BLUE HATTER

Department of Utah
Department Newsletter

September 2026

BLUE HATTER

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BLUE HATTER

LABOR DAY

Labor Day, observed on the first Monday in September, honors the generations of American workers whose dedication, skill, and perseverance have strengthened our nation. As we enjoy time with family and friends, we also recognize the veterans, military families, first responders, and countless Americans whose hard work and service contribute to the communities we call home. This Labor Day, The American Legion Department of Utah salutes all who serve, sacrifice, and work each day to build a stronger America.

HOLIDAYS TO REMEMBER

September 2026

- September 7 – Labor Day — Federal holiday
- September 11 – Patriot Day — Remembrance of those killed in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks
- September 17 – Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
- September 18 – National POW/MIA Recognition Day — Observed on the third Friday of September
- September 20 – National Service Dog Day
- September 27 – Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day — Observed on the last Sunday of September

October 2026

- October 12 – Columbus Day — Federal holiday; also observed in many places as Indigenous Peoples' Day
- October 13 – U.S. Navy Birthday — Established October 13, 1775
- October 26 – National Day of the Deployed
- October 31 – Halloween

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION, RICHFIELD

Celebrating Our American Legion Family in Richfield

The 2026 Department of Utah Convention in Richfield was a wonderful opportunity for The American Legion Family to come together in fellowship, service, and a shared commitment to veterans and our communities. Legionnaires, members of the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders from across Utah gathered to conduct the important business of our organizations, recognize accomplishments, celebrate another year of service, and prepare for the year ahead.

A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who participated and to the many individuals who worked behind the scenes to make the convention a success. From our Department leadership and committees to our delegates, volunteers, host community, presenters, distinguished guests, and Legion Family members, your time, dedication, and willingness to serve made the weekend possible.

The success of our Department Convention reflects what we can accomplish when the entire American Legion Family works together. Thank you for continuing to strengthen our organization, support one another, and carry forward our shared mission of service to veterans, their families, our youth, and the communities of Utah.

Together, we are Veterans Strengthening America!

2026-2027 DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Name	Title	Phone	Email
Kent Anderson	Dept Commander	702-524-7728	kba6991@gmail.com
Chris Brasted	Vice Commander	801-510-5717	cbrasted@comcast.net
Terry Schow	NEC	801-664-2058	tschow48@gmail.com
Richard Fisher	ANEC	801-698-3104	rfisher590@xmission.com
Michael Tovar	Area 1 Commander	801-645-4145	ssgtovarm@hotmail.com
Glen Bradford	Area 2 Commander	801-472-1948	glenbradford@msn.com
Craig Carlson	Area 3 Commander	435-790-2488	ccarlson@deseretpower.com
Marti Bigbie	Area 4 Commander	435-668-5770	martibigbie@gmail.com
John Robertson	PDC	801-502-8439	johnpeggyr@gmail.com
Joseph Guimond	PDC	801-541-9952	jguimond1963@gmail.com
Ninzel Rasmuson	PDC	530-515-7511	ninzel9@gmail.com
Rick Culter	District 1	661-802-2669	r_mcutler@yahoo.com
Tami Santerre	District 2	801-831-3677	tsanterre14@comcast.net
Vacant	District 3: Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Shiela Heindel	District 4	801-768-4527	seheindel@gmail.com
James Martin	District 5	435-820-0677	mart3403@etv.net
Jeff Stithem	District 6	435-851-6231	utahpostal@hotmail.com
Jerry Curtis	District 7	435-632-1570	commander.district7@gmail.com
Amanda Booms	District 8	573-808-0544	Amanda_downs@ymail.com
Patti Cook	District 9	801-664-4389	Cook.patti.4389@gmail.com
Rick Mead	Adjutant	801-669-1526	adjutant@utlegion.org

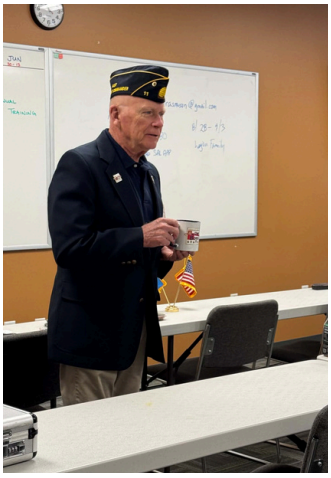
Please contact the Department Adjutant for current Department Chairs.

