



7th DISTRICT NEWS

February 2025



*Our Legion
Family*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

COMMANDER
Carl Wilson
C 320-304-5333

VICE CDR AT LARGE
Pete Flannery
C 507-213-7800

MEMBERSHIP DIR
Jan Ekert
C 320-339-9927

VICE CDR – AREA A
Victor Gades
C 320-288-6610

VICE CDR – AREA B
Jacob Hurst
C 320-295-2443

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

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

ADJUTANT
Mark Kern
C 320-221-5277

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

JUDGE ADVOCATE
Richard Wog
C 320-905-3028

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

FROM THE SEVENTH DISTRICT COMMANDER - CARL WILSON

Greetings 7th District:

Well, we made it to another membership target date on the 15th of January. The target for January 15th was set at 80% and the Mighty Seventh District surpassed that mark with 82.13%. Now our next goal will be 85%, which we will need to meet by Feb 12th and then 90% on March 12th. I know that if we work hard, we can make these two upcoming membership goals.

The Seventh District held its Mid-Winter on January 18th and was attended by approximately 50 people from the Legion family, which I think is a pretty good turnout although it could have been better. I do want to send out a big thank you to Olivia Post 186 for the wonderful job they did in hosting the event and providing everything that we needed to hold a successful Mid-Winter Conference. The meal they served was excellent.

For those that attended the conference, we went over a variety of topics and reminded everyone of the upcoming reports that will need to be filled out and sent in. We stressed to everyone that when you fill out the reports you should make copies of everything for your records. That way if the District or Department says that they do not have the reports or forms, all you need to do is make a copy and send it to them. Remember some of these forms must be filled out every year even if there has been no change from the previous year. If you have trouble finding any forms, please reach out to me and I will help you get the forms needed. Also, this is the time of the year that we start choosing award winners. If you have any Post or individuals that you feel deserves a particular award, please let me know what award and I will work on getting it for them.

My Commanders project, Solider 6, received three donations during the Mid-Winter conference totaling \$1,700.00, thank you for the donations! I am hoping to bring in some more donations for the Project before my year ends. My goal is to raise enough money to train one services dog, which runs around 8 to

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***MARK YOUR CALENDERS *
7TH DISTRICT HAPPENINGS:**

**District 7 Convention
Post 204 Echo
May 17**

DEPARTMENT EVENTS:

**National Commander's Tour of Minnesota
March 24-28, 2025**

**Department Commander's Testimonial,
April 5, 2025
Northern Lights Casino & Hotel**

OTHER EVENTS:

**Sweetheart Rally
February 8, 2025
Post 137, Royalton, MN**

**Minnesota State Oratorical Contest
February 22, 2025
Osseo Post 172 & Anoka Post 102**

**Appreciation Rally
March 8, 2025
Post 580, Chanhassen, MN**

**Buddy Check Week
March 9-15, 2025**

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 320-444-6105

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

Mark Kern 320-221-5277

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

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10 thousand dollars, so I have a long way to go.

To conclude this article, I would like to remind everyone of some upcoming dates and functions.

Feb. 8: Sweetheart Rally, Royalton Post 137

Feb. 22: Minnesota State Oratorical Contest, Osseo Post 172 & Anoka Post 102

March 8: TAL & ALA Department Executive Committees, Chanhassen Post 580

March 8: Appreciation Rally, Chanhassen Post 580

March 9-15: Buddy Check Week

March 15: American Legion Birthday

March 24-28: National Commander's Tour of Minnesota

April 5: Department Commander's Testimonial, Northern Lights Casino & Hotel

April 24-27: Minnesota Legion College, Camp Ripley

May 15-18: Work & Play Weekend, Legionville in Brainerd

May 17: Dept. President's Testimonial, Fairmont

May 17: 7th District Convention, Echo Post 204

Thank You for all you do!!

Carl R. Wilson

District 7 Commander

Serving Veterans from the Past to The Future.

