101st State Convention in Sioux Falls to Feature Elections

The 2019 State Convention in Sioux Falls, SD, will feature elections for several department offices to include electing a new state commander on Sunday, June 9, 2019. Fred Nelson has been endorsed by Spearfish Post #164 for the office of Department Commander. He is currently running unopposed. Also running unopposed is Kevin Morello, Post #311, for the office of Department Vice Commander representing Districts 1 & 2.

Harry Boner has been endorsed by Castlewood Post #250, he is vying for Department Vice Commander representing Districts 3-8.

Verle Whipple of Gary Post #109 is seeking re-election as Department Sergeant-At-Arms. Every vote counts! Be sure to pay for your delegates and be present to vote.

PDC Jim Huls

Jim is from Post #140, Salem, SD and seeking re-election as National Executive Committee

Every vote counts! Be sure to pay for your delegates and be present to vote.

2019 Boys State

To every Legionnaire, thank you for your support in making Boys State 2018 a great success. Last year we had 260 Boys attend the event. Those numbers were down from years past and we are hoping with your support we can get as many boys to this year’s event as possible. Boys State 2019 is scheduled for May 27th to 31st, 2019 on the Campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD.

American Legion Boys State of South Dakota has a two-fold purpose. First, to better help youth understand and appreciate the American system of government and way of life including the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Second, to help to better prepare boys for leadership roles that are critical to our society.

2020 Boys State is scheduled for March 25th to 29th, 2020 at DoD. For more information about Boys State please contact the Boys State Director.

VA asks Legion members to help ‘break the code’ of veteran suicides

VA Acting Deputy Secretary Jim Byrne
Washington, DC, Feb. 26, 2019 - Fourteen of the 20 to 22 veterans who commit suicide every day are not on VA’s radar screen, estimated Jim Byrne, the department’s Acting Deputy Secretary. “The number of veterans taking their lives every day is completely unacceptable,” Byrne told American Legion Family members Feb. 26 during the Commander’s Call at the annual Washington Conference. “It is the Number 1 clinical priority for the Department of Veterans Affairs. There are some good things going on but this is not one of them. It is an area where we are concentrating a lot of our effort and time but we have not broken that code.”

Since 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has handled 3.5 million calls, 400,000 online chats and nearly 100,000 texts. (To access the crisis line, call 800-273-8255 and press 1 or www.veteranscrisissline.net. Or text 838255.) “Through the crisis line they have dispatched emergency services nearly 100,000 times,” Byrne said. “Those are some pretty shocking numbers. The problem is that we are reaching only six of those veterans.” Byrne asks for help from the American Legion Family, supporters and communities. “We’re asking for your help to not only reach out to veterans but to connect with their families and to let them know that we can help them by providing treatment,” he said. “But if we don’t know who they are, we don’t have a chance to do that. That’s where you can be tremendously helpful.”

During his 25-minute address, Byrne detailed areas where he says VA is showing improvement. “The state of the VA is good but more importantly it is getting better,” he said. “We are in the midst of the greatest transformation of the VA since Gen. Omar Bradley was at the helm.” He noted several independent surveys that lauded VA health care as good or better than any care that American people get in any part of the country,” the December report concluded. Among the goals, Byrne said, is a VA “that veterans choose to come to.” Still, he outlined several key priorities of the department. The first, Byrne said, is customer service. “It’s tremendously important; providing care, services and benefits for our veterans in a fashion worthy of their service.” He told the audience that VA created a Veterans Experience Office that scores several key areas including “effectiveness of service, ease of access, emotional experience and overall satisfaction. I am pleased to report that all of those numbers are climbing in the right direction.”

Next up is the Mission Act. Byrne described it as “the most transformational piece of legislation in the VA.” Simply put, it is getting veterans “the care they need, when and where they need it. It combines seven community care programs into one and into a more efficient manner.” Byrne credited the Mission Act for the success of Telehealth, which allows patients and doctors in different states to communicate directly. Telehealth had more than 1 million such visits in the past fiscal year, an increase of 19 percent, Byrne said. “He also discussed the collaboration between VA and the Department of Defense (DoD). “We want to make sure that our veterans are transitioning well.”

