
VETERANS ADVOCATE

September 2016

[VA Announces Community Care Call Center to Help](#)

[Veterans with Choice Program Billing Issues](#)

Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. A Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance and press 1 at the prompt.

Voice of Democracy

Each year, nearly 40,000 high school students from across the country enter to win a share of \$2 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the VFW's Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition. The VFW established the Voice of Democracy program (VOD) in 1947 to provide students grades 9-12 the opportunity to express themselves in regards to democratic ideas and principles. The national first-place winner receives a 30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. Other national scholarships range from \$1,000-\$16,000, and the first-place winner from each (state) VFW Department wins a minimum scholarship of \$1,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

YOU TOO CAN WIN \$30,000! WHO CAN ENTER:

The Voice of Democracy Program is open to students in grades 9-12 (on the Nov. 1 deadline), who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States and its territories.

HOW TO ENTER: Access the application form at: http://www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/VoiceofDemocracyEntryFormandBrochure.pdf

If you experience problems with downloading or printing the application, please try to access the entry form using Internet Explorer. If you continue to experience problems, please contact the VFW National Headquarters at kharmer@vfw.org for assistance.

THE 2016-17 THEME IS: MY RESPONSIBILITY TO AMERICA

Students should record their reading of the draft to an audio CD or flash drive. The recording can be no shorter than three minutes and no longer than five minutes (plus or minus five seconds).

Entries begin at the Post level. Once the student creates their essay and completes burning the audio version to an audio CD/flash drive, they can submit their typed version, CD/flash drive and the Voice of Democracy entry form to their local participating VFW Post by the November 1 deadline.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

Originality is worth 30 points: Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

Content is worth 35 points: Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to the other.

Delivery is worth 35 points: Speak in a clear and credible manner.

Read last years winning essay! <http://www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFW.org/Community/2015%20VOD%20Winning%20Essay.pdf>



Voice of Democracy

2016 - 17 Theme

"My Responsibility To America"

Student Entry Deadline: November 1, 2016



WHAT IS THE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAM?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, almost 40,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, *My Responsibility To America*.

WHY SHOULD I ENTER?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., Feb. 25 - March 1, 2017, to tour the city, be honored by the VFW and its VFW Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$153,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$30,000.

THE RULES

Who can enter?

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Nov. 1 deadline, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are ineligible.

What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 seconds max.) essay on an audio CD or a flash drive. One student per CD or flash drive. When burning your CD, make sure that "Create Audio CD" option (or similar) is selected so the program can properly convert your sound file and burn it to CD. After it has finished, be sure to play back your audio CD on a system other than your computer, such as a standard radio or car CD player, to verify that the conversion/burning process was successful. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or local VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at kharmer@vfw.org for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, (including, but not limited to your name, school, city, state, race, or national origin) although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership. You may enter only one competition at one Post (if otherwise eligible) per year. At any time during the contest, additional participant personal information could be requested by the VFW, including but not limited to a photograph, SSN, or biographical information.

2016-17 OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM VOICE OF DEMOCRACY COMPETITION

MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL CONTESTANTS

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and E-mail (if applicable)

First Name You'd Like on a Name Badge

Jacket Size

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT'S PARENT/GUARDIAN
(required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian's E-mail

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE D.C. NATIONAL FINALS RULES
(ON OPPOSITE SIDE)

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible.

I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

Signature of Student Participant

Date

Rochester Symphony Chorale



The 34th Infantry Division "Red Bull" Band
present

ECHOES OF 9/11

*A concert to honor the heroes & commemorate the
tragedies on the 15th anniversary of September 11, 2001.*
Hosted by Tom Overlie

*Saturday | September 10, 2016 | 2:00pm
Mayo Civic Center Auditorium*

**EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC.**

With participation and support from:



Mayor Ardell Brede

Gold Cross
Ambulance Service

9/11 Commemorative Stained Glass Window
by Mike and Stephanie Podulke
on display at Mayo Civic Center





ROCHESTER SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA & CHORALE



34TH INFANTRY DIVISION "RED BULL" BAND
MINNESOTA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

September 11, 2016, marks the 15th anniversary of the infamous 9/11 attacks.

