



7th DISTRICT NEWS

March 2026



*Our Legion
Family*

DISTRICT OFFICERS And EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

COMMANDER
Pete Flannery
C 507—213-7800

VICE CDR AT LARGE
Carl Wilson
320-304-5333

MEMBERSHIP DIR
John Jones
507-469-7995

VICE CDR – AREA A
Dean Knutson
320-766-0502

VICE CDR – AREA B
Don Brehmer
320-483-3361

VICE CDR – AREA C
Don Dufner
C 320-493-5824

VICE CDR – AREA D
John Jones
C 507-469-7995

ADJUTANT
Jan Ekert
320-339-9927

FINANCE OFFICER
Chip Manson
C 320-220-3001

CHAPLAIN
David Ecker
C 605-695-2409

SGT AT ARMS
Keith Seidler
C 320-309-3411

HISTORIAN
Karen Welander
C 320-444-6105

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AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

FROM THE SEVENTH DISTRICT COMMANDER – Pete Flannery

Hello 7th District!

Well, the weather is getting better for now, hopefully it will continue to get warmer, but I won't hold my breath. So, it's newsletter time again and I find myself writing at the last minute, but we always seem to get it done.

Anyway, not to much happening lately but I did get to attend the district oratorical contest this month and was really impressed with these young competitors, good luck to all that will move on to state. I would like to encourage you all to find some young men and women to attend boys and girls State, and kids for Legionville. I think if we just get the word out there, we can help both of these programs stay successful.

We had a good turnout for midwinter despite the cold weather; a few weren't able to attend, sorry, we missed you but look forward to seeing everyone at the next one. which should be the appreciation rally March 14 in Bloomington. And to my district officers, keep up the good work and thanks for your commitment.

And on a final note, the fundraising for my project is going OK. The money is going towards Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN checks can be filled out as underlined ,this is a very well-planned event. I believe they go for a three-day weekend and tour all the memorials in DC. and it's a very meaningful trip for these veterans so thank you for offering any support you can.

One last thing for me to bring up ,it seems there are emails out there circulating from me. Most of them are scams and for some reason it's happened to a lot of the past commanders as well. Just be mindful of the subject matter and remember if it is really important that I get in touch with you I will usually just call you on the phone.

Thanks all.

Pete Flannery
7th District Commander

***MARK YOUR CALENDERS ***

7TH DISTRICT HAPPENINGS:

*****NATIONAL COMMANDERS TOUR*****

April 18 through April 24, 2026

April 18

**National Commander arrives at the
 Fargo International Airport**

April 19

Tour Fargo VA - AM

Post 431 – Twin Valley Lunch

Post 117 - Thief River Falls Dinner

April 20

Post 15 – Bagley Breakfast

Post 134 – Walker Lunch

Post 46 – Little Falls – Dinner

April 21

Camp Ripley - Museum Tour

Post 12 – Long Prairie - Lunch

Post 323 – Clearwater Dinner

April 22

Post 112 – Elk River Breakfast

Minneapolis VA Home

133rd Airwing Tour

Post 620 – Hugo Dinner

April 23

Veterans Service Building, MN Dept of

Veterans Affairs, National Commander

will speak at Veterans Day on the Hill,

Military Radio

Post 523 Golden Valley – tour of new

Post

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Committee Chairpersons

American Education
Bill Kuperus 320-905-1868

Americanism/Oratorical
Ruben Nathe 320-593-8654

Legion Baseball
Joe Dollerschell 320-894-8181

Blood Program
Jan Ekert 320-339-9927

Boy Scouts
Chip Manson 320-220-3001

Boys State
Donald Brehmer 320-843-3361

Children and Youth
Karen Welander 320-444-6105

Employment
Karen Welander 320-368-0760

Junior Shooting Sports
Carl Wilson 320-304-5333

Law and Order
Carl Wilson 320-304-5333

Legionville/Safety Patrol
Victor Gades 320-288-6810

Legislative
Jan Ekert 320-339-9927

Legion Softball
Hal Meyer 507-530-4412

National Security/Foreign Relations
Jan Ekert 320-339-9927

Public Relation & Media
Pete Pedersen 702-553-5713

Rehabilitation Advisory
Keith Seidler 320-309-3411

Sons of the American Legion
Cal VanHorn 320-589-3495

American Legion Riders
Garylee Davenport 320-224-1895

****ATTENTION POST COMMANDERS, ADJUTANTS
AND MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORS****

Please update your Post roster. There are many instances where members need to be contacted, and the information is not correct or is missing although. Ask for updated information in your meetings and ensure all phone and email information is current.

