



Up To Now!

Kevin Hempel – Department Adjutant
www.sdlegion.org – Email: adjutant@sdlegion.org

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Phone (605) 886-3604

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Mar 1 Eagle Scout of the Year nominations due to HQ
Mar 11 District 5 Spring Meeting
Mar 12 District 4 Spring Meeting
Mar 15 Department Legion College applications due to HQ
Mar 18 District 3 Spring Meeting
Mar 19 District 6 Spring Meeting
Mar 25 District 1 Spring Meeting
Mar 25 Youth Trooper Academy application deadline
Mar 26 District 2 Spring Meeting
Apr Post elections held
Apr 1 District 8 Spring Meeting
Apr 2 District 7 Spring Meeting
Apr 7 Good Friday, HQ closed
Apr 15 Legion Service day at Wings of Valor
Apr 20 Department American Legion College
May 1 Deadline for submitting Boys State applications
May 1 Nominations for William Lenker VA&R award due at HQ
May 1 Good Samaritan nominations due to HQ from Districts
May 1-3 National Commander visits South Dakota
May 8-11 National Spring Meetings
May 29 Memorial Day
May 29-Jun 2 Boys State
Jun 8-11 Department Convention in Oacoma
Jun 26-30 Youth Trooper Academy
Jul 1 National American Legion College applications due to HQ

2023 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

The MidWinter Conference was very successful. There was a great Joint Banquet on Friday, good information relayed at the conference as well as a lot of training on Saturday and a great meal at the Go Getters on Saturday as well. Thank you to Post 7 for the work to make this a success.

DEPARTMENT ORATORY CONTEST

Contestants from five districts competed at the Department Oratory Contest held on Sunday during the MidWinter conference, all hoping to go home with the \$1,500 scholarship grand prize and a chance to go on to the National competition. Elena Andrews of Beresford took home first place, Reagan Blackburn of Aberdeen placed second, Calister Grimsley of Spearfish placed third, and Alex Vonderau of Rapid City and Jordan Musser of Colome were the other two finalists. Congratulations to the fine competitors and thanks to the their posts and districts for encouraging these outstanding students to participate.

MIDWINTER SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

The winners of the MidWinter Sweepstakes were drawn at the end of the Conference on Saturday. A huge thank you to all those that sent in their sweepstakes tickets and donations. It was a very success fund raising program for the Department. Congratulations to the following winners:

\$1000	Mads Andenas
\$500	Robert Carr
\$300	Halley Riedel
\$200	Veryl Altman
\$100	Harlan Silbaugh

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT TO STEP DOWN

The Department Adjutant, Kevin Hempel, advised the Department Executive Committee he needs to step down as the Adjutant due to personal and family issues. He will continue as the Department Adjutant until arrangements for a replacement can be made and a turnover of duties worked out. Department Commander Doug Feltman has appointed a hiring committee consisting of NEC Brenden, Alt NEC Fred Nelson, PDC Paul Evenson and Finance Officer Krisma DeWitt. American Legion members who wish to apply for the position need to send their resumes to adjutant@sdlegion.org. **DEADLINE for resume submission is March 15, 2023.** The member must live near or be willing to relocate to the Watertown, SD area.

DEPARTMENT LEGION COLLEGE

The Department of South Dakota will be hosting its first Department Legion College on April 22, 2023. Twenty applicants will be selected for the initial program. The prerequisites are 1. Must have a minimum of three years of continuous membership. 2. Must have completed the American Legion Basic Training Course and include a copy of the completion certificate with the application package. 3. The Post Commander or Adjutant must endorse the application. 4. You must have Internet access to do the course by Zoom. Applications can be found on the SD Legion website under Training or by contacting HQ. Deadline for application is 15 March 2023.

BOYS STATE AND YOUTH TROOPER REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Boys State registration can be found on the South Dakota Boys State website, the address for applicants:
<http://www.southdakotaboysstate.com/boys-state-application/>
The registration fee for Boys State is \$225 per student and is payable to the Boys State Treasurer. **Registration closes on May 1, 2023.** The Youth Trooper Academy is another outstanding program of the South Dakota American Legion. Registration/Application forms can be found on the website here: <https://www.sdlegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/YTA-Application-New-002.pdf>
The deadline for applications is March 25, 2023. Visit the website for more information:
<https://www.sdlegion.org/sd-youth-trooper-academy/>

2023 NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

Applications are now being accepted at Department Headquarters for this year's National American Legion College (NALC) which will be held in Indianapolis November 12-17. Applications can be found on the National website, legion.org/college and are due to Department Headquarters by July 1st. DO NOT send them to National as they must have the Department's approval first.