As an example, Byrne cited the $16 billion project on electronic lab results, prescriptions, MRIs and other details. “We’re taking the veterans’ footprint from the time they step on the yellow footprint to the end of their lives. It’s a seamless record.”

Among the differences, he noted, is that the electronic record shows lab results, prescriptions, MRIs and other details.

Continued to page 2
“Leave No Veteran Behind”

Denny Brenden
State Commander

Fellow Legionnaires

As I write this article, it is less than three months until our State Convention. The year has gone by fast and I’ve truly enjoyed being your State Commander, and thank you all very much for having that honor. I have represented The American Legion to the best of my abilities.

In a short time, Spring District meetings will begin. Every year for the past twelve years I’ve looked forward to seeing many friends and comrades at the fall and spring meetings. Many Legislators that don’t normally attend conventions or midwinters will attend these meetings. It gives me a chance to visit with Legislators all across the state. I hope these meetings are well attended.

This year being our centennial, I hope all Posts are planning some event in their local communities. Parades, meetings or any other event that brings the public and media to let them know “we who are and what we do” and to honor the 100 years the American Legion has been around. If you are unaware of the history of the American Legion, please contact State Headquarters or myself for assistance. Be ready to talk on how we were started and the pillars on which the American Legion was built 100 years ago.

Please have a representative present at this years State Convention in Sioux Falls. Presentations will be made to all Posts whether your Post is 100 years old or not. This will be a very special event. If your Post has a color guard, have them enter the color guard contest on Friday morning of the convention. We have excellent leaders running for offices in The American Legion. Come to the convention and support their elections. This year’s State Convention should be a great time for all Posts to enjoy.

Our centennial committee has worked hard in coming up with different ways we can best celebrate our centennial. The centennial committee approved and built a beautiful float that really exemplifies The American Legion. Get the float in your community for the event you’ve scheduled.

Every article I’ve written in the Legion News, I’ve talked on membership. This year our leadership have been active in enrolling new members. Many have accomplished the goal I asked them to reach. Some have gone way beyond my expectations and a few have yet to get started. My feeling is that leadership shouldn’t talk membership to Posts unless they are actively working on membership themselves. Many Posts have done a great job and reached their goal plus one, other Posts are so close but are doing their best to find new members and other Posts are holding back and keeping their new members for next year. There could be some serious problems for a Post if they received a their goal plus one, other Posts are so close but are doing their best to find new members and other Posts are holding back and keeping their new members for next year. There could be some serious problems for a Post if they received a goal that is not reached.

Many have accomplished the goal I asked them to reach. Some have gone way beyond my expectations and a few have yet to get started. My feeling is that leadership shouldn’t talk membership to Posts unless they are actively working on membership themselves. Many Posts have done a great job and reached their goal plus one, other Posts are so close but are doing their best to find new members and other Posts are holding back and keeping their new members for next year. There could be some serious problems for a Post if they received a goal that is not reached. However, per diem is not authorized to attend the training if they wish, unless they have the training if they wish, unless they have a need for that training.

The department will serve as the facilitators for the seminar.

Upon completion of the seminar, a tour of the South Dakota American Legion Headquarters is offered to all that wish to see their state headquarters. District Vice Commanders are welcomed and encouraged to attend the training if they wish, however per diem is not authorized.

Facilitators for the District Commander Seminar will be State Adjutant Travise Flisrand, National Executive Committeeman Jim Huls, Alternate National Executive Committeeman Tony Hanson, Past Department Commander Hugh Holmes, Membership Chair Gene Ophook, Finance Officer Gary Wolkow, Department Service Officer Courtney VanZanten and Assistant State Adjutant Dave Manning.

The annual new District Commander’s Seminar has been scheduled for April 27-28, 2019, at the Post 17 in Watertown, SD.

The seminar is conducted annually to assist new District Commanders on the rules, responsibilities, budgets, public relations, communications, veterans relocation, youth trooper academy, membership resolutions, legislative process, and more. It also provides an excellent opportunity to network with fellow District Commanders, as time is spent sharing best practices and brainstorming answers to common challenges.

The department leadership will serve as the facilitators for the seminar.

