



Up To Now!

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HATS IN THE RING

Henry G. Fix, Post 23 of Garretson has endorsed Paul A. Evenson as a candidate for the office of National Executive Committeeman.

Piedmont Valley Post 311 of Piedmont has endorsed Phil Anderson as a candidate for the office of Alternate National Executive Committeeman.

ATHLETIC COMMISSION TO MEET

The South Dakota American Legion Athletic Commission will hold its winter meeting at 1:00 p.m., Sunday, January 30, 2011, at The American Legion Post Home in Pierre, S.D.

The business of the meeting will include finalizing plans for the 2011 baseball season, hearing reports from those Posts hosting various 2011 tournaments, consideration of invitations to host 2012 tournaments, and any other business that may come before the Commission. Posts had until January 17 to submit their bids.

DID YOU KNOW?

- P Past National Commander John Geiger passed away January 10, 2010. Condolences can be sent to 758 Laurel Ave, Des Plaines, IL 60016.
- P The South Dakota Veterans Commission will hold a meeting in Fort Pierre, at the Holiday Inn Express at 1:00 p.m. February 1, the afternoon of The American Legion's legislative reception.
- P Approximately one third of all land in the United States is owned by the federal government.
- P State Headquarters has, on hand, an inventory of U.S. Flags, State Flags, and POW Flags.

AREA ORATORICAL CONTESTS

Area Contests for The American Legion High School Oratorical – "Constitutional Speech Contest" will be held in accordance with the following schedule:

- Area 1, 7 – Irene Legion Post, Jan. 23, 2 p.m.
- Area 2, 5, 6 – Mitchell Senior High School, Jan. 23, 2 p.m.
- Area 3, 4, 14 – Cornerstone Methodist Church, Watertown, Jan. 23, 2 p.m.
- Area 8, 9, 13 – Kadoka Retirement Center Jan. 30, 1:00 p.m.
- Area 10, 11, 12 – Piedmont Legion Post, Jan. 23, 2 p.m.

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The 2011 South Dakota American Legion MidWinter Conference will be held Friday-Sunday, February 11-13, 2011, at the Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma. The schedule of events is outlined below.

Friday, February 11

- 10:00 a.m. – Administrative Committee Meeting – Missouri Winds Room
- 12:00 noon – Registration Desk Opens – Pre-Function Area
- 1:00 p.m. – Department Executive Committee Meeting – River Run / Wetlands Room
- 6:00 p.m. – No Host Cocktails – Pre-Function Area / Ballroom
- 7:00 p.m. – Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet – Ballroom

Saturday, February 12

- 8:00 a.m. – Registration Desk Opens – Pre-Function Area
- 8:30 a.m. – Joint Opening Session – Hale / Oacoma Room
Presentation of Colors
State Commander G. D. "Hoot" Gibson
Auxiliary President Sue Christensen,
SAL Detachment Commander Greg Lemieux
- 8:45 a.m. – National Vice Commander Russell J. Henry
- 9:05 a.m. – Auxiliary VA&R Briefing–Regina Whipple
- 9:15 a.m. – Auxiliary Children & Youth – Barb Vetter
- 9:25 a.m. – Bob Sutton, President of the South Dakota Community Foundation
- 9:45 a.m. – Janell Christensen, Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the Dept of Veterans Affairs
- 10:05 a.m. – Jessie Kuechenmeister, Executive Director of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)
- 10:30 a.m. – Legion/Auxiliary/SAL to separate meetings
- 10:45 a.m. – BREAKOUT SESSIONS:
Post Service Officer Session, Glass
Americanism Session, Howe Room
Legion Riders Session, Hale/Oacoma
Membership Session, Wheeler Room
- 12:00 p.m. – Noon Lunch Break (On Your Own)
- 1:00 p.m. – BREAKOUT SESSIONS:
Legion Riders Session, Hale/Oacoma
Adjutants Session, Glass Room
Americanism Session, Howe Room
Membership Session, Wheeler Room
- 2:15 p.m. – All Assemble in Convention Hall, Hale/Oacoma
- 2:20 p.m. – NEC Paul Evenson Remarks.
- 2:35 p.m. – Alt. NEC Phil Anderson Remarks.
- 2:45 p.m. – Department Legislative Committee Chairman Gerald Goetzinger
- 3:00 p.m. – Honor Flight Representative
- 3:15 p.m. – 2010 American Legion College Graduate Eliann Carr
- 3:30 p.m. – Department Membership Chairman Rick MacDonald, Membership Report, Membership Awards & Turn-In
- 3:50 a.m. – Dept. VAVS Committee Chairman Ollie Redden VAVS Popcorn Fund Turn-In
- 4:00 p.m. – South Dakota American Legion Foundation Meeting
- 6:00 p.m. – Go-Getters Reception – Oacoma Community Center
- 6:30 p.m. – Go-Getters Smorgasbord – Community Center
- 8:00 p.m. – Hospitality Rooms

Sunday, February 13

- 8:30 a.m. – Non-Denominational Service, Hale/Oacoma
- 10:30 a.m. – Department Finals American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship, Hale/Oacoma "Constitutional Speech Contest"

LEGION BASEBALL REGISTRATION BEGINS

This year marks American Legion Baseball's second season

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for on line registration. As American Legion Baseball swings into its 86th year, the 2011 season gets under way with online registration beginning January 1st.

