



# 7<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT NEWS

## March 2025



*Our Legion  
Family*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### COMMANDER

Carl Wilson  
C 320-304-5333

#### VICE CDR AT LARGE

Pete Flannery  
C 507-213-7800

#### MEMBERSHIP DIR

Jan Ekert  
C 320-339-9927

#### VICE CDR – AREA A

Victor Gades  
C 320-288-6610

#### VICE CDR – AREA B

Jacob Hurst  
C 320-295-2443

#### VICE CDR – AREA C

Don Dufner  
C 320-493-5824

#### VICE CDR – AREA D

John Jones  
C 507-469-7995

#### ADJUTANT

Mark Kern  
C 320-221-5277

#### FINANCE OFFICER

Chip Manson  
C 320-220-3001

#### CHAPLAIN

David Ecker  
C 605-695-2409

#### SGT AT ARMS

Keith Seidler  
C 320-309-3411

#### HISTORIAN

Karen Welander  
C 320-444-6105

#### JUDGE ADVOCATE

Richard Wog  
C 320-905-3028

## AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

FROM THE SEVENTH DISTRICT COMMANDER - CARL WILSON

Greetings 7th District:

I hope everyone is doing well with this cold weather that has come to us. I want to congratulate everyone for helping the 7th District in achieving the Feb 12th goal of 85%. The 7th District is currently at 86.17%. We now must reach the next goal of 90% by March 12th, I know we can make it. The 7th District held its Oratorical contest on Feb 2nd in Willmar and had three contestants. The winner Alyson Johnson will now move on to the Department contest in Anoka on Feb 22nd. Alyson is a very talented speaker, and I can see her winning at the Department Level and moving on to the National Competition. Let's all wish her luck.

If everyone has not noticed yet, now is the time of the year that all the Post in the District should start getting their annual forms in the mail. I have received many for my post already. Remember to open them and not wait till your next meeting, things can and often do get missed this way. I say this because a lot of posts in the District do not meet in the winter months and the deadline for getting these forms in have passed before your post has time to act on them. I would also like to remind everyone that if you do complete the forms, whether it is the Post Officer report, Consolidated report, Annual Post Data report, or whatever please make a copy for yourself before sending it to the respective Chairman or Department, that way if something gets lost in the mail or whatever, your post will not have to complete the form a second time. If you would like to know some of the deadlines for these reports, they are listed in the 7th District Directory, or you can contact me, and I will find the info for you. I'm here to serve you!

**Carl R. Wilson**

**District 7 Commander**

**Serving Veterans from the Past to The Future.**

**\*MARK YOUR CALENDERS \*  
7<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT HAPPENINGS:**

**District 7 Convention  
Post 204 Echo  
May 17**

### DEPARTMENT EVENTS:

**National Commander's Tour of  
Minnesota  
March 24-28, 2025**

**Department Commander's Testimonial,  
April 5, 2025  
Northern Lights Casino & Hotel**

### OTHER EVENTS:

**Appreciation Rally  
March 8, 2025  
Post 580, Chanhassen, MN**

**Buddy Check Week  
March 9-15, 2025**

**Minnesota Legion College Spring 2025  
April 24-27, 2025  
15000 Minnesota 115  
Little Falls, MN 56345**

## Committee Chairpersons

### American Education

Bill Kuperus 320-905-1868

### Americanism/Oratorical

Ruben Nathe 320-593-8654

### Legion Baseball

Joe Dollerschell 320-894-8181

### Blood Program

Jan Ekert 320-339-9927

### Boy Scouts

Chip Manson 320-220-3001

### Boys State

Donald Brehmer 320-843-3361

### Children and Youth

Karen Welander 320-444-6105

### Employment

Karen Welander 320-444-6105

### Junior Shooting Sports

Carl Wilson 320-304-5333

### Law and Order

Carl Wilson 320-304-5333

### Legionville/Safety Patrol

Victor Gades 320-288-6810

### Legislative

Mark Kern 320-221-5277

### Legion Softball

Hal Meyer 507-530-4412

### National Security/Foreign Relations

Jan Ekert 320-339-9927

### Public Relation & Media

Pete Pedersen 702-553-5713

### Rehabilitation Advisory

Keith Seidler 320-309-3411

### Sons of the American Legion

Cal VanHorn 320-589-3495

### American Legion Riders

Garylee Davenport 320-224-1895

## **\*\*ATTENTION POST COMMANDERS, ADJUTANTS AND MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORS\*\***

Please update your Post roster. There are many instances where members need to be contacted, and the information is not correct or is missing although. Go around your meeting and ensure all phone and email information is current. In one instance both phone numbers were blocked and there was no e-mail address in mylegion.org. In the near future we will be able to send a newsletter through mylegion.org at no cost to the District. Let's get this done.