JUNE 2026

Be a Part of the #SOLUTION

DEPARTMENT OF UTAH

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION



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JUNE 2026

Be a Part of the #SOLUTION

DEPARTMENT OF UTAH

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

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107th NATIONAL CONVENTION

The American Legion Family gathered in Louisville, Kentucky, August 28 through September 3, 2026, for The American Legion's 107th National Convention. Thousands of Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders, and guests came together for a week focused on service, leadership, training, camaraderie, and the future of our organization. Convention activities included national commission meetings, educational workshops, Be the One training, color guard and band competitions, a patriotic memorial service, community outreach, and the National Convention general sessions at the Kentucky International Convention Center. Delegates conducted the important business of The American Legion, considering resolutions and programs that will guide the organization while electing national leadership for the 2026–2027 year. The convention provided another powerful reminder that, although we represent communities and Departments across the nation and around the world, we remain united by our commitment to veterans, their families, our communities, and the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

John "Jay" Bowen from Department of Colorado was elected as the new National Commander for the 2026-2027 membership year. Additionally, Thomas "Thom" Skelley was elected as the new Sons of the American Legion National Commander and Dr. Coral May Grout was elected as the new National President for the Auxiliary. David Heredia is the National American Legion Riders chairman.

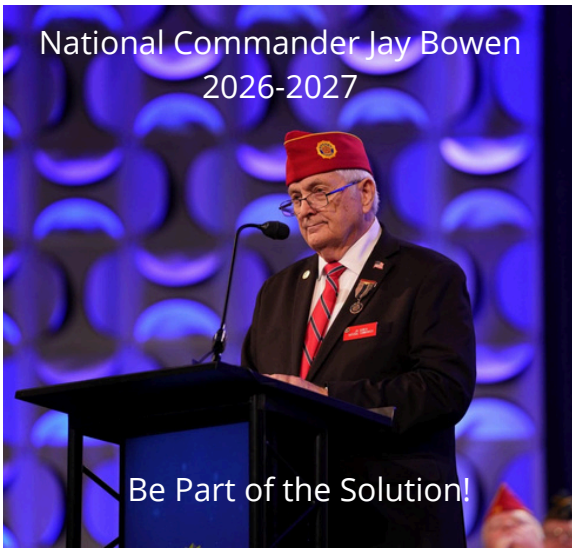
Department of Utah had great delegation representation between Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and American Legion Riders.

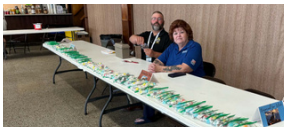
Outgoing Department Commander John Robertson, served as the delegation chair for the National Convention.

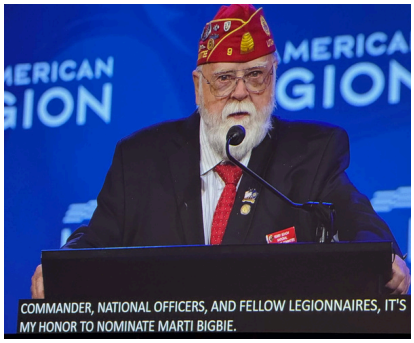
Marti Bigbie, PDC, was recognized and awarded for National Recruiter of the Year. Additionally, Marti was elected as one of the five National Vice Commanders for the 2026-2027 membership year. Congratulations!

DEPARTMENT OF UTAH

107th NATIONAL CONVENTION







like & follow

PATRIOT DAY

On September 11, 2026, we mark the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and pause to remember the 2,977 innocent lives lost at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and aboard Flight 93. We honor the firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency personnel, military members, and ordinary Americans who demonstrated extraordinary courage that day and in the difficult days that followed. Patriot Day is also a National Day of Service and Remembrance, calling us to honor those we lost through service to others and renewed commitment to our communities and country. As members of The American Legion Family, may we remember the unity, patriotism, and determination that brought Americans together following 9/11 and carry that spirit forward for future generations. We will never forget.

Department Commander Message

Greetings from your newly elected Department Commander, Kent Anderson. It is an honor to serve as your commanding officer and assure I am here to serve you. If at any time you wish me to visit your District or Post, please let me know so we can schedule it. We are here to help strengthen our organization and provide any necessary information or help you may need.

I just returned from attending the National Legion Convention held in Louisville, KY. This event helps you to understand the American Legion as a whole and be introduced to our National leaders and Commander. If you have never attended this event, I would encourage you to seriously consider it. It gives you insight to leadership and helps provide training to members.

In this coming year we have the opportunity to establish a Utah Legion College. This is designed to educate our existing and future leaders on skills of leadership with emphasis on service leadership. This will be a three-day event preliminarily planned to be held at Weber State College during Boys State. All leaders and potential leaders of Post, Districts and Department should consider attending. I attended the National Legion College last year and wished I had attended earlier.

