



# Up To Now!

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## COMMANDER GIBSON ANNOUNCES MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

Department Commander G. D. "Hoot" Gibson has announced that the 2011 MidWinter Conference will be held at Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma, Friday-Sunday, February 11-13, 2011.

Commander Gibson has announced that the format for the Mid-Winter Conference will feature individual breakout sessions.

Friday evening, February 11, will feature the traditional Joint Legion/Auxiliary/SAL Banquet at 7:00 p.m. preceded by a one-hour no-host cocktail period. The Banquet ticket coupon can be found in the October issue of *The South Dakota Legion News*. This coupon can be used to order your banquet ticket(s). Again, this year as in the past, there will be no banquet tickets sold at the door the evening of the banquet. Your ticket must be purchased in advance.

This year the keynote speaker at the Joint Banquet will be National Vice Commander Russell J. Henry of the Department of Louisiana.

On Saturday, February 12, the conference will start with the Joint Session of The American Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion from 8:30-10:30 a.m. Commencing at 10:30 a.m., The American Legion, Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion will convene into their own sessions. The American Legion will have separate rooms for the programs being hosted.

The Go-Getter Reception and Smorgasbord will be held at the Oacoma Community Center on Saturday evening commencing at 6:30 p.m. The Go-Getter's cards will be available for pick-up at the State Headquarters Registration Desk in the lobby of the Cedar Shore Resort event center starting at 12:00 noon on Friday.

On Sunday, February 13, there will be a Joint Non-Denominational Religious Service at 8:30 a.m. in the Cedar Shore Resort Convention Center. Department Chaplain Patrick Lewellen will be in charge of the arrangements for the service.

Following the closing of the Annual MidWinter Conference, the Department Finals for The South Dakota American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program "A Constitutional Speech Contest" will be held at the Cedar Shore Resort.

## 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

FALL MEETINGS CONCLUDE

The fall meetings ended the weekend of October 1-3 with meetings at District 4 in Big Stone City, District 3 in Castlewood, and District 2 in White.

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.

## VETERANS FORUMS FOR 2010-2011

Department Service Officer Warren Aas has announced the schedule for veterans forums for 2010-2011. DSO Aas gave the District Commanders the option of whether a forum would be conducted in their respective Districts. These six forums were established by the Commanders.

The start time for all the forums is 6:30 p.m. The American Legion Department of South Dakota has conducted 91 veterans' forums and well over 3,500 veterans and their family members have attended to learn more about their VA benefits.

The schedule for the veterans' forums are as follows:

**District 3:** Wednesday, November 17, American Legion Post Home, Estelline, SD.

**District 4:** Wednesday, January 4, 2011, Milbank Visitor Center, Milbank, SD.

**District 5:** Tuesday, December 7, American Legion Post Home, Redfield, SD.

**District 12:** Tuesday, October 19, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, SD.

**District 13:** Monday, October 18, American Legion Post Home, Hermosa, SD. Taco supper at 5:30 p.m. at the Post Home prior to the forum.

**District 14:** Monday, Dec. 6, Ipswich High School Cafeteria, Ipswich, SD.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Ø There are 55 Departments in The American Legion, including Departments in Mexico, Puerto Rico, France, Philippines, and District of Columbia.
- Ø Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. is known as the "Father of The American Legion" for his efforts in founding of the 1919 caucus in Paris, France.
- Ø The first Boys State in South Dakota was held in 1941. The program continued through 1942 and was stopped due to WWII. In 1946 the program was resumed and has not been stopped since.
- Ø The American Legion was the originator of the original G. I. Bill of Rights in 1944.

## 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

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many of the programs listed under Children and Youth as well as brochures for some of the programs.

### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TO MEET**

The South Dakota American Legion Legislative Committee will hold its annual meeting Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at the Pierre American Legion Post 8 Home in Pierre. The planning meeting is scheduled to start at 10:30 a.m. The current Legislative Commission is chaired by Gerald Goetzinger of Martin and members are Alt NEC Phil Anderson of Piedmont, Ron Tolrud of White, Bob Miller of Kimball and Curt Halverson of Rapid City (member of the Custer American Legion Post).

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. This meeting is open to the membership of The American Legion.

### **VETERANS TO MEET WITH GOVERNOR CANDIDATES**

The South Dakota Veterans Council has set a meeting for Saturday, October 30, 2010, at the VFW in Sioux Falls, with the candidates running for Governor. Representatives from the veterans organizations will be on hand to ask questions pertaining to legislative issues. One candidate will meet with the veterans of South Dakota at 11:00 a.m. and the other candidate will meet with the veterans at 1:00 p.m. All veterans are encouraged to attend. Because of the amount of time allocated for the meeting, questions will be limited.

### **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](http://www.sdlegion.org). Post Commanders and Adjutants please make your membership aware of this.

### **EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR**

The forms for nominating local area teachers for The American Legion Department of South Dakota 2011 Educator of the Year Program are now available from State Headquarters in Watertown or online at [www.sdlegion.org](http://www.sdlegion.org).

This program, sponsored in conjunction with the National Education Week (November 14-20), 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 2011 Educator of the Year competition. The educator selected by the Department will be recognized at a local venue.

### **DEPARTMENT VAVS COMMITTEE TO MEET**

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

The VAVS Committee is chaired by Ollie Redden of Pierre and members are Don Smith of Clear Lake, Darwin Wahlert of Sioux Falls, Darrel Yost of Leola, Kerwin "Pee Wee" Douthit of Hot Springs, Jerold Zerfoss of Wessington, and Ken Van Kekerix of Witten.

The committee will plan for the 2010 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.

### **DEADLINE APPROACHING FOR ED LOANS**

Application deadlines are November 1<sup>st</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **BOYS STATE PLANNING MEETING TO BE HELD**

State Commander G.D. "Hoot" Gibson has called for the annual planning meeting of the South Dakota American Legion Boys State Corporation members and Board of Directors, which will be held in Pierre at the National Guard Armory (East Highway 34) on Tuesday, November 16, 2010. This will be the initial planning meeting for the 2011 American Legion Boys State Session.

### **LEGION RIDERS RAISE \$360,000**

The American Legion Riders turned in \$360,000 for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, at the 92<sup>nd</sup> National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Hundreds of motorcycles completed The American Legion Legacy Run, now in its fifth year. The American Legion Riders started the run in Indianapolis and covered 1,400 miles, traveling through Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund provides college scholarships for the children of U.S. service members killed while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Since 2006, the Riders have raised more than \$1.5 million for this fund. The goal is to bring the fund to \$20 million.

### **SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION**

#### **EMPLOYER OF THE OLDER WORKER AWARD**

Employment Committee Chairman Earl Schultz has announced that the Sturgis Bus Company of Sturgis, S.D., has been selected to be the recipient of The American Legion Department of South Dakota 2010 Employer of the Older Worker Award.

The Sturgis Bus Company operates a transportation service consisting of School Buses and Charter Buses. They currently have 45 employees with 20 of the employees at 55 years of age or older. A number of the employees are veterans and are able to work part-time as well as full-time.

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**

2011 membership stands at 15,620 or 65.82% of the Department 2011 membership goal. "Just Ask".