

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF IOWA - DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS REPORT

DISTRICT SPRING CONFERENCES 2026

BOYS STATE

The American Legion of Iowa Boys State program will be held June 21-26, 2026, at Camp Dodge. Delegates must check-in before 12:00 pm (noon) on Sunday, June 21.

Legionnaires and guests are invited to attend the final assembly on Friday, June 26, at 12:00 pm. The final assembly includes the announcements of scholarship winners and the Boys Nation Senators.

Updates are available from your District Boys State Chair or Board Member. Make sure your delegates attend an orientation and are aware of any transportation arrangements your district or post may be making. Keep in close contact with your Boys State Delegates and your District Boys State Chair or Board Member.

BOYS STATE REGISTRATIONS

The deadline for Boys State registrations has been extended to May 1! We are in desperate need of registration for the 2026 Boys State program. Without them, the survival of the program is questionable. Boys State in Iowa has existed since 1938, teaching young men the importance of citizenship and patriotism. It is one of The American Legion's most revered programs. Please do your part to strengthen this program to make it available for generations to come.

BOYS STATE COUNSELORS NEEDED

Since 1938 the Iowa Department of the American Legion has sponsored over 60,000 participants in the Boys State program. Our success would not be possible without a dedicated volunteer staff of American Legion members and former Boys Staters. We are always in need of good counselors who are called to serve our program and help foster tomorrow's community leaders. If you are interested in serving, learn more at <https://iowaboysstate.org/> or contact Department Headquarters.

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS

The Consolidated Post Reports (CPR) will be mailed to each Post Adjutant on record in March. 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. 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. Awards will be presented during the Department Convention.

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.

Nomination forms, guidelines, and criteria for Education of the Year can be found online at www.ialegion.org/educator and must be received at Department by April 1, 2026.

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STARS STRIPES SPIRIT 5K WALK/RUN – 1K WALK – COLOR RUSH RUN

The Stars Stripes Spirit 5K will be held on Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 16, 2026, at Gray's Lake Park in Des Moines. There will be a 5K Walk/Run and a 1K Walk Option.

Registration is ~~\$50~~ \$40 for adults and \$25 for U18s. The \$10 early registration discount ends on April 14.

Registration begins at 8:00 am with the Walk/Run starting at 9:00 am. Post event ceremonies will be held at 10:00 am.

To register, visit the link below or scan the QR code with your mobile device.

We are also seeking volunteers for the event. Volunteers should visit the link below or scan the QR code.

Register to Participate

<https://www.starsstripesspirit.com/>



Volunteer to Help

<https://forms.office.com/r/cSS2wZZK6Z>



DISTRICT COMMANDER ORIENTATION – May 29, 2026

The District Commander Orientation will be held at Department Headquarters from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Friday, May 29. Lunch will be provided. This session is for 2026-2027 District Commanders and candidates for Department and Detachment Commander.

DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP SCHOOL – May 29-31, 2026

The Department Leadership School will be held May 29-31, 2026, at the Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport and Conference Center. The school will take place on Friday from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm; Saturday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm; and Sunday from 8:00 am to 11:30 am.

The Department will cover the cost of six (6) attendees per District, one of which should be the incoming District Commander. This includes room (based on double occupancy), course materials, breakfast and lunch on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. The Department will not reimburse attendees for mileage or per diem. District authorized attendees must register online at <https://www.ialegion.org/leadershipschool>.

Endorsed candidates for department and national offices are also invited to attend at Department expense. Candidates are in addition to the six allocated for each district. Candidates must register online at <https://www.ialegion.org/leadershipschool>.

Additional attendees from each district are allowed but will be required to pay for lodging. The Department will assist those attending at their own expense with finding roommates to help reduce the cost of attendance. Additional attendees must register online at <https://www.ialegion.org/leadershipschool>.

Any attendee requesting his/her own room will be required to pay an entire room charge of \$109.00 + tax.

Newly elected 2026-2027 District Commanders must submit the List of Authorized Attendees for your District before May 10, 2026. All attendee registrations are due no later than May 15, 2026.

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LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR

The Art McLaughlin Legionnaire of the Year nomination form is available online at <https://www.ialegion.org/loty>. The form has been updated to include the requirement that the nomination be endorsed and certified by the post. There is no limitation on the number of applicants for each district. Nomination forms must be submitted to Department Headquarters before June 15.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION – JULY 17-19, 2026 – DES MOINES

All meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport and Conference Center. Ask for The American Legion rate when making reservations. Schedule will be available on the department website. The Call to Convention and Post Delegate Strength information will be mailed to posts 30 days prior to the Department Convention.

Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport and Conference Center
6111 Fleur Dr.
Des Moines, IA 50321
(515) 287-2400

Rate: \$105.00 + tax

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION COMMITTEES

The Convention Committees will meet on the Friday of Department Convention at 1:00 pm, except the Convention Place Committee, which meets on Saturday at 4:00 pm Each District must assign one representative to each of the Convention Committees. This assignment must be made at the Spring District Conference and reported to the Department immediately following your conference.