We have a new goal of achieving 6.000 members. This is a goal set between the Vice Commander Chris Brasted and the now National Commander Jay Bowen. We believe this is possible by recruiting a small number of members in each Post and retaining our existing members.

My contact information is:
Kent B. Anderson
Commander
702-524-7728
Kba6991@gmail.com

Department Vice Commander Message

My friends and fellow Legionnaires,

As we close out an incredible summer celebrating America 250, I hope you had the opportunity to participate in the many ceremonies and festivities throughout our communities. These events gave us another opportunity to showcase the patriotism and service that define The American Legion and demonstrate the value we bring to our communities.

As this year's Membership Chair, I have set an ambitious goal of 6,000 members for the 2026–2027 membership year. While it is an aggressive goal, I believe it is achievable. Utah had the best retention rate among all 55 Departments, and by building on that success, continuing our recruiting efforts, and expanding Buddy Checks to reconnect with past members, we can reach 6,000.

We are also focused on strengthening our organization for the 21st century by expanding training opportunities, including our first-ever Utah Legion College, will help our Legionnaires and Post and District officers develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. Stronger leaders and better-trained members mean stronger Posts, better retention, and attractive to potential members.

Your Department leadership is here to support you, and we want to hear from you. We are a team and a family, and our success depends on communication, involvement, and supporting one another. Please reach out with your ideas, needs, and challenges, and take advantage of the opportunities ahead. As veterans, we know what it means to persevere. We don't quit, and we never leave anyone behind. Whether it's recruiting a new member, conducting a Buddy Check, helping a fellow Legionnaire, or supporting the "Be the One" mission, each of us has a role to play. This year's membership theme is B.P.O.T.S.— "Be Part of the Solution". Let's make this the year we become the solution. Get involved, support your Post, reach out to a fellow veteran, and help make our Department stronger for generations to come.

Continue to Be the One, and B.P.O.T.S.— Be Part of the Solution!

For God and Country,
Reach out to me at any time by any means.
Chris Brasted
Vice Commander
Department of Utah
The American Legion
801-510-5717
cbrasted@comcast.net

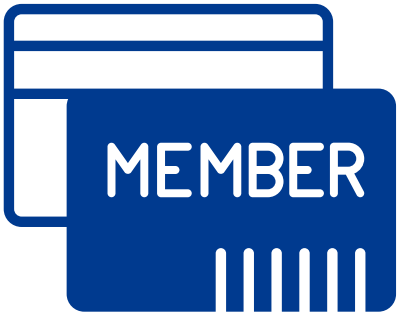
Are You Paid Up fro Life?

Make Your Commitment for a Lifetime: Paid Up For Life

The American Legion's Paid Up For Life (PUFL) membership offers Legionnaires a convenient way to make a lifetime commitment to our organization while eliminating the need to pay annual membership dues. Once a PUFL membership is paid in full, members are protected from future dues increases at the Post, Department, and National levels, no longer have to worry about annual renewals, and continue receiving the benefits of American Legion membership for life, including a lifetime subscription to The American Legion Magazine. PUFL members also receive a permanent membership card along with an annual membership card verifying their continuing membership. Beyond convenience, becoming Paid Up For Life is a statement of commitment to The American Legion and its enduring mission of serving veterans, strengthening national security, developing our nation's youth, and promoting Americanism in communities across the country.

Learn more or obtain your personalized PUFL quote through

The American Legion Paid Up For Life program @ legion.org



AMERICAN LEGION

How to create your own Membership Impact Report

American Legion Family members can produce their own versions of Membership Impact Reports (MIR) for their post, district and/or departments. Here is a step-by-step guide, along with a QR code that directs to the web page where all the documents are kept.

1. Scan the QR Code:

- Download all three of the documents — an instruction guide, template for the MIR and icons to use.

2. Gather the metrics:

- Compile notable metrics from participants in a Boys State or other youth program, volunteer hours at a local veterans home, number of Eagle Scouts/ Boy Scouts mentored and other activities that support Legion programs.

3. Open the documents:

- Open the Word documents that contain the images and MIR template.

4. Create the report:

- Type in the information to specify who the report is for in the upper right corner. For example, Membership Impact Report: Post 123 in New York.
- Type in the number and a description (for example, 250 — number of schoolchildren who learned about flag etiquette during a Veterans Day event)
- Repeat for all of the metrics you have

5. Select the images:

- In the source document (the one with the images), scroll to find an image you want to copy.
- Click on the image to select it. You'll know it's selected when you see a border or handles around it.

