



Reports to the

Department

Executive

Committee

The American Legion of Iowa Foundation
Report to The Department Executive Committee June 27, 2026

I am honored to present this report of the American Legion of Iowa Foundation.

The American Legion of Iowa Foundation, held a meeting at Department Headquarters, 720 Lyon Street in Des Moines, Iowa, on May 21, 2026, after notice of meeting was sent to all members.

Foundation President Steve Dixon called the meeting to order at 9:59am. Invocation was given by Brian Ring. A hand salute was rendered. Chuck Brunsting led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjutant John Derner called roll. The following members were present.

Acting President Steve Dixon

Vice President Chuck Brunsting

Secretary/Treasurer John Derner

Past Department Commander Brian Ring, Sr.

Board Members: Harlan Yoder

Leonard Ernst (excused)

Jeff Large

Dennis Soppe

Steve Neal

Ed Rohner (excused)

Emeritus Member – Dave Rehbein

Emeritus Member - Nicole Clapp

Guests present included Linda Lockwood & Mike Kowalkowski of Regions Bank, Iowa Department Commander Candidate Don De Kock, Iowa Auxiliary Department President Kim Dixon, Iowa Auxiliary Vice-President Judy Ring, Iowa Auxiliary Executive Director Crystal Wright, and staff member Teresa Shaw.

Financial Report Presented by Mike Kowalkowski and Linda Lockwood from Regions bank.

Funds available for distribution (see attachment): \$ 122,910.04

a. Regular awards \$ 119,483.05

b. Keith Baker – Boys State Scholarship \$ 685.39 Used \$500 only

c. Rummel – crippled children with disabilities

and heart disease research \$ 1,370.80

d. 40 & 8 VA&R, Americanism, Children & Youth \$ 1,370.80

Dave Rehbein motioned to stay with 5% for awarding grants. Jeff Large seconded. Motion carried.

We Reviewed 105 Grant request with a break for lunch.

Awards were made in the following

American Legion Programs \$16500

American Legion Aux Programs \$6750

VA&R \$19759.50 Collages \$28000

Americanism Children and youth \$26215

Community Service \$19620

For a total of \$116844.50 Awarded

Jeff Large motioned to approve \$5,880.15 to be held as interim for emergency grant requests. Brian Ring seconded. Motion carried.

The Foundation will be making Several presentations at Convention.

Foundation Breakfast will be Saturday morning of convention.

The meeting adjourned at 2:57pm.

I want to thank all of the Directors for their hard work.

Next meeting for the Foundation in July at Department Convention.

Thank you to all of the Office staff for what they do for the foundation.

For God and Country

Steve Dixon

President, American Legion of Iowa Foundation

ATTRACTION INSTEAD OF PROMOTION

As American Legion Posts, are we doing the things that will grow our Posts? .

The State of Iowa is now ranked 46 out of 55 Posts in this year versus last year. Iowa is down 1489 members below last year. The Department of Iowa is currently sitting at 30,285 members.

If this trend continues, Iowa will have fewer than 30,000 members in 2026.

If you are a member of the Department of Iowa American Legion, you are on the membership committee. In 2027, we must have a membership table at every event our Posts sponsor. When we get up in the morning, we must think, I AM GOING TO GET A NEW MEMBER TODAY.

It is up to us to make The American Legion an attractive group to give up your time and want to join.

For God and Country

Membership Chair 2026

Bob Colin

To: Department Executive Committee

From: Training Committee Chairman

Subject: Department Convention DEC Report

Commander Alderson and member of the DEC,

The Training Committee met by Zoom on the fourth Monday of each month. Attendance: Kenneth Fields, Chairman; committee members Cliff Barker, Whitney Smith-McIntosh, Dave Rehbein, John Derner, Commander Alderson, Polly Graham, and Ian Black; guest PDC Randy Johnson.

The committee planned the 2026 Mid-Winter Conference schedule, organized the training activities, and invited speakers for each session. Mid-Winter training was well received. While the Chairman was absent for health reasons, committee members carried out his duties throughout the Conference. Thank you to everyone who helped make the Mid-Winter Conference a success.

Leadership School (May 29–31, 2026)

Leadership School took place at the Airport Holiday Inn. The committee developed nine training modules and selected presenters for each session. A total of 91 people attended; 35% were first-time attendees, marking a second consecutive year of increased new participation. This suggests the nine districts are beginning to implement succession planning for leadership.