****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 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 Mark Kern at markkern3@hotmail.com and we will get the District Directory updated and out to each post via email and hardcopy.

Minnesota Legion College Spring 2025

April 24-27, 2025

15000 Minnesota 115

Little Falls, MN 56345

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER – Dave Ecker

Mid-Winter has past and I pray that everyone that attended made it home safe and sound.

President Trump has taken the reigns to run the country. Pray that God will guide the President in all his decisions in the future.

We must continue to keep our troops in our hearts and in our prayers. There are a great many of whom are in harm's way each and every day. Our support and prayers do make a difference even though it may be hard to see. God does work in mysterious and wonderous ways. Remember God will not give us more than we can handle.

Dave Ecker

7th District Chaplain

AREA VICE COMMANDERS NEWS –

AREA A

Victor Gades

Greetings A new calendar year is here, and winter still has a grip on us. This is the time that our membership slows to a snail's pace. It is imperative that we don't slow our membership sign-ups now. If we don't sign up delinquent members, snowbirds and new members, we will

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Auxiliary Officer/Contacts

President

Sandy Wersal 320-354-4517

1st Vice President

Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

2nd Vice President

Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104

1st Executive Committee Member

Cassandra Mahoney 320-305-0436

2nd Executive Committee Member

Pamela Gades 320-589-2147

Secretary

Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278

Treasurer

Bev Dresser 320-354-5390

Immediate Past President

Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

Chaplin

Samantha Stai 320-295-2330

Parliamentarian

Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

Sgt-at-Arms

Robyn Scott 320-434-0431

Advisors

Wanda Seidler

Cheryl Gilmer-Schauman

Karla Minnick

Honorary Junior Officers

President

Brooklyn Mahoney

Vice President

Riley Wolbeck

Secretary

Riley Wolbeck

Historian

Miley Mahoney

Sgt-at-Arms

Miley Mahoney

Chaplin

Coral Hurst

ADJUTANT'S CORNER

Mark Kern

Page eight of this newsletter is from The Minnesota Legion Department, which has established QR codes to communicate with your legislators. Each code identifies the area in which it is representing. Please use the codes to contact your state legislators and tell them that you support the efforts to reduce the property tax, charitable gambling or the claim sharks, it only takes a couple of minutes to complete and send. Just use your phone camera and hold it over the QR code and click the link when it shows up on your screen.

Mark Kern

7th District Adjutant

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Jan Ekert

Hello "Mighty Seventh" Well 2 weeks in a row we have held fifth place in membership for the week of January 22, 2025 our percentage is 84.48% which is a 2.35% increase from 1/15/25, we did meet the Department of goal of 80% for the 15th of January. This is traditionally a time of year where all of the Districts and the Department seem to be on a downhill slide. I know that we can do better. It is not always something that comes easy and takes the work of all of us. I hope that we can keep climbing and not lose our momentum. We need to keep working hard to get those numbers up. If your post is having problems call me. I will help make phone calls, or come and talk with your members, whatever it takes. We do have some posts that have already exceeded the next timeline goal of 85% which is February 12. Keep those phones working, making those buddy checks and asking for their renewals at your post meetings. I am hoping that many of you took the time to come to the 7th Districts Mid-Winter in Olivia. I know that sometimes it seems that all of the meetings are overwhelming and sometimes members may not realize all of the work that goes on behind the scenes to offer training as well as important information for our members. If you need information again utilize your area Vice Commanders, and our District officers as they can help you with any questions you might have. A word to the area Vice Commanders make contact with the Posts in your area and see if you are able to help them with any issues, concerns and their membership renewals.

I hope that you are planning to attend the Sweetheart Rally in Royalton February 8th. Look forward to seeing you there.

Jan Ekert

7th District, Membership Director

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continue to decline. More than ever, we need our membership strong - to keep our voice and support of our fellow Veterans alive and vibrant. With everyone working together, we can accomplish great things. Buddy Check and Be the ONE have very positive results. So today, decide to be the person who instills a positive belief in someone who needs to hear your encouraging words, uplift someone who is feeling down. Rally others and share your encouragement with them.

