



Up To Now!

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Phone (605) 886-3604

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June 14 U.S. Army Birthday!!

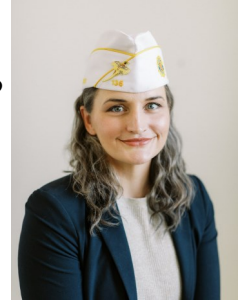
- June 14 Flag Day, Display Flag
- June 16 Father's Day
- June 19 Juneteenth Day **HQ Closed**
- June 20-23 Depart Convention, Ramkota, Pierre
- June 24-28 Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre
- June 27 Blue Cap Day at Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre
- July 4 Independence Day **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- July 9 SDAL Foundation Board Meeting, Dept HQ, 9am
- July 12 Finance Commission Budget Meeting, Dept HQ, 9am
- July 13 DEC Meeting, Post 17, Watertown, 1pm
- July 13-14 Dist Commander's & Vice's Training, Dept HQ
- Jul 15 Tee it up for the Troops Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser, Arrowhead Country Club, Rapid City 7:15 am
- July 17 SD Vets Council Meeting, VFW Aberdeen 11am
- July 21 TAL Basic Training, Redfield Post 92, 1pm
- July 21-27 Boys Nation, Washington DC
- July 25-28 National Membership Workshop, Indianapolis, IN
- Aug 10 Battle Creek Post 303 Beers and Ears, Hermosa 4-6pm
- Aug 17 Commander's Homecoming
- Aug 21 SD Vets Council Meeting, VFW Post 791, Yankton
- Aug 29 Veterans Day at the SD State Fair, Huron
- Aug 29-Sep 2 SD State Fair, Huron
- Aug 23-29 National Convention, New Orleans, LA
- Sep 2 Labor Day **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- Sep 7-8 SDAL Golf Tournament, Webster
- Sep 14 Dist 2 Fall Meeting
- Sep 15 Dist 1 Fall Meeting
- Sep 18 SD Vets Council Meeting Post 22 Rapid City
- Sep 21-22 & 27-29 National Americanism Conference
- Sep 28 Dist 6 Fall Meeting
- Sep 29 Dist 3 Fall Meeting
- Oct 7-10 National Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, IN
- Oct 14 Native American Day, **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- Oct 16 SD Vets Council Meeting, Brookings Post 74 11am
- Oct 19 Dist 4 Fall Meeting, Redfield 1pm
- Oct 20 Dist 5 Fall Meeting, White
- Oct 26 Dist 7 Fall Meeting
- Oct 27 Dist 8 Fall Meeting
- Nov 5 Election Day
- Nov 6 We've Got Your Six, Sturgis 11am-2pm
- Nov 11 Veterans Day **HQ Closed**, Display Flag
- Nov 20 SD Vets Council Meeting, Sioux Falls, DAV, 1519 W. 51 St
- Nov 20 Legislative Round Table, Sioux Falls, DAV, 11am
- Nov 21 Legislative Round Table, Watertown, 11am
- Nov 22 Legislative Round Table, Rapid City Post 22, 11am
- Nov 23 Legislative Round Table, Pierre Post 8, 11am

CONGRATS TO THE 2024 BOYS STATE PARTICIPANTS

184 boys, participated in the 81th Session of South Dakota Boys State, David Yusten Jr. of Sioux Falls, Roosevelt High School, was elected Governor. Elected Lt. Governor was Jesse Wentz of Canton High School. Bilixa Broussard and Joseph Juenger both of Rapid City Stevens High School were selected as the delegates to Boys Nation. Mikael Neilson of Hitchcock-Tulare High School and Charley Stroh of Sioux Falls Washington High School were selected as Alternates. Seth Gerhardt of Sioux Falls Washington High School was selected for the Samsung, American Legion Scholarship. His application has been forwarded to the National Selection Committee. The committee will award ten, \$10,000 scholarships to the National Scholars and ten \$5,000 scholarships to the National Runners-up.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Greetings Legion Family!



