



7th DISTRICT NEWS

OCTOBER 2026



*Our Legion
Family*

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DISTRICT OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

COMMANDER

Carl Wilson
C 320-304-5333

ADJUTANT

Royce “Pete”
Pedersen
C 702-553-5713

VICE CDR AT LARGE

Mark Kern
C 320-221-5277

VICE CDR – AREA A

Fran Bitzan
C 320-808-1479

VICE CDR – AREA B

Don Brehmer
C 320-304-1884

VICE CDR – AREA C

Don Dufner
C 320-493-5824

VICE CDR – AREA D

John Jones
C 507-469-7995

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

We now have a Facebook site for everyone to use. The address is:

Mn 7th District American Legion

(The Commander’s picture is in the circle).

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02dTbyB6iZtTMZ7VYrTg1uSzQvbvtk1xKqZrkubAGRkUDxMJBhV6biyftZHVzdrwDnI&id=61593033647521

Together, We Lead. Together, We Serve. Together, We Inspire.

A Message from District 7 Commander Carl Wilson

It is truly an honor to serve as your District 7 Commander. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside so many Legionnaires who give their time, energy and hearts to support our Veterans, our communities and one another.

My theme this year is “Leading, Serving, Inspiring.” To me, those three words capture what The American Legion is all about.

Leading doesn’t always mean being the person in charge. Sometimes leadership is simply being the person who steps up when something needs to be done, lends a helping hand, or encourages someone else to get involved.

Serving is something every Legionnaire understands. Whether we are helping a Veteran, supporting a family, participating in a community event, or honoring those who came before us, every act of service makes a difference.

And then there is **Inspiring**. I believe this is one of our greatest responsibilities. We need to inspire our fellow Legionnaires, our communities and especially our young people to understand the importance of service and the sacrifices made to protect the freedoms we enjoy.

A Message from District 7 Auxiliary President

Hi! I’m Kathy Schmiedeker, your 2026-2027 7th District President. I’m eligible through my Stepfather, Fred Huisinga. He fought in World War II. Our Unit Post is #545 in Spicer, MN. Where I have been a member for 23+ years. I have held many Unit and District positions. My husband David is a S.A.L. member through his father. Together we have 3 children and 4 grandchildren.

I’m proud to be able to serve this year! I promise to do my best to work with others to see our veterans get their needs met.

Theme: Rest & Nest, Taking Care of our Veterans

Symbol: Birdhouse with Flag and Nest

Project: Relaxation Therapy with Bird Supplies for the Veterans Homes.

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**DISTRICT OFFICERS
& EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**
(CONTINUED)

MEMBERSHIP DIR
Mark Kern
C 320-221-5277

CHAPLAIN
Karen Welander
C 320-444-6105

FINANCE OFFICER
David “Chip” Manson
C 320-220-3001

JUDGE ADVOCATE
Richard Wog
C 320-905-3028

HISTORIAN
Karen Welander
C 320-444-6105

SGT AT ARMS
Keith Seidler
C 320-309-3411

That is why my project this year, **Fund 87**, is especially meaningful to me. The American Legion Fund 87 Junior Shooting Program gives young people an opportunity to learn discipline, concentration, responsibility, safety and sportsmanship. It also gives them a chance to build relationships with Veterans and members of the Legion Family.

When we invest in our young people, we are investing in the future. We have an opportunity to be mentors, share our experiences and perhaps plant a seed that will inspire a young person to become a leader and a servant in their own community someday.

I look forward to visiting the Posts of District 7, meeting with you, listening to your ideas and working together. I know we have challenges ahead, but I also know what this District can accomplish when we pull together.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me and for everything you do for our Veterans and our communities. I am proud to serve alongside you.

Let’s lead by example, serve with our hearts, and inspire those who will carry the torch after us.

FUND 87 — INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH

Help us support the American Legion Fund 87 Junior Shooting Program. Your contribution to **Fund 87** helps provide young people with opportunities to develop **discipline, responsibility, focus and sportsmanship** while building positive connections with our Legion Family.

Every contribution matters. Every young person matters. Together, we can help inspire the next generation.

For God and Country,

Carl Wilson - District 7 Commander

TO POST TO THE DISTRICT WEBSITE

Should you have events in your area that you would like to have posted on the 7th Districts website 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**

Goal: \$2400 \$300 for each of our 8 Veterans Homes.

If you would like to donate to my project. I would be forever grateful! Together I believe we can get the project accomplished!