The numbers below are the highest recorded number over the past 4 years in reporting, with typically 100 out of 240 Posts reporting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Aid</td>
<td>$15,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money spent on C&amp;Y</td>
<td>$15,818</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money spent for Boys State</td>
<td>$60,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money spent for Baseball</td>
<td>$157,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Money spent</td>
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<td>Total Volunteer Hours</td>
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The Department Adjutant Thoughts

Travise Flisrand
State Adjutant

At no point in time, has any American Legion member ever said “I would love to do some paperwork!” with any amount of enthusiasm. I know personally, that has never come out of my mouth, that is, until it is time to write awards for members and I am thankful that I have information to back up the stories of what we do. The “Post Adjutants” job is often a thankless job that few members want to take on, but they are often the ones who ensure that those members of the Post who are active, get the recognition they deserve for the countless hours they put into this organization and make it what it is today.

It is that time of year when the leadership of the Post gets to sit down and count everything that they do in their communities and complete the Consolidated Post Report (CPR). Thankfully, with the computer era it has gotten easier to complete and update forms through MyLegion (for those who actually use it). I have seen some Posts do updates on the MyLegion version of the CPR from January through the June 1st deadline so it isn’t as intimidating to complete.

For those who feel that local level Post involvement doesn’t make a significant impact on the whole of our Department, I want to give you highlights from our Department’s CPR. These numbers are a culmination of all the Posts who actually submit their CPR reports.

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The point of bringing up this statistical data is so those who are recruiting can tell future Legion members what we do in South Dakota and the impact we have as a whole. This also gives the Post Public Relations officer information to share in their local newspapers. By sharing this information, we can show to our communities what we have achieved over the past year.

State Commander Denny Brenden needs your help to capture this information and record it on your CPR reports. No matter how small your Post is, what you do in your Post is worth reporting on the CPR. With this information we will have proof to show our communities and our State, just how important The American Legion, Department of South Dakota, is in our State. This gives the “Why you should belong?” answer to those future Legionnaires.

Travise Flisrand
State Adjutant

Suicides

Continued from page 1

“It’s so that the providers for our veterans have a holistic picture of the veteran for their wellness. There’s also a safety component: to prevent over-prescriptions or double prescribing things that could be harmful to veterans.”

Listed below are good resources for Vets and families
The Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255
Internet: VeteranCrisisLine.net
Text: 838255

Congressional Contact Information


Secretary of Veterans Affairs Greg Whitlock

spoke at the Mid-Winter Conference to council and committee members on several issues. He spoke of the urgency of attending to the needs of the Michael Fitzmaurice Veterans Home. He commented on the staffing and high quality of care. He also discussed economic issues that the home is facing as it looks towards the future.
DEPARTMENT OFFICERS
State Commander — Denny Brenden, Watertown
State Vice Commanders — Ed Thompson Dist 1.2, Ed Stringer Dist 3-8
National Executive Committeeman — Jim Huls, Madison
Alternate National Executive Committeeman — Terry Hanson, Arlington
State Adjutant — Travise Flistrand, Chamberlain
State Assistant Adjutant — Dave Manning, Watertown
State Americanism Officer — Larry Madsen, Gettysburg
State Membership Chairman — Gene Opherk, Rapid City
State Service Officer — Courtney VanZanten, Chester
State Chaplain — Larry Klumb, Ethan
State Finance Officer — Gary Wolkow, De Smet
State Historian — Fred Lee, Brandon
State Judge Advocate — Gary Schumacher, De Smet
State Sergeant-At-Arms — Verle Whipple, Clear Lake
State Children and Youth Chairman — Miranda Krumm, Chester

To add a memorial on https://www.legion.org/memorials, you need the fol-
lowing:
A photo or photos (required), easily taken with a smart phone
Location of the memorial, mapped if possible
Purpose of the memorial, such as who it honors and why, in a sentence or two
Date of the memorial’s installation and who originally installed it
A brief assessment of its condition today
We still only have 3 memorials listed in South Dakota—Can we do better?

DEPARTMENT CONSTITUTION AND
BYLAWS RESOLUTIONS
Deadline April 25, 2019

The deadline for submission of resolutions calling for the amendment of the Constitu-
tion and Bylaws of The American Legion Department of South Dakota is rapidly
approaching.
Proposals for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be received in
State Headquarters at least (6) six weeks prior to the annual state conven-
tion. This requirement is to allow sufficient time for the resolutions to be
reviewed by the Department Internal Affairs Commission and to allow sufficient
time for the Department Adjutant to forward copies of all recommendations for
amendment, along with the recommendation of the Department Internal Af-
fairs Commission to all posts.
The deadline to submit a resolution to amend the Department Constitution and
Bylaws to State Headquarters is April 25, 2019.

