



Up To Now!

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH PACKETS MAILED

Children and Youth Packets have been mailed to all Post Commanders. Post Commanders please share this information with your Post Children and Youth Chairman. In these packets is a letter from Department Children and Youth Chairman Jeff Hrabanek outlining many of the programs listed under Children and Youth as well as brochures for some of the programs.

FALL MEETINGS CONCLUDE

The fall meetings ended the weekend of October 1-3 with meetings at District 1 in Centerville, District 3 in Estelline, and District 2 in Lake Preston.

The Headquarters traveling party would like to thank the local Posts and Districts for all the hospitality that was shown. Also to all the Legionnaires that attended the meetings, a special thank you for taking time out of your schedule to learn more about The American Legion programs. Although some meetings weren't well attended, the Legionnaires that did attend were truly dedicated to the principles and programs of The American Legion.

GETTYSBURG HOSTS HONOR FLIGHT SEND-OFF

Gettysburg American Legion Post 135, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 135, along with the Gettysburg VFW will be hosting an Honor Flight Send-Off for nine of their WWII veterans on October 15, 2009, at 11:00 a.m., in the Gettysburg school gym. Lt. Governor Dennis Daugaard, board of directors member of the SD Honor Flight, will be the guest speaker.

The Veterans Organizations will present a check to the SD Honor Flight for \$8,250. This money was raised through a breakfast and bake sale with a free will offering and other contributions. The Gettysburg veterans groups are providing hotel rooms and transportation for the Gettysburg WWII veterans to Aberdeen to go on the October 16th flight to Washington, D.C. to see their memorial.

Potter County area had 11 veterans signed up to go on the honor flight. One veteran went on the Rapid City flight in August, nine veterans are going on the October 16th flight, and one veteran passed away September 29th. It truly is essential to get these veterans to see their memorial as soon as possible.

THREE RETURN FROM INDIANAPOLIS

South Dakota Americanism Chairman Byron Callies, Boys State Director Tom Tyrrell, and National Vice Chairman of the Americanism Commission Larry Price attended the National Americanism Conference September 25-27 at National Headquarters, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Americanism Chairman Callies said approximately 400 attended the Conference. Lots of good information was given to the attendees regarding Oratory, Boys State, Baseball and other Americanism Programs.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO MEET

The ad-hoc committee set up to establish an American Legion Foundation will meet Wednesday, October 21, at 10:00 a.m. at State Headquarters in Watertown to discuss the formation of the foundation. Committee members are Chairman PDC Jim Huls of Salem, NEC Paul Evenson of Sioux Falls (member of the Garretson American Legion Post), Burdette Solum of Watertown, Dale Christensen of Watertown, Allen Nelson of Rapid City, Tom Sannes of Webster, Commander Martens, and Adjutant Brenden.

VETERANS FORUMS FOR 2009-2010 UNDERWAY

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.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TO MEET

The South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee will hold its annual meeting Monday, November 2nd at the Pierre American Legion Post 8 Home in Pierre. The planning meeting is scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m. The current Legislative Commission is chaired by Gerald Goetzinger of Martin and its members are Alt NEC Phil Anderson of Piedmont, Ron Tolrud of White, Bob Miller of Kimball and Curt Halverson of

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Rapid City (member of the Custer American Legion Post).

The American Legion is anticipating a busy schedule during the 2010 Legislative session in Pierre.

All members of the South Dakota American Legion are encouraged to become knowledgeable of the legislative issues The American Legion will pursue and speak to your local district legislators on these issues. Our efforts on behalf of the veterans of South Dakota are most effective when they are grass-roots driven.

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

The forms for nominating local area teachers for The American Legion Department of South Dakota 2010 Educator of the Year Program are now available from State Headquarters in Watertown.

This program, sponsored in conjunction with the National Education Week (November 15-21), is an excellent opportunity to provide valuable recognition to an educator from your community. Each Post should sponsor a nominee from a local school. That educator is then recognized by your local American Legion Post as your community's American Legion Educator of the Year and the nomination package is submitted to your District Commander.

Each District then selects a District Educator of the Year, who is recognized by the District organization. The District winner is then submitted to the Department for competition in the Department's 2010 Educator of the Year competition. The educator selected by the Department is recognized at the Annual Department Convention; this year in Spearfish, SD. The Department Educator of the Year is the guest of the Department at the Joint Banquet, treated to one free night in the convention hotel, and is recognized during the General Assembly of the Convention.

DEPARTMENT VAVS COMMITTEE TO MEET

The Department Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS) Committee will hold its annual meeting Monday, November 9th at the Pierre American Legion Post 8 Home in Pierre. The planning meeting is scheduled to start at 1:00 p.m.

The committee will plan for the 2009 Christmas season at the VA facilities and the SD State Veterans Home. Traditionally, the committee makes recommendations for annual donations from the Department to the facilities to help offset the expenses of their Christmas parties and accepts recommendations from the Department Commander for gifts from the Department to each facility.

The committee strongly recommends that American Legion Posts begin planning now for the Posts contributions and/or donations to the facilities during the Christmas season.

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.

The American Legion National Headquarters prepares a suggested speech for Veterans Day each year. The 2009 American Legion Veterans Day Speech is already available and can be requested from State Headquarters in Watertown.

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 attended the Annual Commanders and Adjutants Conference October 12-14. Adjutant Brenden attended 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) attended 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 held 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, and National Vice Commander Eugene Schumacher of Aberdeen.

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. It is to be used for loans to eligible veterans, their children, and grandchildren for educational opportunities beyond high school. These loans enable eligible recipients to continue their education in college or technical schools in South Dakota.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

2010 membership stands at 16,062 or 65.53% of the Department's 2010 membership goal. Keep up the good work.

At the fall district meetings a suggestion was made to put our website, what we do, why we do it, who benefits, and the many programs of The American Legion on a business card. It fits easily in your wallet and is a quick reference when one meets a potential member. If your Post is interested in obtaining these cards please notify Headquarters.

It was also noted that Legionnaires were not aware of membership target dates and the criteria needed for many of the membership awards listed in the Adjutant's Awards and Administrative Manual. We urge Post Adjutants to share the information listed in this manual with Legion Post members. You can only work as a team when everyone knows what is needed and by what date, to obtain membership awards for individual Legionnaires, Posts, Districts, and Areas.