The weekend opened Friday night with a motivational, interactive presentation by PDC Randy Johnson, followed by a well-attended hospitality room where participants networked and exchanged ideas. Course evaluations for each module and presenter provided valuable feedback the committee will use to refine, remove, or develop future Leadership School offerings.

Training topics and presenters

- Friday night speaker – PDC Randy Johnson
- Roll of the District Officers - John Derner.
- Running an effective meeting - John Derner
- Developing an effective team - Polly Graham.
- Tech School - Cliff Barker
- Be the One/Buddy Check - Whitney Smith-McIntosh
- Responsibilities of a Department Chair - Dave Rehbein
- Resolution Writing - Dave Rehbein and John Derner
- Membership discussion and roundtable - Dave Rehbein
- Boys State - Mike Vaughn

The Training Committee will continue to meet by Zoom on the fourth Thursday of each month.

We face a clear challenge immediately after the Department Convention: a recurring drop in membership recruiting. To address this, we propose forming a team of the Department's top recruiters to attend each Fall Conference and share proven recruiting and retention practices.

Additional training will be offered at the FY27 Mid-Winter Conference to tackle the steep decline in recruiting that typically follows our Mid-Winter event.

Respectfully,

Kenneth Fields

Chairman - Training Committee

SAL Committee Chairman's Report 06/27/2026

Membership in Iowa off the report on June 4th, 2026. Iowa's year end goal is 5,238. For the detachment, Iowa is currently seated at 5137 total members. Which is 98.07% of goal and Iowa has an 89.89% renewal rate. Which puts Iowa 18th in the Nation and 4th place in the Midwest region. Behind South Dakota, Nebraska and Minnesota.

Currently 2nd District is in 1st place, sitting at 100.13% followed by 4th at 94.94%. Iowa has 9 squadrons sitting between 75-79%, 19 between 80 - 89%, 35 at 90-99% and 50 at 100% or better in membership.

Iowa currently has one new squadron. New Hartford squadron 660.

Iowa has 9 squadrons sitting at zero membership and 12 at charter only.

Respectfully submitted

SAL Committee Chairman

Gary J Quinlan

American Legion Riders Report

DEC Meeting June 27, 2026

The past Midwinter Conference brought several new and exciting happenings for your Riders. First is that in addition to the District Legacy Rides, Iowa will have a 2 day Department wide Legacy Ride. In one weekend, you riders will travel through all 9 districts to raise money for VCF. This was proposed, designed, and coordinated by a rider in the 5th District who asked for the chance to do it.

The Sojourn 250 Ride was announced. On the morning of July 4, 250 Legion Riders from all over the country will leave Pittsburg, riding 250 miles to Washington DC. At the Washington Nationals game, they will present a flag that has flown over 22 national cemeteries, national sporting events, and will have traveled to every state and territory in the /nation. From there it will be taken to the National Archives to be kept as a remembrance of America's 250th Birthday. I'm proud to say Iowa will have several of its Riders there.

Later this spring it was also announced that Iowa will be part of the National Legacy Run in a big way. Spending nearly 2 full days in the Department, we will have stops in Missouri Valley, Carrol, Ames for an overnight, Tame for fuel and a tribal dance presentation, Solon for lunch, and Muscatine for the second overnight. On day 3, before we leave the state, we will present a wreath at the memorial at the national cemetery in Keokuk. The Legacy Run will end at Ft. Knox at the Patton Museum this year before we ride to Louisville. The goal for 2026 is 1.2 million dollars raised, and I have set a goal for Iowa at 40K. If every post, unit and squadron contributed \$50, we would reach this goal and then some. Donations are being accepted now, and we are on our way to goal but more is needed. Bring your donations to Department, to any stop on the District or department Legacy Runs or mail them to my attention at the Ames Post. Make Checks payable to the "Veterans and Children Foundation" with Legacy Run on the memo line. Together we are all the "Champions of Hope".

What have our Chapters been doing so far in 2026? Well the Monroe Riders, with the help of Kellogg, were recognized with the 2026 Iowa Governors Group Volunteer Award for contributions and service to the Marshalltown VA and IVH.

Ames Riders continue the drive for Wreaths Across America, and many other Chapters escorted parades for Memorial Day, and many Riders were seen as members of the Honor Guards.