April is Post Election Time

The Constitution of the American Legion states, “A Commander, Vice Com-
mander, and Executive Committee of each Post shall be elected by its member-
ship at the first regular meeting of the Post in April and installed prior to the
Department Convention. All other officers of the Post may be elected or ap-
pointed as may be provided by its constitution and bylaws, except that in a
Post with a membership of more than 100 members, all officers except the
adjutant shall be elected."

After the election, the current post adjutant is required to certify the new
officers to State Headquarters.

2019 Post Honor Ribbon’s

Alcester 82.14%
Allen 94.12
Belvidere 88.24%
Bison 89.36%
Box Elder 100%
Buffalo 93.75%
Canistota 133.33%
Chamberlain 107.06%
Chester 111.27%
Columbia 97.44%
Custer 105.88%
Draper 88.24%
Eagle Butte 208.33%
Emery 89.47%
Ethan 111.76%
Fairfax 88.24%
Falls 53.33%
Greenwood 115%
Grenville 91.67%
Hayti 91.49%
Herrell 88.19%
Highmore 90.74%
Isabel 93.33
Kyle 100%
Lead 105.21%
Lily 93.33%
Little Eagle 103.33%
Mcintosh 84.38%
Midland 103.45%
Montrose 100%
New Effington 93.83%
North Sioux City 104.08%
Northville 88.24%
Olkeech 80%
Oldham 80%
Parmelee 106.67%
Philip 97.08%
Pine Ridge 46.67%
Plankinton 100%
Porcupine 53.33%
Redfield 92.31%
Salem 101.41%
Timber Lake 106.25%
Vermillion 111.54%
Wakonda 90.91%
Wanblee 100%
Warner 90.38%
Wolsey 88.37%
Worthing 80.77%

Mark Your Calendar

April 2019
1: American Legion CHILDREN & YOUTH MONTH
1: Deadline for SD American Legion Boys State Registration
3: BH National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial
8-10: National Spring Mtg, Indianapolis, IN
11: District CDRs In-Service, (Watertown)
18: Armed Forces Day
19: Good Friday
21: EASTER SUNDAY
28: Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre
May 2019
6-9: American Legion National Spring Meeting
7-9: SDDVA Mini Conferences (Rapid City, Pierre, and Sioux Falls), Topics of the training include: National Guard/VA Benefits, Appeals Modernization Act, Nuts and Bolts of what is in the 38 CFR, How to use the 38 CFR, and Hot Topics.
9-12: V-E Day (1945)
9-16: National Spring Mtg, Indianapolis, IN
12: Mother’s Day
12-18: National Law Enforcement Week
18: Armed Forces Day
27: Memorial Day
27-31: Boys State, Aberdeen
June 2019
6-9: State Convention, Sioux Falls
24-28: Youth Trooper Academy, Pierre

EDITORIAL POLICY DISCLAIMER
The South Dakota Legion News is published six times a year to serve its members and
interested parties by informing them about Department activities and other relevant
issues concerning the veterans of South Dakota. The news and opinions expressed in
this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of The American Legion De-
partment of South Dakota, its officers, members, or the Editor. The Editor has the
right to edit all articles.
2019 Midwinter Conference - Holiday Inn - Spearfish, SD

State Commander Denny Brenden from Watertown, addressed the Legionnaires during the 2019 Mid-Winter Conference at the Holiday Inn, Spearfish, SD. Commander Brenden introduced and welcomed guest speakers, presided over the agenda and presented several membership awards. Commander Brenden thanked all Legionnaires for their attendance.

Guest speaker from Whitesboro, Texas was Paul Dillard who is running for 2020-2021 National Commander. His motto is “No Veteran Left Behind”. Candidate Dillard believes and encourages Legionnaires to use the programs that are offered through the American Legion and believes in Family first, Integrity and Service above self.

The keynote speaker at the 2019 Mid-Winter Conference at the Holiday Inn in Spearfish, SD, was American Legion National Vice Commander James Sweet from the Department of Mississippi. National Vice Commander Sweet thanked the Department of South Dakota for their hospitality.

