

Speakers at the Convention



REP. TIM WALZ, D-MINN.



GOV. MARK DAYTON



DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PRESIDENT SHIRLEY FREDERICK



NATIONAL AUXILIARY VICE PRESIDENT PATRICIA STERANKA



BOYS STATE LEE KROUGH WINNER LUCAS MUMM



EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR TROY TIMMERMAN



ORATORICAL CHAMPION SARAH DONALDSON



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION COMMANDER DENNIS HENKEMEYER

Legion Installation



When the vote was announced, Commander Peggy Moon got a smooch from husband, Carl, 6th District Commander.



The 2014-15 officers of the Minnesota American Legion were installed by Past National Commander Dan Ludwig. They took their oath on the stage of the Mayo Civic Center Presentation Hall.



Past Department Commander Don Pankake, right, presented outgoing Commander Mike Ash with his colors.



Carl moon adjusted the commander's hat on his wife, Peggy, during the installation ceremony.



New Membership Director Pat Logan said his theme for the membership campaign will be baseball.

Auxiliary Installation



President Shirley Frederick received her past president's pin from Past National President Kris Nelson.



Incoming President Chris Ronning took an oath with husband, Marland, looking on.



Carol Kottom was elected Second Vice President of the Auxiliary.



Sandy Fredrickson will serve this year as First Vice President.



Frederick passed the ceremonial gavel onto Ronning to show the change of command.

Awards and presentations made at the 2014 convention



COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS -- Bob Locker, chairman of the Community Service Committee, presented awards to posts that won awards for 2014.



MOST DOLLARS SPENT -- Community Service Chairman Bob Locker presents Carl Renalls of 3M Post 599 with a plaque honoring the post for the most dollars spent on community service for a post its size.



AMERICANISM CERTIFICATES -- Americanism citations were presented to posts in the 10 districts and representative came forward to pick them up at the convention. Those posts that received citations were Preston Post 166, Winnebago Post 82, Mahtomedi Post 507, St. Paul Hamline Post 418, Minneapolis Post Office Post 540, Waite Park Post 428, Clinton Post 258, Littlefork Post 490, Crookston Post, Nels T. Wold Post 20, St. Louis Park Post 282.



POSTS OF EXCELLENCE -- Zimmerman Post 560 and 3M Post 599 were recognized by the national American Legion as Posts of Excellence. From left: NECman Ray DeZurik, Sixth District Commander Carl Moon, 3M Commander Carl Renalls, Cdr. Mike Ash.



BOWLING TROPHY -- Springfield Post 257 won the Legion Bowling tourney. Mike Ash, Bob Mace and John Torma presented the trophy. Jennifer Kafka, Second District Commander, accepted.



BOYS STATE AWARD -- Lee Tallackson presented Ken Meyer with a plaque honoring Pequot Lakes Post 49 for sponsoring the program's Lee Krough winner.



EDUCATION AWARD -- The Americanism Committee members were recognized by National with a Certificate of Appreciation. From left: Mike Ash, Art Tobkin, Tom Kunkel, Mel Buesseler and Education Chairman Gary Weaver.



DEERWOOD HONORED -- Deerwood Post 557 won a Certificate of Meritorious Service from the national American Legion. Vern Massie accepted. Art Tobkin and Mike Ash presented.



DENT HONORED -- Tom Norgaard accepted a plaque honoring Dent Post 148 for most dollars spent on community service for a post its size. Presenting were Bob Locker and Mike Ash.



MERITORIOUS SERVICE -- Carl Renalls accepts a national Certificate of Meritorious Service Award for 3M Post 599. From left: Art Tobkin, Mike Ash, Renalls, Dan Williams and Bird Partridge.



CHASKA HONORED -- Steve Nelson accepted an award from Chairman Bob Locker and Commander Mike Ash for most dollars spent on community service for posts its size.



EAST GRAND FORKS AWARD -- Terry Buraas accepted a Community Service Award for most dollars spent in its community for East Grand Forks. Bob Locker and Mike Ash presented.



HAMLIN HONORED -- Mickey Ostrum accepted a Community Service Award for Hamline Post 418 for time spent in the community. Bob Locker and Mike Ash presented.



NORTH ST. PAUL -- North St. Paul Post Commander Randy Bastyr accepted the plaque for most hours spent on community service for a post its size. Presenting were Bob Locker and Mike Ash.

More honors and awards from the 2014 Department Convention



POST SERVICE OFFICER AWARDS -- Ten Post Service Officers earned a Citation of Meritorious Service Award from the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Various people accepted the awards at the Rochester Convention. The winners were: Russell Retterath, Adams Post 146; Gerald McConkey, Worthington Post 464; David Heidebring, Hutchinson Post 96; Carl Renalls, 3M Post 599; Del Rose, Minneapolis Post 1; Leroy Young, Holdingford Post 211; Lee Stock, Olivia Post 186; Gordon Herrgard, Deer River Post 122; John Stolzman, East Grand Forks Post 157, Jim Eich, Clearwater Post 323.



ORATORICAL WINNER -- Caroline Donaldson was honored as this year's Oratorical Champion. She accepted her plaque from Department Vice Commander Denise Milton and Oratorical Chairman Tess Davis.



TROPHIES AND AWARDS -- Trophies and Awards presentations were made at the convention. From left: Chairman Mike Schaffer, Gary Munkholm, Anoka Post 102, Hanson Education Award; Ray Turnquist, Anoka Post 102, Levi M. Hall School Patrol Award; Gary Reimann, Anoka Post 102; Dick Ward, representing Joe Smith Post 468, Father L.J. Fortin Trophy; Steve Nelson, Chaska Post 57, Lindell Community Service Bell; Tom Kunkel, Waite Park Post 428, Joseph W. Finley Trophy and Frank J. Ring Boy Scout Trophy; Terry Buraas, East Grand Forks Post 157, Stafford Kind Conservation Trophy; Carl Renalls, 3M Post 599, Americanism Trophy; Department Commander Mike Ash.



EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR -- Jack Thurk, center, accepted the Employer of the Year Award for Waconia Manufacturing Inc. Presenting were Dave Heidebrink, chairman, and Commander Mike Ash.



