Notes from the Department Commander

Greetings Kansas American Legion!

We are still seeing unprecedented times in our communities, state, and nation. The Covid-19 pandemic has proven to last a lot longer than many originally imagined and continues to impact our lives. Our organization is over 100 years old, we will persevere, we continue to adapt and overcome because each of you understand the importance of our mission. With that in mind, I have two important things I need to tell you about that are directly related to The American Legion’s Covid-19 response.

First, the national organization understands that many Posts are struggling due to government restrictions placed on them and they want to help. The Mission Blue Post Assistance Program (PAP) is now available and an application can be found at https://www.legion.org/documents/pdf/Mission_Blue_PAP_Application_1.pdf this program is a grant for up to $1,000.00 for Posts that have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and meet the other qualifications. Again, this is a grant not a loan, once completed the applications are being processed rather quickly. If your Post is in need of assistance, don’t hesitate to have Post leadership contact Department Headquarters for assistance in completing the application.

Second, in March 2019 the national organization launched the “Buddy Check” program. Throughout the pandemic these checks have become more important than ever. Isolation can be very hard for individuals already struggling with health problems especially mental health issues. The American Legion is a family, and we need to take care of each other. We can’t know what kind of help someone might need if we don’t ask. The national website has tools to help you with doing buddy checks, check them out at https://www.legion.org/buddycheck/tools. On Sept. 23, 2020, U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, introduced a National Buddy Check Week bill in the Senate (S.4657), mirroring legislation introduced in May 2019 in the House (H.R.2898). I urge you to contact your senators and representatives and encourage them to cosponsor this bill in the house or the senate. Don’t have their email address? No problem, it’s much easier than you may think, just follow this link, https://votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Campaigns/77447/Respond fill in the form and send! Based on your address the site will send the request directly to the correct senators and representatives for you. When I did this I had email confirmations from the senators offices within minutes.

The Department of Kansas Mid-Winter Forum is just around the corner, it will be held in Independence on January 29-31, 2021. I was able to tour the facility in October when I attended the mouse races held there and it has plenty of room for us to be able to meet safely. It has been
recently renovated and has some interesting displays for everyone to see, it is sure to be a successful event. I look forward to seeing you all there.

For God & Country
Marri Krupco
Department of Kansas Commander

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Notes from the Department Vice-Commander and Membership Chairman

Greetings Legionnaires,

I hope everybody had a Happy Thanksgiving, this year was unlike any in the past as Kristy and I spent ours by ourselves only the two of us, instead of the usual full festive bunch. It was inspiring to see so many Posts on Facebook of people still getting together, or at least having Thanksgiving Dinners themselves to celebrate what it means to them. I also understand that many that usually attend Thanksgiving events at Posts have missed out on not only the meal, but fellowship and comradery this year. The Buddy Checks are always a good reason to call and check on Post members but now, during the holiday season it is even more of a reason to call and ask how they are doing. I ask that you continue to call and check on your members throughout Christmas and into the New Year, I’m sure that they appreciate hearing from someone at the Post.

New Years is just a few weeks away now, and if you haven’t yet renewed your membership for 2021 be sure and do it before the new year so you don’t have a lapse in continuous years. There are several ways to pay your dues and the easiest may be online at www.legion.org/renew. All you need is your membership ID number, last name and a debit or credit card to submit. Other ways are to mail or drop off cash or checks to your local Post and they will take care of it for you there. Remember, a membership for a family member or friend to the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of the American Legion would be a great way to tell them how much you care about them this holiday season.

We continue to gain membership numbers weekly, but we still have issues with a few “Goose Eggs” throughout the Department. As of the last report we still had several that need to be worked and revitalized. We had many that are at or above 100% this membership year also, Big Congratulations go out to all those Posts that have worked hard to achieve their goal. Regardless of your activity at the Post, District, or Department level you are helping to keep the American Legion alive and well just by paying your yearly dues, so thank you. Have a wonderful holiday season and a better New Year!

Semper Fi!

