



# Up To Now!

C.P. Van Delist – Department Adjutant  
[www.sdlegion.org](http://www.sdlegion.org) – Email: [adjutant@sdlegion.org](mailto:adjutant@sdlegion.org)

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Phone (605) 886-3604

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December 1, 2023

- Dec 5 Governor’s Budget Address
- Dec 5 Human Services Center Christmas Party, 5:30 PM
- Dec 7 Dept HQ GI Party, 14 1st AVE SE, Watertown
- Dec 9 State Veterans Home Christmas Party, 2pm
- Dec 10 Hot Springs VA Christmas Party, 2pm
- Dec 11 Fort Meade Christmas Party, 1pm
- Dec 12 Sioux Falls VA Christmas Party, VA Auditorium 1pm
- Dec 13 Membership Target Date Pearl Harbor Day 75%
- Dec 14 Depart Holiday Open House, 14 1st AVE SE, Watertown
- Dec 16 Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, Sioux Falls 11am
- Dec 19 Capital Lake Improvements presentation, The SD Military Heritage Alliance 6:35pm
- Dec 22-26 Christmas Holiday, **HQ Closed**
- Dec 29-Jan 2 New Years Holiday, **HQ Closed**
- Dec 31 Department EMT of the Year Award due to HQ
- Dec 31 National Firefighter/EMT of the Year Award due to HQ
- Dec 31 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year due to HQ
- Jan 9 Governor’s State of the State Address, State Capitol 1:00 pm
- Jan 10 SD Vets Council Meeting, Pierre Post 8, 2pm
- Jan 10 SD Vets Council Legislative Reception Pierre Post 8, 5:30pm
- Jan 18 Membership Target Date– Mid-Winter 80%
- Jan 20 MidWinter Go-Getter certification due to Depart HQ
- Jan 22 SDAL Day at the Capital
- Jan 22 SDAL Legislative Reception, Pierre Post 8
- Feb 14 Membership Target Date– President’s Day 85%
- Feb 16-18 SDAL Mid-Winter Conference, the Lodge at Deadwood
- Mar 2 District 5 Meeting Time and Location TBD
- Mar 3 District 4 Meeting Groton Post Time TBD
- Mar 16 District 3 Meeting Time and Location TBD
- Mar 17 District 6 Meeting Plankinton Post 5 Breakfast 9am-1pm Meeting 1:30pm
- Apr 6 District 8 Meeting Time and Location TBD
- Apr 7 District 7 Meeting Time and Location TBD
- Apr 13 District 1 Meeting Time and Location TBD
- Apr 14 District 2 Meeting Time and Location TBD

### HAT IN THE RING

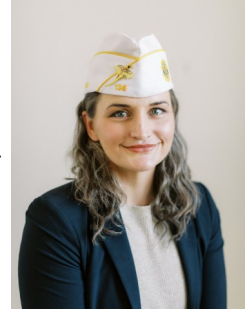
Piedmont Post 311 has endorsed Kevin Morello for Department Commander  
 Chester Post 136 has endorsed Rod Smith for Department Commander  
 Chester Post 136 has endorsed Kevin Hempel for Department Vice Commander (Districts 3-8)

### CAPITAL LAKE IMPROVEMENTS PRESENTATION

Darin Seeley will be making a presentation on the proposed Capital Lake Improvement on Dec. 19, 6:35pm at The SD Military Heritage Alliance. All are invited to join for the evening’s events.  
 5pm Social, 6pm meal-\$10 ea beef tips n gravy. Reservation is required before Friday Dec. 15 if you wish to eat. Presentation to start at 6:35 no reservations needed.  
 For more information email: [legionoffice.al@gmail.com](mailto:legionoffice.al@gmail.com) or call 605.336.3470

### MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

#### Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays Legion family!



It’s that time of year! The lights, the presents, family gatherings—it can be magical. As a mom to three young children, I know the excitement and joy that this season can bring. Nobody enjoys Christmas like a 7-year old that still believes.

I want to take a moment and reflect on the first half of this year. I cannot adequately express how incredibly proud I am of our Posts. I’ve asked each Post this year to focus on Purpose, and have you ever delivered. I’ve watched your work—from feeding families on Thanksgiving, running clothing drives, hosting unique community events and fundraising for important causes, the Legion family’s drive to help never ceases to amaze me. I’ve had the honor of attending many of these events this year, and I’ve enjoyed every minute and meeting every Legionnaire along the way.

