



Up To Now!

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EMPLOYER OF VETERANS APPLICATION ENCLOSED

Enclosed to all Post Commanders is a letter from State Employment Committee Chairman Earl Schultz, along with an application form for the "American Legion Employer of the Year for Hiring Veterans Award". Three awards are available for employers, (1) Small category – for employers with less than 50 employees, (2) Medium category – for employers with 51 to 200 employees, and (3) Large category – for employers with 201 or more employees. This is an excellent opportunity to recognize those employers within your community who understand that veterans make excellent employees.

FALL DISTRICT MEETINGS CONCLUDE

Fall District Meetings have been held in Districts 3-8 these past two weekends. Post representation has been sparse at many District Meetings. We hope the Posts that did not attend, contact their District Commander for all the updates from the Department and National on the many programs that affect all Posts in the American Legion. A special note, District 5 had an attendance of 65 Legionnaires with a large majority of the Posts in the District represented. A main item on the agenda at the District Meetings was to elect a District Commander and District Vice Commander for the new Districts. Elections of District and District Vice Commanders are listed below:

District 3 - Elected as District Commander was Royce Loesch of Pierre and District Vice Commander LeRoy Klingner of Pierre.

District 4 - Elected as District Commander was Dale Strom of Aberdeen and District Vice Commander Paul Douglas of Hosmer.

District 5 - Elected as District Commander was Betty "Sam" Vaughn of Brookings and District Vice Commander John Harper of Watertown.

District 8 - Elected as District Commander was Jay Youngbluth of Wagner and District Vice Commander Lee Rist of Centerville.

District 7 - Elected as District Commander was Dave Saunders of Sioux Falls and District Vice Commander Bob Bender of Hartford.

District 6 - Elected as District Commander was Terry Hanson of Arlington and District Vice Commander Dave Gutzmer of Lake Preston.

PDC VOGEL PASSES AWAY

PDC Dennis J. Vogel, Sr. of Montrose passed away September 13, 2011, at Golden Living Center in Salem. PDC Vogel was the American Legion Department Commander in 1988-1989. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942-1945 and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. PDC Vogel was a Paid Up For Life member of American Legion Post 154 of Montrose, with 67 continuous years of membership. Cards and condolences may be sent to his wife, Leona and family at PO Box 7, Montrose, SD 57048.

IRS INFORMATION

Now is the time of year to begin preparation to file your 990 annual report. National Judge Advocate Philip Onderdonk, Jr. has informed the Department the IRS has a special toll free number to deal with issues and problems involving tax exempt entities. The group is especially trained in tax exempt issues. The number to call is 877-829-5500.

AMERICAN LEGION GOLF TOURNAMENT RESULTS

The 2011 American Legion Golf Tournament concluded September 18, 2011, at Hart Ranch, Rapid City, S.D. The results for the tournament are as follows:

First Place Team: Todd Schmidt of Sioux Falls, Larry Engbretson of Garretson, Francis O'Neil of Garretson, Les Sterling of Tea.

Closest to the Pin: Jerry Duba of Rapid City, Elton Blemaster of Pierre, Don Ludens of Rapid City, Dallas Lafpey of Tripp.

Longest Putt: Les Sterling of Tea, Blaine Hoff of Volga, Neil Lee of Volga, Gene Gillen of Hermosa.

Closest 2nd Shot: Larry Schulte of Hermosa, Jerry Duba of Rapid City, Todd Schmidt of Sioux Falls, Jack Hayne of Volga.

A big "Thank You" goes to Hermosa American Legion Post 303 for sponsoring the tournament and for the meal on Saturday night at the Coyote Den at Camp Rapid.

PIERRE POST 8 RE-OPENS

After being forced to move out of their Post Home a few months ago, due to the Missouri River flood, American Legion Post 8 is moving back to the Post Home Cabin. The Legion Lounge was re-opened on September 24, 2011. The Post Home Office is newly renovated and open for business. To schedule an event, please call 605-224-7681.

ATHLETIC COMMISSION TO MEET

South Dakota American Legion Athletic Chairman has called a meeting of the Department Athletic Commission for 12:00 noon, Sunday, October 2, 2011, at the American Legion Post 8 Home in Pierre. The meeting is to discuss potential changes in the American Legion Baseball program.

SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COMMISSION TO MEET

The South Dakota Veterans Commission will meet October 4-5, 2011, in the Auditorium of the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System in Sioux Falls, SD. The meeting is scheduled to start at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 4, and will conclude at approximately noon on Wednesday, October 5. The meeting will include reports from representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, Congressional delegation, Department of Labor and the veterans service organizations.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▷ Department Bookkeeper Judy Johnson's dad passed away this past week.
- ▷ The shortest war on record took place in 1896 when Zanzibar surrendered to Britain after only 38 minutes. The longest was the so-called 100-years war between Britain and France. It actually lasted 116 years, ending in 1453. It was this war that introduced the direct taxation of income by the British.
- ▷ In 1801, when the first complete world census was carried out, the world's population was 1 billion. China had 295 million people and the USA had 5 million. In 2011, the world population is 7 billion. As in July 2010, China has population of 1.3 billion and the USA has 307 million.
- ▷ Department Service Officer Warren Aas fell from a ladder last Wednesday and broke seven ribs and cracked a vertebrae in his back.

CONTINUED ON BACK

13 POSTS HAVE NOT CERTIFIED THEIR 2012 OFFICERS

State Headquarters cannot mail out the membership cards and packets until these Posts certify their officers. The following Posts have **NOT** certified their officers for the 2012 membership year:

Dist 2 - Wood 19, Rosebud 125, St. Francis 297, Wanblee 269, Pine Ridge 251, Porcupine 294, Manderson 302

Dist 3 - Blunt 77, Rockham 57.