FIRE FIGHTER OF THE YEAR -- Mitch Holmes of the North Branch Fire Department, was honored as Fire Fighter of the Year by the Law and Order Committee. Tom Conway and Mike Ash presented.



PEACE OFFICER OF THE YEAR -- Todd Frank of the North Branch Police Department was named Peace Officer of the Year by the Law and Order Committee. Tom Conway and Mike Ash presented.



LEGIONVILLE AWARD -- Past Department Commander Don Pankake was given the annual Legionville award for service. Presenting were Commander Mike Ash and Chairman Jim Blakesley.



ANDERSON WINDOWS -- Legionville President Wayne Gilbertson presented a plaque for Andersen Windows who make a major donation to Legionville. Accepting at right was Pat Logan.



MELROSE HONORED -- Melrose Post 101 was honored for most dollars spent on community service projects. Bob Locker and Mike Ash presented and Carl Moon accepted.



NORTH BRANCH SPONSOR -- North Branch Post 85 was honored for sponsoring both the Fire Fighter and Law Enforcement award winners. Accepting was Randy Koivisto.



PAT CLIFF AWARD -- Carl Renalls of 3M Post 599 won the Pat Cliff Award for top service officer at a post. Presenting were Phil Ringstrom and Mike Ash.



PR AWARD -- Lucas Johnson, left, and Lisa Ghylin, right, were honored for their work on the Public Relations Committee. Chairman Teresa Ash and Commander Mike Ash presented.



SAL CHECKS -- New Sons of the American Legion Commander Dennis Henkemeyer presented checks for Legion projects to Vice Commander Denise Milton.

Taps

Skarr, Jack, 83 Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died July 21, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Engst, Ron, 73, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 10, 2014. He was a member of Park Rapids Post 212.

Spoden, Clarence, 82, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died July 15, 2014. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

Starin, Charlene, 93, past Department President in 1985 and past 6th District President in 1976, died July 15, 2014. She was a member of the Little Falls Unit.

Kirtz, Robert John, 79, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 28, 2014. He served in Korea. He was a member of Hector Post 135.

Olinger, William Thomas, 79, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 5, 2014. He was stationed in Germany. He was a member of Hector Post 135.

Satter, Gerald, 63, Air Force veteran of Desert Storm and Grenada, died July 1, 2014. He was a support mechanic. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Jones, Glenn Loren, 86, Army veteran of World War II, died June 26, 2014. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Sumerfeldt, Edmund, 88, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 28, 2014. He was a flight engineer and machine gunner on a B-17. He flew with the Second Emergency Rescue Squadron. He was a member of Minneota Post 199.

Boogaard, Clarence, 85, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 25, 2013. He was a member of Marshall Post 113.

Larson, Leon Morris, 95, Army veteran of World War II, died July 6, 2014. He was a member of Rochester Post 92.

Mossel, James Andrew, 71, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 30, 2014. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Steidl, Dewey Frederick, 83, Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War, died July 3, 2014. He was a member of Alexandria Post 87.

Rettig, Virgil, 81, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 19, 2014. He was a member of Eden Valley Post 381.

Weidemann, Kenneth Frederick, 92, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 24, 2014. He trained as a twin-engine pilot, and later served as instructor. He served as a second lieutenant. He was a member of Pine City Post 51.

Elliott, David L., 84, Army National Guard veteran of the Korean War, died June 10, 2014. He was a member of Dodge Center Post 384.

Gentilini, Frank G., Jr., 79, Navy veteran of the Korean War, died June 9, 2014. He served on a sub tender. He was a member of Virginia Post 239.

Koopmeiners, Eugene Anthony, 73, Army National Guard veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 2, 2014. He was a member of Holdingford Post 211.

Listberger, Ronald, 78, Air Force veteran of the Korean War, died June 23, 2014. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Weismann, Edward, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died June 25, 2014. He served in both Europe and in the Pacific. He was a member of Cold Spring Post 455.

Sowada, Robert, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 1, 2014. He was a member of Little Falls Post 46.

Burseth, Edgar C., "Doc," 95, Army veteran of World War II, died June 11, 2014. He was a flight surgeon in Germany. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Ennis, Paul "Chuck," 64, Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 16, 2014. He served two tours in Vietnam. He earned the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He was a member of Mora Post 201.

Horman, Donald, 69, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 4, 2014. He was a member of Eyota Post 551.

Jensen, Joseph S., 94, Army veteran of World War II, died June 6, 2014. He was a prisoner of war for over 30 months. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

LeLand, Walter E., 91, Army veteran of World War II, died June 18, 2014. He served in Europe. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Murtaugh, James E., 86, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 21, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Dreisbach, Robert T., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 25, 2014. He was a member of Albert Lea Post 56.

Mack, Walter, 90, Army veteran of World War II, died June 13, 2014. He was a member of Monticello Post 260.

Enkers, Duane E., 88, Navy veteran of World War II, died June 28, 2014. He was a member of Breckenridge Post 53.

Kohorst, Melvin, 66, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 1, 2014. He served in Germany and Vietnam. He was a member of Lismore Post 636.

Jelen, Ronald, 72, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 10, 2014. He was a member of Deerwood Post 557.

Fageroos, Richard R., 84, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 7, 2014. He was a member of Deerwood

Post 557.

Isle, Alfred, 89, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 13, 2014. He was a member of Deerwood Post 557.

Schoenike, Marvin A., 78, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 22, 2014. He was the first vice commander of Deerwood Post 557.

Keen, Tim J., 68, Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, died June 6, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Theiler, Thomas L., 70, Army veteran of the Vietnam War, died July 6, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Denzer, Virgil, 86, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died June 27, 2014. He was a member of Pequot Lakes Post 49.

Zinniel, Alfred, 89, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 4, 2014. He was a member and bingo caller for Park Rapids Post 212.

Widmer, Godfrey H. "Fritz," 80, Army veteran of the Korean War, died July 7, 2014. He served in Korea and Japan. He was a member of Waconia Post 150.

Lang, Floyd E., 89, Army veteran of World War II, died June 19, 2014. He was stationed in Okinawa. He was a member of Paynesville Post 271.

Ralph, Lee A., 96, Army veteran of World War II, died June 6, 2014. He was in the 6th Infantry Division and served in the Pacific. He earned a Purple Heart. He was a member of Houston Post 423.