Victor Gades

Area A Vice Commander

AREA D

John Jones

****Celebrating Success: Highlights from the Mid-Winter Conference****

The recent Mid-Winter Conference held by District 7 was nothing short of a resounding success. With a focus on collaboration, growth, and community engagement, the event not only showcased the achievements of the past year but also set the stage for an exciting future for our district.

District 7 has been dedicated to expanding its reach and engaging more members in our initiatives, and the results are clear. The increased rise in new memberships, demonstrates a commitment to our community and the values we uphold. It's heartening to see so many individuals eager to contribute

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**Auxiliary Committee
Chairman**

Americanism
Wanda Seidler 320-309-3528

Children and Youth
Donna Barbknecht 320-262-9321

Community Service
Robyn Scott 320-434-0431

Constitution & Standing Rules
Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104

Education
Pamella Lubenow 320-793-6773

Auxiliary Emergency Fund
Kathy Kessler 320-905-2090

Finance
Pam Gades 320-589-2147

Girls State
Sandy Wersal 320-354-4517

History
Karla Minnick 320-894-4835

Junior Activities
Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850

Leadership
Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278

Legislation
Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

Membership
Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

Memorial
Samantha Stai 320-295-2330

National Security
Pat Ecker 320-695-2409

Past Presidents Parley
Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

Poppy
Ashley Stai 320-894-7850

Public Relation
Pam Gades 320-589-2147

VA&R
Deanna Knutson 507-530-3222

Memory Book
Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850

**LEGIONVILLE
Victor Gades**

It is never too soon to start thinking about summer. Go to Department of Minnesota American Legion web page. Go to programs, scroll down and open Legionville. Look at the pictures of kids having fun. Look at the life lessons taught during the week. This is a week that these kids can be kids, doing fun things with others. Do you know someone that would enjoy this? Make a difference in a youngster's life, they are our future leaders. The summer schedule is out for the 2025 summer. Now is the time to pencil in a week for someone. When you talk to others, steer them to the Legionville web site - Promote the American Legions dedication to our youth. Remember Legionville is for ALL children, anybody can sponsor, and anybody can send a kid to camp. This is not an American Legion exclusive program; it is for everyone to enjoy.

**Victor Gades
Legionville Chair,**

**American Education Week
Bill Kuperus**

November 17-November 21, 2025

American Education Week is always scheduled one week before Thanksgiving. This date was set up back in 1921 by the National Education Association and The American Legion. Back then it was to help improve the high rate of illiteracy in the United States. Today it is used to improve the dialogue between parents, teachers, support staff, and students. Education Week has a theme, and each day of Education Week is assigned a different activity.

Monday – Students are introduced to the theme and activities planned for the week.

Tuesday – Family Day-parents are invited to see/experience what their children do in school.

Wednesday – is Support Professional Day. It recognizes the importance of support staff like para's, secretaries, lunch staff, janitors, and bus drivers.

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their time and talents, enriching our district's efforts and making a positive impact.

I'd like to remind everyone about the upcoming District Annual Convention on May 17, 2025. This event promises to be a highlight of our district calendar and presents a wonderful opportunity for networking, learning, and celebrating our achievements together. Mark your calendars! We will be diving into further discussions on growth, sustainability, and the importance of community service within our programs. The convention will provide members with the chance to engage with motivated individuals, to enhance our knowledge base collectively.

I encourage every member of District 7 to take an active role in shaping the agenda of our district as we move forward. Your insights, ideas, and participation are crucial for ensuring that each event, including our annual convention, reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of our members. There's something truly empowering about coming together with like-minded individuals who share a passion for making a difference. Let's keep that momentum alive as we prepare for the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

As we look ahead to the District Annual Convention in May 2025, let's commit to maintaining this level of enthusiasm and collaboration. Let's continue to celebrate our achievements, learn from one another, and invite more members into
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Thursday – Educator for a Day. On this day different community leaders share their knowledge and insight to the students.