6. Copy the image:

- Right-click on the selected image and choose "Copy" from the context menu.
- Alternatively, you can press Ctrl + C on your keyboard to copy the image.

7. Switch to the MIR document:

- Click on the window or tab where the MIR document is open to make it active.

8. Update the icon:

- Click on the icon you want to replace and then click delete.

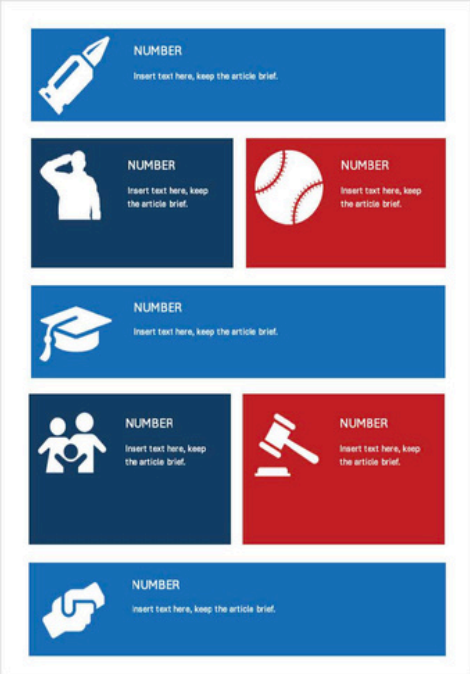
9. Paste the image, and adjust if needed:

- Right-click where you want to paste the image and select "Paste" from the context menu.
- Alternatively, press Ctrl + V on your keyboard to paste the image.
- After pasting, you may want to adjust the size or position of the image. Click on the image to select it, then use the handles to resize it or drag it to reposition.

10. Save and continue:

- Save your changes to the target document by clicking "File" > "Save" or pressing Ctrl + S.
- Then continue until you have all the images accounted for.

Example



ICONS FOR REPORT

Your Logo Here

2025 CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT IMPACT SUMMARY

QUOTE OR MAIN ARTICLE

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4 Area Commanders

Every year, Area Commanders are nominated and elected to have oversight of their Districts while simultaneously working with Districts and Posts to help them be successful.

For the Department of Utah, there are 4 Area Commander positions. They serve as Department 2nd Vice Commanders over their representative Districts. Each area has 2-3 districts within their area. The Districts within each Area are as follows:

Area 1 (Northern Utah): Districts 1, 2, & 3
Cache, Box Elder, & Rich Counties (District 1)
Weber, Morgan, & Davis Counties (District 2)
Summit, Wasatch Counties (District 3)

Area 2 (Central Utah): District 4 & 8
Utah & Juab Counties (District 4)
Salt Lake & Tooele Counties

Area 3 (Eastern Utah): Districts 5 & 9
Carbon, Emery, Grand & San Juan Counties (District 5)
Duchesne, Uintah, & Daggett Counties (District 9)

Area 4 (Southern Utah): Districts 6 & 7
Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Millard & Wayne Counties (District 6)
Iron, Beaver, Washington, Kane & Garfield Counties (District 7)

An Area Commander serves as an important link between Department leadership, Districts, and local Posts throughout the Department of Utah. Area Commanders support District and Post officers, encourage membership growth and retention, promote Department and National programs, assist with training and communication, attend meetings and events, and help identify challenges where Department resources or assistance may be needed. Most importantly, the Area Commander builds relationships and helps ensure that Posts have the information, encouragement, and support they need to successfully serve veterans, their families, and communities. The role is one of communication, mentorship, leadership, and service, helping strengthen The American Legion from the Post level throughout the Department of Utah.

Area Commanders

Michael Tovar, Area 1

Glen Brandford, Area 2

Craig Carlson, Area 3

Marti Bigbie, Area 4

DISTRICTS

Rick Culter
District 1 Commander
Area 1
Cache, Box Elder, &
Rich Counties

Tami Santerre
District 2 Commander
Area 1
Weber, Morgan, &
Davis Counties

VACANT

Vacant
District 3 Commander
Area 1
Summit & Wasatch
Counties

Shiela Heindel
District 4 Commander
Area 2
Utah & Juab Counties

James Martin
District 5 Commander
Area 3
Carbon, Emery, Grand
& San Juan Counties

Jeff Stithem
District 6 Commander
Area 4
Sanpete, Sevier, Piute,
Millard & Wayne Counties

Jerry Curtis
District 7 Commander
Area 4
Iron, Beaver, Washington,
Kane & Garfield Counties

Amanda Booms
District 8 Commander
Area 2
Salt Lake & Tooele Counties

Patti Cook
District 9 Commander
Area 3
Duchesne, Uintah, &
Daggett Counties

9 District COMMANDERS

While the Department is missing one District Commander currently, there are 8 active District Commanders who are working with their posts at varying levels. On the following page are the roles and responsibilities of what the District Commander is charged with during their tenure.