Remember that when the address is not correct or missing your members are not getting their Legionnaire or their Legion Magazine. Please send any changes in your Post leadership contacts to the District Adjutant Mark Kern at [markkern3@hotmail.com](mailto:markkern3@hotmail.com) and we will get the District Directory updated and out to each post via email and hardcopy.

## **ADJUTANT'S CORNER Mark Kern**

Just a reminder that if you or another member of your Post wants to run for a District or Department Office, please submit your Post endorsement to myself as soon as possible. Please also forward Post endorsements for any members wanting to run for any of the delegate positions for the district.

## **Mark Kern 7<sup>th</sup> District Adjutant**

## **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Jan Ekert**

Hello "Mighty Seventh"

Well after sending out all of the District's membership reports I thought that I had a little breathing room and almost forgot about writing an article for the newsletter. For the week of 2/17/25 the Seventh District moved up from 6th place to 5th place but are only .23% ahead of the 6th place District which happens to be the 9th. I do see that our posts continue to work on membership with several having already reached the 90%, 95% and 100% goals. I hope that the Area Vice Commanders are talking to those Posts that continue to struggle. I have had a few calls with questions of how your memberships are processed. There are Continued on page 3

## **CHAPLAIN'S CORNER – Dave Ecker**

Valentine's Day has come and gone for another year. Most of us were probably able to spend time with our sweetheart or significant other, but for many of our troops stationed in foreign lands that was not possible. I remember being far from home and when those holidays and special days came around, they were not as special and happy as they should have been.

Keep President Trump and all legislators in our prayers. They need all the help that we can give them.

Let's remember our troops in our prayers and pray that they are all able to come home again safe and sound.

## **Dave Ecker 7<sup>th</sup> District Chaplain**

## **AREA VICE COMMANDERS NEWS –**

## **AREA A Victor Gades**

Spring will be here shortly. The snowbirds will be returning soon. If you haven't made contact with unpaid members. Now is the time to drop them a note. Also be on the watch for new members. Our younger Veterans are busy with families and jobs, you will not find them in the bars. Expand your search into unfamiliar places and areas. Don't recruit them and then give them an immediate position. THAT IS THE FASTED WAY TO Continued on page 3

