Date: October 9, 2026

To: The American Legion Department of Illinois

From: Jerry Howard, Chairman, Community Service Committee

Subject: Committee Meeting notes of September 26, 2026

The Community Service Committee met at the Department Headquarters at 10 AM for the purpose of discussing programs for this year. Those attending were Thomas Strossner (1st Div.), Jerry Howard (2nd Div.) and Bill Seward (3rd Div.). Excused were Ron Hoffman (4th Div.) and Gary Reynolds (5th Div.). We were joined for a portion of the meeting by Celeste Latham, Wayne Erikson and Josh Thielen from our Department of Illinois. Also, Paul Garrett, Chairman for Public Relations joined the group. The following was reviewed and approved at the meeting.

1. The current brochure will be updated this year. We recommend the "year" be taken off the flyer so that it can be duplicated for several years. We recommend that a new application page for Hall of Fame be written and produced; an application form and photo of the current recipient Post 577, Lena to be added. (We would like the photo to be updated annually.) We request that the brochure be printed and distributed by normal procedures and on the Department website for Community Service Committee.
2. We recommend the list of all past Hall of Fame recipients be added to the Department website. The list has not been updated anywhere since 2021.
3. We recommend that the 2026 Hall of Fame recipient, Post 577, Lena, have a spot on the Department website.
4. We discussed the need for conserving Department resources. We were given 20% less budget this year. One saving we agreed to is to make the plaque for upcoming Hall of Fame recipients the same style as our other award recipients.
5. We will encourage Department, Division and others to promote our programs to all Posts. We will use Zoom, mail, phone and direct communication throughout the year.
6. We agreed to include future meetings with the Public Relations Committee. We will promote our programs together (but continue as separate committees).

It is a pleasure to serve Commander Celeste Latham and the Department of Illinois this year.

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 03, 2026

Chairman Lampert called the meeting to order at 1130 at Department Headquarters.

4 members of the committee were present.

- Joe Lampert – 1st Division – Chairman - Present
- John Reece – 2nd Division – Vice Chairman – Present
- Ron Harkness – 3rd Division - Present
- Sean McNamara – 4th Division - Absent
- Richard Duncan - 5th - Division– Present

ALR recruiter awards (patch w/ year tab and Pin) are available. Mike Monroe is checking into ordering new year tabs. Forms for recruiting 3 new ALR members is available on the Department website under the Riders tab (Programs and Services).

We may schedule another State-wide meeting after the first of next year. More info to come.

Utica Veterans Day Parade will be on Sunday November 1st. Please plan on attending, as we would love a large ALR presence (weather permitting). Please RSVP if your chapter is attending (John Reece at 847-975-9643).

Haven Run is April 24, 2027 and will begin at Edwardsville Post 199. More info, including Hotel and route, will be published as soon as it is available. Make plans on joining us.

Visited by the Department Commander Celeste Latham, Department Sr. Vice Commander Wayne Erickson, Membership Director Mike Monroe,

and Adjutant Josh Thielen. Commander Latham thanked us for a good job and asked us to continue the hard work. Plans for next convention are coming together. John Reece is working on the Commanders In-State VCF run which will involve all 5 Divisions this year. Sr. Vice Erickson thanked the committee for all its work. Adjutant Thielen spoke about using zoom etc., for future meetings to help Department cut costs. Membership Director Monroe explained a change in how a new Chapter goes about obtaining a chapter. (i.e. The Post requesting an ALR Charter will need a letter signed by the Post Commander along with a copy of Post minutes approving the beginning of a charter, must be emailed to Department Membership Director along with a Chapter Date Form and COMPLETED Officer Certification Form) The Membership Director will review the paperwork and forward it to the ALR Advisory Committee for approval. Once approved a Charter will be sent to the Chapter. All new Charters will be signed and counter signed by the Department Commander, Department Adjutant, Department Riders Director/Chairman, and Membership Chairman.

NOTE: (All Chapters must submit an Officer Certification Form annually by the end of June). All forms are available on the Department website under Programs and Services than under Legion Riders.

NOTE: *The Commanders Legacy ride for VCF will take place on the weekend of June 4-6 2027 in the 2nd Division and on May 6 2027 for all other Divisions. The goal is for Riders from all 5 Divisions to meet at Department Headquarters on Sunday May 6th around noon for a cookout and tour of Department Headquarters.*

Moving forward, Department has agreed to include Legion Riders in Leadership seminars/Training.

Department ALR bylaws are under review by the committee and will be sent out for review once completed. One of the changes will be the

required officers and optional officers for a Chapter, as well as Chapter Guidelines. (Required Officers will be Director/Chairman, Asst. Director/Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sgt-at-Arms. Optional Officers include Road Captain, Chaplain, and Historian). Also, moving forward, the Department of Illinois Membership Director shall also serve as the Membership Director for the Department of Illinois ALR.

The committee will be looking into creating a Legion Riders Chapter of the Year in the near future. If you have any Ideas concerning qualifications/requirements for this possible award, please email them to John Reece @ j.b.reece988@gmail.com before April 1st 2027.

The committee is looking into holding future meetings via Zoom/Teams as well as in person.

