakota State Fair, is Veterans Day. Both MaryJo and Judy were out and about driving the volunteer courtesy carts throughout the day.

The American Legion booth is now located in the Expo Center. This here we are now in a larger booth location and the reception has been well received. There were Legion members, Sons, the Auxiliary, and the Junior Auxiliary members present to help out with the booth. A trivia game was added for the kids to play which gave our volunteers time to visit with their parent and grandparents about the American Legion programs that are available today and how they could become a part of it.

Veterans enjoyed being asked to come into the booth and place a pin on a world map. We asked them how far from home they had to travel to protect our freedoms today. The Veterans like to share their stories of their experiences, some of which were just heart wrenching. It was truly amazing to hear their stories about the cost freedom. The next time you see a veteran, shake there hand, give them a hug, and say thank you for all they have done to protect our freedom! Overall having the American Legion booth located in the Expo building has been a great move for us. The direct contact with our Veterans and their family has increased greatly from our days when we were located in the Veterans building.

We're already making plans for next year! If you are ever out to the fair, be sure to stop by the booth and say hi.

Submitted by
Harry Boner, C&Y Chairman

CHILDREN AND YOUTH UPDATE

The last month has been busy for C&Y program within the Department. We had American Legion and Sons of the American Legion volunteers to come out to Ellsworth AFB on Saturday, July 27th to help with the Back to School Backpack distribution project. Operation Homefront donated 400 backpacks with school supplies which were distributed to around 300 children of full time, active duty enlisted service members, and National Guard personnel within the area of Ellsworth. It was great to see the young children's eyes light up when they received their backpacks along with other donated items from local service providers that were also present. I was able to have around 300 donated toys that were collected from the Dollar Tree in late December that had not been distributed yet. While only 300 backpacks were distributed, many of the remaining backpacks were spoken for by families in transition between Rapid City and Grand Forks, ND, which is where many of the bombers relocated to while construction continues at Ellsworth in preparation for the new bomber fleet that will be transitioning to Ellsworth in the coming year. Thank you to our Legionnaires and Sons members who were able to come out to help support this event.

I want to say thank you to our Legion Auxiliary for their generous donation of educational supplies of age zero through eight. These boxes of supplies were part of the Stuff Sack program for the 2025 Auxiliary year. Many of these supplies were donated to the Commands First Sergeants Club while I was at Ellsworth AFB, during the backpack distribution event. This club hosts fund raisers and special events to assist younger service members with children that are in need of temporary assistance.

With this new Legion year of 2026, we have collected many boxes of donated school supplies from several Dollar Tree stores, I hope to plan an event and ask for assistance from our Legion, Son, and Auxiliary members where these donated supplies could be setup and distributed to our National Guard personnel with children at home. Their will be more to come on this event.

We are doing a great job supporting our youth and our Veterans. I will try my best to involve more of our legion families. Thank you.

Best Regards,
Harry Boner, C&Y Chairman
605-691-4571

Employment Awards

Employment Award forms, along with all pertinent information, can be found on the Department website at <https://www.sdlegion.org/employment-award-forms/>. Here, we have included the Employment Awards that are offered and a short description of each. Please search your communities for those employers that deserve to be recognized.

All Employment Award Nomination Forms are due on **November 15th to Department HQ in Watertown**. The January 15th date listed on each form is when they are due from our Department Employment Chairman to National Headquarters.

Employer of Veterans Award

History: The Veterans Employment and Education (VE&E) Commission expanded its Employer Awards Program in 1969 when it created an award category for employers of veterans. Originally, departments were permitted to submit one nomination each for a large and a small employer of veterans. In 1992, the number of awards for employers of veterans was increased to include:

- One nomination for a small company with 50 or fewer employees
- One nomination for a medium sized company with workforces of 51 to 200
- One nomination for a large company with 201 or more employees

In order to be eligible for the National Employer of Veterans Awards, nominees must meet the following criteria:

- 1) At least 10 percent of the nominee's workforce must be veterans.
- 2) The nominee must have been in business for at least five years.
- 3) The nominee cannot restrict employment to veterans only.
- 4) The nominee must be a private sector employer - the nominee cannot be a city, state or federal employer.

The purpose of Award: To confer recognition on one small, one medium and one large employer in each state for outstanding records in the hiring and retention of veterans.

Employer of Older Workers Award

History: In 1958, the National Veterans Employment & Education Commission expanded its Employer Awards Program by creating an award for employers of older workers. Because the commission saw older workers as a valuable economic resource of proven skills, stability, and experience, it wanted to encourage employers to hire and retain older workers in the work force. National "Employ the Older Worker Week" was established by The American Legion and is observed during the last full week of each September.

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission believes that this particular award category will become increasingly important over the next few years. Several major studies have concluded that as we move through the twenty-first century there will be fewer young people entering the labor market. As a result, it will be necessary for employers to encourage older workers to stay in the labor force.

Purpose of Award: To confer recognition on one employer in each state for an outstanding record in the hiring and retention of older workers.

Award to Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons

History: Since 1987, American Legion posts have competed for prizes through the awards program. NOD will continue to award certificates to the winners, and all nominees and their departments will receive American Legion citations of appreciation.

Purpose: The purpose of the National Organization on Disability (NOD) Awards competition is to confer national recognition on organizations, such as The American Legion, for their involvement in enhancing the lives of disabled persons by providing opportunities for their participation in community activities. Any Legion project or program that improves the quality of life for disabled persons will be considered.

Employment Service Awards

History: In 1990, a resolution established a national awards program to recognize outstanding Employment Service (ES) offices and employees. Both the National Veterans Employment & Education (VE&E) Commission and the Internal Affairs Commission's Trophies and Awards Subcommittee conducted extensive studies and both recommended approval and referred the resolution to the National Executive Committee for final approval. The NEC unanimously approved the resolution at its spring 1992 meeting.

Purpose: The purpose of the ES awards program is to confer national recognition annually on one outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER), one Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist (DVOP), and one local ES office. LVERs, DVOPs, and the ES office provide job counseling, testing, and placement assistance to unemployed and underemployed veterans.

Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

History: In January of 2003, the Veterans Employment & Education (VE&E) Commission requested that each department appoint a Homeless Veterans Task Force chairman, who should coordinate the department's activities and report on them to the department adjutant and to the VE&E Division at least once a year. The Homeless Veterans Outreach Award, instituted in 2005, recognizes departments for their activities toward eliminating homelessness among veterans and prevention of future homeless veterans.

Criteria: This award will be given to The American Legion department that demonstrates American Legion family involvement in homeless veteran initiatives that show outstanding support for activity in any or all of these areas: volunteerism, prevention, supportive housing, advocacy and fundraising.