DEPARTMENT COLOR GUARD COMPETITION

The Department Color Guard Contest will be held on the Saturday of Department Convention. Rules and entry forms are available online at <https://www.ialegion.org/convention>. Each entry form must be certified by the Adjutant of the unit's sponsoring post or district. The contest entry form must be submitted to the department before the close of the Color Guard Registration Meeting at Department Convention. Advance registration is encouraged and may be submitted by email to programs@ialegion.org or mailed to The American Legion of Iowa, Color Guard Competition, 720 Lyon Street, Des Moines, IA 50309. The order of appearance in the contest will be in reverse order of receipt of entry form with earliest postmark.

The American Legion Department Color Guard Contest does not limit the number of units allowed to compete in the contest from any post or district. All color guard members will be required to register for the Department Convention as a delegate, alternate or guest with The American Legion.

The contest has one class: Advancing/Retiring of Colors.

All units must be members of The American Legion. The unit must be composed of not less than four (4) members. If the color guard consists of only four (4) members, the American Flag bearer will give all color guard commands.

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NATIONAL CONVENTION – AUGUST 28 – SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 – LOUISVILLE, KY

Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention will be elected at the Spring District Conference. If you are attending the National Convention as a Delegate or Alternate, please pick up a registration packet from the District Commander or the District Adjutant. The packet contains instructions, information, and registration forms. Forms are also available on the Department website at www.ialegion.org/nationalconvention. The deadline for National Convention registration is June 15.

Those not elected as Delegates or Alternates can attend the National Convention as a Guest. To receive a registration packet, contact Department Headquarters or use the forms available on our website at www.ialegion.org/nationalconvention.

The Department of Iowa will be housed in the Hyatt Regency Louisville. The room rate is \$140.00 + \$24.72 tax (17.66%) for a total of \$164.72 per night for up to two occupants. Additional occupant per room is \$10.00 + tax with a maximum occupancy of four. Self-Parking is \$30.00/day. Valet Parking is \$40.00/day.

The National Commander's Banquet will be on Tuesday, September 1. Tickets are \$75.00 each. Entertainment will be provided. Tickets must be ordered in advance. Seating is limited.

WALK FOR VETERANS – AUGUST 17, 2026

The American Legion Walk for Veterans will be during the Veterans Parade at the Iowa State Fair on Monday, August 17, 2026, at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. The parade begins at 11:00 am and participants are asked to be in the staging area between 7:00 am and 10:30 am.

Participants must register (free registration) with The American Legion of Iowa before July 31, 2026. The cost of a Walk for Veterans shirt is \$20.00. All walk participants must wear The American Legion Walk for Veterans shirt and must pre-register. All parade participants will receive free entry into the Iowa State Fair after the parade. Parking is not included.

Registration Forms, Information, and Updates:

Information, instructions, and forms are available on our website. For more information, please contact The American Legion of Iowa by phone at 800-365-8387, by email at teresa@ialegion.org, or view online at www.ialegion.org/wfv.

NATIONAL LEGION COLLEGE FOR 2026 CLASS

The 2026 Legion College class is scheduled for November 15-20, 2026. The 2026 student application will be available at <https://www.legion.org/information-center/training/legion-college>.

The Department of Iowa is currently seeking two candidates. The prerequisites to apply for the National American Legion College are as follows: all candidates must be a member in good standing, be a member for a minimum of three continuous years, have completed Basic Training online with a certificate dated after August 2016 and must be vetted and endorsed by their department leadership. Basic Training can be completed at <https://register.legion.org/alei>.

Class of 2026 student applications are due no later than July 1, 2026, to Department Headquarters. Applications must be reviewed and endorsed by the department before the national deadline.

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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 available online.

Have you 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.

Visit <https://register.legion.org/alei> for more information and to begin the course.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Senior teams will be competing in 1 of 3 Area Tournaments on April 18-19 and April 25-26. Area 1: (Location TBD). Area 2: (Location TBD). Area 3: (Location TBD). Winners will advance to the State Tournament scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2026. Host Team (Location TBD). Details regarding team schedules for the tournaments will be available on the Department website. The deadline to register a team is April 1. After April 1, Area and State Tournaments locations will be published. Currently there are 6 teams that have started the registration process:

- Dubuque County
- Swisher Post 671
- Le Mars Post 241
- Moville Post 303
- Hiawatha Post 735
- Marion Post 298

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

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 post nominations are submitted by this time to ensure that they are considered for the Department Awards 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.ialeion.org/employmentawards>.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

The National Affairs Commission is responsible for selecting the Fire Fighter and the Law Enforcement Officers of the year. This year the applications were due by November 30 to the Department Headquarters.

This year's Firefighter of the Year is Jeff Sander from Onawa. Jeff was nominated by Post #129 in Onawa, 9th District.

This year's Law Enforcement Officer is Jerid Beschen from Dewitt. Jerid was nominated by Post #190 of Clinton, 2nd District.

The department recipients have been submitted for consideration for the national awards.