Last year, Department ALR Donated $10,699 to the Haven, $24.784 to VCF from the Commanders in state run. The National Legacy Run raised $1,011,563.89 for VCF.

Meeting adjourned at 1330.

If you have questions or something you need help with or just want to start a Chapter, please contact your Division ALR Chairman.

Sincerely,

John B. Reece Jr.

Vice Chairman
Illinois ALR Committee

Date: October 14, 2026

To: The American Legion Department of Illinois

From: The Public Relations/Information Exchange Committee, Chairman Paul Garrett and Vice Chairman Jerry Howard

Subject: Committee Meeting Notes of September 26, 2026

The Public Relations/Information Exchange Committee met at the Department at 1 PM for the purpose of discussing programs for this year. Those attending were Thomas Strossner (1st Div.), Vice Chairman Jerry Howard (2nd Div.), Bob Gardner (3d Div.) and Chairman Paul Garrett (4th Div.). Excused was Laura Harvey (5th Div.). We were joined for a portion of the meeting by Commander Celeste Latham, Sr. Vice Commander Wayne Erickson and Adjutant Josh Theilen. The following was reviewed and approved at the meeting.

1. The Committee discussed increasing the number of applications for awards this year. We are going to increase communications with Department, Division and District leadership.
2. This Committee and the Community Service Committee plan to work closer together beginning this year. We plan to meet (per Zoom calls and face to face meetings) and collaborate on communicating all our programs throughout the Department of Illinois. In fact, several of us are members of the two committees currently. This plan was later discussed with Leadership and was approved.
3. The current flyer for this committee will not be changed.
4. We would like the names and contact information for the five committee members to be put on the Department web page under Public Relations. This will assist communications for inquiries.
5. Goals for the Committee will be submitted to Commander Latham for her review.

We look forward to having a successful year for the Dept. of Illinois.

The American Legion
Department of Illinois

State Fair Veterans Day and Uniform Group Committee

Minutes for the meeting held on Oct 3, 2026 in Bloomington IL

The Department State Fair Veterans Day and Uniform Group Committee met at Department headquarters in Bloomington at 11:30 am on October 3, 2026.

Members present were Chairman Larry Miller (5th Div); Vice Chair Craig Fetzer (3re Div), Members Robert Henderson (4th Div) and Norris Teague(1st Div). Absent was Thomas Jorstad (2nd Div).

Chairman Miller welcomed the members to the meeting and members completed their paperwork.

Department Commander Latham, Sr Vice Erickson, and Adjutant Theilen visited the meeting.

The committee first reviewed the Department Commanders Goals for the year. Commander Latham has created a goal to "Promote The American Legions visibility, traditions, and patriotism through the Illinois State Fair Veterans Day Program and the continued support of uniformed ceremonial groups throughout Illinois."

The committee next discussed the committee established goal for the year. We discussed the commanders goal is pretty much all encompassing, which left us with the option to provide focused support to their goal. To that end, as chairman, I will submit articles to the Department Newsletter promoting the State Fair Veterans Day and encouraging posts, units, and/or squadrons to develop a uniform group for potential competition at the Department Convention.
Additionally, committee members will ensure districts and posts throughout their divisions get the message about the "Veterans Day at the State Fair" activities.

Chairman Miller discussed the role of The American Legion at the State Fair; passing out state fair pins and participating in the Veterans parade.

Larry Miller
Chairman, State Fair Veterans Day and Uniform Group Committee

The American Legion
Department of Illinois

Legislative Commission

Minutes for the meeting held on Oct 3, 2026 in Bloomington IL

The Department Legislative Commission met at Department headquarters in Bloomington at 10:00 am on October 3, 2026.

Present were Commission Chairman, Larry Miller (5th Div); Commission Vice Chairman, George Elzy (4th Div); Commission Members, Ed Stash (1st Div) and Terry Cornell (2nd Div). Absent was the 3rd Div member.

Chairman Miller passed to the commission that we have a job to do to emphasize and encourage Divisions/Districts/Posts/Squadron leaders to support the legislative programs and pass information to them to flow down.

The commission reviewed the Department Commanders goals and developed a goal of their own. The commander has set a goal to "Advance The American Legions legislative priorities by strengthening advocacy efforts educating members on key issues, and fostering productive relationships with elected officiails."

The commission set a goal to work toward organizing a Legion only Legislative Day in Springfield, to meet with members of the General Assembly and promote legislation beneficial to veterans and ask them to sign on as sponsors to such legislation.

There was one resolution passed at the Department Convention in June that required action by the Legislative Commission. The resolution called to a change in the 35 ILCS 200/15-169 to lower homestead property tax for veterans with a 29% or less, service-connected disability receive the same reduction in their property taxed (EAV) as those veterans with less than 50% service-connected disability. The committee recommends changing 35 ILCS 200/15-169 (b-3.1) (1) to read "if the veteran has a service connected disability of less than 50%, as certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date the application is submitted for the exemption under this Section for the applicable taxable year, then the annual exemption is $2,500;..."
As the General Assembly is not accepting new legislation until the beginning of the 105th General Assembly in January of 2027, the commission recommends that following the elections, meeting with senators and representatives to find sponsor(s) for the bill, and carry through with writing a change to the law.