Cicha, John R., 96, Navy veteran of World War II, died July 17, 2014. He was a prisoner of war for three and one-half years. He was a member of St. Paul George Grui Post 572.

Nelson, Herb, 90, Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, died July 19, 2014. He was a member of Fairfax Post 205.

Baxter, Robert E., 83, Army veteran of the Korean War, died June 12, 2014. He was a member of the 31st Infantry, Seventh Division in Korea. He earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. He was a member of St. Francis Post 622.

Petersen, W. Edward "Pete," 88, Army veteran of World War II, died June 17, 2014. He survived the sinking of the troop ship SS Leopoldville in the English Channel on Christmas Eve, 1944. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a member of Faribault Post 43.

Eide, David, 82, Army veteran of the Korean War, died recently. He served as a district commander for the Fourth District and as a Department Vice Commander. He was a member of Rosetown Post 542.

More honors and awards from the 2014 Department Convention



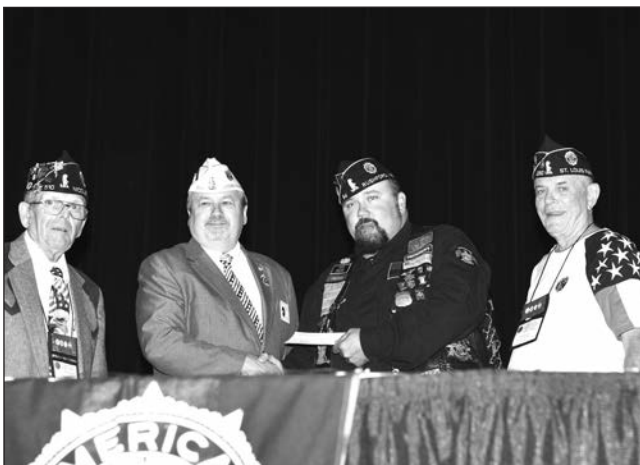
BASEBALL PRESENTATION -- Mike Perry, State Baseball Director, presents an official Legion baseball hat to Commander Mike Ash. Ash will preside over the state tournaments this year.



PARADE COLOR GUARD -- Randy Fierst accepted the trophy for best color guard at the annual parade for the New Prague Post 45. Presenting were Chairman Dave Bode, Commander Mike Ash, Third District Commander Mark Dvorak and Tom Schottenbauer.



TOP VICE COMMANDER -- Denise Milton accepted a certificate as the top Department Vice Commander during this past membership year. She represented the Sixth and Ninth Districts. Presenting were Membership Director Tom Fernlund and Mike Ash.



BEST FLOAT IN PARADE -- Rushford Post 94 won the best patriot float award in the annual Department Parade at Rochester. Scuffy Paulson accepted from Dave Bode, Mike Ash and Tom Schottenbauer.



BEST DISTRICT IN PARADE -- Tom Norgaard accepted the check for the best district representation in the annual parade by the Ninth District. Presenting were Dave Bode, Mike Ash and Tom Schottenbauer.



PREMIER RACE WINNER -- Mark Dvorak, Third District Commander, accepted a plaque for winning the Premier Race for membership. Presenting were Mike Ash and Tom Fernlund.

District Commanders

FIRST DISTRICT

Myron Ehrich
Commander



First District, the Big Red Team, is on the move. I wish to congratulate all of the new officers for each district as well as department officers.

It's a new year and a new commander so let's make Minnesota look good for the next year. I know that it can be done.

I hope to see a good showing at the National Convention, as I will be there.

That is all for now. I will have more of a letter next month.

Keep your faith up and remember our men and women that are defending our Great Nation in your prayers.

SECOND DISTRICT

Jennifer Kafka
Commander



Greetings from the Solid Second. I'd like to thank the entire 2nd District for choosing me to represent you. It is such an honor to be elected as your next Commander. I am humbled that you would place your faith and trust in me. This is a responsibility that I do not take lightly, and I will endeavor to represent you with the utmost transparency and boldness.

I have great officers and they will be out working the membership, and getting information out to the posts. So what will I as the 2nd District Commander be doing you might ask? Well, I will be visiting posts and getting information out about what the American Legion family is all about. I am passionate about what we stand for and sometimes we get caught up on the points and goals that we forget our bigger purpose and who it is for. Yes, strength in numbers but we as an organization have a responsibility to all our Legion family members and I will go and listen to the ones who are out there day after day doing what the American Legion does best and that is supporting our Veterans and their families.

My theme for the year is To go beyond the Status Quo, and my personal motto is We cannot become what we want by remaining what we are. I will work hard and do what is best for the American Legion as your 2nd District Commander.

THIRD DISTRICT

Duane Anderson
Commander



Greetings Thundering 3rd.

Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2014-2015 Legion year. The Department Convention in Rochester last week starts the beginning of a new year of challenges and changes for our Legion. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the veterans in the Third District for electing me as the Commander for your District. It is a great honor to have your trust and respect to be your Commander. It is also a very humbling feeling when I think of the talent and dedication of the other veterans that have held this office. A special recognition goes out to Past Commander Mark Dvorak for completing a very successful year. It has been fun and rewarding to work with Mark this past year. I also want to thank the rest of last year's Executive Board Members and the rest of the Third District team. We had a very successful year and I am looking forward to our coming year.

Embrace Change/Maintain Mission

FIFTH DISTRICT

Wayne Glanton
Commander



Greetings from the Fighting 5th. The 2014-2015 Legion year is upon us and we are raring to go. The 5th District Convention in June was a great success. Our new 5th District Officers are: Commander Wayne Glanton, Johnnie Baker Post 291; 1st Vice Commander, Gary Martin Gopher Post 440; 2nd Vice Commander Ray Eiden, Falldin Post 555; and 3rd Vice Commander, Walt Lyndsley, Court House Post 310. Next month we'll introduce the rest of our 2015 team.

The Department Convention in Rochester was inspiring and we wish all-the-best to Department Commander Peggy Moon and her entire team.

Congratulations to Cari Lamb and Robert Bristo for

being elected as 2014-2015 5th District Auxiliary President and SAL District Commander. I look forward to working with both of them.

The Fighting 5th District Minnesota State Fair Volunteers will be on hand to promote the American Legion and our Programs at the Fair on Tuesday, August 26, 2013. Stop by and say hello.