Dist 4 - Ipswich 67

Dist 6 - Artesian 47.

Dist 8 - Parker 30, Greenwood 257.

SIX ARE CALLED TO INDIANAPOLIS

Six South Dakota Legionnaires have been called to The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis to participate in the Annual Fall Meetings of the organization. State Commander Mark Weinmann of Canton (member of the Hudson American Legion Post) and State Adjutant Denny Brenden of Watertown will be attending the Annual Commanders and Adjutants Conference October 10-11. Adjutant Brenden will attend an Adjutant's Administrative Seminar on October 8 & 9 at National Headquarters.

NEC Paul Evenson of Sioux Falls (member of the Garretson American Legion Post) will be attending the Fall meeting of the National Executive Committee. Evenson also serves concurrently as Vice Chairman of the National Subcommittee on Committees and as a member of the Child Welfare Foundation, both of which will also hold meetings during the October 10-12th timeframe.

Other members called to Indianapolis include Larry Price of Redfield who serves as Vice Chairman of the National Americanism Commission, Gunner Baatrup of Huron (member of the Virgil American Legion Post) who serves on the National Convention Committee and Ron Tolrud of White who serves on the National Children and Youth Commission.

EDUCATION LOAN DEADLINES

Application deadlines for educational loans are November 1st and May 1st. Loans received after the application deadline will be held until the next meeting of the Educational Loan Committee. The Education Loan Committee meets twice a year to review and approve applications for the student loans.

The American Legion Department of South Dakota Educational Loan Program is made possible by voluntary donations of Legion Posts, individuals and corporations. The fund was authorized by the Department Executive Committee of The American Legion in South Dakota meeting in Yankton, June 16, 1956. It is to be used for loans to eligible veterans, their children, and grandchildren for educational opportunities beyond high school. It is to be used to enable eligible recipients to continue their education in college or technical schools in South Dakota.

Loans up to \$1,500 per person, per academic year, will be granted on a basis of need, as long as funds are available. The granting Committee, based on need and prospective best use of training sought. It is further stipulated that no one person may borrow in excess of \$3,000 total from the Educational Loan Fund. Loans must be used at educational institutions within the state of South Dakota unless the program that is being pursued is unavailable in South Dakota.

Loan brochures and applications are available on line at the South Dakota American Legion website www.sdlegion.org.

LEGION FIGHTS TRICARE INCREASES

The American Legion sternly opposes plans to increase out-of-pocket health-care costs for military retirees, American Legion National Commander Fang A. Wong said after learning that the White House recommends increasing TRICARE premiums and charging new annual fees to help reduce the federal deficit.

"President Obama told more than 10,000 Legionnaires at

our national convention less than a month ago that the budget would not be balanced on the backs of veterans," Wong said.

"Military retirees are veterans. And their benefits, including TRICARE medical insurance, cannot be milked to make ends meet. Make no mistake about it, this is an attempt to balance the budget on the backs of veterans. Military retirees are a small target in the middle of a big problem. They should not be asked to forfeit any of their health-care benefits to solve it."

The Washington Post reported this week that the administration's deficit-reduction plan would raise TRICARE co-payments for pharmaceuticals to put them more in line with coverage provided to other federal employees and begin charging a first-ever \$200 annual enrollment fee for TRICARE For Life, a Medicare supplement, beginning in 2013.

"We fully understand the federal deficit crisis, but when you start stripping benefits for military retirees, you affect more than the budget – you affect national security," Wong said. "Not only is such a reduction a breach of contract with our current military retirees, it is a disincentive for anyone willing to make a career of military service. Those who serve our nation in uniform, and swear with their lives to protect our freedoms, are not the same as ordinary government employees."

NELSON SELECTED FOR LEGION COLLEGE

Confirmation has been received from National Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, that Fred Nelson of Spearfish has been selected to attend the National American Legion College in Indianapolis, October 23-28, 2011.

Nelson was nominated by the Department of South Dakota and final selections were made by a panel of National Vice Commanders. Nelson is currently the State Vice Commander for Districts 1 & 2.

COMMANDER ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT

Due to the resignation of Colleen Flynn of Gregory on the Americanism Commission, Commander Mark Weinmann has appointed Larry Madsen of Gettysburg to replace Flynn and fulfill her term of appointment.

SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION

A letter was sent out to all Legionnaires, Post Commanders, Post Adjutants, and leadership in the American Legion in the Department of South Dakota, by the Board of Directors of the South Dakota American Legion Foundation, asking Posts to donate \$1 per member to assist in starting the foundation. To date, 56 American Legion Posts have stepped up and answered the request. With 244 Posts in the Department, that leaves 188 that haven't responded to the request.

The purpose of the foundation is to insure the future of the American Legion programs. A percentage of the earnings from the foundation will return to the Department Executive Committee yearly, to be used for our programs. If your Post hasn't donated a \$1 per member, please do so. Consider the foundation when doing your will.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership stands at 14,470 or 63.30% of the Department's Membership Goal.

Those attending the Fall District Meetings witnessed the enthusiasm and energy Department Membership Chairman Hugh "Homer" Holmes portrayed in his membership presentation. Although the humor was included, Homer is very serious about the Department of South Dakota making 100% membership goal. His motto is to "Just Ask One More". He stated that if all Legionnaires would sign up one more member, our membership would double. He added that not all Posts may make a 100%, but other Posts could get more members to help the District and Department make 100% goal. We are a team and must work together for the good of The American Legion.