



Up To Now!



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2009 CONVENTION PROCEEDING ENCLOSED

Enclosed to all Post Adjutants, Executive Committee, and Administrative Committee is a copy of the 2008 Department Convention proceedings.

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The 2009 South Dakota American Legion MidWinter Conference will be held Friday-Sunday, February 13-15, 2009 at the Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma. The schedule of events is outlined below.

Friday, February 13

- 12:00 noon Registration Desk Opens
- 1:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
- 6:00 p.m. Social Hour/No-Host Cocktails
- 7:00 p.m. Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet

Saturday, February 14

- 8:30 a.m. Joint Opening Session, Presentation of Colors, Invocation, Remarks by State Commander Huls, Auxiliary President Woltjer, and SAL Detachment Commander Lemieux
- 8:35 a.m. Motivational Speaker – Terry Nebelsick
- 9:00 a.m. American Legion VA&R – DSO Warren Aas
- 9:30 a.m. Auxiliary VA&R – Dept 1st Vice President Joan Spears
- 9:50 a.m. Operation Military Kids – Bob Kusser
- 10:00 a.m. Internal Revenue Service – Special Agent Denis Tappella
- 10:30 a.m. Close Joint Session – Legion/Auxiliary/SAL to separate meetings

American Legion Saturday Session:

- 10:30 a.m. Commander's opening remarks.
- 10:35 a.m. Leading Candidate for National Commander Clarence Hill of Florida
- 11:00 a.m. Dale Strom, Department Historian
- 11:20 a.m. Larry Madsen, Department Americanism Officer
- 11:45 a.m. Don Smith, Department VAVS Committee Chairman.
- 12:00 p.m. NEC Paul Evenson
- 12:30 p.m. Boys State Director Tom Tyrrell – Boys State
- 1:00 p.m. Gerald Goetzinger, Dept Legislative Committee Chairman
- 1:30 p.m. National Legion College – Wayne Rohde
- 1:50 p.m. South Dakota Honor Flight – Gary Watts
- 2:20 p.m. Children and Youth – Betty "Sam" Vaughn, Department C&Y Chairman
- 2:45 p.m. LaVaun Holan, Department Membership Chairman

for membership report and membership awards assisted by Membership Director Dennis Brenden)

- 3:45 p.m. Open Forum
- 6:00 p.m. Go-Getter cocktail reception
- 7:00 p.m. Go-Getter Smorgasbord
- 9:00 p.m. Hospitality Rooms for Candidates

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE BANQUET KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The Keynote speaker for the 2009 MidWinter Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet will be The American Legion National Commander David K. Rehbein of the Department of Iowa. A U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam era, National Commander Rehbein served as an infantryman with the 4th and 1st Armored Divisions in Germany from 1970 to 1971.

After leaving the Army, he attended Wayne State College and Iowa State University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in physics and a master's degree in metallurgy. Following graduation, he accepted a position as research metallurgist at the Ames Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, where he remained until his retirement in July of 2008.

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE BANQUET TICKETS

Tickets for the MidWinter Conference Joint Banquet will be by advanced sales only. The deadline date for requesting your tickets is February 6, 2009. No tickets will be available at the event. The Joint Banquet will be held Friday, February 13, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$30.00 each and can be obtained by sending \$30.00 per ticket requested to Potter American Legion Post 3, PO Box 348, Chamberlain, SD 57325.

AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

The South Dakota American Legion Department Legislative Committee has set the date for the 2009 South Dakota American Legion's Legislative Reception for Tuesday, February 10. The reception will be held at Pierre American Legion Post 8, located at the south end of Pierre Street.

The reception will start at 5:30 p.m. and will run until 9:00 p.m. Legion Family members are encouraged to come to Pierre on that date. Come to the capitol and visit your local legislators and extend a personal invitation to them to attend the reception that evening with Legion Family members from all across the state of South Dakota.

UPCOMING BENEFIT OUTREACH FORUMS

Department Service Officer Warren Aas has additional American Legion Benefit Outreach Forums scheduled for 2009. These forums which provide the latest, up-to-date information on veteran's benefits are a must for all veterans, families of veterans and spouses of deceased veterans. You do not need to be a member of The American Legion to attend these forums.

All forums start at 7:00 p.m. and last for approximately 2

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hours. Refreshments will be served during and after the forums and service officers will be available to assist veterans with existing claims or to initiate new claims. Information handouts will be available on many of the topics covered.

