

DISTRICT FALL CONFERENCE 2020 DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS REPORT

Membership Renewals

- Post officers and membership teams are encouraged to work on renewals between now and the Past District Commanders' (PDC) Rally on November 21.
- The goal is to have 100% of your current members renewed by the PDC Rally.

National Vice Commander's Membership Tour and Past District Commanders' (PDC) Rally

- The National Vice Commander's Tour will occur the week of November 16-21, culminating with the PDC Rally on November 21. There will be several stops each day along the route where membership can be turned in. A list of the stops will be available on the Department website and sent to District Commanders when finalized.
- District Commanders, along with your district leadership team, are challenged with setting district objectives for collecting membership to be turned in during the tour or at the PDC Rally, along with a plan to achieve those objectives.
- The districts are strongly encouraged to use Department Vice Commanders and Past District Commanders as part of that plan.

Blood Drives

- The American Legion's Blood Donation program was established around 1942.
- A resolution was passed at the Department Convention in 2019 to enter a partnership with LifeServe Blood Center to expand the Legion's blood donation program in the state of Iowa.
- LifeServe provides blood products to over 120 hospitals and medical centers in Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, including the Des Moines VA.
- American Legion Week – American Legion Day, September 16, recognizes the date we received our Congressional charter in 1919. The week of September 16, Legion Family Members are encouraged to visit one of LiveServe's donation centers in Des Moines, Urbandale, Marshalltown, Mason City, Fort Dodge, Ames, or Sioux City. In eastern Iowa, contact Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center to schedule your donation.
- Schedule a blood drive in your community – Contact LifeServe or Mississippi Valley to set up a blood drive in your community anytime throughout the year.
- American Legion Birthday Week – The American Legion Birthday, March 15-17, commemorates the Paris Caucus of 1919, at which our organization was formed. Visit a blood donation center in honor of The American Legion.
- Department Convention and Mid-Winter Conference – Blood drives will be conducted at each of our annual meetings this year.

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year

- Application packets must be completed and forwarded to Department of Iowa, ATTN: National Affairs Commission, by **November 30**.
- Guidelines and applications are available on the Department website, or by request from Department Headquarters: www.ialegion.org/lawenforcement or www.ialegion.org/firefighter.

Legislative Day – January 20, 2021

- Details will be in the winter issue of the Iowa Legionnaire and on the Department website.

National Commander's Honor Ribbon

- American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford will award his 100 percent American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by May 30, 2021.
- For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and any combination of an Auxiliary unit, Sons squadron or Legion Riders chapter. Each branch must achieve 100 percent membership to qualify for the award.
- National Commander's 100 percent American Legion Family Ribbon form: https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/Oxford_Honor_Ribbon_Form.pdf

National Commander's Incentive Pin

- American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford will award his national commander "A Foundation for the Future" membership excellence pin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.
- A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2021 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2020 membership year.
- Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.
- Only one pin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.
- Download the form "A Foundation for the Future": www.legion.org/commander/pin

Post Excellence Awards

- To qualify for the Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90 percent renewal rate and community activity.
- The purposes of this award are membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to the youth of the community, and increased visibility of the American Legion Family through service projects. A post achieving this qualification will have had numerous post members involved in planning and achieving these goals. Many posts are most likely already active in these areas and will qualify without extra effort. Others, however, will need to increase their efforts in one or more areas to qualify for the award.
- The standard to be achieved in each area is as follows:
 - **Membership:** Post must attain at least 103 percent of their membership goal. At least one post officer attends district meetings.
 - **Consolidated Post Report:** CPRs must be submitted by July 1. The American Legion's federal charter requires the submission of an annual report to Congress on activities for the year. MyLegion.org has made it simple for a post to submit its CPR in a timely manner.
 - **90% Renewal Rate:** The post must renew at least 90 percent of their members that were on the 2020 roster.
 - **Community Activity:** The post must conduct an event that connects the local community with The American Legion post. The objective is to open your doors, welcome the community in, and educate them on what The American Legion is all about and how the post is an asset to the community. Posts do not need to have a physical building to accomplish this. This activity can be held in a park, a community center, or anywhere the post can welcome and interact with the local community.
- The District Commander responsible for the post will certify a post as having achieved the four specified criteria. The district commander will submit a list of posts meeting the criteria to department headquarters. That list should include the post name, phone number, address and commander's name. If possible, accompany the last two criteria with copies of press releases submitted to the local media about the projects to show that the projects were not only accomplished but that an attempt was made to

enhance the image of The American Legion through local media. The copy submitted should include a date and time stamp showing receipt by the media outlet.

