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**7th DISTRICT NEWS**

**October 2025**



 ***Our Legion***

 ***Family***

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|  **DISTRICT OFFICERS** **And** **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****COMMANDER**Pete FlanneryC 507—213-7800**VICE CDR AT LARGE**Carl Wilson320-304-5333**MEMBERSHIP DIR**John Jones507-469-7995**VICE CDR – AREA A**Dean Knutson320-766-0502**VICE CDR – AREA B**Jacob HurstC 320-295-2443**VICE CDR – AREA C**Don DufnerC 320-493-5824**VICE CDR – AREA D**John JonesC 507-469-7995**ADJUTANT**Jan Ekert320-339-9927**FINANCE OFFICER**Chip MansonC 320-220-3001**CHAPLAIN**David EckerC 605-695-2409**SGT AT ARMS**Keith SeidlerC 320-309-3411**HISTORIAN**Karen WelanderC 320-368-0760**JUDGE ADVOCATE**Richard WogC 320-905-3028**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 320-368-0760**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**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****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** |  AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF  MINNESOTA**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT COMMANDER – LINDA DVORAK**Hello 7th District American LegionI just want to bring you up to date on some things happening in the Department. Don't keep this news to yourself, share it with the posts!I know some of you have already received this from the Department Membership Director, but as of September 22 we are still sitting in 4th place Nationally for Membership.  As of September 24th, we are at 63.3% membership, and our retention rate is 61.81%.  This means we have already made the October 15th cutoff and are close to the November 13th cutoff of 65%. We always seem to hit a wall come January and our membership seems to slide downward from there. We need to keep our momentum going all through the year. Open Houses, Revitalizing posts that are struggling are some ways to help stop this slide.  Have you registered for the Fall Conference yet? I would like to see as many posts as possible at the Conference.  This is a learning Conference, we have several classes lined up which are designed to help both Posts and Districts, this is also where we honor our Outstanding Military members.  Also, we will be having a joint service project with the Auxiliary and SAL.  Pearl Harbor Rally will be December 6th in Buffalo. You can register by going to <https://mnlegion.org/pearl-harbor-rally/>.  We will be having presentations on the Americanism and National Security Pillars! National also has some great training opportunities! See the National website for more information on training opportunities.As always, please remember my project for this year, Fund 85 and also Tables and Benches at the new Military and Veterans Museum at Camp Ripley (checks need to be made out to Minnesota American Legion Foundation-in the memo line Fund 82).Enjoy the fall weather, winter will be here before we know it!**Better Together/Back to the Basics-The Four Pillars****Linda Dvorak****Dept of Minnesota Commander****FROM THE SEVENTH DISTRICT COMMANDER –** **Pete Flannery**I am finally getting around to writing a newsletter article, for those of you that haven’t met me yet. My name is Pete Flannery. I am a member of the Morris Post 29 and a 20+ year member of the Legion. My theme this term is **VETERANS FIRST** and my project is the Honor Flight of Minnesota and North Dakota. I am looking forward to getting to know some of your post commanders and members. I’d love to come out and visit and address any issues that you may have. You can reach out to me at any time. My contact information is posted on the seventh district website and under the Officers and Executive Committee and list, as an officer of the district this is what we are here for, to help our veterans and our organization succeed and grow, so please feel free to call me with questions if I don’t know the answer I will find it for you. And lastly, I would like to thank everybody that steps up and gets involved, you are greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank my new district membership director, John Jones, I chose him because his local membership numbers were phenomenal and he is doing a fantastic job so far for the district so thanks, John. And my other officers for guiding me along my journey and supporting me as commander this year.Pete FlanneryDistrict 7 Commander **VETERANS FIRST** \*\*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. Go around in your meeting and ensure all phone and email information is current. In one instance both phone numbers were blocked and there was no e-mail address in mylegion.org. In the near future we will be able to send a newsletter through mylegion.org at no cost to the District. Let’s get this done.Remember that when the address is not correct or missing your members are not getting their Legionnaire or their Legion Magazine. Please send any changes in your Post leadership contacts to the District Adjutant Jan Ekert at Jancrs1@gmail.com and we will get the District Directory updated and out to each post via email and hardcopy.**ADJUTANT’S CORNER**Jan Ekert 7th District AdjutantWow, today I think I have finally finished updating the District Directory and will be sending out both a Hard Copy to your Post Commander and your Post Adjutant. There are still a few glitches and so I am asking that all of your Post Officers check that the information is correct in the directory and I am also asking the Post Adjutants to please send me a copy of your Posts Committee Chairs please make sure you list your Post number so I put the information in the correct place. Did you know that there are 222 Post positions within the 7th District, I know because I had to enter all of them in the directory. The National Convention was a tremendous opportunity to hear from various speakers, 2 of whom left a real impact on me as a Veteran the first was Tulsi Gabbard, Director of National Intelligence, who spoke to the convention urging those in the organization to continue to help our nation overcome the challenges we are facing. She noted that we face many challenges and threats across the country and that they are not related to one group or party. She also stated that there are no better leaders than the American Legion and those who have worn the cloth of this country. The second speaker was Doug Collins, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I believe his focus is one that all Veterans are hopeful of coming to fruition. He is working hard to decrease the **backlog on claims,** putting an intense focus on reducing the numbers. He clearly stated “The VA no longer works for itself; the VA works for the Veteran of the United States. He also addressed **Community Care,** with the priority to get Veterans the care they need be that at a VA medical center or in the community, with a full implementation of the Mission Act, and eliminating the bureaucracy. He further stated that the focus has changed from an organizational focus, which is how well the VA is taking care of veterans. You can watch both Tulsi and Doug on the National website as the convention was live streamed. Let me know and I can walk you through to the site. **Jan Ekert,****7th District Adjutant**  **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**  **John Jones**District 7 Leadership, and PostsPlease see the latest Department of Minnesota Membership Report as of **September 3, 2025**: you can find this at Minnesota Department of the American Legion **Overall Totals**New Members: **305*** PUFL (Paid Up For Life): **6,619 cont pg 4**

