

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF IOWA - DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS REPORT DISTRICT FALL CONFERENCES 2024

VETERANS DAY AT THE CAPITOL: JANUARY 22, 2024

- 8:30 am American Legion Briefing at Department Headquarters
- 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Veterans Day at the Capitol

MID-WINTER CONFERENCE: FEBRUARY 13 – 16, 2025 – DES MOINES

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

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION: JULY 18 – 20, 2025 – DES MOINES

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

NATIONAL CONVENTION: AUGUST 22 – 28, 2025 – TAMPA BAY

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

MEMBERSHIP TOUR AND PDC RALLY

The Department Membership Committee has voted to discontinue the Past District Commanders' Rally traditional held in November. The Department of Iowa will still award the Unity Award and Commanders Watch. Membership must be received by 4pm on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, November 23rd, to qualify. Winners will be announced the following week.

IOWA LEGIONNAIRE

Winter Issue - December, January, and February information. The submission deadline is 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 distributed twice a month, with special editions when necessary. Information on how to sign up is available on the Department website at www.ialegion.org/signup.

DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEERS

Our Department Headquarters Office and our Department Service Office have many volunteers who assist us throughout the year. Some volunteer on a regular basis, while others volunteer occasionally for specific projects.

Our regular volunteers assist with filing, mailings, answering phones, and data entry. Volunteers also assist with building cleaning and maintenance, repairs, and other special projects.

Volunteers provide us with time, talent, and sometimes even tools to help us get what needs to be done. Every time someone volunteers, it saves our staff time and saves our organization money. They are an invaluable part of the organization, and we don't know how we could function without them.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining our volunteer group, please contact Dave Rehbein at davidrehbein@msn.com. Whenever we have a project, Dave emails the group to find out who is available to help.

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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 that 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) – PRODUCTS & SERVICES

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) was founded with the purpose to provide Legionnaires with the most advanced and least expensive form of insurance to protect themselves and their families while providing American Legion Departments with a reliable source of revenue.

This year, the Department of Iowa received **\$82,585** in allocations. Since Iowa joined the LIT in 1992, the Department of Iowa has received a grand total of **\$1,932,449**.

The LIT, as the **only endorsed provider** of the Department's voluntary purchase programs, has made it possible for thousands of Legion families to collect millions of dollars in benefits by enrolling in one or more of the products and/or services offered.

Department Sponsored Programs

- **Hospital HELP Plan** — Provides benefits for hospital stays including intensive care, cardiac care, care for cancer, rehabilitative facilities, and V.A. hospitals.
- **Cancer Care** — Provides important protection and a daily benefit if you are hospitalized due to cancer.
- **Accidental Death** — Helps provide financial protection for you and your family. Up to \$5,000.00 LegionCare AD coverage at no cost to Legionnaires is available. You can also purchase additional Accident coverage up to \$100,000.00.
- **On-The-Move Travel Accident** — Provides up to \$200,000.00 coverage when fatally injured in a covered accident while traveling, plus \$500.00 per day if a covered accident lands you in the hospital.
- **ID Resolve** — Provides 24-hour identity theft resolution that helps protect your money, your time and your financial reputation.
- **Emergency Assistance Plus** — Provides you with 24/7 emergency medical and travel assistance services should something happen to you or your family while traveling away from home.
- **Medicare Supplement Insurance** — Supplements your Medicare Coverage at group rates.
- **Health & Dental Insurance** — Request a quote on various Health & Dental Insurance Plans designed with you in mind.
- **Long-Term Care** — Can help provide home health care, supervised adult care, and more.
- **Lifeline Medical Alert Service** — Provides fast access to help in the event of a fall or medical emergency so you can live confidently and independently.
- **DeviceGuard** — A simple, comprehensive, and affordable way to protect your devices—from smartphones to laptops to digital doorbells. Flexible plans and bundles ensure that you only pay for the protection you need.

For more information, visit www.theLIT.com.

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NEW NATIONAL COMMANDER

James A. LaCoursiere Jr. was elected National Commander of The American Legion on Aug. 29, 2024, in New Orleans, during the 105th National Convention.

As national commander, LaCoursiere is strongly committed to raising awareness for The American Legion's Be the One mission to prevent veteran suicide.

For more information, visit: <https://www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander>

NATIONAL COMMANDER'S PIN INCENTIVE PROGRAM

American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. will award his national commander "Be the One" dog tag coin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2025 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2024 membership year. Transfers do not count as new members.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. New Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members do not count toward this incentive. Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your squadron or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

Only one coin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names in the national database and mail the coin directly to the person who earned it.

<https://www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/national-commanders-incentive-program>

100% AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY RIBBON

American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. will award his 100% American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by the 2025 100% membership target date. For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and/or any combination of an Auxiliary unit or Sons squadron. Each must achieve 100% membership to qualify for the award. The department adjutant will transmit information.