And speaking of purpose: as we prepare for the Holiday season, a friendly reminder that not all holidays are happy for everybody. Particularly susceptible to the holiday blues are people going through transition. The civilian transition from military life, a loss of a job, the loss of a loved one, retirement, empty nesters, divorce—all can have a profound impact on one’s social life and mental state. Add in the extras that come with a holiday—additional expenses, finding that “perfect” gift, a lack of space, travel, weather, comparisons to others—stress can boil over and leave one feeling alone, even in a crowded room.

Legion family, this is where I ask you to Be The One. Please check on your fellow Veterans. Check on your neighbors and friends. Let them know that they are not alone—by reaching out first, you are helping build that sense of community. Send cards. Invite them to dinner. There are innumerable things you can do to let someone know that they are cared about, but they do require action on your behalf. Please do not assume people know how you feel. Tell them, and Be The One.

Pursue Purpose,

Courtney Steffen  
Department Commander



## **NATIONAL DUES INCREASE!**

At the 2023 National Convention a \$5 dues increase was passed that will take effect July 1, 2024. This increase will require all Posts to charge more for membership and makes submitting Post Data Reports critical this year. More information to follow in future UTNs.

## **THE SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY IS HIRING FOR THE DEPARTMENT SECRETARY.**

### **Qualifications:**

Manage the department headquarters while supporting the mission of the organization.

Knowledgeable on non-profit and employee tax forms to ensure that all appropriate state and/or regulatory taxes are filed.

Excellent communication skills, willingness to learn new systems as needed, provide necessary reporting as requested, ability to multi-task and able to work closely with multiple Executives.

Attention to detail, strong organizational and time management skills, work under minimal supervision.

Maintain all monies received at the department headquarters, make deposits, and provide the Treasurer details of deposits.

Maintain record books needed to carry out Department Business.

Proficient in Word and Excel.

Open all mail, answer phone calls, maintain calendar and appointments, make room arrangements, and fill other related job duties.

Attend requested meetings. Provide notice of all meetings, take meeting minutes, and act as Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Ability to work weekends and have dependable transportation.

Department Secretary position is 40 hours a week.

High School diploma, 3 years experience preferred.

Closing date December 15, 2023, or until filled.

Please submit a cover letter and resume with references to: **South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary, PO Box 529, Clear Lake, SD 57226 or southdakotaala@gmail.com**

The Department of South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary Headquarters is determined through negotiations with a successful candidate.

## **DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS G.I. PARTY!**

Dept HQ is looking for volunteers to assist on Dec 7th from 8am-4pm in rearranging office space, cleaning clutter and painting (14 1st AVE SE, Watertown.) If you are interested in assisting please contact the Adjutant at **605-886-2870 or adjutant@sdlegion.org.**

## **DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE FOR THE HOLIDAY**

The Dept HQ will host an Open House for the Holidays on December 14th from 12-4pm in the HQ Office (14 1st AVE SE, Watertown.) All available are welcome to attend; there will be hot cider & cocoa, eggnog and snacks. Prizes will be given for the best ugly sweater, and holiday costume & drawings for special door prizes.

## **THE AMERICAN LEGION ANNOUNCES A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH WELLCARE.**

The American Legion is excited to announce a new partnership with Wellcare, the Medicare brand of Centene Corporation. Through the multi-year partnership, Wellcare will serve as the Official Medicare Provider of The American Legion, connecting Medicare-eligible veterans, their spouses and the greater military community with products and solutions that complement the benefits eligible veterans receive through Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare.

## **DISTRICT ORATORICAL CONTESTS**

DIST. 1- Chair: Mike Pauling, (michaelpauling@ymail.com), 13318 Sunshine Valley Rd., Piedmont, SD 57769. Contest at Spearfish Post 164, 3102 E. Fairgrounds Loop, Spearfish, Jan 21, 2024, 2:00pm. Storm date, Jan 28th, same time and place.

DIST. 2- Chair: Doug Harris (doughinut@gmail.com), 4913

Charmwood Dr., Rapid City, SD 57701. Contest at SDSM&T Classroom Bldg., 501 E. Saint Joseph St., Jan 7, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Storm date, Jan 14th, same time and place.