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR cont -**  **John Jones*** Renewals: **24,069**
* HQ Transfers: **133**
* **Total Membership: 31,126**
* **% of Goal Achieved: 58.07%**

**District-Level Highlights*** Largest Districts: District 6 (**5,442**), District 3 (**5,598**), District 10 (**3,789**), District 1 (**3,811**)
* Smaller Districts: District 4 (**985**), District 5 (**672**), District 11 (**997**)

**District 7 Breakdown*** Total Members: **2,568**
* New Members: **19**
* PUFL: **571**
* Renewals: **1,974**
* HQ Transfers: **4**

**These are the totals for the 7th District as of 09/17/2025** New Pufl Renewals HQ Trans Totals Goal % of GoalSUM: 26 571 2,344 4 2,945 , 4 645 63.4**Largest Posts in District 7:*** Willmar – **259 members**
* Litchfield – **136 members**
* Montevideo – **136 members**
* Alexandria – **120 members**
* Marshall – **110 members**
* Many smaller posts report under 50 members.

**District 99 (At-Large):*** Minnesota At Large (St. Paul): **997 members** (2 new, 194 PUFL, 801 renewals)

✅ **Key Insight:** Membership continues steady growth with over **31,000 members statewide**, reaching **58% of our overall goal**. Districts 3 and 6 remain the strongest, while District 7 shows moderate progress with several standout posts.Please reach out if you have any additions, corrections or questions.**Thank you Team!**  **John Jones, 7th District Membership Director****LEGIONVILLE** **Victor Gades**Nothing new to report on Legionville or Safety Patrol at this time. Hoping to have more information for the next newsletter.**Victor Gades, Legionville Chair** **NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS (NSFR)** **Jan Ekert**The National Security Foreign Relations (NSFR( Team met at Camp Ripley September 12-14, 2025. The NSFR is one of the Four Pillars of the American Legion. Its primary purpose is to maintain and promote a strong National Defense by supporting military members and their families. The mission is accomplished by supporting multiple programs that recognize the needs of families during a soldier’s deployment, needs upon returning home. The NSFR also recognizes outstanding Enlisted soldiers of the year, works with Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, ESGR to maintain a soldier’s rights upon return from deployment.  Based in the Washington office, the National Security Division handles issues that directly affect the lives of military personnel, as well as matters of national and global importance. Division staff work closely with the Pentagon, defense committees in Congress and base commands nationwide. Among its most prominent areas of work is transition assistance for military personnel, including programs to help wounded warriors through medical discharge and into the VA health-care system. The full-commission-led division also supports the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Junior ROTC programs, the Foreign Relations Committee and law-enforcement components of the organization’s mission, as well as the Blood Donor Program.**Jan Ekert,** **District National Security Foreign Relations Chair****American Legion Auxiliary****Mary Kuperus 7th District President**Greetings to the 7th District American Legion Family.  I am Mary Kuperus, the 7th District American Legion Auxiliary President for the 2025-2026 Auxiliary year. I am honored to lead all the Units in the 7th District. The 7th District theme this year is **“Giving Veterans our utmost respect.”** I have chosen a patriotic gnome as the symbol. The 7th District project is to raise funds for the Montevideo Veterans Home for their activity fund. I enjoy having fun and I am hoping the veterans living at the home dotoo. My goal is $2000. If you have any extra funds, I would really like to give the veterans an opportunity to have awesome activities to join in on. Please watch for opportunities for Unit members to participate in also.  **Continued on page 6****American Legion Auxiliary cont– Mary Kuperus**This is my second time as the 7th District President. I served in 2010-2011 with Harley Wahl as Commander. I enjoyed that year and will continue to support veterans, military and their families, and our communities. Please know, if you would like a visit from me, email me at wmkuperus@tds.net or call me at 320-212-3278. I would love to visit all Units in the 7th District!Thank you to all veterans for serving our country wherever you were. Thank you for protecting me and my family. Thank you!**American Legion Auxiliary****Mary Kuperus 7th District President****BOYS STATE INFORMATION AND LINK****Contact Jennifer Kelly at the Department of Minnesota if you have additional questions about Boy’s State** **jkelly@mnlegion.org** **or 651-291-1800.**The link below is a great web site on Boys State.  There are many links that could prove valuable to School Counselors, boys and parents looking into boys state, and what past attendees think about the program.  There is a good video in the web site but is a little long - over 15 minutes - but it gives a great look at what the week-long event entails.Take a look when you have time.  This may be a great sales aid and maybe something the counselor(s) could send out to potential junior boys. <https://www.mnboysstate.org/>**Legislative** **Jan Ekert**There is a lot happening at both the State and National level relating to Legislation. I am listing the Legislative priorities for 2025 at the State level . For the full report you can access this at the Minnesota Department of the American Legion under the Department tab then scroll down to Legislation and the department priorities will have a download. Here are some of the key points of that legislation:**Minnesota Legislative Priorities*** Bring back the Veterans Affairs committees for both chambers, this committee was eliminated in 2023 as well as another part of this committee in 2024 **Continued on page 7**

 **Legislative , continued**  **Minnesota Legislative Priorities*** Protect veterans from consumer fraud and claim sharks, Fraud and aggressive practices target Veterans which takes advantage of our Veterans with disabilities. At the State and National level, the American Legion wants criminal penalties against these non-accredited violators

Please go to the Department website for additional information. Tab over to Department and scroll down to Legislative. **Commanders Task Force Priorities**Priority 1 - Separate Veterans Omnibus Bill* **Pass a clean Veterans Omnibus Bill in the 2025 session.**

Priority 2 – Hunting, Fishing, & Trapping for Veterans* Change MN DNR’s license fees for Veterans 50% or greater service-connection to a greatly reduced cost license (set at the minimum amount for the license to qualify for federal excise funds are $3).
* Recognize all veterans be recognized in MN by setting the out of state license price for non-resident veterans to the resident license price.
* Priority 3 – Modernize the Disabled Market Value Exclusion - Veterans

The exclusion values for disabled veterans and surviving spouses have not changed in over 10 yearsPriority 4 – Minnesota Claim Shark BillThere is a proliferation of parties advertising their services to advise veterans on VA benefits claims. Some of these parties are not accredited with the VA and charge steep fees for their servicesPriority 5 – Food Insecurity* Food insecurity is a growing problem among Minnesota veterans. In the 2023-2024 biennium, $540,000 per year in legislative funding to Metro Meals on Wheels addressed this problem in metro areas.

