



Up To Now!

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ENCLOSED FOR ADJUTANTS

The following items are enclosed for all Adjutants:

- (1) Information and order form for obtaining The American Legion Post Officer Portal (ALPOP). ALPOP, accessible through the Internet, is designed to assist Post Officers in their day-to-day membership processing duties. It allows Post Officers to manage Post membership information on a computer at the Post or at home. This document will also enable you to obtain a 30-day trial version of AIM software. AIM software is the software used by State Headquarters to manage the membership database for the Department.
- (2) Information on LEGIONSITES.COM. This document contains very good information to assist your Post in establishing a presence on the Internet – is one of the easiest ways to build a Post website for your Post.
- (3) A brochure from Department Children and Youth Vice Chairman Wolfgang Migge on Special Olympics. This Special Olympics program has been supported by The American Legion Department of South Dakota for several years and Posts are encouraged to make donations to Special Olympics at your Spring District Convention or through State Headquarters. The brochure provides valuable information on Special Olympics.
- (4) A new brochure produced by National Headquarters for this year's American Legion National Commander, American Legion Auxiliary National President and SAL National Commander. Together, they have designated the National Emergency Fund, the National Creative Arts Festival and The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation as the Legion Family Charities of Preference for this year. All Posts are asked to give careful consideration to donations to these important programs.
- (5) A flyer on the State Legion Bowling Tournament which will be held in Mitchell, Mar 17-18, 24-25, and Mar 31-Apr 1.

ATHLETIC COMMISSION TO MEET

The SD American Legion Athletic Commission will hold its winter meeting on Saturday, February 17 in Huron. The meeting will commence at 10:30 a.m. at the Huron Veterans Club on East Highway 14.

The commission will conduct a review of the Department Baseball Rules at this meeting.

Posts that have submitted bids for 2008 Department athletic tournaments and events are invited and encouraged to present additional information on their bids at this meeting.

Posts that are hosting the 2007 Department athletic tournaments and events are reminded of the requirement to provide reports on their preparation for those events. Representatives of Posts hosting the 2007 Department athletic tournaments and events are also expected to be present to sign the contracts for those events.

FROM PIERRE

Following is an update on the bill status of those legislative items being monitored by your team of Legislative Representatives (lobbyists) Ron Boyd, Warren Aas, and John Dewell:

HB 1003 – this bill makes significant style and form changes to the existing statutes related to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. There are no significant changes in the substance of the existing

statute. *The bill has passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate and has been signed by the Governor.*

HB 1010 – this bill requests an appropriation of \$1,082,783 from the general fund combined with \$1,807,526 in federal funds to provide for the renovation of the nursing care building on the campus of the SD State Veterans Home in Hot Springs. *The bill passed the House on 01/25. The Senate Appropriations Committee heard the bill on 02/02 and amended the bill to declare an emergency which would authorize the appropriation on July 1, 2007. The amended bill received a Do Pass recommendation from the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

HB 1011 – this bill requests a \$200,000 appropriation from the general fund for the renovation of the National Guard Armory in Brookings. *The bill passed the House on 01/22. The bill was amended in the Senate Appropriations Committee by declaration of an emergency. The amended bill, as amended, passed the Senate on 01/30 and the House concurred in the amendment on 02/01. The bill now moves to the Governor for signature.*

HB 1012 – this bill revises the law so that the original appropriation that was made to fund the Veterans Bonus program remains available until four years after a future date to be determined by the State Legislature instead of having to be reverted back to the General Fund at the end of each fiscal year. *The bill passed the House on 01/22, passed the Senate on 01/29 and has been signed by the Governor.*

HB 1081 – this bill changes the motor vehicle license plate system in South Dakota to a system where the license plates remain with the owner of the license plates instead of remaining with the vehicle. *This bill passed the House on 01/18, passed the Senate on 01/29 and is awaiting the Governor's signature.*