Most of us can remember where we were and what we were doing when our country suffered these tragic assaults. Many people—Fire, Police, Ambulance, Sheriff, Military—all came together to face the challenge of what was utter destruction. Amidst the chaos, many of these lives were lost.

Fifteen years have gone by, and we have not forgotten. To commemorate this historic event, honor its victims, and give thanks to the first responders who performed heroically on that day, the Rochester Symphony Chorale, in collaboration with the 34th Infantry Division "Red Bull" Band of the Minnesota Army National Guard, is presenting a free community concert on September 10, 2016. The "Echoes of 9/11" event will be held at the Mayo Civic Center Auditorium of Rochester, Minnesota, at 2:00PM. The program will comprise patriotic music—including the National Anthem, "America the Beautiful," and "The Stars and Stripes Forever"—thoughtful reflections, and time to both remember and honor the lives lost.

It would be a privilege to have you and your colleagues a part of our audience, in uniform, as we gather together to pay tribute to the magnificent valor of America's first responders, active duty and retired military, and volunteer responders. May we draw strength from our collective humanity.

Please find an enclosed poster to display in your offices. We hope to see you there!

Most sincerely,

Eric Kerska
*Battalion Chief, Rochester Fire Department;
Colonel, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota National Guard (Ret.)*

*Jere Lantz President/CEO and Artistic Director, Rochester Symphony Orchestra and Chorale
David Stordalen Commander, 34th Infantry Division Red Bull Band, Minnesota Army National Guard
Patricia Anderson Director, Rochester Symphony Chorale
Jodi Melius Echoes of 9/11 Task Force Chair; RSOC Board Member*

Rochester Symphony Orchestra & Chorale Brings Great Music to Life. Currently heading into its 97th season, the RSOC continues to lead the vibrant cultural arts community in Rochester and surrounding Southeastern Minnesota with a wide variety of concert offerings, educational programs and community partnerships. Under the guidance of President/CEO and Artistic Director Jere Lantz, the symphony comprises 70 paid orchestra musicians and a volunteer chorale of 75 singers. The 2016/17 season begins Friday, October 21, 2016. More at www.rochestersymphony.org.

The 34th Infantry Division "Red Bull" Band provides music throughout the spectrum of military operations to instill in our forces the will to fight and win, foster the support of our citizens, and promote our national interests at home and abroad. Officially organized April 30, 1900, the 34th Infantry Division Band has proudly served state and nation for over 116 years, seeing service in WWI, WWII and the Global War on Terrorism. Whether performing for the public, supporting military ceremonies, or entertaining US Service members and our allies, the Soldier-Musicians of the Red Bull Band are honored to serve in one of the US Army's most respected Divisions.

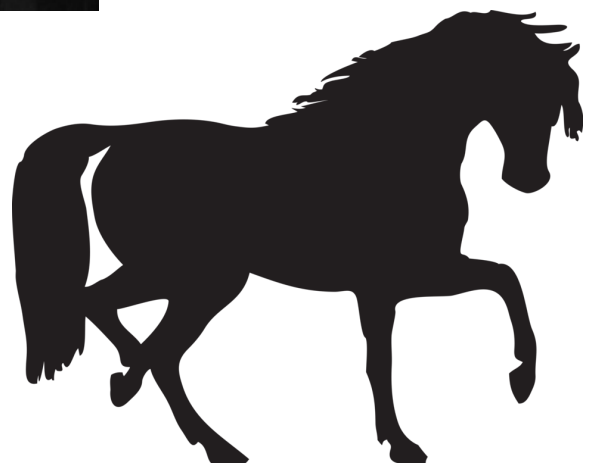
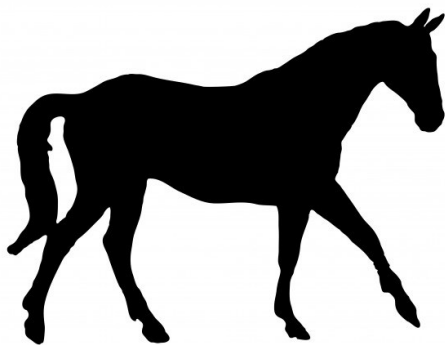
1530 Greenview Dr. SW, Suite 120 Rochester, MN 55902 507-286-8742 www.rochestersymphony.org