Those eligible to compete at the finals this past weekend consisted of Gunther, a senior at Aberdeen Central High School; 2nd place Morgan Roberts, a senior at Spearfish High School; 3rd place Jaslee Kerner, a junior at Gregory High School; Shaina Determan, a senior at Hanson High School; Elise Heesch, a senior at Sisseton High School and Julia Ebbinga, a junior at West Central High School. Second place received a $500 scholarship; third place received a $300 scholarship and fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh places a $100 scholarship.

Gunther was awarded a championship trophy, a $1,000 scholarship, and a plaque to be displayed in her high school’s trophy case as the first place winner of the state contest. She now has the opportunity to represent The South Dakota American Legion in the National Contest which will be held April 5-7 in Indianapolis at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. Gunther will receive an additional $1,500 scholarship for participating in the first round of competition at national and an additional $1,500 if she advances to the second round of national competition but does not make it into the final round. Scholarship awards possible in the national level competition are $18,000 for first place, $16,000 for second place, and $14,000 for third place.

Pictured left to right above: Department Commander Denny Brenden, 2019 Department Champion Keilly Gunther of Aberdeen, Erica Houser of Rapid City, Shaina Determan of Alexandria, Elise Heesch of New Effington, Julia Ebbinga of Hartford, Morgan Roberts of Spearfish, Jaslee Kerner of Gregory, and Americanism Commission Chairman Larry Madsen of Gettysburg, SD.

South Dakota American Legion 2019 Oratorical Contest

SPEARFISH—Keilly Gunther of Aberdeen emerged victorious as the top orator in the final round of competition of The South Dakota American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest” in Spearfish this past weekend. Keilly is the daughter of Kris and David Gunther of Aberdeen. First, contestants were required to deliver a prepared oration of 8-10 minutes on the U.S. Constitution. Second, a constitutional topic was assigned to the contestants and a 3-5 minute extemporaneous oration was required on that topic. They were allowed five minutes of preparation time.

Each of the five contestants in the finals had previously won competition at the local and district levels of competition.
In planning for the State Convention in June, we are requesting that all Posts and Legionnaires who have pictures of the South Dakota American Legion in action or in portraits to scan and e-mail good quality photos to the DSO Courtney Van Zanten. If you know who is in the photos, it would be GREATLY appreciated if you identify who they are in the pictures and when the pictures were taken. We want the Legionnaires of all levels within the Post/County/District/State membership, pictures taken between April 2019 and May 2019 are all accepted! Pictures can be serious or entertaining. Please send them to dso@sdlegion.org. Note: If you send pictures by email please try to send them in jpeg format.

April is Children and Youth Month
Understanding Temporary Financial Assistance

“The American Legion strives to improve the lives of veteran’s young people through the forth Pillar: Children and Youth. Today in a ever changing world, our veteran families are faced with financial hardships from time to time that leave them with no outlets left to go to for assistance. Luckily, through the Temporary Financial Assistance, (TFA), program, the organization can help meet the basic needs of minor children of veterans, when all else has failed. Our organization is the light for so many veteran families. Here’s a short story of a South Dakota veteran our TFA program helped this pass year from the Watertown post:

With all other resources depleted, he had heard of the TFA program through the American Legion from the local VSO. He made his way through the steps of filling out the form, gathering the documentation and sitting through the investigation/answering questions. This veteran had injured his back and was on medical leave with a cut on his income until his recovery. To top his tight budget off, shortly after his accident, his furnace had a small electrical fire, leaving it unrepairable. Slowly his rent began to get behind and he was honest and kept his landlord up-to-date of his situation, however, his landlord told him in the near future he would have to enforce the contract and take back the property leaving the veteran and his daughter nowhere to go. Winter was approaching as and heat was going to become a concern in the upcoming weeks. It was time for the American Legion TFA at the state and national level to step in and help! We caught up his rent payments and we donated towards a new furnace for his home. This veteran family kept their home and stayed warm this winter and we were able to take that burden away from a veteran that was struggling. An amazing feeling!

One of the main objectives of Children and Youth is to strengthen the family unit and I believe you have to start that by keeping the children in their homes, with all the basic amenities of food, warmth, and light to keep them safe.”