CERTIFICATION OF POST OFFICERS

As a reminder, Posts will be conducting their election of officers in April and installation of new officers in May. As soon as the installation is complete, the Adjutant must submit the Officers' Certification to Department Headquarters. Information can be found on pages 27-28 in the Department Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual. Even if the Post officers remain the same, the form **MUST BE SUBMITTED.**

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LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR

Every Legion post has those special Legionnaires that go above and beyond. There is a special person always volunteering to do what ever he or she can do to make it better This is the time of the year for the Post to recognize that special person by selecting them as the Legionnaire of the Year. Once selected they can also compete at the District and Department level. Additional information and nomination forms can be found in the SD Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual as well as the SD Legion website. Nomination packages are due to the respective District Commander 15 days prior to Department Spring meetings.

GOOD SAMARITAN AWARD

The South Dakota American Legion Good Samaritan Award was initiated to recognize those individuals or groups who give of themselves to help others. A narrative with supporting documentation must be forwarded to the District Commander **ten days prior** to the Spring District meeting.

WILLIAM F LENKER VA&R AWARD

During the 2019 State Convention a resolution was passed to create a VA&R Leadership award. The VA&R Commission created the criteria for the award that will be a Post competition. Additional information and nomination form can be found on the Department website under forms . **Forms are due before May 1, 2020** to State Headquarters.

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 or you can call their office at 605-773-3269.

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 Mar Spearfish, 11:00 lunch, 12:00 meeting
Dist 2 26 Mar Hot Springs, 11:30 social, 12:00 lunch, 1:00 meeting
Dist 3 18 Mar Ft Pierre Moose Lodge 11:00 Social, 11:30 lunch, 12:00 meeting
Dist 4 12 Mar Cresbard, 1:00 social, 2:00 meeting with light lunch to follow
Dist 5 11 Mar Watertown Hosana Lutheran Church 12:30 lunch, 1:30 meeting Lunch \$10 per plate
Dist 6 19 Mar DeSmet 12:00 social, 12:30 lunch, 1:30 meeting
Dist 7 2 April Hartford, 1:30 social, 2:00 mgt
Dist 8 1 April Springfield, 1:00 social, 2:00 meeting with light lunch to follow

BIDS FOR 2028 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AND MID-WINTER

Bids for the 2028 MidWinter and Department Convention are being accepted. Posts and Convention Centers who desire to submit bids to host the convention should send that information to the Dept Adjutant. Application forms are available from Dept HQ.

LEGION NEWS STORIES

Although the Department's 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 your story. Please send your stories and photos to Headquarters at P.O. Box 67. Watertown SD or email to adjutant@sdlegion.org

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS (CPR)

It is that time of year again where we need to document what we are doing in our communities. **When calculating volunteer hours it is important to multiply the hours of the event by the number of volunteers.** Please take the time to fill out the form that will be sent out or by going online to mylegion.org and completing it there. Our goal this year is 100% Post reporting for CPRs. Thank you in advance for assisting in this matter.

SUICIDE AWARENESS

About 20 veterans take their own lives by suicide everyday. 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.

FUN AUCTION AT THE STATE CONVENTION

The annual fun auction will be held in Oacoma during the State Convention on June 10. This event has grown through the years and has become an event that is well attended and supported by the American Legion Family. All proceeds from the fun auction are donated to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. Please consider donating items to the fun auction. **If you have a talent in any particular area, such as, quilting, wood carving, woodworking, baking, etc, please consider making something to be auctioned off at the fun auction.** These items are very well received. Thank you.

DID YOU KNOW:

On February 15th, 1898, an explosion in Havana harbour sank the battleship USS Maine, killing 260 American seamen and precipitating the Spanish-American War, which originated in the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain.

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. Posts 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 new year. Keep up the good work and stay ahead of the goal target dates. 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 goal for 2022-2023 is 17,041. As of February 9, we were at 14,715 or 86.35% of goal. The next membership goal is March 15 where all posts should be at 90%. Posts should be contacting their Legionnaires who have not renewed for 2023 and ask them to please renew to support our programs.