<https://www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/100-american-legion-family-ribbon>

NATIONAL COMMANDER'S 103% MEMBERSHIP AWARD

American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. will award his "Be the One" dog tag coin to any post commander, district commander, county commander, division commander, department commander or membership chairman who achieves 103% of their assigned membership goal for 2025. Coins will be mailed directly to the recipient unless otherwise stated.

<https://www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/103-percent-membership-award>

POST EXCELLENCE AWARD

To qualify for the American Legion's Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90% renewal rate, and community activity.

The purpose of this award is membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to 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 already

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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: The post must attain at least 103% 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% of their members that were on the 2023 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.

Certification for the award: 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.

The department adjutant will transmit the information.

<https://www.legion.org/about/leadership/national-commander/post-excellence-award>

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, 2024 points earned will be available on February 1, 2025, 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 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.

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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.

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.

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.
- 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.

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 \$3 million has been contributed to support 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 \$2.2 million. Earnings from this endowment are dedicated to supporting 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/iafoundation/. Donations to the Foundation may be mailed to Department Headquarters or given online at www.ialegion.org/donate.

THE AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING

The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online.

Already taken the old course? The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam.

For more information, visit <https://www.legion.org/information-center/training>.

BOYS STATE: JUNE 22 – 27, 2025, AT CAMP DODGE

Post is eligible to register for a group hold beginning October 15th.

The American Legion of Iowa Boys State program will be held June 22 – 27, 2025, at Camp Dodge.

Post Adjutants should have received information in the mail regarding the timeline and the process. Post Boys State Chairs or members responsible for the program need to check with their adjutant for that information.

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Post Reservations are online. There is a video and step-by-step guide provided online to help. The advantages of CampWise are:

- More post access to information such as delegate contact & registration status.
- Posts are now invoiced rather than having to pay to hold spots, which will reduce the time and resources for refunds. Payment will be taken online through the post portal. This also puts more on the posts to be involved – no funds and the delegate does not participate.
- CampWise will be available during regular business hours to assist in the online reservation process.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

- Teams on file were emailed a packet this fall with information to register. Post-contact information will be required to participate. We are striving to increase communication to include posts in everything.
- Registration fees for Senior Teams are \$375 and for Junior Teams \$250.
- The 2025 Department Area Tournament will be April 19-20 and 26-27.
- The 2025 Department State Tournament will be May 3 or 4 (One and Done, One Day).
- Coaches meeting on Saturday of Mid-Winter.
- Anyone 18 years or older volunteering or coaching must pass a background check and abuse training. There are no exceptions to this as it is required by law for this sport.

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS

The Consolidated Post Reports (CPR) will be mailed to each Post Adjutant on record in the spring of 2025. The Consolidated Post Report must be returned on the correct annual form to Department Headquarters, or submitted through myLegion.org (preferred), before June 15 to be considered for Department Community Service and Children & Youth Awards. Eligible posts selected will be awarded during the Department Convention. Posts wishing to be considered for Community Service and Children & Youth Awards need to provide a narrative of their activities with their CPR submission. Narratives may be submitted separately if your post's CPR is submitted electronically. Start collecting information now so it is not forgotten.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION AWARDS

The National Veterans Employment & Education Commission annually presents several awards to honor employers who hire veterans, disabled veterans, and older workers. Those who help veterans find employment are also recognized.

The awards include:

- Employer of the Year - Small Business, Mid-Sized Business and Large Business
- Employer of the Disabled Award
- Employer of Older Workers Award
- Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year
- Outstanding Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist of the Year
- Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year
- Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

Nomination forms for each award are available through the Department Headquarters. All entries must be accompanied by an official nomination form with no more than two pages of narrative, along with supporting documents.

The deadline for submittals to the Department Veterans Benefits 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 Awards

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to be delivered at the Department Convention. The Department selects one nominee in each category as its winner and submits the winners for the National awards.

Forms and criteria are available on our website at <https://www.ialegion.org/employmentawards>.

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR

The Art McLaughlin Legionnaire of the Year nomination form is available online at <https://www.ialegion.org/loty> or by request from Department Headquarters at (800) 365-8387. There is no limitation on the number of applicants for each District. Nomination forms must be submitted to Department Headquarters before June 15.

ORATORICAL CONTEST

- 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 must be completed by December 1, 2024
 - County must be completed by December 16, 2024
 - District must be completed by January 5, 2025
 - Area must be completed by January 19, 2025
 - Area I: (Districts 1,5,6) District 6 scheduled to host – Details to come
 - Area II: (Districts 2,3,4) District 3 scheduled to host – Details to come
 - Area III: (Districts 7,8,9) District 8 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 16, 2025**, Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines at 8:00 a.m. All contestants will be required to report to the hotel on Saturday, February 15, 2025, by 6:00 p.m.
- First and second-place district finalists may advance to the area contest.