In the near future we will be able to send a newsletter through mylegion.org at no cost to the District. We need to work with the Department and our Webmaster to make this happen. You should be able to find it on the 7 District site as well. Please send any changes in your Post leadership contacts to the District Adjutant Jan Ekert at Janecs1@gmail.com and we will get the District Directory updated and out to each post with corrections (see enclosed with this newsletter.) I have not gotten any changes since the last newsletter went out but have repeated the changes in this one in case you missed them.

ADJUTANT'S CORNER

Jan Ekert 7th District Adjutant

Mid-Winter is over and it was nice to see many of you again. I hope that the time was well spent and questions that you may have had were answered. I did put many items out for you to pick up and take back to your posts as did others I hope you make use of them. The Mid-Winter Conference is filled with all types of guests and visitors, which allows the opportunity for them to talk about their part of the family, what their projects are and to meet the upcoming years candidates for different positions and offices. We had a total of 14 Posts represented and 23 members present. The 7th District has 74 Posts and a projected membership goal for 2026 of 4,645 as of January 14th the total new and renewed membership is 3,947 members which is 84.97% of the goal. Keep working those renewals. Hope to see many of you at the District Convention May 30 I at the New London Post 537.

**Jan Ekert,
7th District Adjutant**

If you are wanting to submit an Event that your post is hosting please email them to me to include in upcoming newsletters.

Janecs1@gmail.com

SEE PAGE 7 FOR UPCOMING REPORTS AND THE DATES THEY ARE DUE

**Cont National Commanders Tour
April 23**

Post 45 – New Prague Dinner

April 24

Departs Minnesota

**Times and contacts were not provided,
contact Post for further information.**

District 7 Convention

Post 537

New London, MN

May 30, 2026

DEPARTMENT EVENTS:

Appreciation Rally

Post 550 Bloomington, MN

March 14, 2026

Department DEC meeting 9:30am

Social Hour 11am

Department Commanders Testimonial

Post 45 – New Prague

June 27, 2026 – Social Hour 5pm

Department 107th Convention

July 9-11

Pre-Convention Committee Meetings

July 8

Post 167 – Willmar

Willmar Convention Center

60th Annual Camporee

September 9-13

Legionville – Brainerd, MN

OTHER EVENTS:

Legion College – Camp Ripley

April 23-26, 2026 registration deadline is

March 15 cost \$200.00

Joint membership and Fundraiser FISH

FRY Area D

**Posts: 69 Granite Falls, 127 Hanley Falls,
294 Echo, 503 Cottonwood, and 536 Wood
Lake**

April 10 – 4 – 8 pm at Post 69 Granite Falls

Auxiliary Officer/Contacts

President
Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278

1st Vice President
Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104

2nd Vice President
Karla Minnick 320-894-4835

Executive Committee Member
Cassandra Mahoney 320-305-0436

Executive Committee Member
Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

Secretary
Ashley Kuperus 320-984-7850

Treasurer
Bev Dresser 320-354-5390

Immediate Past President
Sandy Wersal 320-310-9417

Chaplin
Samantha Stai 320-295-2330

Parliamentarian
Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

Sgt-at-Arms
Robyn Scott 320-434-0431

Honorary Junior Officers

President
Riley Wolbeck

Vice President
Katelyne Walker

Secretary
Brooklyn Mahoney

Historian
Katelyne Walker

Sgt-at-Arms
Miley Mahoney

Chaplin
Brooklyn Mahoney

AREA VICE COMMANDERS NEWS –**Vice Commander At Large****Carl Wilson****No report****Area A Vice Commander****Dean Knutson**

Greetings from Area A of the Seventh District!!! Now is the time of the year when the memberships that keep coming in seems to slow but we cannot give up on our responsibility of trying to recruit new members and keep the members who are members already within our posts .Membership is everyone's responsibility and not just the membership directors of the posts.

I am happy to report that Area A has two posts at goal and that being Millerville and Wheaton. There are also another 14 posts who have either made or surpassed the 85% goal set by the Department for February 11th. Thanks for all your hard work to keep the American Legion strong within our District. Pederson Tripp Post 357 in Ashby SAL will be hosting a Kiss my Racehorse Bingo on February 14th at 2 P M and will have Meat Raffle and Horse Racing between Bingo Games. The Auxiliary Unit will be hosting a Pie Social for all.

area Veterans and their guests on Sunday February 12 at 2 P M at the Saturday 14th, open to all area Veterans and their guest with social hour at 5:00 and the supper at 6P M.