Horse Experience/Therapy Sessions

For any veterans interested in a horse experience/horse therapy session, get in touch with Patty Siefert, 612-240-3077

The small horse farm is located at:

8390 Hiawatha Ave, Eden Prairie, MN





Middle River Disabled Veterans Goose Hunt application form

Goose Hunt is scheduled for September 17, 2016

Name: (Last) _____ **(First)** _____ **(Middle)** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **Age:** _____ **Weight:** _____

E-mail address: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Rank: _____

WWII _____ **Korea** _____ **Vietnam** _____ **Desert Storm** _____ **Afghanistan** _____ **Iraq** _____

Years served: _____

Type of disability/diagnosis:

Briefly describe physical disabilities:

Difficulties with outdoor temperatures: Yes _____ **No** _____

Describe any special needs, assistance, and/or equipment you will need:

Do you require the use of a wheelchair for independence: Yes _____ **No** _____

Please circle items used: walker cane crutches other: _____

List any current medications taken: _____

Date of last medical appointment: _____

Name of physician seen: _____

Allergies (be specific): _____

Please list any other medical information concerning your current health status:

Last year you hunted any type of wildlife: _____

Last year you fired a weapon independently: _____

Do you have a shotgun available to use: Yes _____ No _____

Name and phone number of contact person in case of an emergency during hunt:

Our screening committee will review all applications.

Applications must be received on or before Sept 10, 2016.

All applicants will be notified by mail, E-mail or by telephone.

All attendees will be assigned an experienced volunteer to assist during the event.

You must provide your own transportation to and from Middle River American Legion Post 444.

Transportation to and from hunting grounds will be provided.

Questions concerning these hunts should be directed to Jason by E-mail jasonc@wikel.com (218) 686-0889 or Dave at (218) 449-3865.

Please return applications before Sept 10th to:

**American Legion Post 444
PO Box 66
Middle River, MN 56737**

X

Applicant's Signature

Even before the air becomes crisp and the days become noticeably shorter, the first apple varieties are ready to harvest across the state. Beginning in August and September, Minnesota orchards begin to open. Be sure to plan an afternoon trip to a local orchard. Many not only offer apples pre-picked and pick-your-own, but also feature family activities like hay rides, stores and bakeries, or wine tastings to enjoy an afternoon.