As always your Riders stand at the vanguard of "getting it done", consider how we can help your post or program. Help us support VCF, help us support the Veterans Emergency Fund here at department, and help us support all of our communities.

Thank you for your time,

Respectfully submitted,

Cliff Barker, Chairman

Department Americanism Report

D.E.C. June 27, 2026

Greeting from your Department Americanism Chairmen, thank you chairmen for stepping up to chair the various committees you were asked to of The Americanism Commission. Your Department Americanism Chairmen feels like we have had a successful year of decent participation in our programs, however, there is always room for improvement. As I have said before we need to and somehow encourage and push the individual posts to see the real benefit of getting our youth involved in the legion programs. Most of the time the students are willing to participate if given the opportunity and explained to them how the program works and the benefits, they will receive by participating. In saying that, is exactly why we as legionnaires need to be the ones talking to the students and explaining why participating is beneficial for them. I realize in a lot of posts only one or two are the main ones who do what gets done. Somehow, we need to figure out the solution to resolve this situation to benefit the programs we chair and believe in. Question is how are we going to create a remedy for this situation? As I stated last July, as legionnaires we need to go into the school ourselves asking permission to be able to promote the various programs to the students and not relying on and excepting the teacher, principal or the guidance counselor to do our job. We must take ownership of the programs we want participation in, if we expect our programs to be successful. Let's try a new approach to maybe help resolve part of the lack of participation within our schools. Go to your various school offices depending on the program your post has selected to do rather it be 5th grade flag essay, boys state, oratorical speaking, candidates for good citizenship award, educator of the year or perhaps create and sponsor a patriotic coloring contest in grades maybe 1st through 4th might help generate more interest in our programs. I feel we need some type of program for grades 6th through 8th to help hold their interest, to be willing to try the oratorical speaking contest, let's be thinking on what that could be. Legion baseball how do we get involvement, how about the post sponsors a little league team and let someone else coach, just sponsor with shirts, caps and baseballs. Perhaps that could be a way to recruit new younger members by showing interest in their child. School is out now, however now would be the time to inquire as to when the teachers may be starting to lay out the curriculum for the new year, by speaking to them at this time would allow them to fit your program in at the correct time frame. When you go into the school, know your program well and how you will want to present this certain program, before asking to speak with the appropriate teacher this will greatly enhance your success. Be sure to take with you the pamphlet of the program you are presenting and leave with the teacher if they show interest ask how many pamphlets they may need. If the teacher does not have the time right then, ask when a good time would be to come back. Let's all promote The American Legion Programs.

Mr. Commander, thank you for asking yours truly to be your Department Americanism Chairmen.

James Kessler

June 5, 2026

Report from the Community Service Committee

On May 5th I attended the Spring Meeting on the Youth Activities Subcommittee of the Americanism Commission in Indianapolis. This was my first time of being involved with the Community Service program at this level and felt very good about it. There was a lot of information to digest, but any questions that were asked were answered from the several directors and assistants.

Some of what I brought back with me is as follows:

Community Programs

The American Legion is committed to supporting communities, veterans and their families through programs that provide financial assistance, disaster relief and comfort to wounded warriors.

American Legion Family USA250 Challenge

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation's 250th birthday with the commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities in support of Veterans and Children Foundation.

American Legion Family USA250

The American Legion Family USA250 initiative strives to build excitement about our Nation leading up to the 250th anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 2026.

American Legion Riders

With over 110,000 American Legion Riders in more than 2,000 chapters across every domestic department and at least three foreign countries, the community is united in service and camaraderie

Homeless Veterans

The American Legion is dedicated to aiding homeless veterans through advocacy, essential services and a dedicated Task Force for housing, healthcare and employment.

National Emergency Fund

The National Emergency Fund, created in response to Hurricane Hugo in 1989, has provided more than \$10 million in direct financial assistance to American Legion Family members and Posts.

Operation Comfort Warriors

The American Legion delivers comfort items to military hospitals, warrior transition units, and other facilities worldwide, bringing hope and support to our service members during their recovery.

Temporary Financial Assistance

Since 1925, the American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program has provided cash grants to support the minor children of active duty service members and American Legion members in times of need.

Volunteering

Join the American Legion in making a meaningful impact through a variety of volunteer opportunities that support our veterans, military families and local communities.

