

State Fair Veterans Day and Uniform Groups Committee Meeting

Oct 4, 2025

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order in Bloomington at 1:00pm

Opened with salute to the colors and pledge of allegiance.

Roll call was taken;

Present were:

Chairman: Larry Miller, Div 5

Vice Chair: Craig Fetzner, Div 3

Absent:

Thomas Jorstad, Div 2, recent surgery

Mark Friedman, Div 4, absent

1st Division position is vacant.

Miller passed out committee charge.

"STATE FAIR VETERANS' DAY AND UNIFORM GROUPS COMMITTEE shall publicize the Illinois State Fair Veterans' Day program throughout The American Legion, Department of Illinois; encourage each and every Post having an eligible unit to participate in the annual program. The duties and responsibilities of the Committee are to help on Veterans' Day at the Illinois State Fair. Members are assigned their duty by the superintendent of the fair. This Committee shall promote the organization, maintenance and sponsorship of the various types of musical and drill groups by the local Post, District, and County Council. They shall arrange for competitions, and prescribe the rules therefore, conforming to mandates of the National and Department Convention."

Veterans and Gold Star Day at the State Fair in Springfield for 2025 is August 16, 2026, and DuQuoin Aug 30, 2026.

The department budget has been the same for many years.

Miller reviewed the organization of the State Fair Committee at IDVA. The only tasking the Legion has had was passing out pins to veteran visitors to the fair. Miller also acted as the parade organizer in 2025.

Food at the fair was catered. It was suggested by the IDVA committee that for 2026, volunteers from the various veteran groups be

available to assist in serving the meal, if a meal was to be served. For a few years, vouchers were distributed for food, but the money for that ran out. IDVA committee members were encouraged to find sponsors for meals at the fair.

Also discussed was soliciting businesses to make donations to the State Fair fund, to allow for better menu at the Veterans Lunch.

Miller suggested that department committee members attempt to determine if any posts have honor guard groups that may want to participate in competitions at the Department Convention. I know of the Joliet band, but don't know of others. Rules would be the same as those used at National competitions. Robert Zimbelman is on the department convention committee. There generally has been no competition and the convention committee has no funding for competition.

The Consolidated Veterans Association (CVA) has run the beer tents for the past several years. This is by contract with the Department of Agriculture. The CVA may or may not have the contract for the 2026 fair. CVA's contract with the Dept of Agriculture is for a designated amount. If the beer tents "earn" more than the designated amount contracted for, the overage amount is shared with the posts the beer tent workers are from, based on hours worked. Posts are encouraged to sign up to staff a beer tent, generally, for the duration of the state fair. (2026 State Fair Dates Aug 13-23)

Meeting adjourned at 1:40pm.

Larry Miller
Chairman