HB 1187 – this bill would allow any person who is on temporary duty assignment for the military which causes the person to fail to comply with the application deadline for a property classification as an owner-occupied single-family dwelling, but otherwise qualifies for the classification, to petition the board of county commissioners to recalculate the taxes based on the classification the person would have received and abate or refund the difference in taxes. *The bill was amended in House Taxation Committee by declaring an emergency and the bill was passed by the House on 02/05.*

HB 1192 – this bill requests an appropriation of \$400,000 to fund a study by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assess the need and feasibility of establishing a state veterans cemetery in the eastern half of South Dakota. *The bill will be heard in the House Appropriations Committee on 02/07.*

HB 1202 – this bill would require that members of the armed forces of the United States who return to South Dakota after service in an area designated as a combat zone and who have been assigned a risk level I or II for depleted uranium exposure by the member's or veteran's branch of service shall be informed by first class mail of the persons right to a medical evaluation for exposure to depleted uranium to be conducted at the nearest US Dept. of Veterans Affairs medical facility. *The bill failed to pass the House 25-42 on 02-05.*

HB 1204 – this bill would revoke the requirement that those persons who elect to display a Veterans License Plate on their motor vehicle must have a regular license plate prior to applying for and receiving a Special Veterans License Plate. If enacted the law would only require the owner of the vehicle to have the Special Veterans License Plate in or on the vehicle. There would be a one-time charge of \$10 for the license plate when it was first obtained, however, the additional \$10 per year fee to renew the license plate annual sticker would be revoked. *This bill has passed the*

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House and received a Do Pass recommendation and was placed on the Senate Consent Calendar 02/06.

HC 1002 – this is the annual commemoration for the Governors of SD American Legion Boys State and SD American Legion Auxiliary Girls State. *The Commemoration has been enrolled.*

SB 96 – this bill would make \$100,000 of the full and true value of the total amount of a dwelling or portion thereof (that is owned and occupied for the full calendar year in which a tax is levied), exempt from property taxation for a veteran who is rated as permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability. *The bill has passed the Senate and is currently awaiting hearings in the House Taxation Committee.*

SB 179 – this bill would have increased the Veterans Bonus for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom to maximums of \$360 for non-combat and \$750 for combat service. *The bill was deferred to the 41st Legislative Day by the Senate Appropriations Committee – thereby killing the bill.*

SB 185 – this bill would authorize the appropriation of \$1,000,000 to be used to fund tax refunds for the low income elderly and disabled persons for property tax and sales tax refunds. *This bill passed the Senate 34-0 on 02/05.*

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

The 2007 South Dakota American Legion Legislative Reception is scheduled for 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 13, at the Pierre American Legion Post Home.

The South Dakota State Veterans Commission and Veterans Council will also be conducting their quarterly meeting at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre on Tuesday-Wednesday, February 13-14. The members of the Commission and Council have been invited to attend this reception as well.

Members of The American Legion Family from across South Dakota are encouraged to attend the reception. We would ask you to arrive in Pierre earlier in the day and visit the Capitol, make contact with your legislators from your district and personally invite them to join us at The Pierre Post American Legion Cabin for the reception that evening.

MIDWINTER CONFERENCE JOINT BANQUET

Time is running out to obtain your tickets to the Joint Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL Banquet at the 2007 South Dakota American Legion Mid-Winter Conference. The deadline for obtaining your tickets is February 21.

Tickets are available by advanced sales only. There will be no tickets available at the door the evening of the event. This helps to ensure that adequate meals are prepared and helps ensure that the local host Post has a definite head count for the event.

Tickets are still available from Huron American Legion Post 7, PO Box 1255, Huron, SD 57350. The cost is \$22.00 per person. For additional information, please contact Huron Post Commander Keith Schrader at 605-352-4893.

David Rehbein of the Department of Iowa will be the keynote speaker for the banquet. Rehbein is a candidate for National Commander of The American Legion for 2008-2009.