This now brings us to the Consolidated Post Reports, or CPRs portion of my report.

First, the basic question: Why should Posts submit a CPR? One answer is that when the National Commander testifies before Congress, the Consolidated Post Report is used to provide numerical data of what the collective American Legion is doing. We report hours, dollars and numbers of participants to show in quantifiable ways how our organization lives up to its motto of Veterans Strengthening America. Every Post is doing something in their community. It is important that the leadership report what they are doing to show our impact

Second, the Post CPR may be the most beneficial document the Post will complete, and the Post's information, combined with other Posts will help play a role on behalf of all veterans. Each Post has a story to tell, and when we speak collectively, our strength is magnified. The CPR was developed in 1975 to chronicle and record all the good work our local Posts do. The data that is collected is so important that the American Legion is required to submit it to Congress.

This concludes the report of Community Service, and thank you for taking your time to read through it.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Hopwood
Dept Chairman Community Service



The American Legion, Department of Iowa
Americanism Commission
Children & Youth Committee Report
(27 June 2026)

Members: Polly Graham (Chair) and Curtis Goudy

At the 2026 Department of Iowa Mid-Winter Conference during the Department Executive Committee meeting, the Children & Youth Committee announced the 6 winners of the Iowa Fifth Grade Flag Essay Contest. On February 24, 2026, follow up letters were sent to:

1st Place – Claire Heston and sponsoring Post 49 in Dallas Center
2nd Place – Sully McCarville and sponsoring Post 545 in Lime Springs
3rd Place – Elena Sieren and sponsoring Post 210 in Anita

to officially inform them on their accomplishment and invite them to the Department Convention on Saturday, July 18th to read their essays and accept their awards.

Thanks go to all posts and districts for supporting this year's program which fostered and perpetuated a One Hundred Percent Americanism reaching a total of 1431 students who participated within the State of Iowa.

The Children & Youth Committee also received three applications for the Educator of the Year:

Sara Gott (nominated through Blue Grass Post 711)
Ashley Delaney (nominated through Lake Park Post 371)
Brock Lehman (nominated through Sioux Center Post 199)

On April 25th the applications were judged by James Kessler, Curtis Goudy, and Whitney Smith McIntosh and Sara Gott was selected as the recipient of The American Legion of Iowa's 2026 Educator of the Year. On April 28th a congratulatory letter was sent to Mrs. Gott inviting her to the Department Convention on Saturday, July 18th to accept her award. Mrs. Delaney and Mr. Lehman were also sent letters congratulating them on being nominated for the Educator of the Year and thanking them for serving as role models and promoting the aims and purposes of The American Legion while instilling patriotism and Americanism in our youth as educators.

Respectfully submitted,

Polly Graham

Polly Graham

American Legion Department of Iowa, Children & Youth Committee

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPT OF IOWA, SCOUTING REPORT

TO: JIM KESSLER, AMERICANISM CHAIR
FROM: WILLIAM GREENLEAF, SCOUTING CHAIR
SUBJECT: SCOUTING REPORT
DATE: JUNE 12, 2026
CC: FILE

A. American Legion Scouting awards.

1 District Scouting chairs were encouraged to spread the word concerning Eagle Scout of the Year award and scholarship, and adult troop and Cub scout leader awards.

B. There are no qualifying candidates for Iowa American Legion Eagle Scout of the year.

D. Involve your posts with your local scouting units, teach the Cub Scouts about our flag, its history, how to respect it. For Scout Troops invite them to your meetings, coach them on the flag, help them with compass work, citizenship and other merit badges. Help with fund raising for expenses such as going to summer going to summer camp, or a High Adventure.

Respectfully submitted.

William H. Greenleaf

Scouting Chair



Baseball Committee Report

June 12, 2026

The 2026 Department Legion Baseball champion is Dubuque County from the 2nd District. Dubuque County is sponsored by Cascade Post 528, Dubuque Post 6, Dyersville Post 137, Epworth Post 650 and Farley Post 656. They won the State Tournament by beating Moville Post 303 by a score of 11-0 and 14-4 in a best of three games series. The games were hosted by Moville Post 303 played at Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa on May 2. Drew Sullivan of the Dubuque County team was awarded the Earl H. Proctor & Esther J. Proctor Most Valuable Player of the tournament. Drew pitched a complete game shutout giving up 1 hit, 1 walk and had 9 strikeouts. Dubuque County will play in the Region 6 (Central Plains) Regional Tournament Aug 5th thru the 9th in Fargo, ND subject to change. Dubuque County won the East Area Tournament by beating last year's State Champion Swisher Post 671 by a score of 11-0 and beating Hiawatha Post 735 by a score of 5-1. A big thank you to Moville Post 303 for hosting the State tournament and thank you to all the volunteers and Legion Families that helped out in the tournament."

