



# Up To Now!

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November 23, 2022

Nov 24-25 Thanksgiving HQ closed  
Dec 8 Dept Executive Committee Zoom meeting  
Dec 17 Wreath laying at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery  
Dec 23, 26 Christmas Holiday, HQ closed  
Dec 30-Jan 2 New Years Holiday, HQ closed  
Dec 31 Law Enforcement nominations due to HQ  
Dec 31 Firefighter nominations due to HQ  
Jan 11 South Dakota Veterans Council meeting  
Feb 10-12 Department MidWinter Conference in Huron  
Mar 11 District 5 Spring Meeting  
Mar 12 District 4 Spring Meeting  
Mar 18 District 3 Spring Meeting  
Mar 19 District 6 Spring Meeting  
Mar 25 District 1 Spring Meeting  
Mar 26 District 2 Spring Meeting  
Apr 1 District 8 Spring Meeting  
Apr 2 District 7 Spring Meeting  
Jun 8-11 Department Convention in Oacoma

## INCLUDED IN THIS UP TO NOW

A letter from the VAVS committee regarding VA volunteer and VAVS popcorn fund and contributions.

## HATS IN THE RING

Chester Post 136 has endorsed Courtney Steffen for position of Department Commander

Chester Post 136 has endorsed Rod Smith for the position of Department Vice Commander (Districts 3-8)

## SD DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FUNERAL HONOR REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

There is a new form for Posts to request funeral reimbursements or stipends. Additionally, the reimbursement stipend was raised to \$100. Posts **MUST** use the new form to get the stipend. The older form will not be accepted because it refers to a \$50 stipend. The newest version of the form is "SDDVA Form 3 revised 11/2/2022". This form can be found at the SDDVA website at <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/benefits/State/SDDVA%20Funeral%20Honor%20Reimbursement%20Form.pdf> or you can call their office at 605-773-3269.

## NATIONAL COMMANDER'S MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE PINS

National Commander Troiola has authorized two separate membership hat pins. The first is for any person that recruits three new members or previous member who were not members in 2022. The second hat pin is for anyone that recruits three previous members who were not members in 2022. These are national pins and must be applied for through National, not Department Headquarters. Auxiliary and SAL members are also eligible for this pin. Additional information for these pins can be found at [www.legion.org/commander/pin](http://www.legion.org/commander/pin) and at [www.legion.org/commander/vets-pin](http://www.legion.org/commander/vets-pin).

## REMINDER TO ALL AMERICAN LEGION POSTS TO FILE IRS FORM 990

Federal tax regulations require every American Legion 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. Many

Posts which have less than \$50,000, the 990-N or online form can be used. 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 sizeable fee. This process takes time (months) and can challenge even the most patient of individuals. The form can be downloaded at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f990.pdf>.

## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

SCSEP is a program for individuals who are at least 55 years old and in low family income bracket and unemployed. If accepted the individual receives part time training while being paid to learn skills. Priority is given to veterans over 65, live in rural areas and at risk for being homeless. Although this program is administered by the National Indian Council on Aging, it is open to all who qualify. For more information visit [www.nicoa.org/programs/scsep/](http://www.nicoa.org/programs/scsep/)

## 2023 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

The MidWinter conference will be held at the Cross Roads Hotel and Huron Event Center February 10-12. A block of rooms has been set aside and reservations can be made by calling 800-876-5858. Be sure to mention you will be attending the Legion Mid-Winter conference. Other details such as banquet and training sessions will be coming soon.

## PACT ACT UPDATE

There has been information about the recently approved Pact Act for veterans exposed to toxic materials in the last several Up To Nows. We can't stress the importance of having veterans that may have been impacted to see there County or Tribal Service Officers. They need to get enrolled as soon as possible. Even if you don't think you were affected, but served in the identified areas the veterans need to register. The VA has now started to offer exposure screenings to those who have registered. The screening takes about 10 minutes and can be done during an existing appointment. Once the initial screening is completed, the veteran will be screened at least every 5 years. If you don't have an scheduled appointment or do not receive services from the VA at this time, you can still contact you local VA facility and asked to get screened by the Toxic Exposure Screening Navigator. There was also wording in the Pact Act for those Marines that served at Camp Lejeune and may have been exposed to toxic water there. There have been a number of Law Firms with commercials saying they can represent Marines for this law suite. Keep in mind, there is an offset clause in the law that could take away VA benefits veterans may now be receiving. We have invited Liz Hartman from Bergmann & Moore and an expert on the Camp Lejeune legal issues to MidWinter. She will address the participants and will also be available to talk to Marines in person. Bergmann and Moore is the legal team National uses to assist in appeals for VA benefits and has an MOU with National to assist in the handling of these cases. Please help get the word out to all the veterans. If a veteran does not want to wait until MidWinter, they can contact Bergmann and Moore at [www.camejeunelitigationteam.com/al](http://www.camejeunelitigationteam.com/al) for a secure form or can call 800-898-9450 for additional information.