SIXTH DISTRICT

Carl Moon
Commander



The Great Sixth District is proud to have our candidate Peggy Moon as our new Department Commander. I want to congratulate my fellow District Commanders in being selected to lead their respective Districts. Needless to say, we do not want to disappoint our Department Commander so my Membership Director Jim Lucas and I issue this challenge; "Just Try and Keep Up". We WILL be number ONE in membership and ALL other awards this next year. If you think you have even the slightest chance to beat us, contact Jim with your challenge. I am having 2 schools of instruction for our Commanders, Adjutants, & Membership Directors. The first is on 8-5-14 at the Royalton Legion and the second at the Walker Legion on 8-18-14. Both classes will be at 7p.m. The topics of discussion: My Legion.Org & Reports. My project this year is Legionville, any donations of money, time, or supplies will be greatly appreciated. My theme is: The III's Have It. Inform, Invigorate, Involve. I am looking forward to meeting as many of you as I can. If you would like me to attend an event or meeting this next year please send your request to my new Email: crmoonidoc@yahoo.com. Remember; Be proud of who we are and what we can become.

SEVENTH DISTRICT

Victor Gades
Commander



Greetings from the Mighty Seventh.

We have a first for the Department of Minnesota American Legion -- a female Commander! Peggy Moon, is a highly qualified, enthusiastic individual who has the needs of our Department and Veterans foremost on her agenda. Let's draw from her enthusiasm and revitalize our posts.

Every effort put forward by us, whether large or small, has an impact on Veterans and their families. We call ourselves the American Legion Family and that is how we should approach the retention and recruitment of members.

Do not expect your officers to carry the load of recruitment and retention. These duties are shared with all members of the American Legion Family. This is where a small act, kind word, friendly greeting, sincere concern for health can impress new and old members and their families and may entice them to renew or join the American Legion.

This is "membership dinner season" for many Posts. Invite potential members to share a meal and camaraderie, and above all, don't overwhelm them with a job. Let them learn and appreciate what we do for Veterans and our communities.

My Vice-Commanders and I will make every effort to be available to attend meetings, although there may be unavoidable scheduling conflicts. If there are any questions that you may have, we will try to get a answer for you. We all look forward to serving you.

NINTH DISTRICT

Thomas Norgaard Sr.
Commander



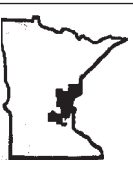
Greetings from the Roaring 9th District. The Department Convention is over and we came out very well financially. Our Finance Officer is smiling as he deposits \$1,750.00 in the bank. He was \$1,500.00 short on his 2014-2015 budget. By now the Goose Egg race is over. Congratulations to our 'sister' district, the 6th, for being the first one off the goose egg. August is filled with meetings, the Department Organizational Meeting on the 9th at Osseo, the District Organizational on the 16th at Crookston and then the National Convention at Charlotte, NC. My wife and I are planning on driving down on the 20th so we can take in some tours at Mooresville, NC, "Race City USA", including Dale Earnhart, Inc. and JR Motorsports to name a few. During the Convention we plan to take a guided tour of Charlotte Motor Speedway. My son is an avid NASCAR fan and a Dale Earnhart Sr. fan. I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to visit these few places and also the NASCAR Hall of Fame. On the way

back, after 36 years of marriage, we intend to stop at Nashville, Churchill Downs and St Louis as part of a long overdue honeymoon.

Until next month, God Bless all our troops wherever they are stationed, God Bless all our veterans and God Bless the greatest country on earth, the United States of America.

TENTH DISTRICT

Tom Sanders
Commander



10th District Commanders Column

I want to thank the Mighty Tenth District American Legion Family for having faith in me and electing me their District Commander.

As I write this month's column I have already participated in three parades, Delano Parade, Hopkins Raspberry Parade and Department Convention Parade in Rochester with some sun and fun. The Tenth District's first Rally will have come and gone at Coon Rapids on the 3rd of August with Legionville Rally September 6th right after National Convention.

I am looking forward to working with this year's District Team and having a personal and up close relationship with all the Post's in the Tenth District. I want to bring back the fun and put the "Mighty" back into "The Mighty Tenth District". If there is anything that I can do, or my Membership Team can do to help the "Blue Capper's", in the District, by all means don't be afraid to ask.

My theme this year is "Tie one on for Membership", in honor of my father Ralph J. Sanders, a Korean War Veteran that has gone to Post Everlasting. He left behind several ties and I will be wearing a different one at each of the Rallies this year.

In closing I want to thank the District Officers and Appointments for taking their respected positions. I know you all will do well. Until next month, for God and Country.

Gibson tells Senate panel VA is in action

In testimony before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson outlined serious problems regarding access to healthcare and key actions the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has taken to get Veterans off wait lists and into clinics.

"The trust that is the foundation of all we do -- the trust of the Veterans we serve and the trust of the American people and their elected representatives -- has eroded," said Acting Secretary Gibson. "We have to earn that trust back through deliberate and decisive action, and by creating an open and transparent approach for dealing with our stakeholders to better serve Veterans."

Gibson discussed six key priorities to begin restoring trust:

1. Get Veterans off wait lists and into clinics;
2. Fix systemic scheduling problems;
3. Address cultural issues;
4. Hold people accountable where willful misconduct or management negligence are documented;
5. Establish regular and ongoing disclosures of information; and,
6. Quantify the resources needed to consistently deliver timely, high-quality healthcare.

Gibson testified that VA needs approximately \$17.6 billion in additional resources to meet current demand for the remainder of FY 2014 through FY 2017. This funding would address challenges such as clinical staff, space, information technology, and benefits processing necessary to provide timely, high-quality care and benefits.

"We understand the seriousness of the problems we face. We own them. We are taking decisive action to begin to resolve them," said Gibson. "We can turn these challenges into the greatest opportunity for improvement in the history of the department."

Gibson also outlined actions that VA is taking now in order to address problems with access to VA healthcare, including:

- The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has reached out to over 160,000 Veterans to get them off wait lists and into clinics. VHA has also made over 543,000 referrals for Veterans to receive care in the private sector -- 91,000 more than in the comparable period a year ago.

- VHA facilities are adding more clinic hours, aggressively recruiting to fill physician vacancies, deploying mobile medical units, using temporary staffing resources, and expanding the use of private sector care.