Veterans Employment and Education Awards

- The deadline for submittals to the Department Veterans Benefit Committee is **October 15**. It is important that the Post nominations are submitted by this time to ensure that they are considered for the Department and National Awards.
- All entries must be accompanied by an official nomination form. The Department award selections will be entered in the national competition.
- Categories awarded are as follows:
 - Employer of Veterans Award
 - Small Business (50 or fewer employees)
 - Mid-Sized Business (51 to 200 employees)
 - Large Business (201 or more employees)
 - Employment Service Award (DVOP)
 - Employment Service Award (LVER)
 - Employment Service Award (Local Office)
 - Employer of Older Workers Award
 - Enhance the Lives of Disabled Person Award
 - Micheal Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

Mid-Winter Conference: February 12 – February 14, 2021, Des Moines

- Airport Holiday Inn, 6111 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321
 - Reservations – call 515-287-2400 and ask for American Legion rate.
- Agenda will appear in winter issue of Iowa Legionnaire.

Department Convention: July 9 – 11, 2021, Des Moines

- Airport Holiday Inn, 6111 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321
 - Reservations – call 515-287-2400 and ask for American Legion rate.
- Agenda will appear in spring issue of Iowa Legionnaire.

National Convention – August 27 – September 2, 2021, Phoenix, AZ

- Delegates/Alternates will be elected at District Spring Conferences.
- Registration materials will be available at District Spring Conferences.

Iowa Legionnaire

- Winter Issue - December, January, and February information. Submission deadline, November 15.

Electronic Newsletter

- The Department of Iowa has an electronic newsletter to supplement the Iowa Legionnaire and provide more timely information to our posts and members.
- The newsletter is produced twice a month, with special editions when necessary.
- Receipt is by subscription, and information on how to sign up is available on the Department website at www.ialegion.org/signup.

Tax-Exempt Status and IRS Filings

- Under the 2006 Pension Protection Act (PPA), a non-church exempt organization's failure to file IRS Form 990 for three consecutive years will result in the revocation of the organization's exempt status.
- Under the new IRS regulations, all posts are required to file an IRS Form 990 every year.
- For more information, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov.
- You may also get more information by contacting your tax professional.

5th Grade Flag Essay Contest

- Contest information will be mailed to Post Adjutants on record.
- Applications can be downloaded from: www.ialegion.org/flag-essay
- Posts will forward one winning entry to their District Children and Youth Chairman or District Commander with signed Participation Application, by **January 2, 2021**.
- District entries will be judged by the respective District Children and Youth Chairman and sent to Department Headquarters at the address at the end of this report, by **January 22, 2021**.
- Department judging will be by the Department Children and Youth Committee at Mid-Winter Conference.

Baseball

- Teams on file will be mailed a packet this Fall with information to register. Post contact information will be required to participate. We are striving to increase communication to include the posts in everything.
- 2021 Department Baseball Tournament will be scheduled at the Mid-Winter meeting on Saturday, February 13, 2021. All prospective new team managers/coaches are encouraged to attend and/or send a representative.
- Anyone 18 years or older volunteering or coaching the Department match must pass a background check and abuse training. There are no exceptions to this as it is required by law for this sport.

Educator of the Year

- One of the goals of The American Legion has always been to work in cooperation with the schools that assist veterans, their families and local communities.
- Iowa integrated the program into our Legion Family by developing a state program that recognizes those teachers. On the information table is a brochure that outlines the criteria and guidelines for The American Legion of Iowa Educator of the Year Award.
- Nomination brochures are available on the information table or online at www.ialegion.org/educator and must be received at Department by **April 1, 2021**.

Legionnaires Insurance Trust (LIT) – Free Coverage

- Members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and Sons of The American Legion can enroll for life in LegionCare, the Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit available at No-Cost to Legion Family members.
- LegionCare is a one-of-a-kind benefit which provides all adult Legion Family members with \$5,000 in Accidental Death Coverage for covered accidents that occur if you are traveling on official Legion business and \$1,000 for all other covered accidents.
- Legion Family members must activate their protection to be covered. Legion Family members may activate coverage by calling 800-235-6943 or by going online at www.theLIT.com .
- Please make sure all your fellow Legionnaires are enrolled in this free benefit.

Legionnaires Insurance Trust (LIT) – Additional Benefits and Support of The American Legion

- The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) was formed in 1966, with two primary goals: to provide Legion families with low cost insurance protection and to provide a source of revenue to participating Departments.
- The Department of Iowa joined the program in 1992. Since joining, Iowa has received a grand total of \$1,681,754 in revenue from the program. For 2019, we received \$46,451.
- Voluntary purchase products available include: ID Resolve identity theft resolution, Cancer Care, Hospital Help Plan, Long Term Care, Dental Insurance, Health Insurance, Medicare Supplement, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Emergency Assistance Plus (EA+), Travel Accident Protection, Lifeline Medical Alert Services, and Accident Protection.
- Call 800-235-6943 or visit www.theLIT.com for more information or to enroll.

myLegion.org

- myLegion.org is a free website designed to assist Post officers with everyday membership duties. The site can be accessed from any computer with an internet browser and internet access.
- Posts with access can view members who have renewed online, generate rosters, submit Consolidated Post Reports (CPR), perform membership record changes for Legion and SAL members, find potential members by utilizing lists of expired members and DMS members in their area, access publications and manuals, and process and transmit membership electronically.
- myLegion.org is scheduled to transform to a new platform, *Personify*, later this year. Details of new features are not yet available.