<p><b>Auxiliary Officer/Contacts</b></p> <p><b>President</b> Sandy Wersal 320-354-4517</p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b> Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428</p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</b> Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104</p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee Member</b> Cassandra Mahoney 320-305-0436</p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Committee Member</b> Pamela Gades 320-589-2147</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278</p> <p><b>Treasurer</b> Bev Dresser 320-354-5390</p> <p><b>Immediate Past President</b> Hope Wilson 320-304-0809</p> <p><b>Chaplin</b> Samantha Stai 320-295-2330</p> <p><b>Parliamentarian</b> Hope Wilson 320-304-0809</p> <p><b>Sgt-at-Arms</b> Robyn Scott 320-434-0431</p> <p><b>Advisors</b> Wanda Seidler Cheryl Gilmer-Schauman Karla Minnick</p> <p><b>Honorary Junior Officers</b></p> <p><b>President</b> Brooklyn Mahoney</p> <p><b>Vice President</b> Riley Wolbeck</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> Riley Wolbeck</p> <p><b>Historian</b> Miley Mahoney</p> <p><b>Sgt-at-Arms</b> Miley Mahoney</p> <p><b>Chaplin</b> Coral Hurst</p>	<p>Continued from page 2</p> <p>multiple steps depending on how you submit them, i.e. paper to the Department or online through My Legion.org. My legion is less time-consuming but again there can be delays in how they are processed. When you submit the paper form it becomes a time-consuming process as you have to fill out the information, mail it to the department, write out the check etc. Once it gets to the department the membership has to be input into a similar program that mirrors My Legion.org. As of this week we have the following posts showing 33 at or above 90% which has a deadline of 3/12, 13 Post are at or above 95% which has a target date of 4/9, and 9 Posts at or above 100% who target date is 5/14. Again, your hard work will pay off in the long run. I am hoping to see many of you at the Appreciation Rally on March 8. Keep working on your post lists. Call me if you have any questions 320-339-9927 or 320-406-2700. I will call you back.</p> <p><b>Jan Ekert</b> <b>7<sup>th</sup> District, Membership Director</b></p> <p><b>Boy Scouts</b> <b>Chip Manson</b></p> <p>A group of four judges gathered together on April 17, 2025 at the Willmar American Legion Post for the purpose of reviewing 2025 Eagle Scout of the Year nomination packages. We had three nomination packages submitted! All three applicants were outstanding young men and were all deserving of the award. Impressively, they all scored within 1.5 points of each other! Wow! As always, with scores this close, the differences came down to a minor difference in one area or another.</p> <p>I am proud to announce that Nathan M. Nelson of New London Troop 228 has been selected as District 7's 2025 Eagle Scout of the Year. Nathan will receive a \$500 scholarship from District 7 and his nomination package will be forwarded to the MN Department Eagle Scout of the Year selection team. This team will meet on the 2nd Saturday of March in Apple Valley.</p> <p>The winner of the state competition receives a \$2,000 scholarship and is then forwarded to the National April competition in Indianapolis. The National winner receives a \$10,000 scholarship and four (4) scouts receive a 2nd place runner-up scholarship of \$2,500. Minnesota's 2024 Eagle Scout of the Year was selected as one of these four 2nd-place winners!! So close!</p> <p>Continued on page 4</p>	<p>Continued from page 2</p> <p>SEND THEM PACKING. Let them form friendships and mentor them, don't scare them away.</p> <p><b>Victor Gades</b> <b>Area A Vice Commander</b></p> <p><b>COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:</b></p> <p><b>Blood Committee Chair</b> <b>Jan Ekert</b></p> <p>I am hopeful that Posts that participate in any type of Blood Drive are keeping track of this as it is an important part of the Blood Program that the American Legion supports. Remember this includes any of your members who donate blood throughout the reporting year, volunteer to help at a blood drive all count. This includes the Legion, Auxiliary and Riders and the Sons. These reports are to be sent to me as the Districts Blood Chair and should have arrived at your Posts early in January of 2025, The reports are then to be sent to me as your District Blood Chair by May 1st as I then need to determine which posts receive a certificate at the Department convention. These reports are due to the Department Bood Chairman by May 15th. Again, the report you compile should include Legion, Auxiliary, Riders, and SAL members who have donated blood, or volunteered their time. It should include the number of Units donated, did your Post sponsor a Bloodmobile Drive and how many units were donated through</p> <p>Continued on page 4</p>
---	--	--