There were 6 teams registered in the Iowa Baseball program this year.

District 1 -Swisher Post 671, District Chairman Milo Popp

District 2 -, Dubuque County, Hiawatha Post 735, Marion Post 298, District Chairman Mike Weber

District 3 – no teams, **District Chairman Vacant**

District 4 – no teams, **District Chairman Vacant**

District 5 – no teams, **District Chairman Vacant**

District 6 – no teams, District Chairman Jay Sisco also Vice Chairman

District 7 – no teams, District Chairman Phillip Sollars

District 8 – no teams, District Chairman Richard Meiners

District 9 - Moville Post 303 & Le Mars Wasmer Post 241 District **Chairman Vacant**

4 of the teams participated in the tournament.

The vacancies at the District Chairman position needs to be filled with baseball minded people for our program to grow.

The baseball program had 17 teams were registered in 2024, 10 teams in 2025 and 6 teams in 2026, Although our team numbers are low Iowa is very competitive at the national level. Iowa has had three teams in the world series since 2018.

Department Baseball Committee is looking for Post's to host the 2027 Area & State tournaments.

Mike Weber

Baseball Committee Chairman

Ph. 563-590-4993, Email: mjweber1@bernardtel.com.

2026 National Oratorical Report

On May 15, Roger Hopwood and his wife, Sharon, arrived at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan. As in the past, Hillsdale College provided rooms and meals from its student cafeteria.

On Saturday morning, they enjoyed breakfast with our Iowa contestant, Helen Peng, and her mother. Helen felt confident and told them that she could present a good showing for us.

At 7:15, the volunteers checked in. Sharon was assigned as a timekeeper, and Roger was chosen to provide seating for the judges.

At 8:15, the contestants and escorts reported to their respective contest rooms, followed by seating at 9:00 am.

At precisely 9:15, the quarter finals began. This continued until 11:00, then broke for lunch.

At 1:00 pm, all moderators, timekeepers, assigned topic-preparation monitors, holding-room monitors, ushers, and escorts reported to the contest room for their briefing and assignments.

At 2:30, the semifinal rounds began.

The Hillsdale American Legion Post 53 invited us to their building for an evening of food and socialization. We had done this before and looked forward to doing it again. The staff and patrons of their Legion were very friendly, and we had an enjoyable night.

Sunday morning, we had breakfast, followed by the flag-raising ceremony by the Hillsdale Legion.

At 10:00 am, the final contest started.

Helen Peng placed in the top 16 overall. We felt that Helen had a good showing with her speech preparation, delivery, and mannerisms. She was among the very best America had to offer, and competing on this level is a distinct honor in itself. She has much to be proud of and will succeed in everything she sets her sights on.

On a side note: Helen told me that she had to compete against her sister to get to the Department finals in February. With this in mind, we feel confident that there will be another Peng in the running for the Department Contest next February, and we wish her the very best also.

Roger Hopwood
Department Oratorical Vice Chair

Respectfully submitted,
Marvin Carr
Department Oratorical Chair

Subject: JSSP Report to DEC

Department Commander & Members of the DEC

The Junior Shooting Program progressed with another successful season with 37 shooter registered for the Ia. AL State Championship Match at Camp Dodge.

I would like to express my heart felt thank you to the coaches and parents that support this youth program. With all the practices, invitationals and various state championships, sponsored by different organizations; they unselfishly give of their time and financial resources to insure their shooters get to where they need to be prepared to compete. That is a critical component to this educational youth program.