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## LEGION NEWS STORIES

Although the next 3 issues of the Legion News will be on line, we are still looking for stories and photos of what the Legion is doing around the state. We really need the input from the Post level to tell our story. Please send your stories to Headquarters at P.O. Box 67, Watertown SD or email to [adjutant@sdlegion.org](mailto:adjutant@sdlegion.org)

## ORATORY CONTEST COMPLETION DATES

The Americanism Commission has set the following completion dates for the oratory contests:

- Post contests completed by January 8, 2023
- District contests completed by January 22nd, 2023
- Department contest on February 12th, 2023 at MidWinter conference.

The following dates and locations have been set for the District contests:

DIST. 1 – to be held at Sturgis American Legion Post 33, January 8, 2023, 1:00pm. Storm date, Jan. 15, same time and place.

DIST. 2 – to be held at SDSM&T Classroom Bldg., 501 E. Saint Joseph St, January 8, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Storm date, January 15th, same time and place.

DIST. 3 - to be held at Faith Lutheran Church Christian Living Center, 714 N Grand Ave, Pierre, SD. January 15, 2023 2:00 p.m. Storm date, January 22nd, same time and place.

DIST. 4 – to be held at the Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 431 W Melgaard Rd, Aberdeen, SD 57401 January 8 2023, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, January 15th, same time and place.

DIST. 5 – to be held at American Lutheran Church, Castlewood, SD on Jan. 15, 2023, 1:30 p.m. Storm date, Jan. 22, same time and place.

DIST. 6 – to be held at the Best Western Hotel 2000 Dakota Ave S, Huron, SD, January 15, 2023, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 22th, same time and place.

DIST. 7 – to be held at the Humboldt Community Center, January 15, 2023, 2:00 p.m. Storm date January 22nd, same time and place.

DIST. 8 - to be held at Al Neuharth Media Center, 555 N Dakota St, Vermillion, January 15th, 2023, 2:00 p.m. Storm Date January 22nd, same time and place.

## DISTRICT SPRING MEETINGS

For planning purposes, the following dates have been proposed for the Spring District Meetings. Watch future Up To Now for final dates and times:

Dist 1	25 March	Location & Time TBD
Dist 2	26 March	Location & Time TBD
Dist 3	18 March	Location & Time TBD
Dist 4	12 March	Cresbard, time TBD
Dist 5	11 March	Watertown, time TBD
Dist 6	19 March	Location & Time TBD
Dist 7	2 April	Hartford, 1:30 social, 2:00 mgt
Dist 8	1 April	Springfield, time TBD

## DEPARTMENT COMMANDER CAP PINS

Commander Feltman will award his 2022-2023 Cap Pin to individuals for:

- Recruiting a new member
- Participating in Oratorical Contest
- Working with Boys State
- Working with Youth Trooper program
- Participating in Honor Guard at veterans funeral
- Working with American Legion Baseball

A Legionnaire is allowed only one pin. The Post Adjutant must certify participation. Additional information and the certification form can be found in the 2022-2023 Post Adjutant's Administrative & Awards manual or on the Department website.

## 2024 BASEBALL BIDS

Bids to host the 2024 baseball tournaments are due by January 16th. The bid form can be found online at the Department Website and should be sent to Headquarters by the due date.

## SUICIDE AWARENESS

About 20 veterans take their own lives by suicide everyday. We need to reduce that to zero. Buddy checks are an important part of Veterans helping Veterans. Take the time to reach out to veterans even if they are not Legion members. The National Commander has started a program called "Be The One." He wants us all to be the one that helps those veterans in need. The VA has a hot line, 1-800-273-8255. You can also dial 988 if you or someone you know needs help, please use the hot line. Be The One to make a difference.

## 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 a Course Conclusion step in the training program, 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](http://www.legion.org/training).

## DID YOU KNOW:

Continuing our look into the meaning of the Preamble, the next section is TO PROMOTE PEACE AND GOOD WILL ON EARTH...Until all the world becomes a good neighborhood, Legionnaires must continue the effort to promote peace and good will on earth. It is in pursuance of this founding ideal that The American Legion has supported from the beginning and seek to strengthen the United Nations organization. Obliquely, The American Legion also contributes to this ideal by firmly supporting a strong national defense to discourage breaking of the peace by aggressors.

## A NOTE FROM ROD SMITH, DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN.

Membership! Look what is happening in South Dakota. The energy and excitement about the American Legion seems to be high and your numbers show it. Post, were ready to close and have been revitalized and are actually growing from where they were. You Legionnaires are getting it done and please keep it up as we go into the cooler weather. Keep up the good work and stay ahead of the goal target dates. Have a great Fall and remember that every one of the Legion Family is a recruiter. Explain our programs and community involvement and how we support veterans and families. Remember, every day is thanksgiving day.

## DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP GOALS

Our National goal for 2022-2023 is 17,041. As of November 20th, we were at 12,835 or 75.32% of goal. Rod Smith is this years Membership Chairman.

Upcoming membership goals	
December 14	75%
January 18	80%

Have You Done Your Buddy Checks?