Chairman Miller also promoted The American Legion Voter Voice and Grass Roots newsletter. Both are vehicles to learn about legislation pending that needs the grass roots support of Legionnaires. Legion members need to learn how to follow bills and contact their legislators as bills are presented.

Miller further encouraged commission members to create accounts on the Illinois General Assembly web page (ilga.gov) and to sign up for a free account on fastdemocracy.com to monitor legislative actions in both the state general assembly and federal congress pertaining to military and veteran legislation.

September 26, 2026

Poppy Sales/Production Committee

The Poppy Sales/Production Committee was called to order at 10:01 am with a salute to the colors and the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all members. Present: 1st Division: Frank Thompson, 2nd Division: Todd Latham (acting Chair Pro Tem), 4th Division: Linda Glenn. HQ Staff-David Scott.

The committee reviewed the budget for Poppy Sales/Production and Poppy Scholarship, signed and returned to Finance.

Poppy Sales/ Production $1,000 (Printing and Meetings)

Poppy Scholarships $3,700 (Printing and Scholarships)

Reviewed the following brochures/documents:

Poppy Poster Contest Rules and Guidelines (Sept 2026)-No Change

Poppy Poster Contest Cover Sheet (Dept winners to National) changes accepted.

Poppy Order Form-

Cost increase anticipated for assembled poppy per thousand; shipping $14.

Poppy order per unassembled to increase with shipping options.

Auxiliary Coloring Book was distributed.

Reviewed Poppy Sales/Distribution May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026.

Sales of All Districts: 188,131

Posters: 439

Club Cards: 738

Can Labels: 243

Citation of Recognition: 11

Bookmarks: 6,645

Division Totals:

1st Division 32,220

2nd Division 53,106

3rd Division 21,450

4th Division 52,650

5th Division 28,725

Other 18,260

Emblem Sales 230,000

The Finance Committee distributed Poppy Notes.

The committee reviewed the Committee Purpose issued by Commander C. Latham.

The committee was surprised that it had to submit a semi-annual report to the Finance Committee and sought clarification on "work closely with the Chicago office."

Poppy Sales/Distribution/Poster Contest/Scholarships

Veterans' Homes participating in poppy assembly included: LaSalle, Manteno, Quincy, Anna, Danville.

Commander Celeste Latham, Adjutant Josh Thielen, and Sr. Vice Commander Wayne Erickson visited the Committee.

Poppies are now pre-cut from two vendors with two options: assembled and unassembled. Due to the cost of supplies the cost per poppy will increase and estimated $30 per 1,000 poppies. Department will encourage smaller orders to assemble their own poppies, at discount. Due to post office rates changing posts/units ordering poppies may not be charged shipping if orders are picked up and distributed at a Poppy Seminar. If not, the cost for shipping will likely increase and passed on with each order.

The committee set the following goals for the Department Poppy Program.

1. Distribute at least 180,000 poppies
2. Get the Legion Family full participation in the poppy program
3. All 5 Divisions and their Districts hold at least one Poppy Seminar
4. Support and promote Poppy Distribution, Poster Contest, Coloring Contest
5. Encourage more posts to use the Poppy Citation to recognize people, chairs, and businesses that support the poppy program.
6. Promote National Poppy Day, the Friday before Memorial Day
7. Select a Jr. Miss Poppy (Auxiliary) and Jr. Mister Poppy (SAL)

The Committee would like more posts/units in schools to promote the Poppy Program through Distribution.

The committee wants to emphasize how the Poppy Program is tied to each of the Four Pillars.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation-Pillar 1

Direct support: Donations collected from distributed poppies fund medical and financial assistance for disabled, needy, and hospitalized veterans.

Rehabilitation Work: The hand-made poppies, often assembled by disabled veterans, provide therapeutic work and a small income.

National Security-Pillar 2

Supporting families: Funds raised provide aid and essential resources to active-duty military personnel and their families facing financial or deployment hardships.

Americanism-Pillar 3

Honoring Sacrifice: Wearing a red poppy promotes public patriotism, memorializes fallen service members, and reminds the community of the cost of freedom.

Education: Local programs often include patriotic poppy poster contests in schools to teach youth about national sacrifice.

Children & Youth: Pillar 4

Family Assistance: Money raised through the American Legion poppy fund helps support family care initiatives, children's welfare organizations, and programs that assist military children in need.

The Committee can accomplish this by actively working with local schools to increase access, participation, and awareness of the Poppy Program. Program improvements would include increased distribution, increased Poppy Poster participation, and connecting the program with the four pillars to better support posts and members.

Lastly, we would like to report a goal that at the 2027 Department Convention: 200,000 were sold; all Divisions held at least one seminar; the number of post/units participating increased; and the National Poppy Day was used for greater awareness.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Latham, Vice Chair

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

September 26, 2026

Attendance:

Craig Fetzer 3rd Div

AC "Dave" Davis 2nd Div

Mike Funneman 5th Div

Absent:

Rodger Bennett 4th Div

Bernard Stegmueller 1st Div

Discussed the need for all counties in IL to have a VAC. Currently only 50% of counties have one.