And just like that, I'm writing my last Up-To-Now! In just a few weeks, we'll be turning over to a new leadership team, full of new ideas and energy. I hope you give them the same support, encouragement and enthusiasm you have given our team. It's undoubtedly been an interesting year for me—I've literally and figuratively taken beatings, but I've also seen the absolute best of what the South Dakota American Legion represents. Undoubtedly, the latter makes up for the former tenfold. I cannot thank the Legion Family of South Dakota enough for this opportunity and experience.

I hope to see you all in Pierre as we celebrate the successes of this year—and there is a lot to be incredibly proud of. From building up programs, to hosting community events, to expanding our Legion Family, to crushing membership goals, our Posts deserve every bit of recognition due. That, and we'll have a lot of fun doing it! Conventions are a great place to network, make friends from across the state, and indulge in a polka while the South Dakota Legion Band performs (admittedly a groupie). That, and no doubt at least one of the hospitality rooms will have Dimock cheese.

Again, thank you for a wonderful year. You all embraced the concept of pursuing purpose wholeheartedly, and I could not be any prouder of an organization. It's been an honor to serve as your Commander.

Pursue purpose,

Courtney Steffen
Department Commander



Courtney Steffen
Department Commander

2023-2024 SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES

Post size categories:

- Category 1: 15-26
- Category 2: 27-46
- Category 3: 47-89
- Category 4: 90 plus

A Legionnaire who recruits a new 2024 member starting November 10th will have their name entered into a drawing. A winner from each of the above categories will be selected and will receive a \$50 check. The recruiter's name will be entered into the drawing one time for each new member recruited. The Post Adjutant or Membership Chairman are responsible for reporting the names of the recruiters along with the name of the new member to Department Headquarters by Friday, June 14th, 2024.

Posts that meet the following criteria will be put into a drawing for a \$200 award, drawn at the Department Convention. One winner will be selected from each of the above categories. Posts will only be entered one time when they meet all the criteria and will be entered one (1) additional time for every 1% over their 100% membership goal.

1. Minimum of 15 Members
2. Meet/exceed 85% of membership goal by Mid-Winter.
3. Meet/exceed 100% of membership goal by the June 14, 2024.
4. Meet/exceed 90% retention by June 14, 2024.
5. Submit on time their Post Data Report, Consolidated Post Report and Post Officer Certification.

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS (CPR)

Due to Nation-June 31, 2024

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 remember to multiply the hours of the event by the number of volunteers.* Please fill out the form by going to mylegion.org or mail the hard copy to Dept HQ ASAP! Our goal this year is 100% Post reporting for CPRs.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Headquarters has received the 2025 membership cards. *Posts who have submitted their officer certifications will be eligible to pick up their cards at the convention registration desk.* Certify your officers **NOW**. The form for certifying officers is found in the 2023-2024 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.

2024 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The 105th Annual American Legion Department of South Dakota Convention will be June 20-23 at the Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center in Pierre. A block of Rooms are available at the rate of \$109 a night. To make reservations call (605) 224-6877.

HATS IN THE RING FOR 2024-2025 LEADERSHIP

Post 311 has endorsed Kevin Morello for Dept Commander
Post 164 has endorsed Brian Dean for Dept Vice CDR Dist 1&2
Post 136 has endorsed Kevin Hempel for Dept Vice CDR Dist 3-8
Post 11 has endorsed Greg Geiman for Dept Sergeant at Arms
Post 164 has endorsed Fred Nelson for Natl Exec Committee
Post 18 has endorsed Hugh Holmes for National Vice Commander
Post 3 has endorsed Doug Feltman for Alt Natl Exec Committee

DELEGATION FEES FOR DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

Each Post is entitled to delegates based on their membership. Delegate credentials (found in the Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual) must be turned in to Department Headquarters by **June 5th, 2024**. Payment of \$7 per delegate must accompany the form from the manual. This is mandatory for all Posts whether they attend the convention or not. Fees can also be paid at registration.