DIST. 3- Chair: Larry Madsen, (larry\_madsen@hotmail.com), 906 E. Commercial Ave., Gettysburg, SD 57442. Contest at the Faith Lutheran Church Christian Living Center, 714 N. Grand Ave., Pierre, SD. Jan 14, 2024, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 21st, same time and place.

DIST. 4- Chair: Dale Strom, (dale\_strom@yahoo.com), 115 N. Kline St., Aberdeen, SD 57401. District Contest at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 431 W. Melgaard Rd., Aberdeen, SD, Jan 7, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 14th, same time and place.

DIST. 5- Chair: Clayton Nei, (pandcnei@gmail.com), 18257 465th Ave., Castlewood, SD 57223. Contest held Castlewood Lutheran Church, Jan 6, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 13th, same time and place.

DIST. 6- Chair: Tim Thomas, (photostoday@midstatesd.net), 112 S. Merrill St., Chamberlain SD 57325. Contest at the Kimball Legion Post, 232 S. Main, Kimball, SD, Jan 7, 2024, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 14th, same time and place.

DIST. 7- Chair: Linda Liddell, (Lliddell08@gmail.com), 1016 NW 5th St., Madison, SD 57042. District Contest to be held at the Humboldt Community Center, Jan 21st, 2:00 p.m..

DIST. 8- Contact: Joseph Knoer, (josephknoer24@gmail.com), 1125 Lincoln St. #101, Vermillion, SD 57069. Contest at the Al Neuharth Media Center, 555 N. Dakota St., Vermillion, Jan 20,

2024, 2:00 p.m. Storm date Jan 27th, same time and place.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **“POPCORN FUND” RENAMED “VAVS RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FUND”**

The Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services Committee has renamed the “Popcorn Fund” to “VAVS Recreational Activities Fund” to better reflect what the donations go toward in supporting the many activities at our VA Health Care Facilities.

## **2024 MID-WINTER UPDATES**

Mid-winter Conference, hosted by District 1, will be at the Deadwood Lodge, in Deadwood, SD., Friday, 16 February through Sunday, 18 February 2024. Rooms have been blocked beginning with 20 rooms for early arrivals on Thursday, 15 February, and another 80 rooms for arrivals on Friday, 16 February. Anyone requiring a Hospitality Suite or room larger than the standard king or double queen, please contact David Booze at 605-484-5328 for reservation arrangements. All who require just the Standard King or Standard Double Queen room, reservations can be made by calling the Deadwood Lodge, phone number 605-584-4800. The rate for the Standard King or Double Queen

room is \$95 plus applicable taxes. Be sure to mention you will be attending the American Legion Mid-winter conference. The Deadwood Lodge is a 100% smoke free facility. The Deadwood Lodge allows dogs; however, all dogs must be declared at the time of making the reservation or upon check-in. Other details such as the Joint Banquet, Go-Getters, and training sessions will be coming soon.

#### MIDWINTER JOINT BANQUET

The MidWinter Joint Banquet will be held Friday evening February 16th with social at 5:30 and banquet at 6:30. Cost is \$35.00 and deadline to order tickets is February 1st. Checks are to be made out to the Department of South Dakota District 1 American Legion, annotate that the check is for the Joint Banquet on the check's purpose line, Mail checks to:

Randall McGruder  
11332 Tetro Rock Rd  
Lead, SD 57754  
Mobile: 605-580-5919  
Email: grude@rbmessentials.com

Individual needs to have the following on request for purchase of the ticket:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Post: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2024 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