Discussed the need Illinois Legislature needs to pass legislation to allow VACs to represent multiple small counties.

Looked at this year's budget. Only change is clerical at the Washington conference. $1500 is paid to 1 or 2. $1000 paid to 3.

Commander visited at 10:36am.

Commander informed us she gave VA&R a goal: help Veterans understand what benefits they can utilize.

VETERANS ASSISTANCE LIAISON COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

The Veterans Assistance Liaison Committee (VALC) met on September 26, 2026 at 1:00pm at Headquarters in Bloomington, Il.

We had three (3) of five (5) committee members present. One (1) was excused and one (1) was absent.

Committee Chair Don Scheyer called the meeting to order.

We were visited by Department Commander Celeste Latham, Department Senior Vice Commander Wayne Erickson and Department Adjutant Josh Thielen.

Commander Latham thanked us for stepping up to serve. She requested that the committee review our mission and determine if any changes were needed. She stated that each committee had two (2) goals this year the Commander's and the Committee's.

Commander's goal (Department priority):

Connect veterans and their families to local assistance resources by strengthening partnerships between American Legion Posts, Veterans Assistance Commissions, and community service organizations throughout Illinois.

Committee goal (as determined by the committee):

To create goal:

Ask ourselves:

What can we accomplish this year that will make a difference?

What would we like to improve?

How can we better support our members and posts?

What would make us proud to report at next year's convention?

Department Adjutant Thielen distributed copies of Video Conference Guidelines and Committee Chairman Expectations.

Following their departure we began to discuss our mission. We determined that there were no changes required to our mission at this time.

We then discussed establishing our goals. A review of the Divisions Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC's) indicated that the 3rd and 5th Divisions had the greatest opportunities to establish VAC's. Our goal will be to work toward the establishment of five (5) VAC's.

What we would like to improve communications throughout the Department about VAC's. We believe this can be accomplished by sharing information in Division and District caucuses at a minimum.

Attaining these goals would clearly, make us proud to announce at next year's convention.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Donald Scheyer

Committee Chair

The American Legion
Department of Illinois

Veterans Home Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

The Veterans Home Advisory Committee met Saturday, October 3, 2026 at 1:00 pm at Department Headquarters

Members Present:
Gary Fravel 5th Division
Edward Stash 2nd Division

Absent:
Dale Stiles 3rd Division
Dale Tippet 1st Division

Dale Tippet sent a report by e-mail

We were visited by Department Commander Celeste Latham and Adjutant Josh Thielen. Commander Lathan asked that we set a goal for the coming year and a plan of how we will achieve that goal. We decided that our goal will be to make more information available to our legion members about the state run nursing homes. We will accomplish this by putting information on our web page instructing the readers to go to THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS web site. Then click on veteran's home. All of the information is there. We also talked about the homes that each of our members visit. The reports are all good. All construction is proceeding as schedule. The homes receive good donations. Many activities are available to to the residents.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm

submitted by , Ronald Shapland Chairman
Veterans Home Advisory Committee

THE AMERICAN LEGION — DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

SECOND DIVISION BASEBALL COMMITTEE REPORT

Reporting Officer: Chad B. Miller, Second Division Baseball Committee Chairman
Subject: Department Baseball Committee Meeting — Report to the Second Division
Reporting Period: October 2026

1. STATE OF AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

The Department Baseball Committee reviewed the continued decline in participation across Illinois, particularly in areas where travel baseball, club programs, and high school athletic commitments compete for players.

The Third Division reported success rebuilding participation through direct partnerships with high school coaches and aligning summer baseball with their existing programs. This approach demonstrates that recruitment and cooperation, rather than competition with established baseball organizations, are critical to the program's survival.

Committee members also discussed creating a statewide baseball association structure while maintaining American Legion oversight. The proposal would strengthen district-level representation, improve recruitment, distribute administrative responsibilities, and preserve existing division identities. Further review and a possible joint resolution from the active divisions were discussed; no final action was taken.

2. SECOND DIVISION — PROJECT HOMETOWN

I presented **Project HOMETOWN**, our Second Division initiative to rebuild American Legion Baseball through partnerships with existing community and club baseball organizations.

Our initial focus will be McHenry and Lake Counties, where established baseball clubs already operate multiple teams but participation in American Legion Baseball remains limited.

The concept is to work directly with club leadership to develop American Legion-sponsored teams using eligible players from their existing programs. This would provide additional playing opportunities, introduce more athletes to American Legion Baseball, and strengthen connections between local Posts, families, and youth organizations.

I have established preliminary communication with a McHenry County baseball liaison who supports exploring the concept. The next step is direct outreach to individual organizations in both counties.

The objective is to establish a workable pilot for the 2027 season, beginning with Post 491, and develop a model that can be expanded throughout the Second Division. Implementation will require verification of player eligibility, roster requirements, geographic boundaries, and scheduling under national and department rules.