Junior Shooting Sports Department Contest

- The Annual Department Junior Shooting Sports Program Championship Match will be mailed to each post that officially sponsors a shooting team.
- New Team Affiliations must be completed by December 31, 2020 to be eligible for the 2021 Department Match at Camp Dodge which will be **March 20, 2021**.
- Military barracks will be available for teams and they are encouraged to arrive by 6:00 pm on Friday, March 19, 2021.
- Department Match information will be available following the October Americanism meeting.
- Anyone 18 years or older volunteering or coaching the Department match must pass a background check and abuse training. There are no exceptions to this as it is required by law for this sport.
- Registration for shooters will be made available online this year www.ialegion.org/jssp.
- National Postal Match: Information regarding the ordering of target sets and national match information will be distributed to all registered teams in Iowa as soon as it becomes available.

Scouting

- All applications are available on the Department's website: www.ialegion.org/scouting.
- Submission deadline to Department will be **March 1, 2021**, for the following:
 - 2021 Eagle Scout of the Year – Eagle Scouts are required to complete the fillable version online, print, and obtain proper signatures.
 - Adult Boy Scout of the Year – Available online or by request from Department.
 - Adult Cub Scout of the Year – Available online or by request from Department.
- Square Knot Award – for adult leaders – can be applied for at any time. Applications available at www.ialegion.org/scouting.
- A Certificate and Department Commander's endorsement letter can be sent to any Scout who achieves the rank of Eagle. The request is available online at www.ialegion.org/scouting.

Oratorical

- Information will be mailed to Post Adjutants.
- Applications are available for download: www.ialegion.org/oratorical.
- Contest information, chairman guides, and brochures to take to the schools are on the Department website, or by request from Department Headquarters. National no longer provides hard copies of the National Rules Brochures.
- **Contest Deadlines:**
 - Local Contests must be completed by **December 6, 2020**
 - County Contests must be completed by **December 20, 2020**
 - District Contests must be completed by **January 10, 2021**
 - Area Contests must be completed by **January 31, 2021**
 - Area I: District 5 scheduled to host – Details to come
 - Area II: District 4 scheduled to host – Details to come
 - Area III: District 7 scheduled to host – Details to come
- Dates and details will be updated on the Department's website: www.ialegion.org/oratorical.

- Department Finals: **Sunday, February 14, 2021**, Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines at 8:00 a.m. All contestants will be required to report to the hotel on Saturday, February 13, 2021, by 6:00 p.m.
- **NEW:** First and second place district finalists may advance to the area contest.
- Please adhere to COVID-19 guidelines for the contest. These are found on the department's website.

Boys State

- Each district has a representative on The American Legion of Iowa Boys State Board of Directors. They may or may not be the District Chairman.
- **Dates for the 2021 session are June 13-18, 2021, at Camp Dodge in Johnston.**
- Posts **NEED** to make reservations **online** through the Department's website: www.ialegion.org/boysstate, no exceptions. Contact your District Board Member, Chairman, or Department for help. Send your early bird reservation check for \$250 per delegate by December 31 to: The American Legion of Iowa, 720 Lyon St., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Reservations made on or after January 1 will default to \$300 per delegate.
- PLEASE provide a good e-mail for SOMEONE in the Post that will help distribute critical information to your delegates in a timely manner.
- A Post/District Chairman's Guide to Selection of Delegates is available online at www.ialegion.org/boysstate, or by request from Department. Please take the time to be familiar with the program before talking to your delegates so that accurate information about the program is relayed.
- The Samsung Scholarship application is available **ONLY** through this link to the national website: www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung. Delegates who wish to apply, must go to the link on our website. Boys State delegates will be required to register with a username/password to apply for the scholarship. A hard copy is no longer required.

Temporary Financial Assistance

- TFA is specifically designed to assist minor children of eligible veterans through cash grants. To maintain a stable home environment for the child or children, grants are awarded to help families meet the costs of shelter, utilities, food, and medical expenses.
- Funds for the operation of the TFA program are provided from a share of the earnings of The American Legion Endowment Fund.
- All TFA applications originate at the local or Post level. A local investigator personally visits with the family to determine the needs of the children. A completed application, with supporting documents and proof of military service, is forwarded to the Department. The Department reviews each case, makes a recommendation, and forwards the application to the National Headquarters.