On my 7th District travels, I will be bringing a bird house with me for anyone that would like to donate to our project. It takes us all to make things happen! If you would like to donate, please send donation to our 7th District Treasurer - Bev Dresser @ P.O. Box 225, New London, MN 56273 - Please put President Project in the memo line. I would like to Thank you ALL in advance for your donations. Together we can accomplish our missions!

If you would like me to visit your unit for special events or meetings feel free to contact me. Kathy Schmiedeker @ 11790 North Shore Drive, Spicer, MN 56288, (320) 295-2104 or email me @ kschmiedeker@gmail.com.

I look forward to accomplishing all our mission together this year with our 7th District American Legion family!!

**Kathy Schmiedeker, 7th District
American Legion President**

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**COMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSONS**

American Education

Bill Kuperus
H 320-905-1868

Americanism

Ruben Nathe
H 320-593-8654

Legion Baseball

Joe Dollerschell
C 320-894-8181

Blood Program

Jan Ekert
C 320-339-9927

Boy Scouts

David“Chip”Manson
C 320-220-3001

Boys State

Donald Brehmer
C 320-843-3361

Children and Youth

Karen Welander
C 320-444-6105

Employment

Open

**Junior Shooting
Sports**

Carl Wilson
C 320-304-5333

EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR

The 2027 Scholarship Award program is fast approaching! Eagle Scout of the Year nomination packages may be submitted anytime between November 1st and February 1st. District 7 Scouting America Committee Chair Manson MUST receive nomination packages no later than February 11th.

Applications can be found at legion.org website: [Nominate Eagle Scout | The American Legion](#)

District 7's Eagle Scout of the Year receives a \$1,000 scholarship and then competes at the Department (State) level. The MN winner receives a \$2,500 scholarship; The National winner receives a \$10,000 scholarship (with three runners-up receiving \$2,500).

Two years in a row, our MN Eagle Scout was selected for a 2nd place National scholarship!! Unfortunately, District 7 did not have any nomination packages submitted in 2026 - so, we were not able to award the \$1,000 scholarship.

Our Department HQ in St. Paul will soon mail a letter 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!!

Any questions? Contact Chip Manson at [\(320\) 220-3001](tel:3202203001). Mail completed packages to him at [408 Miller St., Spicer, MN 56288](#)

7th DISTRICT REHABILITATION

Recent VA&R and Legislative focus areas include-

* Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA): Legislation combining 62 bipartisan priorities like the Major Richard Star Act, adaptive prosthetics, and suicide prevention.

* Medication Rating Rules: Advocating against immediate enforcement of the VA rule that would rate veterans in their medicated state during C&P exams.

* VA Accountability and Reorganization: Monitoring VHA restructuring plans to ensure care delivery and access remain uninterrupted for rural and aging veterans.

Let your voice be heard! Visit our American Legion Grassroots Action Center to urge the members of Congress to pass the Take Care of American Veterans Act (TCAVA).

ORATORICAL CONTEST

It's time now to start your planning for the 2027 February Contest.

Information for this coming year will be posted on the Dist. #7 Web Site \Americanism as it is determined.

Rueben Nathe – Oratorical Chair

Website -

www.mnlegiondistrict7.org

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A new business item for all post agendas should be collecting data for the Children and Youth report for when the forms come in February. The report should provide a balanced program for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs.

Improving conditions for all children and youth with due concern for maintaining the integrity of the family home.

We are implementing the guidance in the Preamble which states "to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism" and "to inculcate a sense of individual obligations to the community, state and nation".

Thank you, Commander Carl, for this appointment.

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**COMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSONS**
(continued)

Law and Order
Carl Wilson
C 320-304-5333

Legionville
Victor Gades
C 320-288-6610

Legislative
Jan Ekert
C 320-339-9927

Legion Softball
Hal Meyer
C 507-530-4412

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

Oratorial
Rueben Nathe
H 320-593-8654

**Public Relation &
Media**
Pete Pedersen
C 702-553-5713

School Safety Patrol
Victor Gades
C 320-288-6610

Go to mnlegion.org and under About scroll down to Legislation. From there you can contact your state lawmakers and the national action center.
Keith Seidler - 2026-2027 7th District VA&R Chairman

DIST. 7 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

410 Minnesota teams recently successfully completed the 2026 American Legion Baseball Season. 40 of those were based in District 7. And by my count, 56 American Legion Clubs in District 7 are located in communities represented by these teams. Congratulations to those clubs for their enthusiastic support of this valuable program.