In addition to districts and posts, there are Sons of the American Legion (SAL) squadrons. Not all posts have SAL squadrons. If you are fortunate to have an SAL squadron to support your post, please encourage their involvement to support your post efforts. It really helps!

Furthermore, if your districts and posts have Auxiliary units, please encourage them to be involved with your posts and squadrons.

And last, but not least, if you have Legion Riders, they are also a tremendous support.

We are an AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY.

If you need assistance as to how to contact your District Commander as a post, please contact your Area Commander for further assistance.

DISTRICT COMMANDER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A District Commander serves as the primary leader and liaison between local Posts and the Department within The American Legion. The role is both operational and pastoral—focused on leadership, support, accountability, and communication.

Key Responsibilities

1) Leadership & Oversight
The District Commander provides leadership to all Posts in the district, helping ensure they operate effectively, follow Legion policies, and remain mission-focused. This includes guiding Post leadership, encouraging best practices, and helping resolve challenges.

2) Communication Link
District Commanders are the vital conduit between the Department and Posts. They share Department priorities, initiatives, and deadlines with Posts—and carry Post concerns, ideas, and needs back to Department leadership.

3) Membership & Post Development
A core responsibility is strengthening Posts through membership growth and retention. District Commanders encourage recruitment, mentor Post officers, and support struggling or inactive Posts to ensure long-term sustainability.

4) Program Promotion & Support
District Commanders promote the Legion's programs—Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Americanism, National Security, and Children & Youth—helping Posts understand how to participate and succeed at the local level.

5) Advocacy & Representation
They represent the District at Department meetings, conferences, and official functions, ensuring their Posts have a voice in Department decisions and initiatives.

6) Mentorship & Officer Development
District Commanders mentor Post Commanders and officers, helping develop future leaders and ensuring continuity of leadership within the organization.

7) Ceremonial & Community Presence
District Commanders often participate in ceremonies, memorials, and community events, serving as visible representatives of the American Legion and its values.

In Summary
A District Commander is not simply an administrator—they are a leader, advocate, mentor, and connector. Their effectiveness directly impacts the strength of Posts, the engagement of members, and the success of the Department's mission. -NR

Department Adjutant Message

Set Goals, Track Progress, and Tell Our Story

As we move into a new American Legion year, I encourage every Post and District in the Department of Utah to take some time now to establish goals for the year ahead.

As Post and District leaders, one of our responsibilities is to provide direction. We do that by asking a few basic questions: What do we want to accomplish this year? Who do we want to serve? How will we know whether we were successful?

Our goals should be tied to the mission of The American Legion and our Four Pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

National Commander Jay Bowen has identified Children & Youth as a focus for his year. That presents an excellent opportunity for each of us to look at what our Posts and Districts can do for young people and families in our communities. But Children & Youth is only one part of our mission. There are opportunities under every Pillar for a Post to make a difference.

Choose Goals That Fit Your Post

There is no expectation that every Post participate in every American Legion program. Our Posts vary greatly in size, resources, location, and membership. What matters is that we identify activities we can realistically accomplish and then work toward them.

The list of possibilities is long: Boys State, the Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, Scouting, Shooting Sports, Children & Youth programs, VA&R activities, Be the One, Buddy Checks, blood drives, veterans assistance, patriotic observances, flag education, school programs, community service, volunteer hours, support for military families, membership outreach, and many others. If you are looking for ideas, take a look at the Consolidated Post Report (CPR). We normally think of the CPR as something we complete at the end of the year because National asks us to do it. Instead, I encourage Post leadership to look at the CPR at the beginning of the year. It provides an excellent list of programs and activities that can help you identify potential goals for your Post.

Make the Goals Specific

Instead of setting a goal to “do more for veterans” or “support Children & Youth,” decide what that actually means for your Post.

Department Adjutant Message

Perhaps your goal is to sponsor two additional students for Boys State, participate in the Oratorical Contest, conduct quarterly Buddy Checks, hold a blood drive, increase volunteer hours, support a local Scout unit, conduct a Be the One activity, or become involved with an American Legion Baseball or Shooting Sports program.

Goals do not need to be large to be meaningful. A few realistic goals that are actually accomplished are far more valuable than a long list of plans that never get started.

Assign someone responsibility for each goal, establish a target date, and periodically review your progress during Post and District meetings.