2007 EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR

The American Legion annually honors The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year at its National Convention. The winner of the competition receives a \$10,000 scholarship and the three runners-up are each awarded a \$2,500 scholarship.

Forms for nominating Boys Scouts for The American Legion 2007 Eagle Scout of the Year award are now available from State Headquarters.

State Headquarters must receive nominations no later than March 1, 2007. A panel will then select the Department Eagle Scout of the Year and that nomination will be submitted to National Headquarters in Indianapolis, IN. The National 2007 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year will be announced during the 2007 Spring Meetings of The American Legion in Indianapolis in May of 2007.

Nomination forms can also be downloaded from the Internet on The American Legion Webpage at www.legion.org. From the main page, select Programs and Events, and then select Scouting. From the resulting page

you will be able to download the 2007 nominating form.

THANK YOU FROM FAMILY OF PDC ERNIE VIET

The Viet family would like to thank the South Dakota American Legion staff and members for their thoughts, prayers, visits, gifts and flowers during Ernie's 9 week stay at the VA Hospital.

It was an honor for Ernie to be a member of the Legion for 57 years. He thoroughly enjoyed being able to serve the Legion in various leadership rolls. Ernie took great pleasure in meeting and working with Legion members across the state.

He was especially honored to have National Commander Paul Morin and National Chaplain Stan Gruneich visit the Sunday before he passed.

Thanks again.

Bonnie Viet, Doug & Pat Viet, Darrell & Nancy Viet, Ken & Dianne Struck, and Darwin & Carol Viet

ALTERNATE NEC PRICE RECOVERING FROM SURGERY

Alternate NEC Larry Price of Redfield is recovering at home from major surgery. Price underwent major surgery on Wednesday, February 28, at St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen.

Cards, letters, and get well wishes may be sent to him at, 202 E. 2nd Ave., Redfield, SD 57469.

HATS IN THE RING

Adolph Schumacher American Legion Post 276 of Long Lake has endorsed Charlie Fischer of Long Lake for the office of State Vice Commander for the Area comprised of Districts 3, 4 and 14.

VETERANS FORUM SCHEDULE

Department Service Officer Warren Aas will be back on the road with two additional Veterans Benefit Outreach Forums during the month of February. Forums are scheduled as follows:

Monday, Feb 12 – District 4 in Milbank at the Community Visitors Center

Tuesday, Feb 13 – District 3 in Estelline at the American Legion Post Home

These benefit forums are packed with valuable information for veterans and their survivors. The forums start at 7:00 p.m. and last approximately two hours. Make sure you attend when a forum is hosted in your area.

COMMANDER BAATRUP SPECIAL PROJECT STATE VETERANS HOME BARBER SHOP

During a visit to the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs not too long ago, Department Commander Baatrup noticed the poor condition of the barber shop that serves the needs of the residents at the home. After some discussions with the barber and with State Veterans Home Superintendent Larry Wilcox, Commander Baatrup decided that it would be a great project for The American Legion Department of South Dakota to undertake financing the rehabilitation of the barber shop.

The State Home is already working on the project. The current barber shop will be closed and removed and the new barber shop will be relocated to the third floor of the building and will re-open with all new fixtures and equipment – to include a striped barber pole at the door. This is a great opportunity for The American Legion of South Dakota to show our generosity and our commitment to the lives of our veterans.

Posts, Units, Squadrons or individual members of The American Legion Family are encouraged to make generous donations to this most important project. Donations may be sent to State Headquarters, PO Box 67, Watertown, SD 57201. Please indicate that the donation is for the State Veterans Home Barbershop Project on your check.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

2007 membership stands at 23,773 or 91.35 percent of the Department's 2007 membership goal.

Commander Baatrup wishes to thank all of the Post, County, District and Department membership teams that have worked so diligently to attain this membership. "The Summit is within our reach – Keep it going!"