On line registration was launched to tighten administrative communication efforts and provide additional value to players and fans. Coaches no longer have to collect, complete and mail registration forms, insurance forms and payments to various locations for processing. The user-friendly online capabilities simplify the entire registration process, allowing coaches to enter game schedules and learn rosters for parents and fans to view.

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION SCHEDULED

The South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee has set the date for the 2011 American Legion Legislative Reception for Tuesday, February 1, 2011. The reception will be held at the Pierre American Legion Post 8, located at the south end of Pierre Street. The reception will start at 5:30 p.m. and run until approximately 9:00 p.m. Prior to the reception, Commander Gibson has called a meeting of the American Legion Legislative Committee at 3:30 p.m. This meeting is open to all members of The American Legion family.

American Legion Family members are encouraged to come to Pierre and visit with their legislators. Please extend a personal invitation to your legislators to attend the reception.

LEGION NEWS AND UP TO NOW ONLINE

The Legion News and Up To Now are online at the South Dakota American Legion website, www.sdlegion.org. Post Commanders and Adjutants please make your membership aware of this.

MIDWINTER BANQUET TICKETS

Tickets for the MidWinter Conference Joint Banquet will be by advance sale only. No tickets will be available at the event. The Joint Banquet will be held Friday, February 11, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. The event will be preceded by a no-host cocktail hour commencing at 6:00 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.

USAA AND THE AMERICAN LEGION JOIN FORCES

The American Legion and USAA - two of the nation's largest military-focused organizations - have joined forces to strengthen support to those who served, giving 2.4 million Legionnaires access to USAA's top-rated insurance and financial services.

The agreement positions USAA as the preferred provider of financial services including insurance, banking, investments, brokerage services and financial guidance. Legionnaires who establish USAA membership can extend the benefits to their qualified family members, many of whom make up the nearly 1.4 million members of the Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary.

U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Jimmie L. Foster, national commander of The American Legion, notes that USAA has catered to military personnel since 1922 with a proud legacy of serving the military community.

"I am very excited about our affiliation - I can't think of a better team," Foster said. "The American Legion provides our veterans and their families a support network, and now USAA is aboard to provide professional financial services including banking, insurance, investments, retirement and advice. Our new relationship with USAA represents a great opportunity for the entire Legion family. I strongly encourage all Legionnaires and their families to

explore and take advantage of the benefits of USAA membership."

USAA provides insurance, banking, investment and retirement products and services to 7.8 million members of the U.S. military and their families. Known for its legendary commitment to its members, USAA is consistently recognized for outstanding service, employee well-being and financial strength. USAA membership is open to all who are serving or have honorably served our nation in the U.S. military - and their families. To learn more about USAA, call 877-699-2654 or visit usaa.com/legion.

BOYS STATE PACKETS MAILED

The 2011 South Dakota American Legion Boys State information packets have been mailed to all high schools and American Legion Posts in the State. Each packet includes brochures, registration forms and other pertinent information related to the 2011 Boys State session.

FLAG AMENDMENT BACK IN US CONGRESS

Citizens Flag Alliance organizations are encouraged to contact their U. S. Representatives and urge them to sign on as co-sponsors of the recently introduced flag amendment.

Representative Jo Ann Emerson, R-Mo., introduced legislation for the 112th Congress proposing a constitutional amendment which would restore to Congress the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag. A companion bill will be introduced in the Senate by Senator Orin Hatch, R-Utah, later this month.

In 1989, the U. S. Supreme Court's decision in *Texas v. Johnson* overturned 200 years of American tradition and laws by declaring that the people no longer had a right to protect the American Flag. The court ruled flag burning was freedom of speech. In reaction to the courts decision, the Citizens Flag Alliance was founded by The American Legion to return to the people their right to protect Old Glory.

FROM PIERRE

With the 86th session of the South Dakota Legislature now in session, these are the bills that have been filed pertaining to veterans issues in the State of South Dakota.

SB 51 - This bill would revise certain provisions relating to a previous appropriation for renovation of the nursing care building on the South Dakota Veterans' Home campus and to declare an emergency. This bill would appropriate funds for the purposes of renovating the South Dakota Veterans Home in Hot Springs for upgrading life and safety issues through the design and construction of a new veterans home.

SB 52 - This bill would authorize the South Dakota Building Authority and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to provide for the design, construction, and equipping of the Veterans Home near Hot Springs and to declare an emergency.

SB 53 - This bill revises certain provisions relating to the Veterans Commission and to veteran's rights, benefits, and services. This bill redefines a veteran and a war time veteran in South Dakota.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership stands at 20,183 or 85.04j% of the Department's membership goal.

A "Just Ask" award will be presented to every Post that has attained 100% of its 2011 membership by February 9, 2011. We need everyone's help in contacting the members who haven't renewed their membership for the 2011 year. Help Commander Gibson achieve 100% membership in his year as your State Commander. Keep up the good work.