Include the Entire American Legion Family

As you establish your goals, remember that we are part of something larger than just our individual Posts.

Invite the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders to participate in both planning and carrying out activities.

A blood drive, Boys State activity, veterans event, Be the One program, Children & Youth project, community service effort, or Buddy Check initiative can accomplish much more when the entire American Legion Family works together.

Working together also demonstrates to our communities what we mean when we talk about The American Legion Family.

Track It as You Do It

Once you establish your goals, make sure someone is keeping track of what you accomplish.

The CPR reporting year runs from June 1 through May 31. The online CPR in MyLegion.org is often not available until later in the year, sometimes around December. That does not mean we should wait until December—or worse, until May—to begin tracking our activities.

Department Adjutant Message

Keep a running record throughout the year of activities conducted, veterans assisted, youth served, volunteer hours, Buddy Checks, dollars spent or donated, community service, patriotic activities, and participation in American Legion programs. When the online CPR becomes available, the information can then be entered and updated throughout the remainder of the year.

Trying to reconstruct twelve months of activity at the end of May almost guarantees that some of the good work your members performed will be forgotten.

The CPR Is More Than a Report to National

I also encourage Post leadership to think differently about the purpose of the CPR.

Yes, the CPR provides important information to Department and National. Those numbers help demonstrate the tremendous impact The American Legion has on veterans, children, families, and communities across the country.

But the CPR should also be a report back to your own members.

At the end of the year, use your CPR information to tell your Post what it accomplished.

How many veterans did you assist? How many Buddy Checks did you make? How many young people participated in programs you supported? How many hours did your members volunteer? How much money did you contribute to veterans, youth, scholarships, or community programs? What ceremonies, service projects, or patriotic activities did you conduct?

Those numbers belong to your members. They represent their work.

Imagine beginning a Post meeting near the end of the year by saying: “Here is what your Post accomplished this year.”

That is a much more meaningful use of the CPR than simply completing another required form.

Department Adjutant Message

It also gives members a reason to be proud of their Post. It demonstrates that their membership and volunteer service matter. And when we tell that story to prospective members and our communities, it shows that The American Legion is not simply an organization that meets once a month—we are an organization that serves.

Leadership Starts With a Goal

At your next Post or District meeting, I encourage you to ask your leadership team to identify a few things you want to accomplish between now and May 31.

Keep it realistic. Make it measurable. Assign responsibility. Include the entire Legion Family. Review your progress during the year. And most importantly, keep track of what you accomplish.

At the end of the year, we should be able to look back and answer two questions:
Did we accomplish the goals we established?

Did we make a difference for veterans, their families, our youth, and our communities?

If the answer is yes, make sure we report it—and make sure we tell our members about it.
Set the goals. Do the work. Track the results. Tell the story.

That is how we strengthen our Posts, our Districts, the Department of Utah, and The American Legion.

Richard Mead
Department Adjutant
The American Legion Department of Utah

National Executive Committeeman Message

We just returned from the national convention in Louisville, Kentucky and the great news is Utah's own. Marti Bigbie was elected as National Vice Commander for the Western United States. This honor is most well deserved as Marti is one of the very best. She has been a gold brigade (recruiting 50 or more members) membership recruiter eight times and has been the national membership recruiter three times. Congratulations to Marti.

Congratulations to Kent Anderson as our new Department Commander and Chris Brasted as our new Department Vice Commander. Army Veteran Jay Bowen from our neighboring state Colorado was elected as National Commander.

We learned at the convention that American Legion Service Officer around the country obtained 15 billion dollars worth of VA compensation benefits to Veterans.

As many of you know here in Utah, Rick Mead, Tami Santerre and I serve as service officers. We urge you to let your members know during your contacts and Buddy Checks and especially urge you to invite them to the meetings when Department officers attend as we always bring VA compensation forms. One piece of advice I would offer is that each year on your birthday that you file a VA form 21–0966 (intent to file a VA claim form) this can be done over the phone at the VA at 1-800-827-1000 this form once filed gives a Veteran up to a year to file a claim and if approved is retroactive back to the day the form was filed.

I also would like to thank Rick Mead for all of his great work not only he does he serve as Department Adjutant but he also is a Department Service Officer and that's a great asset to our department.

The American Legion is supporting the Take Care of America's Veterans act HR 9237 this bill encompasses more than 60 pieces of legislation and would be a great benefit to Veterans. The National Commander spoke about this as some length and we are urging Legion members to contact their members of Congress to support this. In addition we urge you to use legion.org/action to support American Legion legislative priorities.

Many American Legion Posts around the state conduct military military funeral honors and this means a great deal to the families. Thanks for your effort.