##### Friday, February 16, 2024

10:00 a.m. Department Finance Commission Meeting

12:00 p.m. Registration Desk Opens

Boys State Board of Directors

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 Cocktails

6:30 p.m. Joint Legion / Auxiliary / SAL Banquet

##### Saturday, February 17, 2024

7:30 a.m. Registration Desk Opens Area

8:00 a.m. Joint Opening Session

8:15 a.m. Introduction of Auxiliary Secretary and President

8:25 a.m. Auxiliary VA&R Report

8:35 a.m. Auxiliary Children and Youth Report

8:45 a.m. Intro of Sons of the American Legion Det. Commander

8:50 a.m. Secretary of the Dept of Veterans Affairs Greg Whitlock

9:00 a.m. Boys State Planning Session

9:10 a.m. Capitol Grounds Memorial Improvements, Darin Seeley

9:25 a.m. National Vice Commander Remarks

9:40 a.m. 1st Leading Candidate Remarks

9:50 a.m. Training Committee Report and 2023 NALC Graduate

10:05 a.m. Recess Joint Session

10:10 a.m. BREAKOUT 1: Legion Reports & Awards

11:00 a.m. BREAKOUT 2: Be the One & S.A.V.E. Training

12:00 a.m. LUNCH BREAK

1:00 p.m. BREAKOUT 3: Post History, Security & Avoiding Scams

1:00 p.m. SAL Business meeting

2:00 p.m. BREAKOUT 4: Legal Briefing

2:50 p.m. Reconvene Joint Session

2:55 p.m. Committee & Commission Reports and updates

4:25 p.m. Sweepstakes Drawing

4:30 p.m. Announcements and Adjourn Assembly

4:30 p.m. American Legion Rider meeting

4:30 p.m. Joint Membership and Marketing, Media & Comms Committees Meeting

6:00 p.m. Go-Getter Reception & Smorgasbord- Deadwood VFW Hosted by Post 31

##### Sunday, February 18, 2024

8:30 a.m. Non-Denominational Service Four Chaplains

10:30 a.m. SD American Legion – Oratorical Contest, State Finals

#### 2028 DEPT CONVENTION & MIDWINTER

Bids for the 2028 MidWinter are being accepted, at this time only one bid has been submitted from Chamberlain Post 3. Posts and Convention Centers who desire to submit bids to host the Midwinter should send that information to the Dept Adjutant. Application forms are available from Dept HQ.

Bids for the 2029 MidWinter and Department Convention are being accepted at this time as well.

#### FUTURE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AND MIDWINTER DATES AND LOCATIONS

2024 MidWinter	Deadwood	Feb 16-18
2024 Convention	Pierre	June 20-23
2025 MidWinter	Oacoma	Feb 14-16
2025 Convention	Huron	June 19-22

#### 2024 SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

The 2024 South Dakota American Legion College will be April 27th & 28th in Chamberlain, SD. Class size is limited to ten (10). Applications can be found at <https://www.sdlegion.org/departments-training-tools/>

#### FOUNDATION UPDATE

The South Dakota American Legion Foundation is conducting a Beef Raffle to raise funds for our programs. Tickets are \$10 each and can be obtained from any of the board members, Paul Evenson, Jim Huls, Denny Brenden, Doug Feltman or Jim Kurtz. 1st Prize is \$500 in Beef Certificates, 2nd Prize is \$300 in Beef Certificates, and 3rd \$200 in Beef Certificates. Drawing will be at the Mid-Winter Conference, need not be present to win.

#### SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION SCHOLARSHIPS

The Department awarded four students educational scholarships for the 2023-24 academic year. Recipients are Samantha Peppel of Chamberlain, Allison Gross of Brookings, Ela Petersen of Pierre, and Mayor Matthies of Sioux Falls. Congratulations to all students. Information and applications can be found at [www.sdlegion.org/scholarship-information/](http://www.sdlegion.org/scholarship-information/)

#### 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 27, 2024.

*Total amount of scholarship funds awarded in 2023: \$1,484,122*

#### REMINDER TO 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 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>.

#### MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Headquarters has received the 2024 membership cards. Posts who have submitted their officer certifications will be eligible to receive their cards. The form for certifying officers is found in the

Department's 2022-2023 Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual online at the Department website.

### MISSING OFFICER CERTIFICATION FOR 2022-2023

The following posts need to contact Judy at headquarters to certify their officers and get their membership cards

**District 1:** Bullhead #82 Dupree #124 Little Eagle #239  
**District 2:** Belvidere #144 Oelrichs #238 Pine Ridge #251  
Kyle #265 Porcupine #294 Parmelee #295  
St. Francis #297 Manderson #302 Norris #310  
New Underwood #256  
**District 3:** Witten #167  
**District 6:** Virgil #268  
**District 7:** Sioux Falls Post #911  
**District 8:** Parker #30

### NATIONAL COMMANDER MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE

National Commander Seehafer will award his "Be the One" pin to any Legionnaire who obtains two new members, one to replace you and one for growth.