Legion: Compromise bill needed for VA

The American Legion welcomed the introduction of a bill in Congress that would fix longstanding, widespread problems within the Department of Veterans Affairs, which have impaired its ability to deliver timely health care and benefits to America's veterans.

At a news conference today, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., discussed their joint sponsorship of the Veterans Access to Care Act of 2014, a compromise measure that emerged from previous bills introduced in the House and Senate.

"This measure is a critical component in developing a long-term solution to problems that have dogged the VA for years," National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said. "We know that Sen. Sanders and Rep. Miller have labored diligently to reach bipartisan consensus. But it would be a great mistake to see this legislation as a one-time fix for all the woes that have been hobbling VA's performance and credibility."

Sanders, chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, said at the news conference that the bill "makes certain that we will address the immediate crisis of veterans being forced onto long waiting lines for health care. It strengthens the VA so that it will be able to hire the doctors, nurses and other medical personnel it needs, so that we can put a permanent end to long waiting lists."

"It addresses the very serious problems of accountability and makes certain that dishonest and incompetent senior officials at the VA do not remain employed there...."

Sanders said funding for veterans' needs must be considered "a cost of war."

Miller, who chairs the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, said, "We have a VA that is in crisis today. This agreement will go a long way to helping resolve the crisis that exists out there today. Helping to get veterans off of waiting lists is extremely important and this bill does that."

The VA reform bill, Miller said, "starts a conversation, I think, about VA for the future. Sen. Sanders and I differ about certain things but one thing that we do agree about is that the veterans of this country deserve the best-quality health care that they can get, in a timely fashion – and that has not been the case as of late The VA is not sacred, the veteran is."

Major provisions of the bill include:

- Authorization and funding for VA to contract with community providers to help get veterans immediate care for

those who had to wait, or would have to travel excessive distances to VA facilities.

- Authorization of 27 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, which is one more than the number authorized by the Senate bill

- Increased authority for the VA Secretary to manage senior personnel. Expedited authority to move or fire SES and other senior-grade executives.

- Extension of the traumatic brain injury (TBI) resident pilot program.

- \$5 billion to help VA to hire more physicians.

- \$10 billion to help VA reduced the benefits claims backlog.

- Continued VA development of an upgraded IT patient-scheduling system.

The bill would also require the establishment of a Commission on Capital Planning for VA medical facilities, in order to improve VA's capital asset processes – from

facility planning and individual project management to managing the multi-billion dollar backlog of facility construction and maintenance projects.

At his congressional testimony last September, Dellinger addressed The American Legion's concerns over VA's chronic cost-overruns and construction delays for new medical centers.

"We hope this commission, after thoroughly examining the way VA builds facilities, will have some useful recommendations to make. In any case, we appreciate Congress's interest in taking a very close look at the department's construction process."

The bill would also establish another commission to examine VA health-care access issues and recommend actions to bolster capacity. A report to the president would be required within 90 days of the commission's first meeting.

VA releases data on access to facilities

WASHINGTON – Under the direction of Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Sloan D. Gibson, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has taken significant steps to improve Veterans' access to quality health care. In keeping with the commitment to improve transparency in the department's processes, VA today released the latest update of facility-level patient access data.

"VA is fully committed to fixing the problems we face in order to better serve Veterans," said Gibson. "VA must restore the public's trust, but more importantly restore the trust of our Veterans who depend on us for health care."

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has reached out to over 160,000 Veterans to get them off wait lists and into clinics. VHA has also made over 543,000 referrals for Veterans to receive care in the private sector – 91,000 more than in the comparable period a year ago. Additionally, VA has reduced the New Enrollee Appointment Report (NEAR) from its peak of 46,000 on June 1, 2014 to 2,000 (as of July 1, 2014). As of July 1, 2014, there has been a reduction in over 17,000 Veterans on the Electronic Waiting List since May 15, 2014.

Since June 2014, Acting VA Secretary Gibson has traveled to 11 VA medical centers across the country in an effort

to hear directly from Veterans and employees about obstacles to providing timely, quality care and how VA can immediately address them.

"We have to rebuild trust by creating an open and transparent culture that is focused on better serving Veterans," said Gibson. "That's what these site visits are all about – listening to Veterans and employees around the country about how we can better serve Veterans and deliver the quality healthcare that they have earned."

VA has added approximately 7,000 appointments provided to newly enrolled Veterans who had requested an initial appointment at the time of enrollment. VA is continuing to address systemic challenges in accessing care, as quickly as possible and will provide the most immediate information on its progress to Veterans and the public via the VA website, www.va.gov.

In a hearing before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs Wednesday, Gibson testified that VA needs approximately \$17.6 billion in additional resources to meet current demand for the remainder of FY 2014 through FY 2017. This funding would address challenges such as clinical staff, space, information technology, and benefits processing necessary to provide timely, high-quality benefits.

Musical Extravaganza



Animals filled the stage during the 2014 Extravaganza at the Convention.



Dopey (Lori Skallerud) explains the Extravaganza program to Bashful (Pamella Lubenow) as the Seven Dwarfs took the stage for the Seventh District.



Lynn Nottage blew bubbles.



Amelia Tesdahl was Mickey Mouse.



President Shirley Frederick and Dee Dee Buckley were two of the Mouseketeers during the Extravaganza, which had a Disney theme. Buckley was the ringmaster.



The Auxiliary Bulletin

No. 15-1

President Chris Ronning

August 2014

Secretary Sandie Deutsch

Department Headquarters, Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, MN 55155 651-224-7634

The President's Column

By
Chris Ronning



I am so excited to write my first news article as your newly elected Department President for the year 2014-2015.

What an honor to represent all the members of the American Legion Auxiliary as we work together to help our Veterans and their families. I want to thank everyone for attending the Installation in Rochester and to all Units, Districts and Department officers and chairmen, I know you will do great.

Congratulations to our new leaders from The Legion, Sons of The American Legion and the Legion Riders. I am looking forward to working with you as we all come together for a common cause, our Veterans.

My theme for the year is "Our Veterans - Past, Present and Future." My symbol is the Poppy and the Butterfly and my Project is two parts.

The first part is the Daycare Center for Veterans at the Minneapolis Veterans Home and the second part is the Creative Arts Program at VA in Minneapolis and the VA in St. Cloud.

