



Up To Now!

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ENCLOSED TO POST COMMANDERS

Enclosed is a letter and application from the Department Employment Chairman, Gary Warne of Aberdeen, announcing the call for nominations of local employers within your community to be recognized by The American Legion for their "Hiring of 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 that understand that veterans make excellent employees.

FALL DISTRICT MEETINGS CONTINUE

The 2009 Fall District Conferences commenced the weekend of September 18-20 when Legionnaires from Districts 4, 14, and 6 gathered for their annual meetings.

The members of the Headquarters traveling team have been presenting updated information on numerous programs of The American Legion and leading discussions on many topics of interest to Legionnaires. Conferences were also held in Districts 5, 7, 8, and 9 during the weekend of September 24-27. The remaining schedule for the upcoming Districts is as follows:

Dist 1 – Thursday, October 1, Centerville American Legion Post Home, 6:00 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. meeting, light lunch following the meeting. Auxiliary will meet at the Senior Citizens Building (1/2 block away).

Dist 3 – Friday, October 2, Estelline American Legion Post Home, social 7:00 p.m., meeting 7:30 p.m., coffee and bars following the meeting. Auxiliary will meet at Estelline Community Center.

Dist 2 – Saturday, October 3, Lake Preston American Legion Post Home, social 1:00 p.m., meeting 2:00 p.m., Auxiliary will meet at the UCC Church (across the road from the Post Home).

DISTRICT 8 HAS NEW VICE COMMANDER

Legionnaires of District 8 elected a new Vice Commander for the District at their Fall District Conference in Dallas on Friday, September 25. The Legionnaires present at the meeting elected Roger Pochop of Dallas (member of the Colome Post) to serve the remainder of the uncompleted two-year term.

VETERANS FORUMS FOR 2009-2010 UNDER WAY

Department Service Officer Warren Aas is busy conducting veterans' forums in the state of South Dakota. The start time for all the forums is 6:30 p.m. The American Legion Department of South Dakota has conducted 77 veterans' forums and well over 3,100 veterans and their family members have

attended to learn more about their VA benefits.

The remaining schedule for the veterans' forums is as follows:

District 1: Wednesday, October 28, VFW Post, Brandon, SD.

District 2: Thursday, October 29, American Legion Post Home, Arlington, SD.

District 3: Thursday, November 5, American Legion Post Home, Clark, SD.

District 4: Wednesday, November 4, Community Center, Agency Village, SD.

District 5: Wednesday, October 21, American Legion Post Home, Faulkton, SD.

District 10: Tuesday, October 20, American Legion Post Home, Onida, SD.

District 14: Monday, October 19, American Legion Post Home, Mobridge, SD.

All Legionnaires, their spouses and other veterans are encouraged to attend The American Legion Department of South Dakota Veterans Benefits Outreach Forum closest to their home. This is an educational and valuable opportunity to learn about benefits you may be eligible for that you were previously unaware of.

Refreshments will be served during and after the forums and informational handout materials will be available for the attendees to take home and keep for future reference.

SEVEN ARE CALLED TO INDIANAPOLIS

Seven 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 Rod Martens of Black Hawk (member of the Piedmont American Legion Post) and State Adjutant Denny Brenden of Watertown will be attending the Annual Commanders and Adjutants Conference October 12-14. Adjutant Brenden will attend an Adjutant's Administrative Seminar on October 9 & 10 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 12-14th 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, Ron Tolrud of White who serves on the National Children and Youth Commission;

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and Eugene Schumacher who serves as a National Vice Commander.

NEW PUFL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM TO BEGIN

The Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) program is changing effective October 1, 2009 as a result of National Executive Committee Resolution #8 passed during the Spring Meetings, May 6-7, 2009.

Under the new Paid-Up-For-Life program Legionnaires will be allowed to make 36 equal monthly payments. Identification will be required showing the birth date of the applicant and must be certified by the Adjutant. Although the cost is greater, the convenience of monthly payments makes it appealing.

All PUFL applications must be submitted on the New PUFL forms at the new rates.

COMMANDER MARTENS MAKES APPOINTMENT

Commander Martens has announced the appointment of Jerold M. Zerfoss of Wessington to a two year term as a member of the VAVS Committee representing Districts 5, and 6.

DEADLINE APPROACHING FOR ED LOANS

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

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 of 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 of these loans will be determined by the Department Educational Loan 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 applications can be obtained from your local American Legion Post; by contacting State Headquarters in Watertown; or the forms are available on the South Dakota American Legion website at www.sdlegion.org.

ORATORICAL CONTEST OFFERS \$18,000

The South Dakota American Legion will be sponsoring The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program again this year.

Competition commences at the local Post level, proceeds through District and Area levels of competition and

culminates at the State level.

Competition is open to all high school students in South Dakota. Local Post contests are scheduled by the individual Posts and must be completed by January 10, 2010. District contests must be completed by January 24, 2010, and the Area contest must be completed by February 7, 2010.

The top contestant from each Area will compete in the State Finals which will be held on Sunday, February 14, 2010 at the Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma, SD at the conclusion of the annual MidWinter Conference.

The first place winner at the State level will move on to the National Contest in Indianapolis, Indiana April 9-11, 2010.

Scholarship awards are presented to the three finalists in the Final Round of the National Contest as follows: 1st place - \$18,000, 2nd place - \$16,000, and 3rd place - \$14,000.

VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day is Wednesday November 11. Make sure that your Post and community have plans for this significant day by coordinating a meaningful program and ceremony in your area. The American Legion should not be waiting to be asked to participate in Veterans Day – The American Legion should be leading the way. We are after all, “Veterans – Still Serving America.”

The American Legion National Headquarters prepares a suggested speech for Veterans Day each year. When the 2009 American Legion Veterans Day Speech is available, it can be requested from State Headquarters in Watertown, or it can be downloaded from The American Legion National Website at www.legion.org.

SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION EMPLOYER OF THE OLDER WORKER AWARD

Employment Committee Chairman Gary Warne has announced that the Good Samaritan Society of Howard SD has been selected to be the recipient of The American Legion Department of South Dakota 2009 Employer of the Older Worker Award.

The Good Samaritan Society in Howard was established in 1964. The facility was built to serve older individuals and others in need. They currently have 70 staff members with 29% of the staff at 55 years of age or older.

In 1958, the National Economics Commission expanded its Employer Award Program by creating this award for employers of older workers. Because the commission saw older workers as a valuable economic resource of proven skills, stability and experience, it wanted to encourage employers to hire and retain older workers in the work force. National "Employer the Older Worker Week" was established by The American Legion and is observed during the last full week of each September.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

2010 membership stands at 15,520 or 63.32% of the Department 2010 membership goal. Keep up the good work and help make goal for your Post and the Department of South Dakota.

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