Operation Comfort Warriors

- Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) is a program dedicated to meeting the needs of wounded military personnel, providing them with comfort items not usually supplied by the government. OCW ensures that patients at U.S. military hospitals and warrior transition units are given items like sweat suits, DVDs, puzzles, electronic devices, books, calling cards and more. OCW also provides larger items such as ping pong tables, entertainment centers, computers, kayaks and other recreational goods for use by wounded warriors in common areas.
- More than 40,000 American troops have been injured since the War on Terrorism started; countless others have been hospitalized. There's always an injured service member in need of comfort.
- Not a single penny of donated money is spent on administrative costs or marketing. Those expenses are paid from the national headquarters budget, so all money you donate to Operation Comfort Warriors goes to help the troops.
- Donating to Operation Comfort Warriors has never been easier. You can use your credit card by donating online or you can send a check to Operation Comfort Warriors, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Flag Rewards Program

- Your Post can receive a 10¢ credit for each dollar spent on the purchase of American Flags from Emblem Sales. This includes purchases made by your Post, as well as by members, friends, neighbors, schools and businesses that choose to sponsor your Post, and buy their flags from The American Legion.
- Your Post can ask potential sponsors to purchase their flags from American Legion Emblem Sales or the Post can buy and re-sell the flags. If a Sponsor purchases an American Flag from Emblem Sales, they will need to request that their purchase benefit their local Post and indicate the Post #. Once a sponsor chooses a local Post, all future purchases will automatically benefit the Post.
- Points earned for the calendar year will be credited to your Post account once a year, by February 1 of the following year. For example: 2019 points earned will be available on February 1, 2020 and may then be used on any future transactions. Your Post will have 11 months, February 1 to December 31, to spend its points, which expire on December 31 each year.
- Posts have taken a copy of the Flag Rewards sign-up to their city councils, schools, county and state officials, giving them the opportunity to purchase US made flags directly through The American Legion Emblem Sales – many times at a substantial savings from what they were currently paying. The sales result in a credit for the local American Legion Post, that could be spent on items from American Legion Emblem Sales – Honor Guard uniforms, supplies, incentives, awards – anything the Post desires.
- Information and registration for the program are available online at:
http://emblem.legion.org/flag_rewards.asp.

National Emergency Fund

- The American Legion National Emergency Fund was established to meet the needs of Posts or an individual member of the Legion family - Legion, Auxiliary or SAL - in areas stricken by natural disasters. Individuals are eligible to receive grants up to \$3,000 and Posts up to \$10,000.
- Since the NEF's inception in 1989, over \$8,000,000 has been provided in direct financial assistance to American Legion family members and Posts.
- All contributions made to the NEF are deposited in a special account and are used exclusively to meet our members' most urgent needs. Not one single contribution dollar is used for fund raising or administrative costs.
- All requests for assistance will be submitted through Department Headquarters on The American Legion National Emergency Fund Grant Application. Should a natural disaster occur in your District, we recommend your District designate one individual to set up a centralized location for members to obtain copies of the grant application.
- Donations may be sent to: The American Legion, National Emergency Fund, P. O. BOX 6141, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.

Disaster Preparedness

- The American Legion encourages Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. American Legion Posts are encouraged to take steps to prepare for disasters and be informed about the different types of emergencies and their appropriate responses.
- We cannot stress enough the importance of being prepared for all types of emergencies, from natural disasters to terrorist attacks. Having a plan can make all the difference, as flooding, tornados, and recent hurricanes, across the country have shown. The time for individuals, families and businesses to plan is now, and to resolve to make readiness a priority.

American Legion of Iowa Foundation

- Incorporated Nov. 29, 1978 as the charitable entity of the Iowa Department of The American Legion, the Foundation was organized as a mechanism for the Legion to provide financial assistance to promote Americanism, youth programs, veterans' rehabilitation and community service in the state of Iowa.
- Since 1979, over \$2.5 million has been contributed in support of veterans' assistance, educational programs, patriotic endeavors and children and youth programs.

- The American Legion of Iowa Foundation has accumulated a total permanent endowment fund of over \$2 million. Earnings from this endowment are dedicated to support programs of veterans' assistance, education and patriotic endeavors.
- Applications for grants must be postmarked no later than April 15th of each calendar year. Application information is available on the website at www.ialegion.org or by request from Department Headquarters.
- Donations to the Foundation may be mailed to Department Headquarters.

American Legion of Iowa Contact Information

The American Legion of Iowa	(800) 365-8387 (toll free)	www.ialegion.org
720 Lyon Street	(515) 282-5068 (phone)	
Des Moines, IA 50309	(515) 282-7583 (fax)	