Apple Ridge Orchard

County Road 1
Mazeppa
507-843-3033
9a-6p

Bauer's Market and Nursery

Hwy 14 and 61
LA Crescent
507-895-4583
M-Sat 8a-6p, Sun 10a-5p

Bushel and Peck Orchard and Market

Hwy 61
Lake City
651-345-4516 or 1-800-4(Bushel)
10a-6p

Fireside Orchard and Gardens

Hwy 19
Northfield

Sekapp Orchard

3415 College View road E
Rochester
9a-7p

Frontenac Hills Apple Farm

30202 Circle S Road
Red Wing
10a-6p



Northwood Orchard

8018 75th Ave NW
Oronoco
507 280 0591

King's Orchard

Hwy 14
Kasson
507-634-7830
M-Sat 9a-dusk, Sun noon-dusk

Leidel's Apple Stand

Hwy 16
LA Crescent
507-895-4832 or 507-895-8221
9a-6p

Pepin Heights Orchard

Hwy 61
Lake City
1-800-652-3779

Pine tree Apple Orchards

County Road 17
Preston
507-765-2408

Preston Apple and Berry Farm

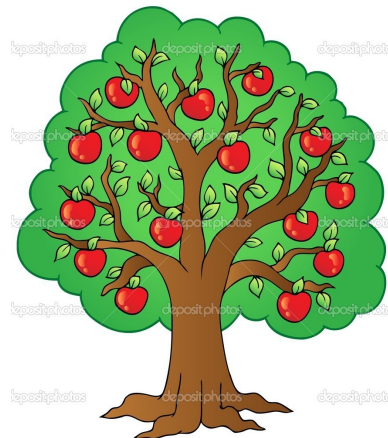
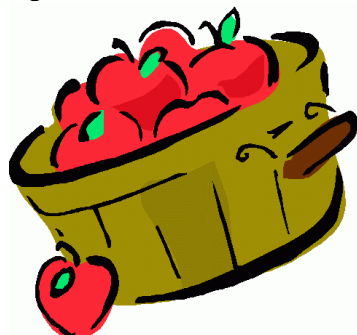
645 Hwy 16 and Hwy 52 E
Preston
507-765-4486

Wescott Agri Products, Inc

RR 1, Box 13
Elgin
507-876-2891

White Barn Orchard

1966 320th Street
Northfield, MN 55057



Visit a local pumpkin patch in SE MN!

Most of these have loads of pumpkins to choose from.

Tweite's Family Farm

1821 Frontier Rd SW
Byron
507-365-8035
Sat & Sun 10a-530p

Roper Pumpkin Patch

104 Orchard Lane
Lake City
507-585-0204
Call

Oak View Nursery Pump- kin Patch

7921 S County Rd 45
Owatonna
507-451-0454
Sat 10a-6p
Sun 12p-6p

Red Barn Learning Farm

27251 State Hwy 30
Hayfield
507-365-8321
Labor day weekend, Sept
9, and Sept 16th open 10a-3p
Open all weekends in
October
Sat 10a-5p
Sun 12p-5p

Prairie River Camp

52792 80th St
Bricelyn
507-327-7047
Sat & Sun 1p-5p

Farmer Johns Pumpkin Patch

90537 273rd St
Austin
507-437-9180
Open Sun-Sat noon-6pm
Sept 19-Oct 31

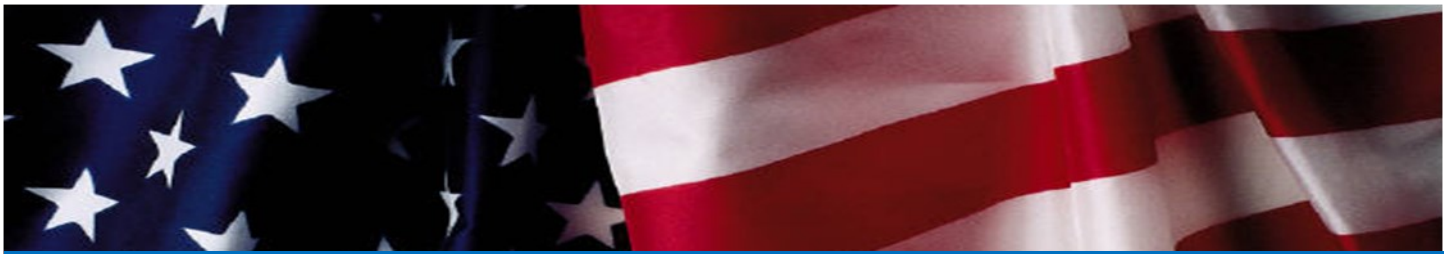
Hilltop Greenhouse and Farm

83204 300th Street
Ellendale
507-889-3271
Mon-Sat 9a-5p
Sun 1p-4p

Oak Knoll Farm

20791 785th Ave
Albert Lea
507-402-7637
Mon-Fri 11a-6p
May-Oct 31





PTSD Support Group for Veterans, Friends, and Family Members

SEMCIL's Veteran Services Program is offering a support group for Veterans that have been diagnosed with PTSD, or those who have signs and symptoms of PTSD, and their family members. Maybe you need to talk or just be in the company of your extended Veteran family. The support group will be a place for Veterans to share, heal and talk about their experiences in dealing with PTSD. We will be there for each other.

We are our brothers and sisters keepers because the oath we took to never leave a fallen comrade has no expiration date. For many of us, combat veterans, there are daily reminders of deaths of brothers and sisters.

The group will be facilitated by Jennifer Shumaker, Veteran

Upcoming meetings:

Thursday, September 29, 2016

Thursday, October 27, 2016

6:30pm-8:30 p.m.