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Auxiliary Committee Chairman</b></p> <p>Americanism Wanda Seidler 320-309-3528</p> <p>Children and Youth Donna Barbknecht 320-262-9321</p> <p>Community Service Robyn Scott 320-434-0431</p> <p>Constitution &amp; Standing Rules Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104</p> <p>Education Pamella Lubenow 320-793-6773</p> <p>Auxiliary Emergency Fund Kathy Kessler 320-905-2090</p> <p>Finance Pam Gades 320-589-2147</p> <p>Girls State Sandy Wersal 320-354-4517</p> <p>History Karla Minnick 320-894-4835</p> <p>Junior Activities Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850</p> <p>Leadership Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278</p> <p>Legislation Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428</p> <p>Membership Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428</p> <p>Memorial Samantha Stai 320-295-2330</p> <p>National Security Pat Ecker 320-695-2409</p> <p>Past Presidents Parley Hope Wilson 320-304-0809</p> <p>Poppy Ashley Stai 320-894-7850</p> <p>Public Relation Pam Gades 320-589-2147</p> <p>VA&amp;R Deanna Knutson 507-530-3222</p> <p>Memory Book Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850</p>	<p>Continued from page 3</p> <p>Thank you to all that supported the Eagle Scout of the Year program. Don't be bashful - share this information with your local Scouting America troops and let them know you are there to help them submit their own Eagle Scout nomination packages. Any questions? Give me a call!</p> <p><b>Chip Manson District 7 Scouting America Committee Chair</b></p> <p><b>LEGIONVILLE Victor Gades</b></p> <p>The 2025 Camp dates are out and posted on the Legionville web site. The camp for a week still is priced at \$500.00. Remember that campers can be anybody, they don't need a Legionnaire in their family history. We are supporting youth, no matter who they are. These kids are our future. What better time to invest in our youth before sports camps become a conflicting camp. Yesterday there was a discussion on local facebook group, lamenting how Parents Park in the Fire Lane at school - get out of their cars and walk their kids into the school. Now I know most schools have unloaded buses in nonpublic areas (which is good), but this does not address the problem in the front. I responded to the post with information and link to the Legionville website. I hope that someone that reads the thread will take heart and visit the website. Remember we always must be vigilant to find ways to promote Legionville. It is not how much money you have, or how big a house you live in is, or how fancy Your car is. It is how you can affect a child's life that will make the most difference.</p> <p><b>Victor Gades Legionville Chair,</b></p> <p><b>Americanism Committee Chairman Rueben Nathe</b></p> <p><b>National High School Oratorical Contest News Release-</b> On Sunday February 2. 2025 District #7 of the Minnesota American Legion held its annual Oratorical Contest which was hosted by the Willmar American Legion. The Chairman Rueben Nathe of Litchfield conducted the contest. He was assisted by District #7 Commander Carl Wilson of Brandon and members of the Willmar American Legion and volunteers from throughout the 14 counties of the 7th District. Continued on page 5</p>	<p>Continued from page 3</p> <p>your Posts efforts. Did you Post help with a Blood Drive? Please fill out the report and get the credit for what your Post is doing.</p> <p>Remember donating Blood saves lives,</p> <p><b>Jan Ekert Blood Committee Chair</b></p> <p><b>Baseball Chair Joe Dollerschell</b></p> <p>Registrations for the 2025 baseball season are under way throughout Minnesota. Last season there were well over 40 teams sponsored by legion posts in District 7. My hope is that in 2025 we can equal that amount and maybe even surpass it. Traditionally, D7 has had tremendous participation in the baseball program for our young men.</p> <p>To register a legion team with the national organization, someone representing the team will go onto the national web site and enter some simple and basic information. It could be your coach or maybe there is a designated baseball representative in your post membership that does this. It can be either, but I would like to remind you that if a coach is the person relied on to register your team, please be sure that the post is kept abreast of the situation. Your post needs to be on board.</p> <p>Fees for registering are not due yet but Continued on page 5</p>
---	--	---

Continued from page 4

The purpose of the American Legion's High School (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades) Oratorical Contest is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States on the part of High School students, and to win scholarship funds. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.



**District #7 Commander presenting awards.**

**1<sup>ST</sup> Place Champion & Award winner** is Alyson Johnson High School 12<sup>th</sup> Grader of Willmar School District. Alyson received an \$800.00 Scholarship and the opportunity to advance to represent the Seventh District in the State/Department contest.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place award** winner William Pennertz is a High School senior of the Litchfield school district and will receive a \$400.00 Scholarship award.

**3rd Place award winner** Alison Sarsland is a High School Senior of the New London -Spicer school district and will receive a \$200.00 scholarship award.

The Minnesota Dept\State contest will be held Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup>. 2025- It will be hosted by the OSSEO & ANOKA American Legion Posts. The Minnesota Contest winners will receive scholarship awards - 1<sup>st</sup> Place \$1,500. 2<sup>nd</sup> place, \$1,000. 3<sup>rd</sup> place \$700., 4<sup>th</sup> place \$500. – The Minnesota winner will advance to the National Contest-

The National Contest will be held May 2025 in Hillsdale, Michigan The National winners will receive scholarship awards 1<sup>st</sup> place \$25,000. 2<sup>nd</sup> place \$22,500. 3<sup>rd</sup> place \$20,000. Each Department\State winner who participates in the first round  
Continued on page 6

Continued from page 4

getting your team listed early can be very helpful as people like myself are planning the upcoming season. Many teams are already filling out their schedules and planning to play in tournaments and leagues throughout the summer.