ORATORICAL CONTEST

The Department of Iowa's High School Oratorical Contest was held Sunday, February 15, 2026, at Mid-Winter Conference. First place was awarded to Helen Peng of Cedar Falls. Helen is a Sophomore at Cedar Falls High School. The title of her prepared oration is "America: The Roots of Our Republic". She will compete in the National Oratorical Contest on May 15-17, 2026, in Hillsdale, Michigan, for a chance to win a scholarship of \$25,000 and the title of national champion. Helen is sponsored by American Legion Post #138 in Waterloo.

Runner-up honors go to Sophie Hoevelkamp, a Carroll High School Junior and a Carroll resident sponsored by American Legion Post #607 in Breda. Third place winner went to Nolan Williams, a Senior from Durant. Nolan attends Durant High School and is sponsored by American Legion Post #430 in Durant.

FIFTH GRADE FLAG ESSAY CONTEST

The Fifth-Grade Flag Essay Contest winners were judged by the Department Children and Youth Committee. First place went to Claire Heston of DCG Middle School in Dallas Center. Claire was sponsored by American Legion Post #49 in Dallas Center and District 6. Runner up went to Sully McCarville of Notre Dame Catholic in Cresco. Sully was sponsored by Lloyd L Horton American Legion Post #545 in Lime Springs and District 4. Third place went to Elena Sieren of Cam Elementary in Massena. Elena was sponsored by American Legion Post #210 in Anita and District 7.

AMERICAN LEGION OF IOWA FOUNDATION

Incorporated November 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 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 million. Earnings from this endowment are dedicated to support programs of veterans' assistance, education, and patriotic endeavors.

Information on applications for grants is available at <https://www.ialegion.org/iafoundation/> or by request from Department Headquarters. Applications can be submitted electronically (preferred) to foundation@ialegion.org or mailed to Department Headquarters. Grant applications are due by **April 15** (postmarked no later than April 15 for mailed applications).

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LEGIONCARE NO COST AD&D INSURANCE

Anyone who enrolls in LegionCare will be covered for life if they remain a member of The Legion Family. All adult Legion Family members – Legion, Auxiliary and SAL – are eligible for the coverage.

Every eligible Legion Family member may enroll, but the member must sign up to be covered. LegionCare provides up to \$1,000 of 24-hour/day accidental death coverage to an enrolled member. And if an enrolled member suffers a covered loss while performing official Legion Family business, there is an additional \$4,000 benefit – bringing the total to \$5,000.

Go online to www.TheLIT.com and fill in the requested information. By enrolling on-line, your coverage will begin immediately, and you will get an e-mail confirmation within minutes. You may also enroll by calling the LIT's toll-free number at (800) 235-6943.

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 and benefits to protect themselves and their families while providing American Legion Departments with a reliable source of revenue.

In 2025, the Department of Iowa received **\$48,254** in allocations. Since Iowa joined the LIT in 1992, the Department of Iowa has received a grand total of **\$1,980,703**.

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. For more information, visit www.theLIT.com.

Department Sponsored Programs include:

- **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.

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JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM

On March 14 the American Legion, Department of Iowa, conducted its annual Junior Shooting Sports Air Rifle Championship Tournament at Camp Dodge in Johnston. The results were as follows:

U15: 1st Place: Dash McQueen-Swisher Sharp Shooters

U17: 1st Place: Sophia Cronin-Central Campus MROTC

U19: 1st Place: Wesley Rumbaugh-Central Campus MROTC

Scholarship Winners:

1st Place-\$2000 scholarship: Wesley Rumbaugh-Central Campus MROTC

2nd Place-\$1500 scholarship: Elsie Manning-Central Campus MROTC

3rd Place-\$1000 scholarship: Evan Rumbaugh-Central Campus MROTC

*All 3 winners are sponsored by American Legion Post #374-Highland Park from District 6.

Overall Team Results:

1st Place: Central Campus MROTC

2nd Place: Swisher Sharp Shooters

3rd Place: Dietrich Kershinski

DEPARTMENT MEDIA AWARDS

The American Legion Department Media and Communications committee hosts an annual Media Contest in four categories. All categories must be a publication of The American Legion, ALA, SAL, or American Legion Riders or a joint publication of two or more of the organizations, at the Post, Unit, County, or District level. There is NO entry fee. Department level publications are not eligible.

There are four categories: single sheet newsletter, multiple sheet newsletter, electronic newsletter, and website/social media. All submissions are due April 30, 2026, and publication must have occurred between May 1, 2025, and April 30, 2026.

For more information, visit <https://www.ialegion.org/ialpa/>

DONATIONS

The Department has an online platform for donations. The 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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AMERICAN LEGION OF IOWA ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

The American Legion, Department of Iowa, has an electronic newsletter. The newsletter is emailed twice per month, with special editions when necessary. Subscribe today to get the latest information from the Department delivered right to your email. A link to subscribe can be found on our home page at <https://ialegion.org/>.

AMERICAN LEGION OF IOWA FACEBOOK

Our Department of Iowa Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/iowalegion>. Our Facebook page is all about exposure. To maximize our efforts in getting our word out to our entire Legion Family, our Veterans and communities, we need active page followers. If you haven't done so already, please Click the "Follow" button on our page. You are also encouraged to Like, Share, and Comment on our posts. All will increase the exposure of our message.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

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