**American Legion
315 1st Ave NW,
Rochester, MN, 55901**

Jennifer at 507-328-6324 or shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us





Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs



Quarry Hill Nature Center

Women Veterans Event

Saturday, September 17, 2016 at Quarry Hill Nature Center
As always, this event is completely free and open to all women veterans and currently serving female service members in Minnesota!

Register now at: <https://s2wvsemn.eventbrite.com>

Please plan to attend for breakfast, connection, and a fall hike with your fellow women veterans! Event hosted by Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Women Veterans Program.

This will be led by Cortney Amundson - woman veteran, Eco therapist, and founder of Mindful Restoration.

Agenda:

9:00 Arrival & breakfast

9:30 Intros & overview of Eco therapist - Savanna Room

10:30 Hike & activity - Outdoor Trails

12:00 Questions & discussion - Savanna Room

12:30 Wrap up & Departure

***Please Note: Hike will be a walk on a paved path.**

Ashley Laganieri

Gold Star Family/Women Veterans Coordinator | Department Planning



Veterans who served in Vietnam, their family, and friends:

An estimated 250,000 Vietnam-era veterans as well as other veterans who received less-than-honorable discharges from the military have been denied VA benefits. These include medical treatment and disability pay.

It is estimated that between 80,000 and 90,000 of these men and women who served our country suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which was not recognized as a medical disorder until 1980. Many of our veterans have also suffered medical conditions due to exposure to Agent Orange.

Hardships suffered by these veterans include serious medical issues, homelessness, prolonged unemployment, damaged family and social relationships as well as the experience of a less than honorable discharge.

Veterans for Peace, Chapter 115, in the Red Wing area is committed to assisting veterans through the process for upgrades. If you are one of these veterans or know veterans who might be helped by this upgrade, please send a note with a phone number and name to PO Box 244, Red Wing, MN. 55066, or please contact Jack Nordgaard at: 651-388-7731.

<https://www.veteransforpeace.org/>



DEER HUNT FOR DISABLED VETERANS

NOVEMBER 10-13, 2016

OLMSTED COUNTY CHESTER WOODS PARK

**SPONSORED BY: Olmsted County Parks
Olmsted County Veterans Service Office
MN Disabled American Veterans Chapter 28**

Olmsted County Parks, in collaboration with the Olmsted County Veterans Service Office and MN Disabled American Veterans Chapter 28 is offering an opportunity for a limited number of service connected, disabled veterans to deer hunt within the boundaries of Chester Woods Park during the 2016 3A firearms deer season.

The lottery is open to all military veterans and active duty military with documented service connected disability and a Minnesota deer hunting license. Final selection of the hunters will be made by the Olmsted County Veterans Services office with priority based on disability rating. Each chosen Veteran will be allowed to sign up and have two DEERS dependents hunt with them.

Stop out to the Olmsted County Veterans Service Office to register for the hunt.
2100 Campus Drive SE, Rochester, MN 55904

Or Call 507-328-6355 for more information. Deadline for applications is SEPTEMBER 30



Olmsted County Veteran's Services

SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS DEER HUNT

SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS DEER HUNT

REGISTRATION OPENS Friday August 26, 2016!!

Chester Woods Park will grant permission to a limited number of hunters to hunt within the park from November 10-13, 2016 during the normal shotgun season for Zone 3A.

All successful applicants will be required to obtain one or more intensive harvest tags allowing the taking of additional antlerless deer. Permits will be reserved for service-connected, disabled veterans and will be granted through the Veteran Service Office.

Registration forms for the drawing may be obtained at the Olmsted County

Veteran Service Office, 2100 Campus Drive SE, Suite 200, Rochester, Minnesota 55904 or

by calling 507-328-6355. The drawing will be held on **September 30th** and both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by mail or email, per preference. **Successful applicants**

must provide picture identification, a 2016 deer hunting license, and at least one 2016

intensive harvest tag when picking up their permission slips *at the evening banquet on*

November 9th at Chester Woods, or the morning of the hunt. You cannot be in the Park hunting without your permission slip.