Miranda Krumm, Department Children and Youth Chairman
A Thousand Words

Pictures from our past highlighting the rich heritage of the South Dakota Legion

Photo taken at the 1949 National Convention in the city Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Notice where our great state is sitting?

Greetings Legionnaires!

Getting settled back into the swing of things following the Washington, D.C. Department Service Officer training. What an incredible opportunity it was to learn from the best, network with other DSOs and come home energized with new information and new ideas.

As many of you may have heard, the Appeals Modernization Act has been enacted in the VA’s Disability and Compensation world. The AMA has the potential to effectively reduce the number of cases backlogged from the previous system—here’s a quick overview.

The AMA consists of three lanes—one to match up with each of the following statements:

Supplemental: “We help Veterans who didn’t understand what they needed to prove to submit the evidence needed to win.” Essentially, supplemental appeals will allow you to submit more evidence to help round out your claim within one year from the initial denial of your claim. Need another medical opinion, civilian medical records or additional statements to prove your case? This is your lane.

Higher Level Review: “We point out simple errors to more experienced staff at the RO.” Mistakes happen, even in (or especially in) the VA world. Cases can be thousands of pages thick, and the Regional Office Claims Examiner often only gets a matter of hours with each case. That said, evidence that is already there can be overlooked. Higher Level Review puts cases with all the evidence already gathered into the hands of a more experienced case examiner, who will do a more stringent review and make a decision.

Appeal: “We help Veterans take medically and legally complex cases to the Board.” If you’ve submitted all possible evidence, and a higher review still doesn’t come back in your favor, it is still possible to file a Notice of Disagreement and present your case to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). Some major bonus to the AMA is the ability to treat an unfavorable decision as a learning opportunity—as long as you, the veteran, file to seek further review within one year from the initial denial of your claim. Additionally, you can use separate lanes for separate issues—if your initial claim had three things denied, it’s possible to use a different AMA lane for each.

The current wait for a decision from a BVA case is about seven years. It is hoped, by opening up the flexibility of the first two lanes, that many cases can be solved at lower level appeal processes, and we can drastically reduce both the number of cases presented to the BVA and the amount of time it takes to get a final decision.

If you have any questions about your VA disability claim, reach out to your local County Veterans Service Officer, or me!

Always here to help,
Courtney VanZanten
### 2019 Legislative Results

#### State Capitol in Pierre

During the 2019 Legislative Session, the Department of South Dakota followed 14 bills and 2 concurrent resolution: HB 1007, HB 1043, HB 1044, HB 1000, HB 1081, HB 1111, HB 1171, HB 1201, HB 1203, HB 1257, HB 1260, HB 1263, HB 1263, SB 9, SB 58. Also tracked, was one commoration: HC 1007, honoring Calico Ducheneaux of Mobridge, for being the Girls State Governor and Seamus Duffy of Sioux Falls, for being the Boys State Governor as well as commending the South Dakota American Legion and Auxiliary for their sponsorship and coordination of the Girls State and Boys State programs. SCR 3 commending, honoring, and thanking South Dakota's numerous women veterans for their service to our country and state. HC’s 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1026, 1027, 1028. Along with SCR 11: Requesting that the President of the United States designate a single state funeral be held upon the death of the last living Medal of Honor recipient from World War II. Senate Resolution’s 6, 7.

**HB 1007:** Revise certain provisions regarding the exemptions from the twelve-month residency requirement for university students.
Signed by the Governor on February 13, 2019. H.J. 403

**HB 1043:** Require the Department of Social Services to collect and report certain information regarding the military affiliation of a parent whose child is subject to a report of abuse or neglect.
Signed by the Governor on February 14, 2019. H.J. 426

**HB 1044:** Authorize certain children who are subject to a pending military relocation to apply for enrollment in a school district.
Signed by the Governor on February 14, 2019. H.J. 426

**HB 1080:** Increase the property tax exemption allowed for certain veterans with a disability and the surviving spouses of certain veterans with a disability.
Delivered to the Governor on March 6, 2019

**HB 1081:** Authorize certain paraplegic or amputee veterans or their surviving spouses to retain a property tax exemption without having to reapply each year.
Delivered to the Governor on March 6, 2019