Remaining Veteran Benefits Outreach Forums are scheduled as follows:

February 2, 2009 – Sisseton, American Legion Post

February 3, 2009 – Willow Lake, Community Room

February 4, 2009 – Roscoe, American Legion Post

SD AMERICAN LEGION 2009 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The 2009 Legislative Agenda for The American Legion Department of South Dakota was set by The American Legion Legislative Committee is as follows:

Introduce legislation to separate the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs into two separate cabinet level departments, and create a Department of Veterans Affairs.

Re-introduce HB 1298 from the 2008 Legislative Session and try again to change the current law to make it a requirement that ALL discharges from the U.S. Armed Forces held by employees of the SD Division of Veteran Affairs MUST BE HONORABLE.

To ensure that there are no changes made in the current codified law that would revise the process by which the Director for the SD Division of Veterans Affairs is nominated and appointed. The South Dakota Veterans Commission continues to play a major role in that process.

Continue to ask for a study on the feasibility of establishing a veteran's cemetery and/or a veteran's home in Eastern South Dakota.

Continue to press for more emphasis to be placed on veteran's preference in the hiring of persons within South Dakota state government.

To support legislation to increase the amount of the \$40 benefit that is currently available for the headstone setting fee on South Dakota veterans' graves to \$100.

An excellent dialog has developed between the major veteran service organizations with regard to the above legislative agenda and all major groups will be working for the same legislative issues.

It is imperative that our legislators are made aware of our concerns. Please call or e-mail them to better improve the success of our issues. We Need Your Help!!

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR

All American Legion Posts are reminded that now is the time to select your Post Legionnaire of the Year. This is an excellent opportunity to recognize one Legionnaire from within your Post for his/her special efforts, initiative, and performance during the past year.

Forms for nominating your local Post Legionnaire of the Year for District Legionnaire of the Year competition are included in the 2008-2009 Post Adjutants' Administrative and Awards Manual. Rules require Posts to submit nominations to the District Commander at least 15 days prior to the Spring District Conventions.

District Legionnaires of the Year will be recognized at the Spring District Conventions and at the Annual Department Convention in Huron in June 2009. District Legionnaires of the Year will be eligible for competition in the Department Legionnaire of the Year selection process. The Department Legionnaire of the

Year will be announced at the Department Convention in Huron in June.

JOURNALISM CITY

Application forms for boys selected to attend the South Dakota American Legion Boys State Journalism City program must be sent to the South Dakota American Legion Boys State Registrar, Gene Schumacher, at 924 N. Main St., Aberdeen, SD 57401.

The deadline for submitting applications is February 4, 2009. The registration fee for Journalism City is \$150 per student. Do not send registration fees with the application forms. After the applications are screened, those students selected for the program will be notified and the local American Legion Post will be informed of students selected from within your local Post area. Journalism City students do not count against the school or local Post's quota for South Dakota American Legion Boys State.

HOTELS/MOTELS IN OACOMA

The Headquarters Hotel for the South Dakota American Legion MidWinter Conference will be the Cedar Shore Resort, located on Shoreline Drive in Oacoma. The phone number for the Cedar Shore Resort is 605-734-6376.

Additional lodging facilities in the Chamberlain/Oacoma area which may be considered by those wishing to attend the MidWinter Conference who do not yet have reservations would include the following:

West River Inn & Suites – W Hwy 16, I 90 Exit 260, Oacoma 605-734-4222

Days Inn – I 90 Exit 260, Oacoma 605-734-4100

Super 8 Motel - I 90 Exit 263, Chamberlain 605-734-6548

Oasis Inn – W Hwy 16, I90 Exit 260, Oacoma 605-734-6061

Holiday Inn Express - I 90 Exit 260, Oacoma 605-734-5593

AmericInn - I 90 Exit 263, Chamberlain 605-734-0985

2009 EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR

The American Legion annually honors The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year at its National Convention. The winner of the competition receives a \$10,000 scholarship and the three runners-up are each awarded a \$2,500 scholarship.

Forms for nominating Boys Scouts for The American Legion 2009 Eagle Scout of the Year award are now available from State Headquarters.

State Headquarters must receive nominations no later than March 1, 2009. A panel will then select the Department Eagle Scout of the Year.

Nomination forms may also be downloaded from the internet on The American Legion webpage at www.legion.org or the South Dakota American Legion webpage at www.sdlegion.org.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

2009 membership stands at 21,784 or 86.90% of the 2009 membership goal. Keep up the good work. Let's go out and renew the remaining members and sign up all the eligible veterans.