Jeremy Ehart
Vice-Commander
The American Legion, Department of Kansas
jehart23@gmail.com
FEBRUARY 1 DEADLINE REMINDER: An important date for membership workers. This is the LAST chance to qualify for the Gold Star Club and other awards. ADJUTANTS ARE TO REPORT WORKERS NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 15. Reporting forms were mailed last month, let us know if you need additional copies.

THREE DUES NOTICES have been sent by National Headquarters; the easy ones are in; the rest will require personal contact. Organize membership drives now before everyone gets caught up in Christmas shopping, etc. For those Posts with club rooms/lounges: Your lounge workers should have a list of unpaid members available to them and they should be collecting dues. It does not matter who collects dues -- but they must be collected. Listed below are suggestions how to collect membership.

1. Divide all unpaid renewals among your membership workers and Post Officers. These people should contact every person on their ‘list’ this month.

2. Divide your membership workers and Post Officers into teams similar to the above suggestion #1. Perhaps your Post can award a prize to the most successful team and/or individual.

3. Use the ‘buddy system’ to organize an old fashioned door-to-door membership drive to seek out new membership, renewals and those who can be reinstated.

4. Ask those who have never helped out on a membership drive to help. Who knows you might find a permanent membership worker. Ask all your membership to help out by remembering who went to service with them and get them signed up. Ditto for all other veterans including today’s active duty military and 80% of the current Guard and Reserve Personnel. Who is a ‘new’ member? Anyone who did not pay their dues to your Post last year but does so this year. There are over 200,000 eligible veterans in Kansas who still haven’t been asked to join.

STATE BOWLING TOURNAMENT: Information and entries for the 74th State Bowling Tournament are being mailed to all past participants and bowling alleys. If your local bowling alley does not receive the information please contact State Headquarters. This year’s tournament will be held at Flint Hill Lanes, 1519 W. 6th Ave. in Emporia January 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, and 30-31, 2021.

TRANSFERS: The Post Transfer section of the Member Data Form must be filled out for all members transferring their membership to another Post. This includes DMS members and is very important because of permanent member ID numbers.

LEGISLATIVE PARTY: Mark your calendar for January 13, 2021 as the date for the Legion’s annual Legislative Party. More information is enclosed.
POSTS INTERESTED IN HOSTING 2021 BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS must notify Headquarters before January 2, 2021.

POST EXCELLENCE AWARD The American Legion's Post Excellence Award has added new criteria. To qualify for the Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), attaining a 90 percent renewal rate and community activity. The purposes of this award is membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to the youth of the community, and increased visibility of the American Legion Family through service projects. A post achieving this qualification will have had numerous post members involved in planning and achieving these goals. Many posts are most likely already active in these areas and will qualify without extra effort. Others, however, will need to increase their efforts in one or more areas to qualify for the award. **The standard to be achieved in each area is as follows:**

**Membership:** Post must attain at least 103 percent of their membership goal. At least one post officer attends district meetings. **Consolidated Post Report:** CPRs must be submitted by July 1. The American Legion's federal charter requires the submission of an annual report to Congress on activities for the year. MyLegion.org has made it simple for a post to submit its CPR in a timely manner. **90% Renewal Rate:** The post must renew at least 90 percent of their members that were on the 2020 roster. **Community Activity:** The post must conduct an event that connects the local community with The American Legion post. The objective is to open your doors, welcome the community in, and educate them on what The American Legion is all about and how the post is an asset to the community. Posts do not need to have a physical building to accomplish this. This activity can be held in a park, a community center, or anywhere the post can welcome and interact with the local community. The district commander responsible for the post will certify a post as having achieved the four specified criteria. The district commander will submit a list of posts meeting the criteria to department headquarters. That list should include the post name, phone number, address and commander's name. If possible, accompany the last two criteria with copies of press releases submitted to the local media about the projects to show that the projects were not only accomplished but that an attempt was made to enhance the image of The American Legion through local media. The copy submitted should include a date and time stamp showing receipt by the media outlet.

THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM will be held at 9:00am, March 13, 2021 at American Legion Post #17, 114 McCall Rd, in Manhattan. Prior to the State Contest there are nine District Contests scheduled for the winner to qualify for the state contest. Scholarships vary for each District with scholarships given to the top three District Contestants. They then move on to the State Contest where nine contestants compete for $750; $500; and $250 and $150. The state winner gets an all expense trip to the National Finals Contest. The three National finalists receive scholarships as follows; 1st Place, $20,000; 2nd Place, $17,000; and 3rd Place, $15,000.

SCHOOL AWARD PROGRAM: Information on the School Award Program is enclosed. This is an excellent program for a Post to be involved with local school(s). Posts reaching quota by February 1, 2021 will receive Medals and Certificates in accordance with Page 5 of the Membership Campaign and Awards Handbook.

RENEWAL POST CARDS: Department Headquarters will receive a supply of the Membership Renewal Post Cards. These cards can be very effective when sent to delinquent members. Contact Headquarters with the number that you need.
CONGRATULATIONS: To Blue Rapids, Corning, Greenleaf, Pratt, Hoisington, Dighton, Bazine, and Grainfield for making QUOTA. (As of November 25.)

DISTRICT STANDINGS AS OF NOVEMBER 25, 2020: District VII, 1,283 – 83.31%; District VI, 1,075 - 80.77%; District IX, 806 - 78.79%; District VIII, 645 - 78.18%; District I, 3,032 - 77.45%; District II, 2,742 - 77.20%; District V, 2,177- 74.84%; District IV, 2,246 – 72.24% and District III, 1,433 - 66.50%. Dement Headquarters Post 58 (included in Dept. total) is 681. Total membership is 16,120.

IN ORDER TO AVOID RECEIVING THE NEXT RENEWAL NOTICE ALL PAID MEMBERS’ CARDS MUST BE IN THIS OFFICE BY DECEMBER 10, 2020.

LEGISLATIVE PARTY:

Mark your calendar for January 13, 2021 as the date for the Legion’s annual Legislative Party. The Reception will be held on 13 January 2021 at 5:00 P.M., before the Mid-Winter Conference, this year. It was in agreement with the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate that it should be earlier in the year to get the Legislators engaged on Our items that need to be discussed and supported for Veterans and their Families. We will see how many Legislators show up and how the Bills progress through both the Senate and the House this year. Depending on the results of being held earlier, we may revert back to the Wednesday after the Mid-Winter Forum.

Location again this year is the CAPITOL PLAZA HOTEL, 1717 SW TOPEKA BLVD., TOPEKA, KS 66612. Several issues important to Veterans and Veterans Benefits are expected to be brought before the Legislature. The briefing for members is at 5:00 pm and the reception for the Legislators begins at 6:00 pm. Reservations of $25.00 per person may be sent to Department Headquarters, 1314 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, KS 66612 using the coupon below.

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LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

Yes, I plan to attend The American Legion Legislative Reception, Jan. 13, 2021 in Topeka. Enclosed is $____ ($25 per person). Note: please list the name of each attendee.

No, I am unable to attend. Enclosed is my donation of $____ to help make this American Legion function a success.

Name__________________________________________
Address________________________________________
City__________________________________________Zip___________

Mail to:
Dept. Headquarters
1314 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka, KS 66612

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Centennial Coin Raffle

Win a piece of American Legion History!

One person will win three

American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coins

1 Uncirculated $5 Gold Coin ($463 value)
1 Uncirculated Silver Dollar ($57 value)
1 Uncirculated Clad Half Dollar ($31 value)

($551 total value)

Tickets $5

5 tickets for $20
11 tickets for $40

Drawing to be held at Department of Kansas Leadership College in June 2021 (need not be present to win)

To purchase tickets online contact: Jeremy Ehart at 1-620-899-0010 or jjehart23@gmail.com; or Marri Krupco at 1-620-224-7354 or mkrupco@gmail.com
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Team Kansas T Shirt  $20.00 each
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+3.00 3x
+4.00 FOR 4x

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