2024 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Below is the basic schedule of events for the upcoming Department Convention

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

10:00 a.m. Finance Commission meeting
1:00 p.m. Executive Committee meeting

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

9:00 a.m. Registration desk opens
10:00 a.m. SAL Executive Committee meeting
10:00 a.m. Resolutions Committee Initial meeting
11:30 a.m. S.D.A.L.P.A. luncheon/meeting
1:00 p.m. Convention Committee Chairmen meet with

Commander & Adjutant
1:30 p.m. Convention committees meet
3:00 p.m. SDAL Foundation meeting
4:30 p.m. Joint Convention Memorial Service
6:00 p.m. No-Host Cocktails/Social
7:00 p.m. Joint Legion Family Banquet
SATURDAY, JUNE 22
8:00 a.m. Registration desk opens
8:30 a.m. Concert, State Legion Band
9:00 a.m. Convention Call To Order
Various speakers and committee reports
1:00 p.m. SAL Business meeting
Recognition of Legionnaire of the Year
Recognition of the Gabrielson Memorial Leadership
Presentation of History Awards
ANNOUNCEMENTS
CONVENTION IN RECESS
Area caucus for election of Vice Commanders
5:00 p.m. Go-Getters Reception and dinner
8:00 p.m. SD American Legion Foundation Fun Auction
SUNDAY, JUNE 23
8:00 a.m. Registration desk open
8:30 a.m. Concert – State Legion Band
9:00 a.m. Convention business session reconvenes
Speakers and committee reports continue.
11:45 a.m. Sweepstakes Drawings
12:00 noon Special Order of Business - Elections (earlier if all other business is completed)
Installation of newly elected officers
Acceptance speech by new Department Commander
Adjourn Convention, Department Commander
Post-Convention Dept Executive Committee

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONVENTION

The following are the titles and first resolved clause of the resolutions that have been submitted for consideration at convention. Those with constitutional intent are enclosed in the print mailing all are available in full form on the Dept website.

24-01 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA DUES- Constitution & By-laws ARTICLE VI DUES, Section 2. DUES – DISPOSITION. to read “Each Post shall pay annually to the headquarters of the Department of South Dakota the sum of \$20.00 plus the amount of National dues assessed each fiscal year for each of its individual members, which said sum shall be distributed as follows:”

24-02 RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A STANDING FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE- TABLED by Internal Affairs pending further study

24-03 SUPPORT OF PROVIDING POSTSECONDARY CREDIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE- That the American Legion supports the establishment of a standardized system to recognize and appropriately award academic credit or certification for military service based on American Council on Education recommendations of evaluation of the Joint Services Transcript System standards

24-04 SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE- That the member at large appointed by the Commander serve on the SDVC for a term of three years; and, be it finally
24-05 BIRCH-MILLER POST 9 OF MILBANK, SD TO HOST THE STATE A, THE STATE B AND THE JUNIOR LEGION BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS- That in commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of The Birthplace of American Legion Baseball that the State B Senior and Junior Legion State Baseball Tournaments be held at the newly constructed Legion Field Complex in Milbank, SD Birthplace of American Legion Baseball in 2025 with final dates to be determined prior to the 2025 baseball season.

24-06 SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION REGARDING PROPERTY RIGHTS-the American Legion supports the rights of property owners

GO-GETTERS RECEPTION AND DINNER

A reminder to all Posts. If you have Go-Getters who were not certified at Mid-Winter, but eligible now to attend the Dept Convention Go-Getters reception and dinner, the Go-Getter Certification Form in the Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual must be completed and sent to Department Headquarters by June 5th in order for the Go Getter to attend. If names were sent in previously, they do not need to be sent in again.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION BANQUET INFORMATION

The American Legion Family Joint Banquet will be Friday, June 21st, 2024 at the Ramkota Conference Center, 920 W Sioux Ave, in Pierre. No Host Bar 6:00 pm Banquet 7:00 pm
Transportation to and from the banquet is available. Please ask at the Registration table when you pick up your tickets.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Number of Tickets: _____ Adults \$35 per ticket _____
(Total)