Friday – is Substitute Educator Day. It is a day to recognize the invaluable assistance they provide.

Note- there is not a theme set up for 2025 yet.

Bill Kuperus
American Education Week

National Security and Foreign Relations (NSFR)
Jan Ekert

A lot of things have been happening at the National Level that fall under the National Security and Foreign Relations Program. The many topics of discussion included sustaining the readiness of our Reserve Component and their readiness and how this can impact the Active-Duty personnel and their families. Looking at the Basic needs allowance, funding for childcare, health care access for military families, and the BIGGIE Suicide Prevention, remember “BE THE ONE”. A big part of the “Be The One” campaign is working on those Buddy Checks, a Buddy Check is not to solicit a membership it is to let someone know you are checking in.

National Security also works to recognize the outstanding Enlisted Soldier of the year, if you know of a soldier who has gone above and beyond talk to them, tell them about the Award and encourage them to submit an application. The process is being streamlined to an online version to make this easier for the soldiers to apply and gather the required documents for submission. An interesting part of this award is that it can also be reflected on their NCOER’s and their Military Vitae when they are putting together promotion packets. Keep this in mind as an AWESOME Award.

National Security and Foreign Relations (NSFR) Chair
Jan Ekert

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION
Keith Seidler

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our fold—creating a lasting impact that echoes the values we hold dear. Here’s to a brighter future and continued prosperity for District 7!

John Jones
Area D Vice Commander

COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:

Children and Youth Committee Chair
Karen Welander

It’s February so all posts will be receiving the first call for Children and Youth activities report. ALL posts are required to submit their report by March 31, 2025, I will call/email reminders as needed. If you have a question, please call your district C&Y chairman Karen Welander at 320-444-6105. Thank you for your timely reporting.

Karen Welander
Children and Youth Committee Chair

Blood Committee Chair
Jan Ekert

I am hopeful that many of you are paying attention to what is going on in the world and realize the importance of donating Blood or helping with a Blood Drive. There is a significant shortage of Blood available in both our local and National Blood Banks and knowing the importance and the lifesaving difference that even 1 pint of Blood or Plasma can make in a person’s life. If you do not have a local

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The top three American Legion Department of MN 2025 legislative priorities are
*Protect Veterans from Consumer Fraud and Claim Sharks. Contact your legislators at

<https://www.votervoice.net/MNLegion/Campaigns/118451/Respond>

*Charitable Gambling Tax Cuts. Contact your legislators at

<https://www.votervoice.net/MNLegion/Campaigns/115179/Respond>

*Modernize the Disabled Veterans Homestead Market Value Exclusion. Contact your legislators at

<https://www.votervoice.net/MNLegion/Campaigns/118453/Respond>

This is your opportunity to respectfully voice your concerns and opinions on these top three American Legion Department of MN 2025 legislative priorities. You can contact your legislators daily.

Veterans Helping Veterans!

**Keith Seidler,
VA&R 7th District Chairman**

**Baseball Chair
Joe Dollerschell**

Greetings to all our D7 American Legion Clubs. It's now 2025 and those of us deeply involved in American Legion Baseball have turned our focus on the new season just ahead of us.

In 2024, the D7 area sponsored 44 teams across five different divisions and age groups. To the best of my knowledge 57 different D7 American Legion clubs were represented by those teams. I can't say if all 57 of those clubs actively supported, either financially or otherwise, the teams in their area. But I can say with certainty that quite an impressive number did. Wouldn't it be great if all our clubs could support their teams in some way?