FIFTH GRADE FLAG ESSAY CONTEST

- 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 a signed Participation Application by **January 7, 2025**.
- 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, 2025.
- Department judging will be by the Department Children and Youth Committee at the Mid-Winter Conference.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

- Application packets must be completed and forwarded to the 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: <https://www.ialegion.org/lawenforcement/> or <https://www.ialegion.org/firefighter/>.

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SCOUTING

- All applications are available on the Department's website: <https://www.ialegion.org/scouting/> .
- Submission deadline to the Department will be **March 1, 2025**, for the following:
 - Eagle Scout of the Year – Eagle Scouts are required to complete the fillable version online, print it, and obtain proper signatures.
 - Adult Boy Scout of the Year – Available online or by request from the Department.
 - Adult Cub Scout of the Year – Available online or by request from the Department.
- Square Knot Award – for adult leaders – can be applied for at any time. Applications are available at <https://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 <https://www.ialegion.org/scouting/> .

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM

- 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, 2024**, to be eligible for the 2025 Department Match at Camp Dodge which will be on March 8, 2025.
- Military barracks will be available for teams, and they are encouraged to arrive by 6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7, 2025.
- 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 is online at
- 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.

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 the Department by **April 1, 2025**.

DONATIONS

We have launched a new online platform for donations. The new platform allows donors to give one-time donations, monthly donations, and even has a text-to-give function. Visit www.ialegion.org/donate or simply text the word "LEGION" to 26989.

The online platform also allows for "round-up" donations. Donors may designate a debit card or credit card to be used and every purchase on the card can be rounded up to the next dollar as a donation. The accumulated donation is taken out once per month, and donors may set a maximum amount to give.

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DEPARTMENT SOCIA MEDIA

The American Legion of Iowa Facebook page has two new volunteer administrators! Whitney Smith Macintosh and Rod Rosburg took over in July. Whitney and Rod have split the districts for easier communication, Whitney will have even numbered districts, and Rod will have odd numbered districts.

Whitney is currently a 6th District Vice Commander, Post 682 Adjutant, American Legion Riders Chapter 274 Secretary, and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 682 President.

Rod is currently Post 53 Vice Commander, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 53 Commander, and 5th District Sgt-At-Arms.

When you have accomplishments, events, or highlights please forward them to Whitney or Rod either via email or Facebook Messenger.

Whitney can be reached at smithmcintosh.alia@gmail.com. Rod can be reached at rrosburg@gmail.com.

Follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/iowalegion>

“BE THE ONE”

Contingent upon the approval of the DEC in November, the Be The One Ad Hoc committee is ready take Be The One from a marketing program with the mission to get the word out to the American Legion Family into an actionable plan to lead/train the American Legion Family to be mental health first responders.

The Department of Iowa Be The One Suicide prevention program will utilize the Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training materials and method to create a robust buddy check process with the mission of making every buddy check and every interaction positive, productive and keeping our suicide minded veterans alive for one more day.

This program is intended to bridge the gap between the desire to Be The One, and National’s Columbia Protocol training into actionable training for real-life situations. It will also champion and maintain the Buddy Check program.

We are asking for individuals who are interested in joining this training program to email smithmcintosh.alia@gmail.com for further discussion and an application.

SECRETARY OF STATE VETERANS FOR VOTING INITIATIVE

Iowa Secretary of State Paul D. Pate is debuting a new initiative, Veterans for Voting, to engage Iowa veterans this election. Veterans for Voting works to aid veterans and service members exercise their right to vote.

Ways for your post to participate with Veterans for Voting:

- Help veterans access information to register to vote
- Share information about how to obtain an absentee ballot
- Drive veterans to their polling locations on Election Day, November 5, 2024
- Direct them to the Secretary of State’s website, www.sos.iowa.gov or their county auditor’s website for questions about Iowa election security, 2024 candidates, and important voting deadlines
- Promote voting through post websites, newsletters, and social media posts
- Buddy Check members to see if they plan to vote or require assistance in casting their vote.

For more information and to access resources, visit <https://www.ialegion.org/veterans-for-voting/>.

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PRINTABLE AMERICANISM PROGRAM FLYERS

In cooperation with BDI Signs, The American Legion of Iowa has produced recruiting posters for our programs. The posters are intended to be placed in schools and around your community to recruit for our American Legion programs.

The poster program began last year. New versions of the Boys State, 5th Grade Flag Essay Contest, Oratorical, and Junior Shooting Sports are now available for print from our website.

- <https://www.ialegion.org/boysstate/>
- <https://www.ialegion.org/flag-essay/>
- <https://www.ialegion.org/oratorical/>

DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

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