3. RULES, PLAYER SAFETY, AND ELIGIBILITY

The committee reviewed several important rules and enforcement issues:

- **Pitch counts:** National discussions indicated that pitch limits, required rest periods, and pitching appearances may be revised for 2027 following USA Baseball injury-prevention reviews. No final changes were confirmed. Alignment with IHSA standards was recommended for consideration.
- **Pitch-count violations:** Discussion centered on the appropriate penalty when an ineligible pitcher enters a game or exceeds permitted limits. National guidance discussed at the meeting favored removal or ejection of the pitcher and manager rather than automatic team forfeiture. The committee raised concerns about competitive fairness and the need for written clarification.
- **Roster limits:** The 18-player limit following final roster approval was reaffirmed in discussion. Questions concerning larger regular-season player pools, roster changes before lock-in, and insurance coverage require further clarification.
- **Postseason eligibility:** Players participating with outside teams during Legion postseason competition may jeopardize their eligibility. Coaches and division chairmen must verify the applicable restrictions before tournament play.
- **Sponsorship and trademarks:** The committee discussed teams operating without an active sponsoring American Legion Post, including proper sponsorship identification, use of the Legion name, and financial oversight. Additional clarification from National was recommended.

The importance of qualified umpires, accurate pitch-count records, coach education, and consistent statewide enforcement was emphasized.

4. 2027 REGISTRATION, TOURNAMENTS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Department Chairman Don reviewed the registration process, deadlines, and tournament preparations.

The May 15 early-registration deadline and associated $200 late penalty were discussed, particularly their impact on high school coaches still involved in spring competition. The

committee emphasized earlier communication and assistance rather than unnecessary penalties.

The Department Senior Tournament is expected to return to Carol Stream, with July 21–25, 2027, discussed as the likely dates, subject to final confirmation.

The committee also reviewed the national baseball scholarship application deadline of July 15, the need to increase applications, and the availability of division-level scholarship awards. Better communication is necessary so deserving players are not overlooked.

Outstanding reimbursements and delayed scholarship payments were identified as issues requiring resolution.

5. PROGRAM FINANCES AND TOURNAMENT OPERATIONS

Significant attention was given to the rising cost of tournament operations and national postseason travel.

National proposals discussed included changes to transportation arrangements, baggage allowances, future team fees, and a possible $3,000 assessment per department beginning in 2028. These were discussed as proposed changes, not established Illinois obligations.

Don reported that eliminating the host's responsibility for team lodging at the Department Senior Tournament substantially reduced the financial burden on the host organization. Additional consideration was given to modest host assistance, centralized tournament facilities, and partnerships with colleges or established baseball venues.

The committee also discussed replacing traditional championship trophies with championship flags, potentially reducing expenses while providing a lasting and visible recognition of achievement.

6. ALL-STAR GAMES, RECRUITMENT, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Don reported a successful Illinois All-Star victory over Missouri and proposed bringing the championship trophy to participating American Legion Posts to recognize their players.

Additional discussions included a possible Illinois–Indiana All-Star competition and continuing the Junior Legion All-Star program. Members emphasized better promotion to college coaches and scouts, particularly junior colleges and Division III programs.

The committee supported maintaining a recruitment presence at the baseball coaches' conference in Chicago in January.

The Department Commander emphasized strengthening the entire Legion Family's participation, including potential SAL and Auxiliary representation, additional volunteers, and improved financial support for youth programs.

Outdated baseball webpages and inconsistent social media reporting were also identified as problems. The committee discussed updating the state rulebook, improving communication of scores and schedules, and establishing shared administrative control of department baseball communications.

7. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND NEXT STEPS

The Department Commander stressed the importance of active district baseball representatives, clearly defined chairman responsibilities, succession planning, and regular communication between district, division, and department leadership.

The committee discussed conducting a spring follow-up meeting, potentially by Zoom, to address outstanding rules, recruitment, and organizational matters.

Second Division priorities moving forward:

1. Launch Project HOMETOWN outreach in McHenry and Lake Counties and work toward a 2027 pilot.
2. Reengage baseball representatives throughout the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th Districts.
3. Verify 2027 eligibility, pitching, roster, insurance, and registration requirements before advising prospective teams.
4. Expand recruitment through high schools, baseball clubs, and community organizations.
5. Support improved committee coordination, financial accountability, scholarship participation, and promotion of American Legion Baseball.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad B. Miller
Second Division Baseball Committee Chairman
The American Legion, Department of Illinois

OCT 07 2026

SCOUTING AMERICA
CMTE MEETING
26SEP2026
1000 HRS
FALL MTG

MEETING HELD AT ILL. LEGION HQ BLOOMINGTON, ILL.
PRAYER AND PLEDGE OFFERED.

PRESENT: ALBERT P. GANGOLF (1ST DIV. 8TH DIST.)
LEON KRAUT (2nd DIV. 13TH DIST.)
JAMES WATTS (3rd DIV. 15TH DIST.)
DAVID MORRIS (4TH DIV. 18TH DIST.)
JAMES PAGE (5TH DIV. 22nd DIST.)

CMDR. LATHAM VISITED AND THANKED THE SCOUTING AMERICA CMTE. JOB WELL DONE. CMDR LATHAM REMINDED THE CMTE. TO CONTINUE USING THE GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATION NOTES THE CMTE HAS RECIEVED.