If your post is interested in sponsoring a team for the first time, I suggest you begin by contacting the school where students from your community attend. The AD or baseball coach there should be aware if the players from your community are participating now, or if there is interest in starting a new team.

As I said above, D7 had well over 40 teams sponsored last season. That's a lot of young men who are being given an opportunity to participate in America's pastime beyond their high school team. Imagine how much of a positive impact your post can have on these young men.

**Joe Dollerschell**  
**District 7 MN Legion Baseball**  
**320-894-8181**



**American Legion Auxiliary**  
**Sandy Wersal**

It's time to work on getting girls signed up to attend ALA Minnesota Girls State  
Continued on page 6



	<p>Continued from page 5 of the National Contest will receive a \$2,000 scholarship+ if advancing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level an additional \$2,000.</p> <p>Congratulations Alyson Johnson —We all wish Alyson the best as she competes in the State\Department Contest to represent the 7<sup>th</sup> District and Willmar . We are all cheering for Alyson!</p> <p><b>Rueben Nathe</b> <b>Americanism &amp; Oratorical Chairman</b></p> <p><b>National Security and Foreign Relations (NSFR)</b> <b>Jan Ekert</b></p> <p>At the present time there are many who are not sure what the National Security Foreign Relations Committee does and what it is all about. One of the big goals at the department level has been looking at the access our Veterans have to health care and how they perceived the care they received, what were the timelines for getting an appointment and were they also offered the ability to continue to see their community provider. I have had some questions from Veterans on how the new administration and their policies might affect each and every one of us. Right now, I can't answer those questions, but the Committee is committed to making sure all of our Veterans are taken care of and the promises made are kept. We need to speak loudly, contact your representatives and let them know that they work for us and our voices can be loud and that we will be heard.</p> <p><b>National Security and Foreign Relations (NSFR) Chair</b> <b>Jan Ekert</b></p> <p><b>VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION</b> <b>Keith Seidler</b></p> <p>I will be mailing out, to each Post, the Post Service Officer Report Form and an instruction sheet. Remember that line item #17 related activities include, among other things, that for every paid member of your Post, 25 cents of their paid dues goes to Department for rehabilitation related activities. Therefore, this line item should never be left blank. Please fill out the form completely and return it to me by May 1st, 2025, by mail or email. The form covers activities that your Post participated in from April 1st, 2024, through March 31st, 2025. The form I am mailing out is a two-page form. If you choose to download the form online it is a</p> <p>Continued on page 7</p>	<p>Continued from page 5</p> <p>the week of June 4th to 21st at Bethel University. Cost this year is \$350 per citizen. Contact school counselors and visit schools. I had the opportunity to talk at Atwater, Grove City, Cosmos school this last week to the junior class and gave them the Boys State dates of June 8-14th and talked about their week. There was a lot of interest.</p> <p>Sweetheart Rally was canceled due to the weather. So, let's have a good attendance at the appreciation rally on March 8, 2025, please plan to attend.</p> <p>The 7th district is in 5th place out of the 10. Total members 2,099 with a goal of 2,561 at 81.96%. Minnesota is in third place in the Northwestern Division. Colorado moved ahead of us, with South Dakota still in first place. Keep working membership, all of us.</p> <p>I will not have a testimonial this year. But a 7th District American Auxiliary Year End Celebration, will be on May 31st. It will be at the Montevideo Home at 10 am. We will play Bingo with the Veterans and have coffee and treats.</p> <p><b>Sandy Wersal</b> <b>7th District President</b></p>
--	---	--

	<p>Continued from page 6</p> <p>3-page form. However, the same questions are in either form. You are always welcome to add additional comments on a separate sheet of paper. The more information you can provide, the better. Contact me with questions at 320 309-3411.</p> <p>Veterans Helping Veterans!</p> <p><b>Keith Seidler,</b> <b>VA&amp;R 7<sup>th</sup> District Chairman</b></p>	
--	---	--