A new member is any person joining for the 2024 year who was not a member in the 2023 year. Transfers do not count.

Only one pin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names in the national database and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.

[https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/seehafer\\_twonewmembers.pdf](https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/seehafer_twonewmembers.pdf)

### 103 PERCENT MEMBERSHIP AWARD

National Commander Seehafer will award his "Be the One" pin to any post, district, county, and/or depart commander and membership chair who achieves 103% of their membership goal for 2024.

[https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/2024\\_103percentmembership.pdf](https://www.legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/documents/2024_103percentmembership.pdf)

### NATIONAL COMMANDER POST EXCELLENCE AWARD

To qualify, a post must achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90% renewal rate, and community activity.

The standard is as follows:

**Membership:** Attain at least 103% of their membership goal. At least one post officer attends district meetings.

**Consolidated Post Report:** CPR submitted by July 1.

**90% Renewal Rate:** Renew at least 90% of their 2023 members.

**Community Activity:** The post must conduct an event that connects the local community with The American Legion. The objective is to open your doors, welcome the community in, and educate them on what The American Legion is all about and how the post is an asset to the community.

**Certification for the award:** The district commander responsible for the post will certify a post as having achieved the four specified criteria. The district commander will submit a list of posts meeting the criteria to Dept HQ. List should include the post name, phone number, address and commander's name. If possible, provide with copies of press releases submitted to the local media about the projects to show that the projects were to enhance the image of The American Legion through local media. Dept HQ will forward to National Headquarters.

### 100% AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY RIBBON

American Legion National Commander Seehafer will award his 100% American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100% membership by the 2024 100% membership target date. For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and/or any combination of an Auxiliary unit or Sons squadron. Each must achieve 100% membership to qualify for the award. The Dept HQ will forward to National Headquarters.

### DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN MESSAGE

I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving. With Thanksgiving past, December becomes a very busy month with all the holiday things to do. First, thank you all for supporting the American Legion. As Membership Chairman I need to take this opportunity to talk about a couple of things as we approach the end of the year.

"Pursue Purpose" is our Commander's Vision for 2024 and I hope going forward. I talk a lot about membership and as in any organization we do need membership. Let me take a moment to talk about our Purpose as I see it. I had a conversation with a Veteran a few days ago. In talking with her she commented that she was asked to renew her membership, and her comment was "I don't have time I'm too busy". This Veteran is younger has a family that is involved in many activities as is true of our younger veterans. As we continued to visit, I decide to try my elevator speech on Purpose. I explained what I believe is the Purpose of the American Legion and why I am a member. I asked her if she has ever thought about what the American Legion has done for veterans i.e.: the GI Bill, VA Housing, VA Benefits, and the Pact Act to name just a few. I told her membership is about supporting the Legion not asking that she be involved on the local level. It's about the National and State level. The Legion was instrumental last year on the State level in getting 100% tuition for National Guard members. The National Legion was very involved in the passing of the Pact Act. At the end of the conversation she said, "you know nobody has ever explained it like you did to me before". I encourage you to think about the way we ask veterans to join or renew and have our elevator speech ready when the occasion presents itself.

If you have renewed for 2024 thank you for your continual support of the American Legion. If you have not, please do so by December 13. Why December 13? That is the cutoff date to keep National from having to send another renewal notice as we all know that costs money. I also have been challenged by the Minnesota Membership Chair that whoever has the best renewal percentage on December 13 wins and the other must wear the winner's state shirt at their Mid-Winter Convention. I don't want to wear a burgundy shirt and explain why. I need your help. Thank you.

Your 2023 membership expires on December 31, 2023

If you send your dues to the Post or stop by the Post, I ask that you do that by December 10 to make sure they are processed by the 13th. Renew online at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) and click on renew.

I realize the Holiday season is very busy. Please take a minute to continue your membership and most of all thank you for your service.

"Be the One" to save one. "Be the One" to thank a Veteran for their service.

In closing I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. God Bless you and your families

Bill Peters

605-360-6547  
[bpeters0551@gmail.com](mailto:bpeters0551@gmail.com)