MISC. CHANGES WILL BE MADE TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AND SCOUTING AMERICA "PARTNERS for GOD AND COUNTRY" PAMPHLET FOR THE 2026-2027 AMERICAN LEGION YR. CK. WEB SITE

THE SCOUTING AMERICA CMTE. SPRING MEETING WILL BE: 01 MAY 2027 AT 1000 HRS AT ILL. LEGION HQ. BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

ARTURO CHAVEZ WILL BE REPRESENTING THE 1ST DIV. SCOUTING AMERICA CMTE. FOR LEGION YR 2026-2027, WAS NOT PRESENT. MTG. ADJOURNED 1115 HRS

A SCOUT IS COURTEOUS

BERT GANGOLF
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

PS: PLEASE MAIL THESE MINUTES OF FALL MTG. TO THE SCOUTING AMERICA CMTE MBRS

Children & Youth Commission

Fall Meeting October 3, 2026
Department Headquarters

Meeting called to order 1032

Salute Nations Colors

Attendance:

1st Wade Hudson
2nd David E. Johnson(chair)
3rd Leslie Arbuckle
4th Mark Young
5th Chris Schoo(v-chair) Temp Secretary
Sue Johnson ALA Chairman C&Y Guest

Visit from Department Commander Celeste Latham and Adjutant Josh Thielen.

Dave & Sue attended Children & Youth National Conference 9-26 Indianapolis.

Children & Youth National Chairman Stacey Cope has been moved and her replacement has not been named yet.

TFA-Temporary Financial Assistance:
TFA: Temporary Financial Assistance, newer claim form must be filled properly out, and all avenues for assistance must be touched. County has programs and must also be contacted for help. This is a one time $2,500 assistance with the National Adjutant making the final decision. A face to face meeting is a must and can be done in a neutral area, if its a female needing the assistance, then a female should accompany, and the same for a male if its a female Legion member filing the paperwork. Money is used for child under 17 and not car payments, etc. This will be a two party check to insure the intent of money. Just recently added is the Coast Guard and the Sons for eligibility. If the person is not a Legion member then pay his dues to help. All bills listed must be within 30 days of visit and must have copies.

We will have a zoom call on how to fill out the paperwork for TFA.

Other programs are National Guard Military Children, Open doors to local Guard units to see if we can help; Food Pantry's, Christmas gifts. Talk to the SSRG Soldier Family Readiness Group.

Home schooled children could need help with Civics, like flag etiquette.

Child Welfare is now Child Well Being.

The Whole Child Magazine has been updated along with Children & Youth Department Chairman program Guide, Child Well Being Foundation, Veterans & Children Foundation.

The Child Well Being will be giving out 15 applicants Scholarships and must be in by July 15th.

Special Olympics will be June 11,12 2027

Thursday starting at 0830 with picking up donations from local establishments (looking for 2-3 volunteers) then at 1400 will be setting up prep and food area.
Friday 0900 starting prep day and feed the athletes.
Saturday starts 0900 with prep, feed the athletes then tear down and pack the trailer.

We had a great turn out on Friday this year with 50 volunteers only 5 showed up for Saturday. Our Commission needs to email earlier, get all District reps involved and track days and time of volunteering.
Anyone reserving hotels rooms do it early and DO NOT mention the American Legion or the Special Olympics the hotels will raise your rate.

Tennis games on Saturday were cancelled for weather but were able to resume on Sunday.

Christmas Gifting the AL SAL and AUX share the cost of gifts for the Children under 17.

Looking at a new program like 4H but using 4R.

Meeting was adjourned at 1214.

Safety Law & Order Committee

Committee meet October 3 2026 at American Legion Headquarters in Bloomington at 10am.
Roll Call 1st Division Chevonne Woodard Present
2nd Division Chuck Coffey Present
3rd Division Candy Gann Present Vice Chairman
4th Division Paul Garrett Excused
5th Division Wayne Madson Present Chairman

We made updates for all the brochures for 2027
Committee voted to keep cost for cadets at $350
Department Commander, Sr Vice Erickson,Adjutant Thielen stopped to discuss the committee's goals for the upcoming year.

1st Goal: To have 50 Certificates of Appreciation to Police and Firefighters that are veterans still serving their communities.
2nd Goal: To increase attendance for Youth Police School to 30 cadets.
Last year we had 25 cadets.
Chairman encouraged members to attend their Division and District meetings to pass along information about Youth Police School, encourage Post to recognize veterans still serving communities as Police Officers or Firefighters, and nominate a Police Officer or Firefighter of the year award.

Meeting adjourned 11:05 am

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Wayne Madson
Chairman Safety Law & Order

Education & Scholarship Committee (Zoom)
October 6, 2026

Members Present:
Don Horn (Chairman), Tom Marcicak (Vice Chair), Jeffery Kosowski, David Morris, Dudley Maden

Call to Order:
The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Horn.