Dean Knutson**Area A vice Commander**deknutson29@gmail.com

320-766-0502

Area D Vice Commander and District Membership Director**John Jones**

As we begin the new year, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all our Legion Family members who continue to serve their communities with dedication, pride, and purpose. The winter months provide an important opportunity to reflect on our progress, re-energize our efforts, and prepare for a strong and successful year ahead. Membership remains the lifeblood of our organization, and I am proud of the work being done across Area D and District 7 to reach veterans where they are. Whether it is renewing current members, welcoming new ones, or simply checking in on a fellow.

cont pg 4**OTHER EVENTS:**

Litchfield Post 104 Community Open House June 27, 2026 12pm to 2:30pm

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER –**Dave Ecker****7th District Chaplain**

The month of February brings Valentine's Day, a day that most of us celebrate with a loved one. Many of those serving in our Military won't have the chance to be with their loved ones and it could be a lonely day for them. We need to pray for them to be strong and safe. Prayers for the troops will need to be especially strong that day. You must never underestimate the power of prayer.

Many things are going on in our world, not only abroad but also here at home. We need to pray for our leaders to make the right decisions regarding the law and this country's Constitution which our forefathers crafted many many years ago.

God bless our troops and God bless America.

Dave Ecker, 7th District Chaplain**COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:****VA and R - REHABILITATION CHAIR****Keith Seidler**

I will be mailing out the Post Service Officer annual report forms to each Post sometime in February. The form is being updated, so hopefully that will be completed for this year's reporting time frame. Instructions on correctly filling out the report will be included in the mailing this year also. Follow the instructions and fill out the form completely and return forms to me by May 1st. On December 30th the American Legion Department of MN VA&R committee met at the Montevideo Veterans Home for a tour of the facilities. 44 Veterans presently reside there with more rooms becoming available as staff is trained. Currently there is an 18-month waiting list. The home is

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**Auxiliary Committee
Chairman**

Americanism
open

Children and Youth
Open

Community Service
Open

Constitution & Standing Rules
Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

Education
Pamella Lubenow 320-793-6773

Auxiliary Emergency Fund
Open

Finance
Wanda Seidler 320-309-3528

Girls State
Sandy Wersal 320-310-9417

History
Open

Junior Activities
Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850

Leadership
Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278

Legislation
Wanda Seidler 320-309-3528

Membership
Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104

Memorial
Kathy Kessler 320-305-2090

National Security
Pat Ecker 320-695-2409

Past Presidents Parley
Karla Minnick 320-894-4835

Poppy
Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

Public Relation
Ashley Kuperus 320-984-7850

VA&R
Sandy Wersal 320-310-9417

Memory Book
Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850

cont - Area D Vice Commander and District Membership Director

John Jones

Veteran, every personal connection strengthens our Legion family. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to reach out to members who have not yet renewed—often a simple phone call or conversation makes all the difference.

In that spirit of outreach and unity, **Area D posts will be hosting a joint American Legion fish fry membership and fundraising event on April 10th, 2026**, at Granite Falls Post 69, bringing together posts from **Echo, Granite Falls, Wood Lake, Cottonwood, and Hanley Falls**. This collaborative event is designed to strengthen camaraderie between posts, raise funds to support Legion programs, and—most importantly—serve as a welcoming opportunity to engage veterans and community members who may not yet be connected to the Legion. Events like this demonstrate what we can accomplish when posts work together toward a shared mission. As we look ahead to the Mid-Winter Conference and the months leading into convention season, let us remain focused on unity, outreach, and growth. Encourage younger veterans to see the American Legion for what it truly is: a place of service, camaraderie, advocacy, and continued commitment to our communities and our country. Every event, every meeting, and every conversation is an opportunity to share our mission and invite others to be part of it. Thank you for your leadership, dedication, and continued service. Together, we will make 2026 a year of renewed strength, cooperation, and purpose for Area D and District 7.

**John Jones,
Area D Vice Commander & Membership Director
District 7 – The American Legion, Department of Minnesota**

AREA B Vice Commander

Don Brehmer

No report

Don has agreed to step back into the position of Area Vice Commander until someone else is found or expresses an interest in that position. Let Commander Pete know if you are interested.