There is so much talent in these men and women, who all served our country so honorably, that I would like to raise \$23,000.00 to support the Veterans and any money left over will go towards Legionville.

Our Membership Chairman is Judy Ackerman. She will do a great job, but not without the help of you, the members.

We need to retain our members and also need to recruit new members, so we can stand side by side with our Legionnaires to have our voices be heard by our Congressmen as we are again electing new officials this year.

I hope to see some of you at the National Convention in Charlotte, NC and also at our Department rallies this year.

They are so important and I am pretty sure that Judy and Pat Logan, our new Legion Department Membership Director will keep us entertained. Good luck to them both and a successful membership year.

The first weekend in August we again will have our Junior Fun Weekend at Legionville and also don't forget our annual Legionville Camporee the first weekend in September.

Chris Ronning takes the helm of the Auxiliary 2014-15

On Saturday, July 19th, the year of "Patriotism - Thank Our Veterans, Teach Our Children" under the wonderful leadership of President Shirley Frederick, came to its conclusion and became yet another page in the history of the American Legion Auxiliary. The 95th annual Department Convention was held at the Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester, hosted by The American Legion Post and Unit #92 of Rochester, with 221 delegates, 4 alternates and 6 guests representing 121 Units hearing the various reports and conducting the business of the Auxiliary over the three days of the convention. Another busy year of programs and activities carried on by you, our Unit members, had come to its conclusion.

Our special congratulations to newly elected Department President Chris Ronning, Department First Vice President Sandra Fredrickson, and Department Second Vice President Carol Kottom who assumed their duties at the close of the Department Convention.

Our newly elected Department President Chris has chosen "Our Veterans - Past, Present and Future" as her theme for the 2014-15 administrative year. Her symbol is Poppy and Butterfly.

The ratification and election of 34 delegates and 21 alternates to the 2014 National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina brought the business portion of the convention to a close. Shirley Frederick will serve as our Delegation Chairman with Raleen Tolzmann representing us as our National Executive Committeewoman at the National Convention.

Our appreciation and congratulations are given to Shirley for her dedicated service as Department President this Auxiliary year. She travelled to all areas of the state and did her best to honor all of her invitations. Shirley is very dedicated to our organization and serving and supporting our Veterans.

SPECIAL THANKS

Our special thanks to Sharon Kingsley, Auxiliary Convention General Chairman, and the members of the Rochester Unit and Post 92 as well as the First District for their excellent preparations and arrangements in hosting the 2014 Department Convention. Their many hours of planning were reflected in the smooth operation of our 95th annual convention. Thank you for your warm hospitality and for making this convention such an outstanding one.

The 2015 Department Convention will be held at the Jackpot Junction Hotel with the Redwood Falls American Legion Family 38 hosting. We look forward to seeing all of you there.

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

At the Department Convention President Shirley was most pleased to present her special "Presidents Awards of Excellence" to those Unit members in each of the following programs. These awards were based on the Unit's annual report and the activities it carried on under the program.

The recipients were:

- Americanism - Louise Flom, Faribault Unit #43
- Children and Youth - Wanda Anderson & Mary Joy, Blackduck Unit 372
- History - Renee Suess, Monticello Unit 260
- Junior Activities - Micki Turja, Kingston Unit 483
- Community Service - Kim McPhee, Byron Unit 119
- Education - Louanne Iceman, Blackduck Unit 372
- Past Presidents Parley - Lois Wenz, Chaska Unit 57
- Legislation - Sondra Erickson, Unit 216, Princeton Memorial - Roxanne Jensen, Hutchinson Unit 96
- National Security - Dee Koepp, Hutchinson Unit 96
- Poppy - Marlys Jacobson, New London Unit 537
- Public Relations - Cheryl Nymann, Plainview Unit 179

Donna Arends endorsed for Second VP

Donna Arends has been endorsed from her Unit 167 Willmar and the 7th District to be a candidate for Dept. 2nd Vice President.

Her eligibility is through her father William Somerville, a WWII Veteran. Her special friend Harold Goblisch is also a Army Veteran and National Guard Veteran.

Arends has three children, a son Mark a SAL member and two daughters, Michelle and Melanie, both Auxiliary members. She has six grandchildren, three

boys all SAL members and three girls all Jr. Auxiliary members.

She has been employed by Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar for over 25 years. She plans to retire within the next two years. Her hobby is attending all American Legion Family events, which she misses very few. She especially enjoyed her years as 7th District President 08-09, and her year as Dept. Membership Chairman 11-12, as she enjoyed traveling

her District and the State in both of those years. She has met and made many new friends from those experiences.

Arends has held many Unit, District and Dept. Chairmanships and offices, through her 27 years of being an Auxiliary member. Other hobbies include reading, traveling and shopping.

She is a member of the United Methodist Church in Raymond, and has several volunteer activities that she enjoys.



DONNA ARENDS

Jean Walker endorsed for 2nd V-president

American Legion Auxiliary Warren Unit 27 Executive Committee has endorsed Jean Walker for Department Second Vice President for the year 2015-2016.

She has been an active member of Unit 27 for 21 years.

Her eligibility is through her father, a World War II veteran.

At the Unit level, she has held many positions including President. On the District level she has been District President, 1st Vice

President, 2nd Vice President, chairman for several of the committees including, Membership, Americanism, Education, Children and Youth, Finance Chairman, Past President Parley.

On the Department level, Jean has served as Americanism Chairman and attended Girls State this last year.

This year she will be serving as Leadership Chairman.

Walker has attended

many District and Department Conventions and Conferences since she has been an Auxiliary member.

She has attended National Conventions as a delegate and as an alternate.

Jean has been married for 22 years to John. She has one son and one granddaughter.

She is very active in the community. Walker currently works at Evergreen Implement Company as Office Manager.



