



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

## MAY 2026



*Our Legion  
Family*

### DISTRICT OFFICERS And EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**COMMANDER**  
Pete Flannery  
C 507—213-7800

**VICE CDR AT LARGE**  
Carl Wilson  
320-304-5333

**MEMBERSHIP DIR**  
John Jones  
507-469-7995

**VICE CDR – AREA A**  
Dean Knutson  
320-766-0502

**VICE CDR – AREA B**  
Don Brehmer  
320-483-3361

**VICE CDR – AREA C**  
Don Dufner  
C 320-493-5824

**VICE CDR – AREA D**  
John Jones  
C 507-469-7995

**ADJUTANT**  
Jan Ekert  
320-339-9927

**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

## AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

### FROM THE SEVENTH DISTRICT COMMANDER – PETE FLANNERY

**Pete Flannery**  
**7<sup>th</sup> District Commander**

board members, when you have good people working with you, it makes your job a little easier so thank you all for your hard work. I am just getting back to normal life after the death of my father. So thanks everyone that stepped up to cover for me in my absence as needed.

I have just completed Legion College and was very impressed with the staff and course materials that they taught. One of the subjects touched on evolving your post has to evolve to survive. How do we get new members in all that's a lot to do with the demographic of your community and a lot has to do with communication. I know I have brought this up before in some of my articles, we have to get the awareness out that we are actually there and what The Legion does for the community. A good example of this was when I was at the Legion college. There was 25 people in that room and they asked the question who's heard of Legionville and there was about six people that raise their hand and that really surprised me because these are actually Legion members and they haven't heard of Legionville so what percentage of the local public has not heard of Legionville that's just one example but I think it's a good point anyway start reaching out to your schools and get the word out that'll help keep these programs alive like boys state girls state oratorical and many other programs that the legion supports.

One last thing if this knew that it comes out before our district convention, I encourage everyone to attend. It will be on 30 May at New London Post. Any member is welcome to attend. Hope to see you all there.

**Pete Flannery**  
**7<sup>th</sup> District Commander**

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

**District 7 Convention**  
**Post 537**  
**New London, MN**  
**May 30, 2026**

**DEPARTMENT EVENTS:**  
**Department Commanders Testimonial**  
**Post 45 – New Prague**  
**June 27, 2026 – Social Hour 5pm**  
**Department 107<sup>th</sup> Convention -July 9-11**  
**Pre-Convention Committee Meetings**  
**July 8**  
**Hosted by Post 167 – Willmar**  
**Site - Willmar Convention Center**  
**60<sup>th</sup> Annual Camporee**  
**September 9-13**  
**Legionville – Brainerd, MN**

**OTHER EVENTS:**  
**Litchfield Post 104 Community Open**  
**House June 27, 2026 12pm to 2:30pm**

### TO POST TO THE DISTRICT WEBSITE

Should you have events in your area that you would like to have posted on the 7<sup>th</sup> Districts web site send them to Rueben Nathe at [ruebenn@hutchtel.net](mailto:ruebenn@hutchtel.net) . To check for 7<sup>th</sup> District news, use the link or address below to access the web site. **Web site link for the 7<sup>th</sup> District News and events:** [www.mnlegiondistrict7.org](http://www.mnlegiondistrict7.org)

**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 320-368-0760

**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**  
Jan Ekert 320-339-9927

**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. Ask for updated information in your meetings and ensure all phone and email information is current.

In the near future we will be able to send a newsletter through mylegion.org at no cost to the District. We need to work with the Department and our Webmaster to make this happen. You should be able to find it on the 7 District site as well. Please send any changes in your Post leadership contacts to the District Adjutant Jan Ekert at [Janecs1@gmail.com](mailto:Janecs1@gmail.com) and we will get the District Directory updated and out to each post with corrections ( see enclosed with this newsletter.) I have not gotten any changes since the last newsletter went out but have repeated the changes in this one in case you missed them.

**ADJUTANT'S CORNER**

Jan Ekert 7<sup>th</sup> District Adjutant

I am so sorry for the lateness of this newsletter, I had hoped to have this out the first part of the month but unfortunately, I had a family illness that took priority. I am sad to say the outcome was not good, my oldest daughter passed away from her cancer. All of your posts received the Call to convention and I am hopeful that you will all be well represented on May 30<sup>th</sup>, we have 74 posts in the 7<sup>th</sup> District. At the convention we elect many new officers, review changes to the District Constitution and By-Laws which any changes must be voted on by the body at the convention. If you have a resolution you would like to be reviewed and presented, please bring that with, You do have a say in how the 7<sup>th</sup> District operates.