AREA C Vice Commander

Don Dufner

No report

Cont – VA and R - REHABILITATION CHAIR

Keith Seidler

always looking for Posts to sponsor or to play bingo with residents. The Montevideo Veterans Home is also asking for donations for a Veterans Memorial Wall which is currently in the planning stages. The memorial will honor Veterans from the Montevideo Veterans Home that passes away. The estimated cost of the memorial is \$30,000. Donations need to be earmarked for the Veterans Memorial Wall. The VA&R Committee that toured the Montevideo Veterans Home included Pam Krill, Tom Behrend, Keith Seidler, and Dept Advisor Jason Storm.

Encourage Congress to pass H.R. 2605/S. 1441, the Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act. Legislation proposes a 5-year pilot program for the VA to award grants to nonprofit organizations to provide service dogs to eligible Veterans, cover the cost of training, and provide lifelong veterinary insurance. Information from a recent American Legion Weekly Grassroots Newsletter email. Continue to do buddy checks and Be The One for other Veterans!

Veterans Helping Veterans

VA and R – Rehab Chair Keith Seidler

NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS (NSFR) , Jan Ekert

A big focus of the National Security committee is the Law Enforcement Firefighter of the year, keep your eyes out for service members that you might know that would be good candidates for this award. The National Security also looks at the repatriation of those missing and not accounted for. National Security falls under one of the four Pillars which is Americanism.

Jan Ekert, District National Security Foreign Relations Chair

Auxiliary Greeting and News

7th District American Legion Auxiliary

Mary Kueperus, American Legion Auxiliary President

Greetings to you all.

Thank you to all who were able to attend the 7th District Mid-Winter despite the weather. The American Legion Auxiliary had 11 members in attendance. We were honored to have Department President Robin and 1st Vice President Linda in attendance at the conference even with the yucky roads and wind! Thank you to Litchfield Commander Paul for all his work in making the conference go well. Thank you also for the staff for the lunch and other duties.

As of January 14th, 7th District Auxiliary is in 5th place. Please remember to send in memberships as you receive them. Please don't hold on to them. We have eight Units who will receive "The First 7 in the Seventh" awards this year. There are eight of them because the last two Units reached their goal on the same day.

Thank you to all Legionnaires who continue to serve their country by being involved with The American Legion. Taking care of our veterans, military and their families, and communities is very important to The American Legion Family.

**Mary Kueperus,
American Legion Auxiliary President**

Chairs without an Article

(information taken from reports given at the Mid-Winter Conference)

LEGIONVILLE Chair - Victor Gades

Victor presented a brief written history of when Legionville started which was in the 1950's. Legionville supports at least 2 Pillars of the American Legion (Children and Youth and Americanism). He reported on the Camp Sessions for 2026 as June 14-19, June 21-26, July 5-10, July 12-17, July 19-24, and July 26-31. He does note that the 7th District provided support for Legionville in 2025 by sending 22 Campers and also donated \$690.00. He Thanked the posts that sent campers as well as identified other organizations that supported Legionville which shows that other organizations recognize the value and importance of the Legionville experienc3efor the youth in their communities. He also noted the various hunts that are available at Legionville Disabled Deer Hunt in Sept 30 to Oct 1, and a Disabled Turkey Hunt Oct 3-4.

- 14-19 June 2026
- 21-26 June 2026

ORATORICAL/AMERICANISM

Rueben Nathe- 7th District

Oratorical/Americanism Chair

The basis of Americanism is to inspire patriotism among our youth as well as adults. This is done through patriotic observances, civic instruction in schools and through the programs and committees that the American Legion promotes. The Americanism committee is one of the 4 Pillars of the American Legion which are Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Rueben provided the dates for the oratorical contest, Sunday February 1st at 1pm, which will be held in Willmar. At the present time there are 2 contestants in the 7th District with posts encouraged to let Rueben know if they have any student interested in competing. He also continues to look for judges or other help with the contest. Contest give the youth in our communities the opportunity to research the Constitution of the United States with contestants having to research the constitution.