Now to the meat and potatoes

Ia. AL championship results:

Age group 3:

1st place.	Dash McQueen	518-17
2nd place.	Wayan Bulicek.	501-10
3rd place.	Lizeth Castro.	489-10

Age group 2:

1st place .	Sophia Cronin.	518-9
2nd place.	Brandon Soto Garcia.	506-6
3rd place.	Liam Marshall.	504-1

Age group 1:

1st place.	Wesley Tombaugh.	550-15
2nd place.	Elsie Manning.	530-14
3rd place.	Evan Igrukwishatse.	529-9

The overall winners were the three shooters in age group 1 and were presented with the scholarships for their finish positions.

The top team was MCJROTC from Des Moines

Second place team was the Swisher Sharp Shooters from Swisher

Third place team was Dietrich Kershinski from Muscatine

Forth place team was Ames Air Rifle from Ames

Both the Des Moines MCJROTC and the Swisher Sharp Shooters represented Ia. AL very well at the CMP Regionals at Camp Perry Ohio. I want thank them for representing our JSSP.

Iowa has two teams preparing to compete at the CMP National Championships at Camp Perry the third week in June.

The Des Moines MCJROTC and Iowa State Air Rifle Team sponsored by the Iowa State Rifle & Pistol Association and the Swisher Sharp Shooters. This team consists of 3 shooters from Swisher and a shooter from Muscatine.

Good luck to both teams May every shot end up right where you want it.

I want to close with a big thank you to our new programs Director for doing a phenomenal job organizing the championship match, the incoming Dept. Commander for helping present the awards, the volunteers who gave up their time to help keep the match on track and especially Bill Besgrove; for not only being a phenomenal shooting coach but also being my partner in promoting this great youth program.

Finally I want to apologize for not being able to attend this DEC meeting. Unfortunately; this meeting is on the same day as a community event sponsored by Club 671 at Swisher Post and my presence is required here.

Happy 250th Birthday to the United States of America and THANK YOU all the men and women who wore a uniform to defend our democracy

Gary Palas
JSSP Chairman

VHA top priorities for 2026

Ensure timely access to care and benefits
Drive innovation and challenge the status quo
Expand health care choice by strengthening VA capabilities
Put Veterans at the center of all we do
Empower and hold accountable our workforce
Reach and support Veterans at risk

RESEARCH NEWS

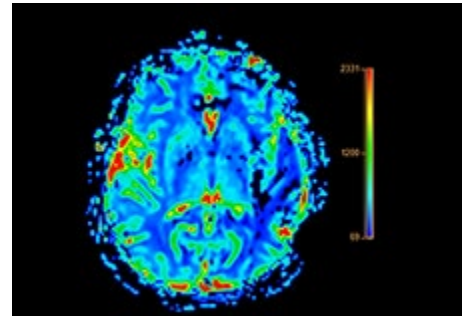
[When Veterans Save Each Other](#)

Project Life Force transforms the standard VA suicide safety plan into a group-built, peer-supported tool for Veterans at the highest risk of suicide, and research now shows that what saves Veterans is often other Veterans. ... (06/02/2026)



[Exciting new treatment being developed for Parkinson's, Alzheimer's](#)

VA researchers have discovered a way to flush unwanted proteins and waste products from the brain by using inhaled puffs of specific amounts of carbon dioxide at set intervals, providing a low-impact, easy-to-administer breathing treatment for patients with neurodegenerative disorders like Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease. ... (04/30/2026)



VA launches MDMA-assisted mental health therapy trial

May 26, 2026 11:00 am

New VA clinical trial to evaluate the safety and efficacy of methylenedioxymethamphetamine-assisted therapy, or MDMA-assisted therapy, for the treatment of severe mental health disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder and alcohol use disorder.

Iowa City VA Health Care System (ICVAHCS) receive top marks in 2026 CMS report

May 22, 2026

Iowa City VA Health Care System announced today that it received a 5-star rating in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' annual Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating report. Iowa City VA Health Care System has proudly maintained this rating for over 3 years.

VA Medical Center in Iowa City is on track constructing additional floors to the south side of the building. At this time, they moved their Eye Clinic back to Second Floor and was told the NEW THIRD FLOOR is going to contain all services for Women. Expected date of operation is late 2026.

VA Central Iowa nurse awarded Distinguished Flying Cross

Katie Lunning, Intensive Care Unit nurse manager at Central Iowa VA, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, marking only the second time the honor has been given to a nurse.

A delegation of Ukrainian medical professionals, selected through a partnership of the Congressional Office for International Leadership and the Iowa International Center, visited [Central Iowa VA](#) in March.