However, food insecurity persists in rural and outstate Minnesota.Again, to read the full articles on the Commanders Task force for 2025 go to the Department’s website click on the Department tab and scroll down to Legislative.**Jan Ekert****Legislative Chair 7th District**At the bottom of this page is a link that may provide you with information found in multiple manuals. It will also have information on charters, general membership questions and forms, a history of membership throughout the states within the American Legion Family. Let me know if this kind of information is helpful and I will continue to add resources for the Posts in the 7th District. You will need to hold the Ctrl button and click to get to the sight if you are using your computer otherwise it’s a long type in. Jan | \*MARK YOUR CALENDERS \*7TH DISTRICT HAPPENINGS:District 7 Mid-WinterPost 104Litchfield, MN January 17, 2026No Snow date setDistrict 7 ConventionPost 537New London, MN May 30, 2026DEPARTMENT EVENTS:Department of Minnesota Fall ConferenceOctober 24-25, 2025, Rivers Edge Convention Center St Cloud, MNHosted by the Convention CorporationBlood Drive Oct 23 12pm – 5pm 29 Units GoalDepartment of Minnesota Convention July 9-11, 2026, Willmar Conference CenterHosted by Willmar Post 167 OTHER EVENTS:Pearl Harbor RallyDecember 6, 2025, 11amHosted by Buffalo Post 270Appreciation Rally March 14, 2026, 11amHosted by Bloomington Post 550 Pg 1OTHER EVENTS: contLegion College – Camp Ripley April 23-26, 2026 registration deadline is March 15 cost $200.00CHAPLAIN’S CORNER – Dave EckerOctober is almost here, and schools are in full session. It is very important that the Legion continues to support and pray for students, teachers, the support staff and all those that keep our education system one of the best in the world. One of the 4 Pillars of the Legion is taking care of our children and youth. Coming in November is National Education Month, which will be an excellent opportunity for your Post to participate in things like Flag etiquette training, what the Pledge of Allegiance means, properly folding of the Flag, and anything else you can plan to do at school. Many Posts recognize teachers with a small gift or a meal. Above all we must pray to keep our schools safe as there have been far too many instances of violence in our schools.We must keep our troops in our prayers. God bless America.**Dave Ecker****7th District Chaplain****AREA VICE COMMANDERS NEWS –** **Vice Commander At Large****Carl Wilson****No report****Carl Wilson****Vice Commander at Large** **Pg 2****AREA A****Dean Knutson**Greetings to the members of Area A of the Seventh District. Hope all is going well and you are working on your membership and do not forget to work your 1982 and 1982AD lists as there are many members in the at-large post either at department or at national headquarters  who have not been picked up by a post in the different areas of the district. If you need help in this area feel free to get a hold of me at deknutson29@gmail.com. I would let to let Area A know that currently there are 14 posts out of the 19m posts in the Area that are sitting at 50% or higher with five posts over 75%. Thank you to everyone within the Area for your hard work and let's keep on going to help the 7th District hit 100% in membership for this year.**Dean Knutson****Area A Vice Commander****AREA B****Jacob Hurst****Nothing to report****AREA C****Don Dufner****Nothing to report****Don Dufner****Area C Vice Commander****No report available** **Pg 3****AREA D****John Jones, Area D vice Commander**Community ImpactArea D posts remain active in civic and memorial ceremonies, youth programs (scholarships, Boys State, Americanism), veteran and family support initiatives, and fundraising through local partnerships.Goals Moving Forward• Boost membership, especially younger veterans.• Strengthen under-goal posts through support and mentorship.• Expand services like transition assistance and mental health advocacy.• Increase community visibility through events, schools, and media.Call to ActionThe American Legion is more than membership — it’s a mission of service. Veterans in Area D are encouraged to visit your local post, renew or upgrade your membership, volunteer for community programs, and share the Legion story with fellow veterans. Together, we can keep the proud tradition of service strong in western Minnesota.**John Jones****Area D Vice Commander**    **Pg 4** **COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:****VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION - Keith Seidler**14 pieces of Veterans-related legislation were recently passed in the House of Representatives. Department of MN American Legion Adjutant Mike Maxa's September 18th article highlights these pieces of legislation.  