The following rules will apply to the hunt:

1. Parties of up to three may register on a single form. The applicant must be a service-connected disabled veteran. **An applicant's name can only appear on one application.** The additional individuals must be a DEERS dependent of the veteran.

2. Successful applicants will be issued a written permission slip allowing them to hunt within the park. Picture identification and 2016 deer license and intensive harvest tag must be provided when picking up the permission slip.

3. All hunters must carry picture identification, hunting license, and permission slip while in the park.

4. The park will be closed to the general public during the hunt.

5. No one without a valid permission slip will be allowed within the park for any reason.

6. All trash must be removed.

7. Conservation officers will be patrolling the park and violators will be prosecuted.

8. Archers may hunt during the same dates and under the same rules.

9. The purpose of this hunt is to harvest sufficient numbers to keep the Chester Woods herd healthy and manageable. It may or may not be repeated in subsequent years.

10. A change in the DNR regulation requires a buck **must** have at least 4-points on one side to be legal.

11. These rules will be enforced without exception!

CHESTER WOODS PARK
DEER HUNTER LOTTERY REGISTRATION FORM
SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

This form may be filled out for parties of up to 3 persons. The applicant must be a service connected disabled veteran and may include 2 dependents. Each applicant must fill in his or her full name, address, telephone number and social security number to verify disability. **All successful applicants and dependents will be required to obtain at least one intensive harvest tag so that additional antlerless deer may be taken.**

Successful applicants and dependents must provide picture identification, a 2016 deer license, and at least one intensive harvest tag when picking up their permission slip. There will be no exceptions to this rule!

All hunters must return the pre-addressed report postcard by mail within 5 days following the hunt regardless if an animal was taken or not. Cards will be distributed with the permission slips. **Failure to comply with these requirements will disqualify the hunter from future hunts.**

Completed lottery registration forms will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. Friday, September 30, 2016 at the Veteran Service Office in the Public Health Building on the second floor. The address is: 2100 Campus Drive SE, Suite 200, Rochester, MN. 55904.

The drawing will be held Friday, September 30, 2016 and all applicants will be notified by mail.

NOTE: AN APPLICANT'S NAME CAN ONLY APPEAR ON ONE APPLICATION.

PLEASE PRINT!

Applicant #1

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____ Social Security Number: _____

DEERS Dependent #1

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____

DEERS Dependent #2

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____

Other upcoming local events

Rochester American Legion Post 92
3rd Tuesday of each month
315 First Ave NW
Rochester, MN 55901

7pm
Legion Riders
2nd Thursday of each month
7pm

Forty et eight at the American Legion
2nd Tuesday of each month
7pm

Military Order of the Purple Heart
3rd Thursday of each month,
6pm, March, May, July, September, and
November

Rochester VFW Post Meeting
2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215
16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902
7pm

Byron American Legion Post 119
1st Monday of the month
8pm
505 Frontage Road NW, Byron, MN

Vietnam Veterans of America
Meets 4th Monday each month
at 7:00pm, at the Rochester American Legion
315 First Ave NW
Rochester, MN 55901

DAV Meeting
2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge
1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901
5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm

Korean War Veterans
Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen
1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55902
(Silver lake plaza)
8 AM

Marine Corp League Meeting
4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm, VFW Post 1215
16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902

Kasson American Legion Post 333
Third Thursday of the month
March 19 , 7pm
212 West Main Street , Kasson, MN 55944

Chatfield VFW Post 6913
2nd Tuesday of the month
9– 2nd St SW, Chatfield, MN

Gulf War Veterans of America
2nd Monday of each month
7pm, at the Rochester American Legion
315 First Ave NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Rochester American Legion Friday night dinners Sept 4, 18, 25 from 5pm-730pm

Rochester VFW POW/MIA Recognition day September 18th

Rochester VFW Lunches served from 1145am-2:30pm M-F



“To promote the interests and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors and to enhance their quality of life through counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy and special projects.”



Veterans Services
2100 Campus Drive SE,
Suite 200
Rochester, MN 55904