The group had the opportunity to learn about various aspects of U.S. health care systems at varying levels starting with the federal health system in Washington D.C. and moving on to Iowa to speak with medical leaders, representatives and legislators.

Conclusion for Iowa VA Medical-

Iowa has 28 medical sites for the veterans seeking medical attention. Yet, the long-standing issue is not enough staff to ensure timely and effective care. Could this really be the method of hiring or lower pay?

This report respectively submitted by Janet Grass, Chair of Health Administration Committee

Donation Needs List

- Non-perishable food items
- Hand Warmers
- Winter Boots sizes 9, 9.5, 10, 10.5, 11, 11.5, 12, 12.5, 13, 13.5
- Sleeping Bags
- Camping Tents, single or 3 person sizes
- Mats to place underneath sleeping bags
- Men's Winter Jackets, size L & XL
- Men's Winter Caps
- Winter gloves
- Hand warmers
- Thermal long john underwear various sizes
- Toenail Clippers
- Water Bottles
- Monetary donation homeless outreach or women's clinic
- Tracphones



Donations Needed!




U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Iowa City VA Health Care System



Support America's Veterans



Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Benefits Committee

Committee member, Rick Jacoby, visited the Iowa Veterans Home. He reports that the IVH has 392 residents, 715 staff and over 600 volunteers. The Veterans Home delivers on the promise made by the American people to take care of our Veterans. The IVH is open to honorably discharged veterans and their spouses. Veterans who are service connected at 70% or greater stay at no cost. Others pay like you would at any other nursing facility. The big difference is that activities are geared toward the veterans.

This winter, I have used the Omaha VA Medical Center and my local VA clinic. I received excellent care and recommend all veterans to look into eligibility for VA health care. See your county service officer or the Eligibility Office at your nearest VA Medical Center.

I recently toured the Omaha National Cemetery, which serves Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa. The cemetery is 9 years old and is scheduled to inter nearly 114,000 veterans, spouses and family members. They have two committal shelters along with administration and maintenance buildings. I found it to be very well maintained and welcoming. Volunteers man the reception desk.

Thanks to all involved in Legislative Affairs this past session. Sometimes it is what does not happen that matters more than what did pass.

The nomination for the Val Likens Post Service Officer of the Year, is Greg Hoenig, Veterans Service Officer. Greg has always been very active serving veterans. Congratulations to Greg, well deserved.

Our recommendation for filing compensation and pension claims remains to use County Veterans Service Officers to organize and file the claim. Gather evidence on the local level, and then forward the claim to Shane and his staff at the American Legion Service Office in the Federal Building. We feel this makes the best use of available services.

Jerry Hansen

Chairman

VA&R Commission, Benefits Committee

Recap Since February 2026 Report

The Legislative Commission worked hard on our legislative priority, HF 1000, for nearly two years. Our efforts focused on building support and collaboration with key Veterans Service Organizations.

Our work included compiling a contact list for VSOs operating out of the Federal Building, including Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, and The American Legion. A VSO sign-on letter has been presented to Governor Reynolds. We've also developed talking points for VSO members to use when meeting with their legislators, ensuring a consistent and effective message across all organizations.

As we continued to focus on HF 1000, we also continued to address our other priorities, including the Military Homeowners Assistance Program. Despite efforts to increase funding, the program's funds are exhausted and veterans are once again placed on a waiting list. Last session, Governor Reynolds increased funding by \$500,000, bringing the total to \$2.7 million. However, that increase was insufficient, and the program's funds were depleted again.

SF 2246 was introduced. This bill relates to the Military Home Ownership Assistance Program, makes appropriations, and includes effective date provisions. It appropriates \$750,000 from the general fund of the state to the Iowa Finance Authority for FY 2025-2026 to be used for the program, which provides financial assistance to current and former members of the United States armed forces for purchasing homes. The appropriation supplements the FY 2025-2026 appropriation passed by the General Assembly of \$2.2 million. The bill takes effect upon enactment. We must prioritize addressing this funding shortfall this session to ensure veterans receive the support they need.

Despite all of our work, HF 1000 was never considered throughout last session. After the last session began, much of our attention turned to Governor Reynolds' proposed SSB 3079, later becoming SF 2466. This legislation was drafted without input from veterans service organizations, the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, county commissions of veterans affairs, county veterans service officers, or the Iowa State Association of Counties. Engaging these stakeholders prior to drafting could have prevented many of the issues raised.

