

State Fair and Uniform Groups Minutes

Oct 5, 2024

Chairman Larry Miller called meeting to order at Department Headquarters at 1300.

Members present:

3rd Div Craig Fetzner

5th Div Larry Miller, Chairman

Excused:

2nd Div Thomas Lynch (GTTY Meeting at same time)

4th Div Mark Friedman (family business)

Asked for resignation:

1st Div James Kostka

Gold Star and Veterans Day at the Springfield State Fair is August 10, 2025. The DuQuoin State Fair runs from Aug 26-Sep 5, 2025, so it is suspected Veterans Day at the DuQuoin Fair will be Sunday Aug 31, 2025. At the Fair in Springfield, Veterans and their immediate families are admitted to the fair grounds free. A Veterans Parade and activities are some highlights. Discounted ride passes for families of the military veteran will be available in Springfield.

The veteran activities and events at the Springfield Fair are suggested by the Illinois Veterans Day State Fair Committee, a 501(c)(3) organization. The purpose of the committee is to publicize the Illinois State Fair Veterans Day program throughout the state, attend and actively participate during the day of activities at the fairgrounds, and to fund raise for the day's events. The committee's monthly meeting is held at the offices of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) in Springfield, with a virtual option available.

A discussion on the parade at the fair took place. In the past, the various veteran service organizations would provide a color guard and lead the parade at the fairgrounds, rotating the lead organization each year. In 2024, the VFW provided the color guard and led the parade. The determination as to who will lead the parade in 2025 has not been made as yet. Also discussed was parade entry registration. The form was apparently sent to the department and the committee wasn't notified. Registration forms need to be sent out several months prior to the parade to allow for anyone wishing to join in, to make their wishes known.

To raise funds for supporting the activities for the Veterans Day at the State Fair, a fund raising letter was developed to request sponsorship and donations from businesses.

Chairman Miller pointed out the description of the tasking for the State Fair Veterans Day and Uniformed Groups Committee is in the Department Directory. He pointed out that the duties of the committee are to help on Veterans Day at the fair and duties are assigned by the superintendent of the fair. The fair no longer has a superintendent, but now a Fair Manager. However, the organizing committee asks for volunteers to pass out the state fair pins and food vouchers, and other activities as needed.

The budget for the State Fair Committee remains the same as last year and the year before that at \$3,150. About the only expenditures that came from the 2023-2024 budget was travel. The American Legion did not provide any money for the JROTC awards in the past several years. In the past, different veteran service organizations would rotate funding the JrROTC 1st, 2nd and 3rd place plaques. That practice ceased 2022, with the awards presented to the winners bearing the names of the

supporting veterans service organizations.

Another duty of the Department State Fair committee is to promote the organization, maintenance and sponsorship of the various types of musical and drill groups in the Post, Districts or County Councils and arrange for competitions to conform to the rules of the National and Department Convention. We need to query within their division to determine if there were any color guard units active in their divisions. If so, then we could move forward and attempt to make arrangements for competition at the Department Convention.

Commander Lampert and Adjutant Conatser needed to leave for Indianapolis, so briefed Chairman Miller on some items to share with the committee.

First, Commander Lampert thanks the committees for their dedication and involvement, and as the first line in communicating to the legionnaires in the Posts, districts, and divisions. The communications regarding what is transpiring in the organization in relationship to activities begins at the commission/committee level. Share the information within posts, districts, and divisions; so that Legionnaires and the public can see what the Legion is doing. Let's not keep the Legion our best kept secret. Rather than just reporting what happens in the commission/committee meetings, share a bit about the programs the commissions/committees support and be the advocate for those programs.

Ensure your contact information is up to date in MyLegion.

Commissions and committee chairs must make an end of year report for inclusion in the convention book. Start making notes now.

Adjutant Conatser commented on the Department gun raffle. The last of the mailings have gone out through the hard work of Legion volunteers. Using in house volunteers helps save the department several thousands of dollars, over using an outside vendor to run the raffle.

Meeting was adjourned at 1350.

Respectfully, submitted Larry Miller, Chairman