Committee Purpose & Goals:
The Chair reviewed the committee's responsibilities and the Department Commander's assigned goal of increasing participation in both the Scholarship, and School Medal Award programs through improved promotion and outreach. The committee also discussed establishing an additional goal to increase public recognition of scholarship recipients.

Rubric Scholarship Evaluation:
The committee reviewed and agreed upon revisions to the Rubric Scholarship evaluation to improve consistency, fairness, and objectivity. Changes were made to better recognize academic achievement, extracurricular activities, employment, family responsibilities, financial circumstances, and written responses. The Rubric will maintain a maximum score of 100 points. The Chair will update and distribute the revised rubric to the committee members for final review and approval.

The committee also decided to identify Trade School applications on their covers to assist reviewers. No rubric changes were required.

Review of Scholarship Applications:
The committee agreed to schedule its spring scholarship judging meeting separately from the Department Executive Committee meeting day to allow adequate time for reviewing the applications. The Chair will coordinate the meeting date with Department Headquarters.

Scholarship and School Medal Award Programs:
The committee discussed improving communication within the Posts and Districts. Division representatives will promote both programs at Division and District meetings.

The committee also discussed using existing Department electronic communication resources to distribute program information. Scholarship Application deadline is March 15.

Scholarship Recipient Recognition:
The committee discussed increasing public awareness of the scholarship program by personally recognizing recipients whenever practical.

The committee will work with Department Headquarters to develop certificates for scholarship recipients. Division representatives will coordinate with local Legion leadership to arrange presentations, photographs, and local publicity when possible.

Committee Follow-Up:
The Chair will circulate the revised rubric, coordinate certificate development, and work with Department Headquarters on scheduling and program promotion, and updating members on webpage.

Additional committee business will be handled through email, with meetings scheduled as needed.

Adjournment:
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Don Horn, Chairman

NATIONAL Security zoom mtg. 3-Oct-26

Open mtg. 0900

Roll Call: Div 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

- Discussed Budget for the year.
- Discussed Resolution #25 “Blood Donor Award Program” submitted by District #25
  Endorsed by District 25 and Division 5
  Sent late for inclusion at Department Convention
- National Security Committee has funds in our budget to cover cost of certificates and plaques.
- Applications still go through Department (David Scott)
- Discussed ROTC/JROTC program certificates and medals. It is not too early to contact every school with the program to remind them we still can support their awards ceremony.
- On a National note, a resolution submitted by the Dept. of Michigan to have the suicide crisis hot line number #988 displayed on every marked emergency vehicle (recommended for approval)

Commander Latham joined the meeting and gave closing comments.

Meeting Adjourned at 0925

The Internal Affairs Commission met on Saturday, 3 October 2026, at Department Headquarters in Bloomington, Illinois. The original start time was postponed until 1020 hours when quorum was met. Opening protocols were followed. Commission Members present or accounted for were

1st Division - Member Peter Hirt
2nd Division - Member Marciciak was traveling
3rd Division - Vice-Chairman Erickson
4th Division - Member Iris Miranda-Kirschner
5th Division - Chairman Smith was traveling

The Department Commander spoke to the Members, asking them to review and revise the Commission Charter; to draft a specific goal for the current year; and to review the proposed budget. Each Member received a copy of the Committee Chairman Expectations and Video Conference Guidelines.

Item #1 - The Members reviewed the Commission Charter and voted unanimously to **DELETE**the following Charter language: **The Commission is charged with responsibility of initiating methods for the identification, locating, and marking of graves and permanent memorials of graves of veterans in the State of Illinois. The Commission shall recommend policies regarding the Energy and Pollution Program.**
The rest of the Charter's language remains intact because it accurately reflects the Commission's duties.

Item #2 - After detailed discussions, the Members voted unanimously to adopt the following goals for the current year:
To facilitate the execution of the Redistricting Plan for the 1st Division and to assist with the merger and acquisition of the Districts within the 1st Division. This Redistricting Plan was approved at the July Department Convention.

Item #3 - The Members reviewed and voted to approve the proposed Commission budget for the current year.

Meeting was adjourned at 1055 hours.

Thank you. Have a great Air Force Day -

Iris I. M. Kirschner

District Reassignment Ad Hoc Committee

10-3-2026 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Don Horn-1st Division; Wayne Erickson-4th Division; Jeff Roscow-5th Division and Wayne Fischer 2nd Division. Roger Bennett was excused. Note Committee change: Don Horn was selected by the 1st Division Commander to represent the 1st Division in place of Larry Hippert. Approved by Department Commander.

Item 1: Commander Latham gave me what she had prepared prior to the Convention a handout spelling out the change of our committee assignment for this year is now to monitor and support the approved 1st Division redistricting plan during the 2026-2027 administrative year. All Committee members now have this handout.

Item 2: Commander Celeste and Department Adjutant Josh joined us initially and Celeste updated us on Membership efforts targeting non-renewals from the past 3-4-years. Revitalization efforts will initially focus on this group in October 2026.

Item 3: We started the meeting with a general and open discussion regarding Post items that needed to be addressed moving forward. They are Leadership; Membership; Post Activities; Financial Strength; and American Legion Family Strength.

