



Up To Now!

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ENCLOSED FOR ALL

Enclosed for all recipients of this *Up To Now* is a letter from the VAVS Hospital Representatives encouraging everyone to help make the holidays as pleasant as possible for all our veterans cared for at the VA Medical Centers in South Dakota by donating funds to purchase gifts and sponsor various holiday activities.

Also enclosed for all recipients is a copy of the Post-by-Post membership statistics as of November 23, 2009.

HATS IN THE RING

Codington County Post 17 of Watertown has endorsed Byron Callies, Sr. for the office of State Vice Commander of The American Legion for the area consisting of Districts 3, 4, and 14.

COMMANDER MARTENS MAKES APPOINTMENT

Commander Rod Martens has appointed Gary Henle of Sioux Falls as a member of the Troop Connection Program as the American Legion Riders Representative.

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Tuesday, November 17 was the deadline for membership dues to arrive at State Headquarters in Watertown in order to qualify for any of the Veterans Day Target Membership Awards.

Veterans Day Target Membership Awards include:

- The awarding of a desk size set of flags (5 service flags and the US Flag). One flag set will be awarded to a lucky Legionnaire in each District who has paid his/her 2010 dues by this target date. The winners were chosen by a drawing from all members who have paid within the District. Dist 1- Charles E. Ericson of Alcester Post 86, Dist 2-David Owens, Sr. of Iroquois Post 280, Dist 3-Richard J. Bruns of Astoria Post 103, Dist 4-James W. Hagen of Roslyn Post 253, Dist 5-Harley J. Hansen of Redfield Post 92, Dist 6-Richard Mentele of Montrose Post 154, Dist-7 Gregory M. Huckabee of Vermillion Post 1, Dist 8-James R. Krier of Herrick Post 220, Dist 9-A. M. Loken of Murdo Post 75, Dist 10-Royce Loesch of Pierre Post 8, Dist 11-Jane W. Scofield of Faith Post 106, Dist 12-Durley K. Boyer of Buffalo Post 147, Dist 13-William F. Kenny of Hot Springs Post 71, Dist 14-Martin G. Mickelson of Pollock Post 272.
- One lucky recruiter will receive a Legion wristwatch. Again, the winner was chosen by drawing a name from all the names of recruiters of new members that have been reported to State Headquarters by November 12. The winner is Dave Saunders of Sioux Falls Post 15.
- Each District Membership Chairman who has reached a target of 75% of his/her District's membership, with no "goose egg" Posts, will receive a desk size set of flags (5 service flags and the US Flag). Winners are: Wayne Rohde-Dist 1, Betty "Sam" Vaughn-Dist 2, Charles Greenfield-Dist 3, Russ McKee-Dist 4, Dave Johnson-Dist 5, Lyle DeHaai-Dist 6, Roy King-Dist 7, Jeff Hra-

banek-Dist 8, Bob Kusser-Dist 10, Dave Bertch-Dist 12, Dale Strom-Dist 14.

- Each Post that has attained 100% or more of its 2010 membership goal will receive a plaque attesting to this achievement. Winners are Centerville Post 43, Davis Post 176, North Sioux City Post 319, Badger Post 260, Nunda Post 105, Carpenter Post 153, Grenville Post 267, Rosholt Post 48, Polo Post 299, Northville Post 149, Plankinton Post 5, Letcher Post 93, Geddes Post 56, Freeman Post 248, Fairfax Post 187, Witten Post 167, Norris Post 310, Piedmont Post 311, Hermosa Post 303, Hecla Post 68, Stratford Post 207, Herreid Post 170.

These awards will be presented at the 2010 MidWinter Conference in Oacoma in February.

The Department membership awards are outlined in the *2009-2010 Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual*. Copies of this manual have been provided to all Post Adjutants and Post Commanders. Also target dates and membership award criteria are listed on The American Legion Website, www.sdlegion.org.

SD AMERICAN LEGION 2010 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The SD American Legion Legislative Committee met November 2 at the Pierre American Legion Post 8. Those attending the meeting included Committee Chairman Gerald Goetzinger of Martin, committee members Curt Halverson of Custer, Ron Tolrud of White, and Bob Miller of Kimball, Alt NEC Phil Anderson of Piedmont. Additional attendees included Department Commander Rod Martens, NEC Paul Evenson, Department Adjutant Denny Brenden, Department Service Officer Warren Aas, Legion Legislative Lobbyist John Dewell of Pierre, State Vice Commander Nancy Lemieux of Pierre, Royce Loesch of Pierre, PDC Glenn Green, PDC Wayne Vetter, Bob Kusser of Pierre, Larry Person from the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs, and Sioux Falls American Legion Post 15 Legislative Chairman Dean DeLashmutt.