JEAN WALKER

Auxiliary Membership as of July 9, 2014

District	7-9 Total	Percent	Goal
First	5,252	92.50	5,678
Second	5,121	93.91	5,453
Third	4,514	92.82	4,863
Fourth	783	93.21	840
Fifth	962	92.06	1,045
Sixth	6,314	92.87	6,799
Seventh	4,102	93.31	4,423
Eighth	1,755	91.31	1,922
Ninth	4,556	94.48	4,822
Tenth	5,414	93.78	5,773
Depart.	157	81.35	166
Total	38,930	93.17	41,784

Auxiliary Bulletin

Continued from Preceding Page

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation – Stephanie Chappell, Hutchinson Unit 96
Field Service – Kathy Fisher, Walker Unit 134
Home Service - Charlotte DeLong, New London Unit 537
Leadership - Lois Wenz, Chaska Unit 57

OTHER DEPARTMENT WINNERS

Department Poppy Chairman Shaaron Barnes held two Poppy contests at the 2014 Department Convention. The following winners were announced.

Patriotic Coloring Book

1st place – Linda Deschene, Brooklyn Center Unit 630
2nd place – Jane Moody, Lambertton Unit 41
3rd place – Hesley Jensen, Bayport Unit 491
Peoples Choice – Emily Claire, Shakopee Unit 2

Poppy Hat

1st place - Barb Oakland, Hayfield Unit 330
2nd place - Sue Mueller, Wabasha Unit 50
3rd place - Hutchinson Unit #96
Peoples Choice – Jan Elder, Bayport Unit 491

Chairman Barnes would like thank everyone who brought entries to the department convention. They were all wonderfully done.

The Book of Annual Reports contains a list of the trophies and awards that were presented at our department convention. You may want to add the above contest winners to your Unit's copy of the Book of Annual Reports.

Congratulations to all who received a trophy or an award in recognition of your outstanding work in the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary for the 2013-14 year.

BOOK OF ANNUAL REPORTS

Every Unit has or will receive a copy of the 2013-14 Department Book of Annual Reports, either at the Department Convention Rochester or by mail. This book belongs to the Unit and should be shared with all your members. If you would like your own personal copy, they are available from the Department Office. Just give us a call and we will get one to you.

This book contains not only the reports of the Department Officers, Chairmen and District Presidents for this year of "Patriotism - Thank Our Veterans, Teach Our Children", it also contains a copy of the Department, District and Unit Constitutions and Standing Rules.

DEPARTMENT APPOINTMENTS

The following Department President's appointments for the 2014-15 Auxiliary year of "Our Veterans - Past, Present and Future" were approved by the Department Executive Committee:

Americanism – Joanne Joachim
Children and Youth – Raleen Tolzmann
Community Service – Mary Hendrickson
Education – Norma Tramm
Finance – Patricia Swanson, Chairman
AnnaMae Warnier
Deborah Rottman
Beverly Otterness
Carol Barbknecht
Girls State – Marie Goede, Chairman
Kris Nelson, Director
Bethany Dickert, Educational Director
Joanne Joachim, Americanism
Donna Arends, Committee Member
Jeannette Mertens, Committee Member

Junior Activities – Patti Coleman
Leadership – Jean Walker
Legislation – Sandra Fredrickson
Membership – Judy Ackerman
Memorial/Chaplain – Erma Redden
National Security – Wanda Anderson
Parliamentarian – Norma Tramm
Past Presidents Parley – Linda Thompson
Poppy – Mary Kuperus
Public Relations – Diane Hayes

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation – Carol Kottom, Chairman

Field/Home Service - Diane Strassburg

Gift Shop – Sally Strasser, Chairman
Debra Bayer, Committee Member

Audit Committee –Becky Nelson, Sharon Thiemecke, Pat Ecker

Special Appointments:

Auxiliary Emergency Fund – Jean Horack
Armed Forces Center – Paula Davis
Memory Book – Jill Mueller
Brain Science Foundation – Judy Samuelson
Sue Nunnelee
Diane Sullivan

Hospital/Home Representatives

Fargo VA - Carolyn Albertson
Fergus Falls Veterans Home – Doris LaFayette
Hastings Veterans Home – Darlene Wondra
Luverne Veterans Home – Judy Kumerow
Minneapolis Veterans Home – Sandy Gibson



AUXILIARY OFFICERS FOR 2014-2015 -- Following the annual installation ceremony, the newly elected Auxiliary officers gathered for a photo. From left, front: Sandy Fredrickson, First Vice President; Chris Ronning, President; Carol Kottom, Second Vice President. District Presidents from left in back: Michelle Weaver, First; Vida Bacon, Second; Michelle Leonard, Third; Joan Strack, Fourth; Cari Lamb, Fifth; Jessie Hoppe, Sixth; Sandy Wersal, Seventh; Zandra Kessler, Eighth; Robin Dorf, 10th. Missing is Margee Keller, Ninth.

Minneapolis VA - Mary Ann Davis
Silver Bay Veterans Home - Phyllis Mealey
Sioux Falls VA - Gloria Lindquist
St. Cloud VA – Jan Benson

Our best wishes to each of you as you assume the responsibilities of leadership that you have taken on through the programs and activities of the American Legion Auxiliary this 2014-15 year.

2014/2015 MEMBERSHIP PACKETS

The 2014/2015 membership packets will be mailed to your Unit Membership Chairman provided we had received an officers' list from your Unit. If no Membership Chairman was listed, we will send it to the Unit Treasurer. If your Unit did not turn in an officers list to the Department Office, then we are holding your 2015 cards until we receive the required officers list.

Be certain to read the 2014/2015 "Minnesota Guide to Membership" that will accompany your membership cards for instructions. The transmittal forms will be available electronically and on our website (mnala.org) after August 4. Both current and past due dues will be submitted on the same form. The 2014/2015 transmittals are PURPLE (go Vikings), please dispose of any OLD forms. If you have any questions on how to process your membership, please contact the department office.

If you are in need of additional membership supplies they are available from the department office. An order form was included in your membership packet listing items available.

2015 DUES NOTICES

Just a reminder the National organization will be sending out the first dues notices by September 15th this year. Members don't have to wait until they receive a notice to pay their dues. Please make that personal contact with your members reminding them their 2015 membership dues are due and payable now. Let's get those dues collected early this year and get back to the top of the rankings where we belong.

LEGIONNAIRE AUXILIARY PAGES

Looking forward to the 2014-2015 year, let's make a point to share some of the Unit Happenings, Big Events, Big Ideas. Does your Unit have a "Wall of Honor?" How about sharing a picture, a story of how it came about. Honoring their service, let's share how it is done. Submit your photo and story to Sandie in the Department office, let's share ideas and honor their service together. Items can be emailed to sandie@mnala.org or deptoffice@mnala.org.