**HB 1111:** Provide for professional or occupational licensure for certain active duty military personnel and spouses.
Delivered to the Governor on March 11, 2019

**HB 1171:** Allow certain veterans to attend courses offered at postsecondary technical institutes without payment of tuition.
House of Representatives Conference Report H.J. 714 Amendment Cc1171a

**HB 1083:** Authorize certain paraplegic or amputee veterans or their surviving spouses to retain a property tax exemption without having to reapply each year.
Delivered to the Governor on March 6, 2019

**HB 1111:** Provide for professional or occupational licensure for certain active duty military personnel and spouses.
Delivered to the Governor on March 6, 2019

**HB 1201:** Revise provisions regarding group pheasant hunts for disabled veterans.
Delivered to the Governor on March 11, 2019

**HB 1203:** Authorize certain pork tournaments for restricted purposes.
State Affairs Deferred to the 41st legislative day, Passed, 10-3. H.J. 337

**HB 1257:** Authorize the Department of the Military to construct two storage buildings, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.
Signed by the Governor on March 1, 2019. H.J.596

**HB 1260:** Make an appropriation to continue the veteran's bonus program and to declare an emergency.
Signed by the Governor on March 1, 2019. H.J.596

**HC 1007:** Honoring Calico Ducheneaux of Mobridge, SD Girls State Governor and Seamus Duffy of Sioux Falls, SD Boys State Governor and commending the South Dakota American Legion and Auxiliary for their sponsorship and coordination of the Girls State and Boys State Legislative Results continued...

**HC 1026:** Celebrating and commemorating the commissioning of the USS South Dakota

**SB 9:** Provide for the Servicemember Firearms Protection Act. Referred to Senate Military and Veterans Affairs, Passed, 6-1. S.J. 95. Senate Do Pass Amended, Failed, 4-31. S.J.506

**SB 58:** Authorize the Bureau of Administration to conduct a study of the

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**Flaming Fountain on Capitol Lake, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.**
Joint Committee on Appropriations Deferred to the 41st legislative day, Passed, YEAS 15, NAYS 1. S.J. 445

**SCR 3:** Commending, honoring, and thanking South Dakota’s numerous women veterans for their service to our country and state.
House of Representatives Concurred in Resolution, Passed, 68-0.

**SCR 11:** Requesting that the President of the United States designate a single state funeral be held upon the death of the last living Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.
House of Representatives Concurred in Resolution, Passed 63-1.

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### Habitat for Humanity

We appreciate your interest in Habitat for Humanity’s Veterans Build. Through this initiative, you can help us provide volunteer, homeownership and employment opportunities to U.S. veterans, military service members and their families.

**Facts about veterans**

The National Low Income Housing Coalition finds that 2.5 million veterans heading households are at risk 55 years of age. Of those 2.5 million veterans, 24 percent have housing cost burdens. Unlike our older civilians, our older veterans are more likely to have a disability — 35 percent versus 28 percent — which may require home modifications, health and other supportive services as they age.

Our female veteran population is in need as well. According to a report by the National Housing Conference, nearly half of our veterans who are single mothers spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Our female veterans face significant economic and housing challenges and are particularly vulnerable to housing cost burdens compared with our overall veteran population.

Likewise, our most recent veterans who served following 9/11 have returned to a slow-growing economy and rising housing costs. These economic factors have made the transition from military service to civilian life difficult for many of our veterans.

In addition, nearly 4 million of our veterans pay at least 30 percent of their income toward rent or mortgage, while more than 1.5 million pay at least 50 percent. As you can imagine, using half of your income to pay your rent or mortgage is an enormous strain on any budget.

- **Five areas we focus on:**
  - **Building**
  - **Employment**
  - **Education**
  - **Volunteer engagement**

**Building**

Safe, decent, affordable housing is the centerpiece of Veterans Build. In many communities, we are expanding programs to maintain and preserve homes and make them more energy-efficient and affordable. In partnership with The Home Depot Foundation, Habitat developed the Repair Corps program to offer critical home repair to veteran homeowners.

**Employment**

We value skill sets gained from your military service. We recruit veterans to work at Habitat as employees, board members, extended volunteers, AmeriCorps members, interns and fellows. You can find a position at Habitat for Humanity International or find a Habitat office near you for employment opportunities in your community.