Item 4: 1st Division Update by Don Horn, 1st Division Committee Member. Don had prepared a manual highlighting the current update of where things stand in the 1st Division Redistricting. In general, all is moving forward thanks to the District Officers and Don's leadership and "PUSH"!!!! Change is always a challenge, but here things are moving forward. Don has set our April 2027 DEC as the target for completing the major implementation activities, other than elections, and hopefully with the Districts using the manual as their guide it will help with the process. Then they can elect officers in April or May

then we can complete the final package for the Department before our Convention.

Item 5: Moving forward, at this point only Districts 2&3and 4&5 may have some issues, and they have pretty much been identified. The original 7 Districts still operate independently but are moving together to get all the needed changes and work done for final presentation. Upcoming meeting dates; October 31st-District Updates and November 4th-1st Division Meeting.

Item 6: The final subject discussed was dealing with "Uncertified Posts". This remains a big issue for the 1st division as many Posts are Corporate Posts, but we should explore how to keep these members in our American Legion.

In summary, our meeting went well, with everyone's input. Don has put forth a lot of time and effort into this, and the "Redistricting Success" rests with our Division, District and Post Officers.

Respectively,

Wayne

Wayne Fischer-Chair

American Legion Jeepers

Minutes

Oct. 14, 2026 - Zoom Meeting

Meeting was Call to Order by Chairman at 1904 hrs

Divisions, 1, 4 &5 Attended, 2nd Excused, 3rd Absent.

The Meeting was called to order at 1904 hrs, by Chairman.

First thing discussed was official name, The American Legion.
Chairman Mark Young, started that is an Illinois Pilot Program, being started in Illinois. Goal is to get this started throughout the Dept of Illinois, and goal in as many posts in each Division and Districts.

Local Chapters, will be called, "Willys". Honor WWII generation. Jeep being called Willy. Starting a New local Charter, will need FIVE (5) Jeep Owners.

By-Laws will be fashion from the Legion Riders By-Laws. Chairman put together a draft from their by laws., All 3 committee members put their thought on what needs to be included to fit the AL Jeepers. Chairman will re-write the By-Laws for next meeting and approved on by Committee and forward to Department for Final Approval.

Promoting the New Program was next discussed, promote thru Division and District Meeting and District reps promoting. Along with 4x6 window sheets to be place on Jeep owners windshields. Each to include contact info at District and Division. And local rep call add their contact info. Also, suggestion was made to visit area Jeep Dealerships, for local Jeep Clubs contacts, and help promote the AL Jeepers Program. And once we take the Program National, possibly have the Jeep Corp. Help promote.

Jeepers Logo was discussed, with a few ideals, and will be taken to Dept Print and Design department (Shandi). And look at Patches and Pins in the Future.

Apparel and Colors for the Jeepers was briefly discussed, each, committee member to discuss within their members and bring back for next meeting.

Time Line was talked about, to have Jeepers Program totally on it's feet within 2 yrs, and the take it to other State Departments so we can take it Nationally.

Chairman, stated for a first meeting, a lot was discussed and accomplished for a start. All agreed. A date and time was set for the Next Meeting, Jan. 13th @ 7pm, being another Zoom Meeting. Meeting Adjourned at 1946 hrs.

Mark Young, Chairman
American Legion Jeepers

The American Legion
Department of Illinois

Gaming and Wellness Committee

Minutes for the meeting held on Oct 3, 2026 in Bloomington IL

Committee Chairman Miller prepared a Zoom meeting for the members of the Gaming and Wellness Committee. The Zoom call began at 1:00pm. One committee member joined, David Lopez, 1st Div. Also joining the Zoom call were Greg Lawrence, SAL representative and Ashley Rolf, Auxiliary representative.

Chairman Miller welcomed everyone and commented that the Gaming and Wellness Committee was approved at the Department Convention as a committee under the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

Department Commander Latham and Adjutant Theilen visited and addressed the zoom participants.

The goals of the committee are to encourage gaming, whether they are electronic games, board games, or card games as a method to engage veterans to become part of an activity. Many newly discharged veterans were brought up with console video games and continued them during their service, and it is thought to be a way to encourage them to become members of The American Legion.

Offering "game nights" is also a way to engage the families of younger members to come out to the post and participate in activities. Include the community, so that they might see benefit of membership in The American Legion Family.

Rantoul recently held a game night at their post and it had limited success. Members were encouraged if they do hold a game night at the post to not be discouraged with a limited turnout, but continue with a regular program. As a continual process, people will become aware of the program and begin to show. The key is, don't let one less than successful experience, prevent you from doing a similar program in the future.

The gaming process needs to start at the post, unit, squadron level and grow from there. Committee members are encouraged to reach out to their districts and ask them to create a gaming committee in their district and maintain communication with the Division contact to enhance communications and cooperation within the division and districts, with a goal of perhaps starting an eSports league. District leaders should also look to their posts in their districts to develop local gaming committee or points of contact.

There is a district in northern Illinois that already conducts intra-district eSports events. This began as a grassroots effort and has grown throughout the district. They have portable gaming consoles so that a post doesn't have to devote a room to full time eSports activities.

Larry Miller
Chairman, Gaming and Wellness Committee