There were many hurdles along the way. Many meetings, phone calls, and in some cases hurt feelings. Our legislative team stuck to our guns and stayed in near constant contact with key legislators. SF 2466 was a bad bill. I truly believe had the American Legion of Iowa not stuck to our guns, the Governor's Bill SF 2466 would have passed the full House. SF 2466 ultimately died in House committee. We expect to see another version next session.

Going forward, our Legislative Team will continue to work hard. We've already started our planning for the 2026-2027 legislative session with our first meeting just last week. We'll meet again prior to our finance meeting on June 26. We will have more information for you at Department Convention.

Respectfully submitted,

RL Johnson,
Chair,
Dept of Iowa Legislative Commission

Marketing Commission Report

Your marketing commission has done several things over the past few months, Starting off with media and communications the website has been live for a while and as expected error and outdated information is being found please if you find a bug or something that is not right with the website please email John, Ann, Teresa, and Nick so they can work on addressing these fixes. Additionally, the department has purchased a new way to spread information. Constant contact, one of the features that we get is each person has the ability to add information to their “profile” I encourage everyone if you have not already to subscribe to the newsletter and at the bottom of the next newsletter you see click the “update profile” button you will then hit submit, it will send you an email with a nice purple button that says “update your profile” you can then enter your NAME (that’s important) your phone number (important but a little less) and other contact information as well as your birthdate incase we decide in the future to send out birthday greetings.

It is important to update these profiles so when subgroups are being made for things like national convention and leadership school and the “super-secret squirrel club” names can be entered instead of fluffyunicornluvr8675309@updateyourprofile.com. This is usually the point where John steps in and explains more so John anything you would like to add about constant contact?

On the promotions and revenue side we had our 5k and while we had 6 fewer runners, we did have Scheels step up and be a title sponsor and we are still waiting to see the financial impact that has. Who remembers me bringing up a big national sweepstake that this department is apart of? Yeah, that’s still not released yet, turns out every state has different laws and it’s proving to be more difficult to comply with each state’s laws. However! I do feel comfortable showing you the website thus showing you the grand prize so if I could please have whoever is running this digital operation pull up the website. (Crowd ohhs’ and ahhs.)

Other wonderful things that have happened in the past few weeks, we have done 2 Scheels flag exchanges, one in Des Moines and one in Iowa City both resulted in around 100 flags given away at each location. Iowa city is in talks to get their veterans day date lined up and big things may be coming if we can all play our cards right.

We have been invited back to the Iowa wild Veteran appreciation night as a department and they are looking for any sort of military memorabilia that would be appropriate to bring into the concourse to have on display. For example, they have the spirit of Iowa bell and some

dude brings his tractor that has a bunch of stuff painted on it. PLEASE contact me if you have or know of anything of the sort so I can get them in contact with the correct person from the Iowa wild.

There have been 0 fundraising mailings that have gone out in the last 2-3 months we are looking at other options but as for now and the foreseeable future we will not be paying to put anything through the mail in regard to fundraising. We WILL however be looking towards the digital approach, once we have more information, we will pass it along so that leaders at all levels can be informed on what may be coming to your email and more importantly who it comes from. As always, we will not be asking for gift cards to be purchased and sent to the department.

To all the incoming district commanders if you're still awake. I encourage you and your vice commanders while you're doing post visits to sign up for the e-newsletter. We are currently seeking advertising spots and if we can show hard data about how far our information is spreading and how many things are getting opened and clicked then we can make that sale a bit easier. If you're saying, "gee Sam, how will we fit that into our talking points?" well perhaps skip the dead horses that have been beat for the last 25 years and try something new.

In closing, Candi already yelled at you all and the marketing commission is trying to make her stop yelling at you BUT, if you don't help us then we can't make her stop yelling at you.

Samuel Johnson

Marketing Commission Chair

The Department website was redesigned due to aging website building software that won't be updated in the future. The new website is live, as well as the new electronic newsletter, The Legion Link.

The Department Facebook page currently has 3126 followers, an increase of over 400 followers in the last 6 months. The top performing recent posts are a Membership Message from the Department Commander and an infographic discussing service connection and what it means.

The Department Media contest concluded in April, winners will be announced at Department Convention in July.