**Volunteer engagement**

We provide volunteer experiences that bring together veterans, military families and their neighbors. These experiences help bridge the gap and ease the transition to civilian life with fulfilling community engagement.

**Education**

We offer financial education and financial literacy programs. Our programs support successful homeownership among veteran and military homeowners. We also train Habitat employees and community volunteers throughout the U.S. to better understand the military culture. This increases their effectiveness in interacting with veterans and military families. You can learn more about our financial education and financial literacy programs.

**Honor**

Throughout the year, we host special events that pay tribute to veterans, raise awareness and mobilize volunteers. We invite you to join one of our build events.

For additional information, please contact us at VeteransBuild@habitat.org.

### American Legion Centennial Commemorative Coins

The American Legion Centennial Commemorative coins produced by the US Mint is now on sale. Prices vary based on the quality of the coin and the price of gold and silver during the time of the sale.

The half dollar sells for around $28, the silver dollar for around $55 and the gold coin is around $430. A “$5” quality set which may require home modifications, health and other supportive services is the age.

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### WANTED: Auction Items for State Convention

For the past several years, a fun auction has been held during our annual state convention to raise money for the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. We ask that you please consider donating your item(s) for this worthwhile cause. You may drop them off at State Headquarters in Watertown or just bring them to the state convention in Sioux Falls in June 2019.

State Commander Denny Brenden will be the Auctioneer for this fun auction event. Several thousand dollars have been raised over the past year and those proceeds are donated to the South Dakota American Legion Foundation. The auction is scheduled for the evening of June 7, 2019.

**SD Veterans Affairs Jobs**

http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/

publicaffairs/Job%20Listings.aspx
As I sit this morning in a little coffee shop in Gregory, SD and after watching the early morning news. I sometimes wonder about this great land. What is in our future, not only as Veterans, but also as Americans? As a free people living in a free nation where we can work, have families, practice our own Christianity, vote, own firearms without fear of retribution by an overpowering entity, whether individual or governmental. I think about our history, the great men and women who allowed us to proceed to this point. Did they have the same thoughts and desires for America as we do now? I think their desire for America to prosper was a lot stronger than it is today. Deep down inside have we lost that? Do we just go day to day and not think of the sacrifice it takes to live in a world like ours? It is quiet and peaceful here, this morning. A small community waking up to everyday life. People stopping for their morning coffee, maybe a donut or scone. Conversation is, of course about the weather, The President, what is happening at school, normal small-town talk. Will we lose this someday, this closeness, this relaxed yet necessary morning ritual that we all go through, in our own small town, or own coffee shop that we frequent every day? I sure hope not. This is just like your community, you keep it strong and thriving with your support through your membership in the American Legion. Supporting small and large communities, families, students, veterans. I think now more than ever it is a time to come together. To push harder, to expect a little more from each other, and ourselves. To thank the good Lord above for all our blessings and ask for his help to give us strength and the courage to move forward. It is not the time to slow down or stop, we must never do that!!

We all gave something to get where we are now, in America, in the American Legion and in our communities. I am asking that you stay strong for them.

I know you will not let me down, you never have!!

God bless you and yours!

Gene O
Department Membership Chairman

Membership
“20,000 plus One!”

Gene Opbroek
State Membership Chairman

March 18, 2019 — In State Headquarters
Area Vice/District Commanders Membership Standings

State Vice Commanders 2019 2019 % of POS
GOAL MEMBERSHIP GOAL
AREA 1-2 Ed Thompson 3,555 3,268 92.45% 1
AREA 3-8 Ed Stringer 16,216 14,005 86.37% 2

District CDRs
Dist 1 David Boozoo 1,531 1,471 96.08% 1
Dist 2 Gene Iron Shell 2,004 1,797 89.67% 2
Dist 3 Leroy Madsen 1,881 1,655 89.79% 3
Dist 4 Perry Schmidt 2,058 1,752 85.13% 7
Dist 5 Matt Lagerstrom 3,304 2,808 84.99% 8
Dist 6 Doug Feltman 2,682 2,326 86.73% 5
Dist 7 Roger Klos 4,100 3,596 87.71% 4
Dist 8 Greg Geiman 2,191 1,868 85.26% 6
Post 500 250 171

State Totals 20,001 17,444 87.22%