The 2010 Legislative Agenda for The American Legion Department of South Dakota was set 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.

Support honorable discharges qualifications for the Director, employees of the Division of Veterans Affairs, and for county/tribal Veteran Service Officers.

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.

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 is-

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sues.

LEGISLATIVE ROUND TABLE MEETINGS

On November 14, the first of four scheduled round table meetings by the Veterans Service Organizations of South Dakota was held at the DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls. Legislators from the surrounding areas were invited to the round table meetings to listen to the legislative issues and concerns of the veterans of South Dakota. Legislators at the round table meeting were very receptive of the issues. A South Dakota State Pledge "to stand up for veterans" was given to all legislators and they were asked to sign this pledge to show their support. The four issues on the pledge are the same issues that were listed under the 2010 legislative agenda on the front page. A majority of the legislators signed the pledge and voiced their support for concerns of the Veterans Organizations.

At the Sioux Falls Round Table Meeting, the forces of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans, and TREA (The Retired Enlisted Association) presented the legislative agenda for the upcoming session.

The schedule of the remaining Round Table Meetings is as follows:

December 3, 2009, Brookings VFW Post Home, 12:00 noon

December 5, 2009, Piedmont American Legion Post Home, 1:00 p.m.

December 18, 2009, Watertown American Legion Post Home, 1:00 p.m.

Everyone is encouraged to attend these round table meetings. Legionnaires should wear their Legion caps when attending these meetings. Please encourage your local legislators to attend. Legislators are often more receptive to our concerns if they have been made aware of the issues by local constituents rather than hearing about them for the first time in a legislative committee hearing room.

AMERICAN LEGION LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE

America's largest veteran's service organization has launched a new Web site, bulging with new content and featuring a completely redesigned look. American Legion National Commander Clarence Hill said the new Web site, "is a tremendous addition to our online presence. It's more informative, better-looking, and easier to navigate than our previous site. I encourage Legionnaires to visit www.legion.org [1] and explore the wealth of content in its pages."

The new site includes more than 30 separate landing pages for American Legion programs and activities, including baseball, scholarships, troop support, membership/post activities and the Family Support Network.

Two prominent programs – The American Legion Riders and Sons of The American Legion – also have their own landing pages. Online visitors will also find the Legion's popular blog site, "The Burn Pit."

"We've got everything there from our COP Keating fundraising drive for soldiers attacked in Afghanistan, to film footage of the Legion's 1927 National Convention in Paris, France," Hill said. It's a very impressive online compilation of what The American Legion is all about."

The Legion's new home page features two major stories, headlines and news links that are updated each morning. The page's new design also includes links to the Legion's social media such as Twitter and Facebook, to major hubs of Legion activ-

ity such as the Veterans Benefits Center and Legislative Action Center, and to the national commander's Web site.

"Our national staff has worked very hard to create this new Web site as a fantastic calling card to the entire world," Hill said.

MIDWINTER BANQUET TICKETS

Tickets for the MidWinter Conference Joint Banquet will be by advanced sale only. No tickets will be available at the event. The joint Banquet will be held Friday, February 12, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Banquet Dinner will feature Prime Rib plus desert. The event will be preceded by a no-host cocktail hour commencing at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

SEARS OFFERS HOLIDAY BONUS PROGRAM

Now through December 13, 2009, Sears, is offering a Holiday Bonus Program. If you purchase a \$100 gift card, you will get a \$10 gift card free. If you buy a \$50 gift card, you will get a \$5 gift card free. Sears gift cards never expire and hold no user fees.

To order gift cards during this special offer contact Bill Gillette at FAX 866-538-9054 or e-mail at wgill03@searsshc.com.

GO-GETTER CERTIFICATION DEADLINE

All Posts are reminded that the deadline for certifying Go-Getters to qualify for Early Bird Go-Getter status is Tuesday, January 13, 2009. All Go-Getters who are certified to State Headquarters by Wednesday, January 13, 2010 will be entitled to attend the Go-Getters reception and dinner at the MidWinter Conference in Oacoma.

Post Adjutants must certify Go-Getters using GG Form No. 1-2010, Go-Getter Certification Form, which is located between Pages 7 and 8 in the *2009-2010 Post Adjutant's Administrative and Awards Manual*. Go-Getter cards may be picked up at the registration table at the MidWinter Conference in Oacoma.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

2010 membership stands at 19,587 or 79.91% of the Department's 2010 membership goal. GREAT JOB! Keep up the good work.

Commander Martens would like to offer a membership incentive. If a District is at 100% by the MidWinter Conference, the District Membership Chairman and District Commander will have their picture taken with National Commander Clarence Hill.