Thanks for all you do for our veterans their families and the American Legion. Most honored to serve with you.

Terry Schow

National Executive Committeeman Message

It was announced the recipient of The American Legion National Education Award for 2026 is the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University. Representing the Center for Constitutional Studies was Dr. Matthew Brogden who gave powerful remarks on the value of our government and was sincer in appreciation for all the American Legion does to preserve our republic. He was particularly grateful for our influence on youth.

Congratulatons to Utah Valley University!

Department of Utah Veteran Service Officers (VSOs)

Terry Schow
tschow48@gmail.com
801-644-2058

Rick Mead
adjutant@utlegion.org
801-699-1526

Tami Santerre
AFLadyVet14@outlook.com
tami.santerre@va.gov
801-831-3677

If you are interested in becoming a Veteran Service Officer, please contact Rick Mead, Department Adjutant.

To learn more about the VA Eligibility and Claim process, visit: https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-a-claim/

BE THE ONE

Be the One: Changing and Saving Lives

Be the One is more than an initiative. It is a commitment each of us can make to our fellow veterans, servicemembers, families, and communities. We do not have to be mental health professionals to make a difference. We can Be the One to ask, Be the One to listen, and Be the One to reach out when someone may be struggling. A Buddy Check phone call, a conversation over coffee, a text message, or simply taking the time to listen can remind someone that they matter and that they are not alone. Throughout the Department of Utah, I challenge every Legionnaire and member of The American Legion Family to make suicide prevention personal. Know the veterans in your Post, check on those you have not seen recently, learn the resources available in your community, and never underestimate the impact of showing someone you care. Together, through compassion, connection, and action, we can fulfill the mission of Be the One: Changing and Saving Lives.

DEPARTMENT OF UTAH AMERICANISM PROGRAMS 2026-2027

AMERICAN LEGION UTAH BOYS STATE

Douglas Cass, President/Chairman
Cell: (385) 564-4080
Email: utahboysstate@utlegion.org
Website: www.utahboysstate.org
(Information/Student Registration)

Class of 2027: June 13-19, 2027
at Weber State University (WSU)
Scholarships at Graduation: $500 to $10,000
Scholarship offers to 2026 Boys State graduates = $1.7+ million

AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL (U.S. Constitution) CONTEST

Shiela Heindel, Chairman
Cell: (385) 244-5254
Email: sheindel@gmail.com
Website: www.legion.org/oratorical

Post Contests in January 2027
District Contests in February 2027
Department Contest: March 20, 2027
Scholarships: Dept level: $750-$1,500
National level: $2,000-$25,000

AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

Kit Workman, Chairman
Cell: (801) 540-6464
Email: kworkman1@aol.com
Website: www.legion.org/shooting

Competition Schedule: September 1, 2026 to July 26, 2027
Scholarships: $500 to $5,000

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

John Decker, Chairman
Cell: (801) 628-5329
Email: 6decker@gmail.com
Nation website: www.legion.org/baseball

Steve Hansen, Baseball Commissioner
(sign up teams)
Email: utlegionbaseball@gmail.com
Online registration opens January 1, 2027
Closes June 1, 2027
Scholarships: $500 to $5,000

SCOUTING AMERICA

Jeff Stithem, Chairman
Cell: (435) 692-6159
Email: utahpostal@hotmail.com
National website: www.legion.org/scouting

Eagle Scout of the Year Applications due March 1, 2027 to Utah Department Adjutant
Application download from National website
Scholarships: $500 to $10,000

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Joseph Guimond, Chairman
Cell: (801) 541-8552/Department HQ: (801) 539-1013
Email: jguimond1968@gmail.com

Website: www.legion.org/tfa for Temporary Financial Assistance information

LOCAL AMERICAN LEGION POST CONTACT INFORMATION:

NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

Randy Edwards
Department Americanism Chairman
Edwards.randy60@gmail.com
801-224-6168

Updated 8/14/2026

"We Don't Do Boys State"

Each year, about nine or ten months before the next Utah Boys State session begins, I review my notes, speak with attendees in person and by phone, and search for the right message to share with you, the American Legion Department of Utah. My goal is always the same: to inspire greater support for Utah Boys State and encourage each of you to meet the challenge of sustaining this important program.

Too often, however, that challenge remains unmet. When support falls short, the program feels the impact. Utah Boys State can only be as strong as the commitment it receives from the members, Posts, Districts, and Department that stand behind it.

We have too many Posts that **do not**—or **will not**—get involved in youth programs. That is not an opinion; it is a reality we must address. Those of us who have seen the value of Utah Boys State know how powerful the program can be. We speak proudly about the difference it makes in the lives of young men, and even in the lives of those of us who return year after year to serve.