According to the article, The American Legion contributed to the language of one of these bills...H.R.3579 (The Veterans Readiness and Employment Program Integrity Act). For more information on the VR&E program bill and all 14 pieces of passed legislation read the entire article on mnlegion.org under the Adjutant's Corner. Another interesting article to read under the Adjutant's Corner is about America's last living WW II ace pilot that recently died at the age of 103. Keep ongoing records of your Post's activities throughout the year. This will make filling out your PSO report a lot easier, and it will be more complete. I was contacted by the Dept Service Officer to forward to her my PSO report instruction sheet that I mailed out last spring along with the PSO report form to 7th District Posts. I was also asked to share ideas on how to make the PSO report shorter or more aligned to what we do today at the Post level. My hope is that the PSO report form can be simplified. Activities that your Post is doing make a difference, so please take the time to record and report it! Thank you!**Keith Seidler,** **VA&R 7th District Chairman** **Pg 5** **AMERICAN EDUCATION** **Bill Kuperus****American Education Week**This year American Education Week is from Nov. 17, 2025, to Nov. 21, 2025. The theme for this year is Community Engagement. Which highlights how schools and their communities work together to advance student achievements and success.During this week each day is set up to celebrate our teachers, support staff, and the public.Monday, Nov. 17th is Kick-Off Day. On this day the teacher explains about education week and its theme. Tuesday, Nov. 18th is Family Day. On this day, the parents are invited into the classroom to experience what their child does in a day at school. Plus, now the child can show their parents what they do.Wednesday, Nov. 19th is Education Support Professional Day. On this day we honor the Education Support Professionals who continue to keep students safe, healthy, and ready to learn. Thursday, Nov. 20 is Educator Day. On this day, community leaders are invited to explain/teach the students what they do. They can be the mayor, banker, shop owner, College Professor, and members of the American Legion Family. (Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and American Legion Riders)Friday, Nov. 21 is Substitute Educators Day. On this day we thank these professional educators who provide a critical link in the quality of education to our children in the absence of the regular teacher.**Bill Kuperus****American Educations, 7th District Chairman** **Pg 6****Blood Committee Chair****Jan Ekert**The Department Fall Conference is coming up and once again this year the Department is holding a Blood Drive with a goal of 29 Units. Last year the 7th District had a great showing through the efforts of Posts and individual members. Remember to track the number of Blood Drives that your post or individual members from the Legion Family ,which includes the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and the Riders, you can take credit for this on your annual blood report. Donating Blood saves lives. Again, try and come to the Fall Conference in St Cloud, donate blood and stay for the conference, which is a training opportunity to learn more, refresh your skills and experience the camaraderie that you may have had in the military. You might just see someone you served with and may not have seen in a long time. Bring a new or potential member with.**Jan Ekert****Blood Committee Chair****Boy Scouts****Chip Manson****EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR**Eagle Scout of the Year nomination packages can be submitted anytime between November 1st and January 31st. District 7 Scout BSA Committee Chair Chip Manson MUST receive packages no later than February 3rd. Applications can be found at this legion.org website:16ACY1021Eagle Scout Nomination Form.pdf (legion.org) District 7’s Eagle Scout of the Year receives a $750 scholarship and then competes at the Department (State) level. The  **Continued on page 8 pg 7****EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR cont**Minnesota winner receives a $2,000Scholarship; The National winner receives a $10,000 (with three runners up receiving $2,500.Any questions? Contact Chip Manson at (320) 220-3001. Mail completed packages to 408 Miller St., Spicer, MN 56288Donation request letters were recently mailed to all Minnesota Legion Posts, asking for donations to the Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship program. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated!!!**Chip Manson****District 7 Scouting America Committee Chair**ORATORICAL/AMERICANISMRueben NatheNothing to report at this time.  More information will be available after Dept. Fall Conference and it's meetings. Rueben Nathe7th District Oratorical/Americanism ChairShould 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**](http://www.mnlegiondisrict7.org) **Pg 8** |

 <https://www.legion.org/information-center/in-the-media/publications/organization-membership-awards?utm_campaign=Source+Code+Here&utm_content=MEMBERSHIP&utm_term=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Adestra> .