Rueben Nathe- 7th District

Oratorical/Americanism Chair

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR –

Jan Ekert

There are several issues at the Legislative level in the State of Minnesota as well as at the National level. One of major importance to all Retired and Disabled Veterans is the Major Richard Star Act. This aims to eliminates the deduction that occurs in compensation when a disabled Veteran receives both retirement and disability compensation. It is working to remove the "wounded warrior tax," that reduces the retirement pay of service

Cont - LEGIONVILLE Chair - Victor Gades

- 5-10 July 2026
- 12-17 July 2026
- 19-24 July 2026
- 26-31 July 2026

Other Events using the facilities

- o Work & Play Weekend 15-17 May 2026
- o Junior Fun Weekend 7-9 August 2026
- o Camporee 4-6 September 2026
- o ALR Romp 11-13 September 2026
- o Disabled Deer Hunt 30 Sept – 1 Oct 2026
- o Disabled Turkey Hunt 3-4 October 2026

LEGIONVILLE Chair - Victor Gades

AMERICAN EDUCATION

Bill Kuperus

American education week is Nov 16-20, 2026. Bill provided a brief on the history of why the American Legion got involved with American Education week. This is held annually the week before Thanksgiving. He then presented the schedule of the various activities throughout the week.

Bill Kuperus

American Educations, 7th District Chairman

Boy Scouts

Chip Manson

EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR

The eagle Scout of the year packages can be submitted anytime between November 1 and January 1 and must be received by the District Chair Chip Manson no later than February 15th. Chip encourages them to be sent to him as he will check them for accuracy, to make sure they are complete and that no information is missing. Over the past 5 years we have had a District Eagle Scout yearly and possibly 2 this year. He then went through the amts that the Eagle Scouts earn if they are winners at both the state and the national levels. District 7 awards a \$750.00 and the Department \$2,000.00 and the national winner receives \$10,000.00 with 3 runners up \$2,500.00 each.

Any questions? Contact Chip Manson at (320) 220-3001. Mail completed packages to 408 Miller St., Spicer, MN 56288

Chip Manson

District 7 Scouting America Committee Chair

Cont – LEGISLATIVE – Jan Ekert

members who are medically retired due to combat related injuries. If passed eligible veterans would receive both their full retirement and disability compensation. To follow this the files are H.R. 2102 and S 1032.

The other issue that has a significant benefit for Veterans with Disabilities is changing the Homestead Market Value Exclusion. These exclusions have not changed in 10 years even though home valuations have increased, which reduces the benefit or impact of the current exclusion. The proposal is to raise the 70-100% disabled from \$150,000. to \$200,000. And the 100% P&T from \$300,000. to \$400,000. The House File is HF 4259 but at the time of this writing there has not been a Senate Companion File.

Jan Ekert

Legislative Chair 7th District

*******Remember if you have events or activities that you would like to share send me the dates and what it is and I will add to the Newsletter, or if you have something you would like to get out to the members in the district I can also do that.**

Janrcs1@gmail.com

TO POST TO THE DISTRICT WEBSITE

Should you have events in your area that you would like to have posted on the 7th Districts web site send them to Rueben Nathe at ruebenn@hutchtel.net . To check for 7th District news, use the link or address below to access the web site. **Web site link for the 7th District News and events: www.mnlegiondisrict7.org**

REPORTS AND THEIR DUE DATES:

MAKE SURE AND MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS, ALSO SEND ONE TO THE DISTRICT CHAIR AND THE DISTRICT ADJUTANT

Consolidated Post Report	Due June 1 st
Children and Youth	Due March 31
Post Service Officer	Due May 1 st
Community Service	Due June 1
Annual Post Data Report	Due April 12
Blood Reports	Due April 30

Don't wait until the last minute to send these reports off, you can always do them earlier. Remember to always keep a copy, send one to the District Chair and 1 to the District Adjutant that way if one is misplaced or lost there are multiple records.

Directory Corrections/Changes:

Minneota Post 199
 Commander/Mbrshp Robert Mhyre
 Email correction; blmyhre@gmail.com
 Dassel Post 364
 Commander name correction
 John Van Eschen
 Graceville
 Commander Post 297
 Address change:
 Gary Hoffman
 611 E 3rd St
 Graceville, MN 56240
 Beardsley Post 302
 Commander Address Change
 Steve Almquist
 18079 Northstar At, Apt 325
 Big Lake, MN 55309
 Correction to Area
 Buffalo Lake Post 469 is Area C
 Hector Post is Area C
 Montevideo Post 59
 Commander John Lyngen
 520 S 11th St
 Montevideo, MN 56265
johnlygen@gmail.com

7th District American Legion

Jan Ekert, Adjutant

31693 733 Ave

South Haven, MN 55382