- 3 division 1 junior teams (Alexandria-2, Marshall)
- 16 division 2 junior teams. (Sacred Heart, Montevideo, Madison, BOLD, Minneota, Canby, Granite Falls, Dawson, Prinsburg, Ashby, Starbuck, New London-Spicer, Atwater, Benson, Litchfield, Morris)
- 3 division 1 senior teams (Alexandria, Marshall, Willmar)
- 18 division 2 senior teams. (Atwater, Eden Valley-Watkins, Litchfield, New London-Spicer, Ashby, Morris, Wheaton, Benson, Glenwood-Lowrie, Dawson, Granite Falls, Madison, Montevideo, BOLD, Osakis, Cottonwood, Kerkhoven)

I can say that Patriotism and Americanism are still alive and thriving through the Minnesota American Legion Baseball Program. All one needs to do is attend any legion games going on in your area, and in particular, any substate or state tournaments that take place here.

Two state tournaments were successfully hosted by District 7 communities in 2026. Alexandria hosted the Division 1 Junior Tournament.

Meanwhile, just down the road at Minnewaska High School, The Glenwood Lowry team hosted the Division 2 Senior Tournament. Both were well run events and well supported by their communities and Legions Posts.

VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE

Good Day Mighty 7th . As we push farther into the Legion year let get membership front and center. If we want to succeed, we must have members. Currently this year we are sitting in 9th place in the Department. We can do better! Let's get current as there are only a couple of months left in the year. They must renew by December to keep the continuous year counter going.

Let's also strive to contact the members that are registered At Large and find them a home in one of our local posts. Don't forget that in October we have Fall Conference from the 22-24 in St Cloud. Keep up the good work and let me know if you have any questions.

Mark Kern - 7th Dist. Vice Commander at Large

MEMBERSHIP

Hello Mighty 7th . We are well into the 26-27 Legion year and the membership drive. As we work on the Membership drive please ensure that as your Post receives the updated membership that they are processed as they come in and that you are not holding them until you receive multiple renewals. Currently District 7 is sitting in 9th place for membership.

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Sons of the American Legion

Cal VanHorn
C 320-589-3495

American Legion Riders

Garylee Davenport
C 320-224-1895

****Remember ****

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

Four teams from District 7 participated in state tournaments at the end of the season. Alexandria and Glenwood-Lowry played as host teams of tournaments in their communities. Marshall played in the Division 1 Senior Tournament hosted by New Ulm. BOLD took home the runner-up trophy at the Division 2 Junior Tournament played at Parkers Prairie.

I can't express enough my gratitude for you men and women who have served our country in such selfless and humble ways. You set a tremendous example for our young men who participate in the American Legion Baseball Program. Please stay in contact with whoever it is that operates the legion baseball program in your communities and let's make 2027 another banner year for American Legion Baseball. Joe Dollerschell – Dist. 7 Legion Baseball Chairman

HISTORIAN

Does your post have a Historian for The Post History? It is difficult to find storage for items and preservation of keepsakes. Is a photo album enough to fill the job description of a historian.

As we age, some events lose importance to us and fall by the wayside. If your post wants to start a new tradition of honoring the four Chaplains ceremony, please contact me now to get the ball rolling. Chaplain Karen @ (320) 444-6105

NATIONAL SECURITY CHAIR - JAN EKERT

The national security foreign relations team met this past weekend at Camp Ripley. We had seventeen people in attendance from District Commanders or their representatives as well as the chairman from the districts. One of the Big focuses of this meeting is to review the different programs that National Security works with.

This year for the Enlisted soldier of the year there were only three submissions which is low when compared to previous years. Many times, the issue is that we do not solicit applicants enough within our respective districts.

Let's improve on this and get membership front and center in our tasks.

The Challenge from the Department Membership Director this year is to make the At Large Legionnaires a priority. These Legionnaires are already members of the American Legion. Take the time to reach out to them and let them know that they matter and invite them to transfer to a local post. I have sent a breakdown of the At Large Legionnaires by county to the Area Vice Commanders. Please reach out to them for your county information.

If you need any help with processing memberships, please reach out to me at markkern3@hotmail.com or 320-221-5277 and I will help you as much as I can. Mark Kern - 7th District Membership Director

DIST. 7 AREA "A" VICE COMMANDER

Hello, I am Fran Bitzan, your new Area A Vice CDR. I may be new as a District Officer, but I have been very active as an officer in my home Post 527 of Millerville. My goal is to be available to Area A Posts as often as possible to help, especially with recruitment. This is likely the most significant challenge Posts face. I have ideas and am working on a plan which I will communicate out soon.