_____ Children \$20 per ticket _____
(Total)

Total enclosed: _____

Please make checks or money orders out to:

American Legion Pierre Post 8

Please Send ticket requests to:

Convention Banquet Tickets

ATTN: Mike Wells, Convention Finance Chairman

PO Box 621

Pierre, SD, 57501

FUN AUCTION AT THE STATE CONVENTION

The annual fun auction will be held in Pierre during the State Convention on June 22. 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 special talent in any particular area, such as, quilting, wood carving, wood-working, baking, etc, please consider making something to be auctioned off at the fun auction.**

2028 & 2029 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 Convention, Ramkota, Pierre, June 20-23

2025 MidWinter, Arrowwood Resort, Oacoma, Feb 14-16

2025 Convention, Crossroads Hotel, Huron, June 19-22

YOUTH TROOPER ACADEMY

The 2024 Youth Trooper Academy will take place at the SD Law Enforcement Training Center in Pierre, the week of 24-28 June.

We would like to invite members of the American Legion Family

to come visit us on June 27th, "Blue Cap Day". Activities should start around 08:30. There will be several demonstrations from Law Enforcement, including, SWAT, dogs, SDGF&P, weapons demonstrations, weapons firing by the recruits, and an evening cookout sponsored by the American Legion.

Activities that day will take place at the SDHP Rifle Range located at 29055 Range Road, Pierre, SD.

Come witness South Dakota's future Law Enforcement Officers, Military and civilian leaders in action. Twenty-Four of America's finest.

P.S. You may want to bring a lawn chair!

Larry Price,

SDAL Public Safety Committee Chair

BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS SCHEDULE

The schedule for The American Legion 2024 baseball state tournaments is as follows:

State "A" Senior- July 30- Aug 3, Brookings

State "A" Junior- Aug 1-4, Pierre

State "B" Senior - Aug 2-6, Salem

State "B" Junior- Aug 9-1, Groton

2024 SDAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The SDAL annual golf tournament will be held in Webster, SD over the weekend of September 7th and 8th, 2024. Register today by calling Chad Hesla at 605-881-0007. For more information contact Athletic Commissioner Elton Blemaster 605-280-2023 or Athletic Commissioner Gene Gillen at 605-415-0885

BATTLE CREEK POST 303 ANNUAL BEERS AND EARS

Saturday August 10, 2024, 4-6pm at Hermosa Post home 14386 Hwy 40, \$10 adults \$5:00 kids. Contact Rick McDonald for more information rickymac1955@gmail.com or 605-484-7136.

2024 NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

Applications are now being accepted at Department Headquarters for this year's *National American Legion College* which will be held in Indianapolis November 17-22, 2024. Applications can be found on the National website, <https://www.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.

VA HEALTH CARE EXPANSION

The VA has announced that all veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military – at home or abroad – will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. All veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty will also be eligible to enroll.

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST (LIT)

This Year the Department received \$38,311 for 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/>

You may also qualify for Medicare Supplement and Medicare Advantage Plans through LIT with a portion of your dollars spent coming right back here to the Department. Last year alone LIT returned to the department \$17,917.65. <https://www.thelit.com/>

2024 CHILD AND YOUTH VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE FOR THIS SUMMER.

Over the course of the past five years, the American Legion, Department of South Dakota has volunteered their time and resources to assist Operation Homefront with programs to aid young service members and their families in time of need. Our Legionnaires have help to pick up and distribute donate school supplies from various Dollar Tree stores throughout the state in the summertime for distribution in August. Donations of small gifts for children are also picked up by these same volunteers in November from Dollar Tree stores for distribution in December.

For the past three years, some of these Dollar Tree stores have had volunteers from local Family Readiness Support Groups, with affiliation to local National Guard Armories, picking up these donated items. Those stores located in communities with no Amory or Family Readiness Support Group, have seen our Legion volunteers step up to ensure the donations are picked up and distributed accordingly.