Still, too many Post members remain on the sidelines when schools need outreach, students need encouragement, and our staff needs help. Engagement at the Post level is essential. It is where relationships are built, candidates are identified, and young leaders first learn that the American Legion believes in them.

Many of our members may never personally see, witness, or fully understand the exceptional civics and leadership experience that Utah Boys State provides. But those who do step up make a lasting contribution. They strengthen their own legacy while helping shape the character, confidence, and promise of tomorrow's leaders.

Supporting Utah Boys State is more than filling seats at a session. It is an investment in young men who will carry forward the values of citizenship, leadership, service, and love of country.

Each year, we review survey feedback from attendees and applicants to identify ways to improve the program. The 2027 session will be no different. In September, the Board of Directors will meet to determine next year's tuition cost and consider any program updates needed to keep Utah Boys State moving forward.

Please monitor your email for updates. Any changes will be communicated through the chain of command and distributed to all members.

If you would like someone from the Utah Boys State team to visit your District or Post, please contact us at ubs@utahboysstate.org. Include enough advance notice and relevant details so we can plan the visit effectively.

From your Boys State team, thank you for your service and for your future personal support of the Utah Boys State program.

"The greatest rewards come when you give of yourself. It's about bettering the lives of others, being part of something bigger than yourself, and making a positive difference". **Nick Vujicic**

Please don't be the members or Posts that boast "we don't do Boys State"!

AMERICAN LEGION Utah Boys STATE

Founders 25o

BUILDING BRIDGES CHANGING LIVES

You are invited to be a part of something extraordinary through the Utah Boys State charity fundraiser called Founders 250 in honor of America250. Together lets make dreams come true one heartfelt donation at a time. 100% of donation proceeds support Utah Boys State citizens.

- **Donate $250 by December 31, 2026**
- **Support Utah Boys State program**
- **Receive an exclusive pin, alumni membership, and recognition at June Welcome Reception**

utahboysstate.org/ubs-foundation/

DEPARTMENT TRAINING THURSDAYS VIA ZOOM

Zoom links are provided from the Department Adjutant to your email on file with your membership. Zoom training meetings begin at 6pm sharp with training for the first 45 minutes followed by 15 minutes Q&A. Please be on time and prepared to be engaged. Sessions are recorded and can be accessed at a later date; however, please do not rely on a recording as it is important to be present to address questions and provide any clarification, as needed.

Thursday, September 10, 2026 - Post & District Success
Thursday, October 1, 2026 - Membership Processing
Thursday, November 5, 2026 - Americanism Programs
Thursday, December 3, 2026 - Be the One
Thursday, January 7, 2027 - Post Everlasting
Thursday, February 4, 2027 - Award Submissions for Posts and Members
Thursday, March 4, 2027 - VA Claims
Thursday, April 1, 2027 - Honor Guards
Thursday, May 6, 2027 - Post and Squadron Consolidated Reports

If you need assistance with connecting with Zoom, please contact Department Adjutant Rick Mead. Thank you.

UTAH LEGION COLLEGE

All American Legion Family members are invited to attend the first Utah Legion College in June 2027. If you are interested in being an instructor and/or serving on the Training Committee, please contact Ninzel Rasmuson, Department Training Chair and Dean of Utah Legion College by October 31, 2026. Questions? Contact Ninzel at utahlegioncollege@gmail.com or 385-900-3124.

LAST LAUGH

POST 27, FARMINGTON

We always enjoy Kent Hansen's cartoons and appreciate that he shares his talents with all of us.

Do you have art, poetry, or stories you want to share? Send it in!

BLUE HATTER SUBMISSIONS

Blue Hatter Submission Due Date:	**Blue Hatter Release Date:**
Sunday, September 5, 2026	Tuesday, September 8, 2026
Friday, October 23, 2026	Tuesday, November 3, 2026
Sunday, December 27, 2026	Tuesday, January 5, 2027
Friday, February 26, 2027	Tuesday, March 2, 2027
Friday, April 23, 2027	Tuesday, May 4, 2027

Please be timely with your submissions so I have enough time to have the newsletter completed by the release date. Department Adjutant Rick Mead will release the Blue Hatter to all leadership across the Department to be shared at the post and district level. It will also be available on utlegion.org.

Please take the time to read the newsletter as there is important information the Department disseminates so you can keep up to date.

If you have any questions, please contact Ninzel Rasmuson, Department Newsletter Editor, at ninzel9@gmail.com or cell 385-900-3124.