AUXILIARY WEBSITE

We would encourage you to submit any changes or anything you would like to see on the website. This is your site and we want to make it as useful as possible. If there is any event you would like posted to the Department calendar, please send an email to deptoffice@mnala.org. We are adding things all the time and if there are items you would like put on there but can't seem to find, please let us know.

THANKS FROM SHIRLEY

I wish to thank everybody that attended the 2014 Department Convention to make it a very successful event. This is one that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you to everyone that helped in making the Convention such a success as we worked together for "Patriotism - Thank Our Veterans, Teach Our Children".

2014 FALL CONFERENCE

I am early I know but I have some information regarding Fall Conference which will be held at the Shooting Star Hotel/Casino in Mahanomen, October 24-25, 2014. If you would like to make hotel reservations please call 218-936-2621 and tell them you are with The American Legion Block Code 632397. You shouldn't have any problems by using that code number. More information will be in the next issue.

SECRETARY SANDIE'S CORNER

I keep calling this a corner but it is never in a corner - help me come up with a better name. I made it through my third Department Convention and it seemed to go off without a hitch. President Shirley has been a blessing to work with all year and I only wish her the best. We are now on to August Workshop, National Convention, Membership Rallies, Budget Meetings and then Fall Conference. Never a dull moment around here. I wish all of the new 2014/2015 Officers a very successful year. Always remember we are here in the Department Office ready to help with any questions you may have.

MINNEAPOLIS VA HOSPITAL

Our Hospital Home Representative Mary Ann Davis is in need of the following items: 45" x 60" lap robes and neck pillows. She has a good stock of the other items. Mary Ann would again like to thank all of the Units for the continuous donations that she has been getting for our Veterans.

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Baseball tourneys begin Aug. 1 in Eagan, Luverne

The 2014 Minnesota American Legion Baseball Tournaments will get underway at two sites on Friday, Aug. 1.

The Division I play, featuring the top 16 larger teams in the state, will begin at four fields in the Eagan area. The main field will be at Eagan High School, with first round action also at Bloomington's Red Haddock Field and Burnsville's two Alimagnet Park Fields.

Games on Saturday will be at Eagan and Red Haddock Fields. The championship games will be on Monday at the Eagan Varsity Field.

The double-elimination tournament will feature teams that survived the 15 sub-state tournaments held around Minnesota -- plus the host time, Eagan.

The teams for this year include:

Excelsior, Burnsville, Rochester Redhawks, Tri-City Red, Chaska, New Ulm Gold, Hutchinson, Hamline Purple, Nisswa, Delano, Alexandria, Lakeville North, Champlin Park, St. Cloud Chutes and St. Francis.

All games will be nine innings.

Teams will check in on Thursday, July 31, and there will be an opening ceremony that afternoon. A banquet will be held in Eagan where the Legion's annual awards will be presented.

Terry Ryan will be the featured speaker at the annual banquet.

The third place game will be played at 10 a.m. Monday, Aug. 4, and the championship game will be at 1 p.m. with a short awards ceremony to follow.

The Division II State Tournament will be held in Luverne beginning Friday, Aug. 1.

It will feature the top eight smaller school teams in the state. There were seven district tournaments, plus the host team Luverne.

The entrants in the single-elimination tournament are LaCrescent, St. James, Plato, Foley, Osakis, International Falls, Dilworth-Glyndon-Fenton and Luverne.

The tournament games will all be played on one field.

There will be a third place and consolation title game.

The championship game will be Sunday at the Luverne Redbird Field.

The tourney will be preceded by a banquet on Thursday night.

Each tournament will name an outstanding player, and each will determine a team to win the sportsmanship trophy.

Division I will also determine the outstanding pitcher in the tournament.

The two top finishers in the Division I tournament will go on to the Central Plains Regional at Fargo. The tourney will begin on Aug. 7.

The winner of that eight-team regional will go onto the 88th World Series, held at Shelby, North Carolina.

Minnesota has had five winners of the national title, including three in the last 15 years.

The winner and runner-up of the Division II tournament will go on to the Central Plains Regional in Milbank, S.D., the birthplace of American Legion baseball. That tournament will begin on Aug. 7.

Minnesota has 303 teams, including junior teams, making the state the largest Legion baseball program in the nation. The Division I tournament is also the nation's largest.

In all, about 5,000 student-athletes take part in Legion baseball in Minnesota.

The program began in 1926 with the first state tournament at Mankato. The winner was Crosby.

The five teams that have won the national World Series are Richfield, Edina, Tri-City Red, Rochester A's, and Eden Prairie. Eden Prairie has also be the runner up twice in the last seven years.

The winner of this year's awards are:
 Bird Island and Olivia, Post of the Year
 Dennis Frey, Minnesota Legion Baseball Hall of Fame
 Scott Hackett, Coach of the Year
 Dean Atchison, Graduate of the Year.

McDonald confirmed as VA Secretary

American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger today thanked the Senate for acting quickly today to confirm the nomination of former Procter & Gamble Chief Executive Officer Robert McDonald to become secretary of the embattled Department of Veterans Affairs.

"The time to act is now," Dellinger said. "Veterans are waiting for the care they earned and deserve." The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs voted 14-0 July 23 in support of McDonald, 61, who would replace Eric Shinseki, who resigned in late May.

Shinseki's departure came after The American Legion called for urgent change, starting with new leadership at the top, to restore trust in the system after revelations that veterans had died waiting for VA doctor appointments that were never really scheduled and that executives received bonuses for falsified performance reports.

From McDonald, Dellinger said he looks for the kind of changes one would expect in the corporate world when a company is in trouble. "The American Legion is confident that Robert McDonald will apply his experience leading big, complex business operations to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a complex operation that desperately needs a system-wide overhaul right now," Dellinger said.

"I am also confident Mr. McDonald will understand the importance of engaging the veteran stakeholders of the VA health-care system as reforms are adopted in the coming months," Dellinger said the incoming VA secretary must make patients his first priority and include them at the table as changes are planned and executed. "It's time to put the veteran back into the Department of Veterans Affairs. No more secret lists. No more bonuses for poor performance or unreasonably long waiting times for appointments."

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