This year is no exception. We are looking for volunteers in the Sioux Falls, Brookings, Sisseton, and Pierre areas. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer to pick up these donated items, please contact myself, for more info.

A second program of Operation Homefront this summer is the Back to School Round Up at Ellsworth AFB. This is taking place on July 27th from 0900-1200 at the Dakotas Plaza, on base. Volunteers from the Legion Family and VFW in the Black Hills area will be on site to assist as needed. Organizations can also have information tables set up to advise about programs to assist young Soldiers and Airman. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, contact me prior to the event for base access or if your Post would like to donate school supplies in any significant amount at this event please reach out to me.

If your Post would like to donate funds to aid our young service members through programs of Operation Homefront, please send your donation to the Department HQ. Please make the check out to the "American Legion, Department of South Dakota" and place a note in the Memo area that states "Operation Homefront Donation". Any donated funds will be forwarded to Operation Homefront.

Remember, the events and programs listed above are available to all South Dakota Service members, E1-E6, who are currently active duty or have been discharged within the past 10 years with an Honorable discharge, including the National Guard. Financial aid assistance is also available. Please encourage those eligible to utilize these resources when they are available.

Respectfully,
Harry Boner
SAL, Detachment of South Dakota
Children and Youth Chairman
hb.boner@gmail.com 605-691-4571

NEW VETERANS DISCOUNT ON HOTELS!!!

Ramkota Companies now offers a 20% discounted rate for ALL Veterans at 10 locations in South Dakota. Use the links below to book on line or you can call the hotel and ask for the Veteran's discount.

Aberdeen - Best Western Hotel and Conference Center
https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.42041.html?promoCode=VETERAN&singleRate=true

Chamberlain/Oacoma - Cedar Shore Resort
<https://be.synxis.com/?hotel=62000&promo=VETRNS>

Deadwood - The Lodge at Deadwood Resort
<https://be.synxis.com/?hotel=61991&promo=VET>

Pierre - Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
<https://be.synxis.com/?Hotel=67230&promo=VETS>

Pierre - ClubHouse Hotel & Suites

<https://be.synxis.com/?hotel=61910&rate=VET>

Rapid City - Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.42048.html?promoCode=VETERAN

Sioux Falls - Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel
https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-details.42038.html?rateCode=8K

Sioux Falls- ClubHouse Hotel & Suites
<https://be.synxis.com/?Hotel=61911&promo=VETS>

Sioux Falls - AeroStay Hotel
<https://be.synxis.com/?hotel=64817&promo=MILT>

Watertown - Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
<https://be.synxis.com/?hotel=75667&rate=VETERANS>

SD DEPT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS RESOURCE BOOK

The South Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs (SDDVA) has developed a resource book to educate veterans on the benefits and resources that are available to them and their family. This is a great guide with 60 pages of useful information. You can access the guide at the SDDVA website <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/> Or directly at: [https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/Other%20Publications/2023%20Resource%20Book%20\(July\).pdf](https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/Other%20Publications/2023%20Resource%20Book%20(July).pdf)

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN MESSAGE

As the Department Convention approaches and the year draws to a close, this will be my final article for this year. I am immensely grateful for the support you have shown me throughout the year. At the start, I spoke of South Dakota as the 'Eye of the Tiger.' Now, with only 26 days left, we may not meet every goal, but I believe we have largely embodied that spirit. I urged us to work as a team and leave everything on the field. In these final days, I ask for one last push to secure the remaining 633 members needed to meet our target. Remember, the three-year membership option is still available, and I encourage those who haven't yet, to consider it.

I owe many thanks and will not attempt to list everyone. First, I must express my gratitude to my wife Sue for her unwavering support this year. I also thank Courtney, Van, Judy, Mary Jo, and the entire leadership team—Department, District, County, Posts—and all our members for your support.

It's been a year filled with both fun and challenges. Thank you for everything you've done for the Legion, and I eagerly anticipate serving another year as your Membership Chairman.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the convention, and until we meet again:

May God bless you and your families,
May God bless the American Legion,
And may God bless the United States of America.

Bill