CHAPLIN

Help us to follow the ideals of the American Legion and to be ready to carry on when we are called on to do so. Lord, look after those who have fallen in defense of our country. Amen.

A reminder to all posts that you as individuals can recommend someone, ask them to look at the application process which is now available online on the Department website and then fill it out.

They do need to look at the checklist which tells them the things to submit, one of which is letters from their commander of their reserve or guard unit, letters from people in their community and their accomplishments which should include their military performance reports. NSFR also works with the ROTC programs, Civil Air Patrol, Beyond the yellow ribbon to name a few.

We also focus on what is happening with the repatriation of our POW's and MIA's and accountability for them. This year we had the pleasure of visiting with our National Vice Commander Hugh (Homer) Holmes as he was at Camp Ripley for the Grand Opening of the new Military Museum, it is Awesome, I would encourage all of you to try and make a trip to see it. The museum focuses on Minnesota's involvement in all Wars, 911 to name a few. I will try to keep you all updated as we pursue other avenues dealing with National Security.
Jan Ekert

DIST. 7 AREA "B" VICE COMMANDER

Area B Vice Commander Donald Brehmer my e-mail address dcbrehmer@hotmail.com and my phone number is 320-304-1884. I'm sending out to all Area A Commanders a list of 1982 State Legion members from different counties throughout the 7th District Area.

Please make an effort to contact them to become members of the American Legion in your Posts. If that isn't possible try to get them to transfer to our District 7 at large post. I'm here to help you your posts with whatever your needs are. Hopefully we will see some of you at District, State or local Legion events in the upcoming years.

BLOOD CHAIR JAN EKERT

Kudos to all the posts who work diligently to support Blood Drives in their areas. I have talked at length with Terry Larson about trying to get the Blood report a little more inclusive and get out the information of how you can take credit for what your posts do to support this life saving measure.

Beyond recruitment, I suspect Posts have other goals such as starting an SAL Squadron. Having just done this last year, I can help. Matter of fact, I have a couple startup packets in hand ready for anyone. Just contact me.

Lastly, I am willing and ready to visit your Post, whether for a regular meeting or a special gathering. I'm not afraid to get some grim on my new white crowned District cover.

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR JAN EKERT

The Legislative Committee has just started to look at what their focus is going to be on. They have not had a formal meeting, and I plan to contact their committee chair to see if I am able to sit in and listen to their planning so that I am able to provide you all with updates in each newsletter.

Many of you are watching what happens with TCAVA, I do not have any confirmed steps. Many of us have been following this in both the news and posts that we may be getting on Facebook, messages from the Veterans organizations that we subscribe to just to name a few.

TCAVA has both good and not so good things that are included in the bill.

As a post adjutant and blood chair I have had questions when filling out the Blood Report. To help you better understand what the report is looking for I will try to provide you with a little more information. Your posts do not need to host a blood drive itself, if your post helps with another entity in hosting a drive record the number of your posts, auxiliary, Sal, and Rider's members that help.

You should also be asking at every meeting who has donated blood in the past month and record this in your minutes or on a form to make the total number of volunteers and units donated.

Also, if you are attending the Fall conference in St Cloud in October there is a Blood Drive October 22 from 1200 to 1700 (5pm) and you can donate there and give your post credit. Remember every unit of Blood Saves lives. Jan Ekert Blood Chair

AMERICANISM

This year with being the 250th Anniversary of the United States and One of the Legions four Pillars being Americanism where we promote & practice patriotism.

It is where Posts must practice showing respect for our U.S Flag & Country, our programs like Boys Scouts, Boys State, Oratorical Contest, Legion Baseball, Jr Shooting Sports & Legionville.

Legions Post must remember that the most important part of all these programs & events starts with showing respect for Flag, Pledge of allegiance or playing of the National Anthem.

Rueben Nathe – Americanism Chair

The 2026 Minnesota American Legion Fall Conference is scheduled for Oct. 22-24. We will be in St. Cloud at the River's Edge Convention Center.

<https://www.mnlegion.org/fall-conference>

At the National convention, the resolution was sent back for further study/review. Both the VA and R committee and the Legislative Committees have many of the same goals and missions. Helping all Veterans!

I am hoping to be able to sit in at some of their meetings and plan to contact the committee chair as the 7th District representative so I can share with you all the focus of the team.

****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.

Please send any changes in your Post leadership contacts to the District Adjutant Royce Pedersen at Royce.Eugene.Pedersen@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.