What school(s) do the young people in your communities attend? That school likely, is fielding a legion team, or two, or maybe even three in one case. 33 different school districts supplied players in 2024 for one of those 44 teams. Quite possibly young men from your town played on one of those teams. Our national registration site is now open, and our teams have begun completing the steps needed to be sponsored as an American Legion team. Now is the time for all our D7 clubs to consider participating in this very beneficial program. If your club is interested in helping in some way and you're not sure how, start by contacting the AD at the school where the young people from your community attend. He/she will likely know who the local legion baseball manager is. If not,

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Blood Drive, you can check with your local hospitals and see if there are any Blood Collection sites in your area. Remember any of your members who donate blood throughout the reporting year count. These reports are to be sent to me as the Districts Blood Chair and should arrive at your Posts early in January of 2025, and sent to me no later than April 10, 2025. These reports are due to the Department at the end of April and as the Blood Chair I will select 3 Posts in our District who are eligible for recognition and Awards. The report you compile should include Legion, Auxiliary, and SAL members and Riders who have donated blood. It should include the number of Units donated, did your Post sponsor a Bloodmobile Drive and how many units were donated through your Posts efforts. Please fill out the report and get the credit for what your Post is doing.

**Jan Ekert
Blood Committee Chair**

**Americanism Committee Chairman
Rueben Nathe**

Boys & Girls State
Week of June 8---11th Held at Girls at Bethel & Boys at -St Johns Colleges
Remember to contact your local schools in February or early March to get them registered for 2025 Juniors.

Legionville
It's not just for School Patrol but also
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it's very likely that the school's baseball coach would know. There are significant costs involved with operating these teams. There's state, national, and possibly league registration fees. The players will need equipment and baseballs. Certified umpires will need to be hired. Insurance must be purchased from our national provider. Sometimes teams make money by hosting tournaments. Some will levy fees from each player or family. But much of these funds come from local American Legion clubs like yours. Please carefully consider helping out with your local team if you aren't already. If you are already participating, I ask that you please talk now about continuing that support, and maybe even increasing your it.

Joe Dollerschell
District 7 MN Legion Baseball
320-894-8181



American Legion Auxiliary
Sandy Wersal

Mid-winter conference was a success, thanks to the Olivia post and unit for hosting. All the members that attended and chairman that gave good reports.

Sweetheart Rally has come and gone on February 8th hosted by the Royalton Post.

Let's make some phone calls this week and finish up on getting are membership in for the year. 7th district has 2,000 paid members with a goal of 2,561 as of 1-15-25. Keep asking people to join us! The 7th is in 6th place out of the 10 districts and Minnesota is in second place in the Northwestern Division.

Mark your calendar for May 31st. I will not have a testimonial this year. But a 7th District American Auxiliary Year End Celebration. It will be at the Montevideo Home at 10 am. We will play Bingo with the Veterans and have coffee and treats. More information will be coming.

Sandy Wersal
7th District President

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teaches Bus safety. One great week of fun and networking. Past students loved the week and experience. For Campers who will be 9 years old before September 1st and not older than 13 years will be accepted. Outside sponsors or parents can also choose to sponsor their own children. Get them registered early and pick your available week. Per Camper \$500.00.

Oratorical Contest--2025

To be held Sunday Feb 2, 2025, hosted by Willmar American Legion. If you want to experience the 4 speakers this year who have signed up to be contestants your invited to sit in the audience. Start working on getting students for 2026

These are all great programs. Additional information is always posted on the District #7 Web Site under Americanism and then picking the program that you are interested in.

www.mnlegiondistrict7.org

Rueben Nathe
Americanism Committee-Chairman



AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA
VOTER VOICE CAMPAIGNS

Disabled vets property tax exclusion:

<https://www.votervoicenet/MNLegion/Campaigns/118453/Respond>



Claim sharks: <https://www.votervoicenet/MNLegion/Campaigns/118451/Respond>



Charitable gambling tax cuts:

<https://www.votervoicenet/MNLegion/Campaigns/115179/Respond>



Contact: Kristy Janigo, The American Legion Department of Minnesota Legislative Chair
Phone: 612-708-9029 **Email:** Kristy.janigo@gmail.com