**Jan Ekert,  
7<sup>th</sup> District Adjutant**

**If you are wanting to submit an Event that your post is hosting please email them to me to include in upcoming newsletters.**

[Janecs1@gmail.com](mailto:Janecs1@gmail.com)

**CHAPLAIN'S CORNER – Dave Ecker, Chaplain  
Dave Ecker  
Chaplain**

**Directory Corrections/Changes:**

**Minneota Post 199**

**Commander/Mbrshp Robert Mhyre**

**Email correction; [blmyhre@gmail.com](mailto:blmyhre@gmail.com)**

**Dassel Post 364**

**Commander name correction**

**John Van Eschen**

**Graceville**

**Commander Post 297**

**Address change:**

**Gary Hoffman**

**611 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St**

**Graceville, MN 56240**

**Beardsley Post 302**

**Commander Address Change**

**Steve Almquist**

**18079 Northstar At, Apt 325**

**Big Lake, MN 55309**

**Correction to Area**

**Buffalo Lake Post 469 is Area C**

**Hector Post is Area C**

**Montevideo Post 59**

**Commander John Lyngen**

**520 S 11<sup>th</sup> St**

**Montevideo, MN 56265**

**[johnlyngen@gmail.com](mailto:johnlyngen@gmail.com)**

**\*\*\*\*\*Remember if you have events or activities that you would like to share send me the dates and what it is and I will add to the Newsletter, or if you have something you would like to get out to the members in the district I can also do that.**

**[Janecs1@gmail.com](mailto:Janecs1@gmail.com)**

**Auxiliary Officer/Contacts****President**

Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Karla Minnick 320-894-4835

**Executive Committee Member**

Cassandra Mahoney 320-305-0436

**Executive Committee Member**

Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

**Secretary**

Ashley Kuperus 320-984-7850

**Treasurer**

Bev Dresser 320-354-5390

**Immediate Past President**

Sandy Wersal 320-310-9417

**Chaplin**

Samantha Stai 320-295-2330

**Parliamentarian**

Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

**Sgt-at-Arms**

Robyn Scott 320-434-0431

**Honorary Junior Officers****President**

Riley Wolbeck

**Vice President**

Katelyne Walker

**Secretary**

Brooklyn Mahoney

**Historian**

Katelyne Walker

**Sgt-at-Arms**

Miley Mahoney

**Chaplin**

Brooklyn Mahoney

**VICE COMMANDERS NEWS –****Vice Commander At Large****Carl Wilson****No report****Area A Vice Commander****Dean Knutson**

Greetings from Southwest Minnesota!!! Hope everyone survived the winter months in one piece and good health.

I would like to say that I have enjoyed being the Area A Vice Commander this year and being able to work with the posts of Area A. A special Thank you to all the posts for their work in membership and we need to remember that the American Legion is not run by just one or two people, but it takes all of us who are members working together for the betterment of our posts, community and our organization.

It is hard to believe that it is once again time for the yearly Convention for the District which will this year be held in New London on Saturday May 30th. It would be nice if all posts could have at least one member present for the General Session.

The Seventh District has two people that are vying for Department Offices this year and they are Garylee Davenport for Department and Dean Knutson for Department Chaplain. Please support us both in our endeavors.

Have a good spring and I hope to see you in New London.

**Dean Knutson**, [deknutson29@gmail.com](mailto:deknutson29@gmail.com), 320-766-0502

**Area A vice Commander****AREA B Vice Commander****Don Brehmer****No report****AREA C Vice Commander****Don Dufner****No report****Area D Vice Commander****John Jones****Area D Focus**

Across Area D, our focus is simple: **stronger together than we are apart.**

This past April, multiple posts came together to support a **collaborative fish fry**—not as individual efforts, but as a unified push to strengthen our communities and our organization. That kind of cooperation is exactly what we need more of.

Looking ahead, that same mindset carries into our **American Legion Golf Day on July 31st in Tracy at the Tracy Country Club.** This is not about one

**ORATORICAL/AMERICANISM Chair –****Rueben Nathe****No report provided****Rueben Nathe****Oratorical/Americanism Chair****CHILDREN AND YOUTH Chair – Karen****Welander**

he American Legion Child Well-being Foundation (still CWF) is supporting youth-serving projects that include activities, programs and research to the public. Since 1955 they have awarded more than \$22 million to organizations to assist children in this country.

The Temporary Financial Assistance Program (TFA) distributed \$64,476 in cash grants to 39 veterans with 69 minor children across 19 departments, helping stabilize home environments during periods of financial hardship.

The children and youth emphasize is to assure care and protections for all children of veterans. improve conditions for all children and youth for maintaining the integrity of the family home. We prevent social and physical ills with sound organizations and agencies for youth. We are maintaining a program that provides for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. This is where you tell the Americanism Council and nation what your post did for the organization for C&Y. Why do you exist as an active post if you are not telling everyone what you do?

Thank you commander Pete for this appointment.

**Karen Welander****Children and Youth Chair**

**Auxiliary Committee  
Chairman**

Americanism  
Open

Children and Youth  
Open

Community Service  
Open

Constitution & Standing Rules  
Jennifer Hurst 707-419-1428

Education  
Pamella Lubenow 320-793-6773

Auxiliary Emergency Fund  
Open

Finance  
Wanda Seidler 320-309-3528

Girls State  
Sandy Wersal 320-310-9417

History  
Open

Junior Activities  
Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850

Leadership  
Mary Kuperus 320-212-3278

Legislation  
Wanda Seidler 320-309-3528

Membership  
Kathy Schmiedeker 320-295-2104

Memorial  
Kathy Kessler 320-305-2090

National Security  
Pat Ecker 320-695-2409

Past Presidents Parley  
Karla Minnick 320-894-4835

Poppy  
Hope Wilson 320-304-0809

Public Relation  
Ashley Kuperus 320-984-7850

VA&R  
Sandy Wersal 320-310-9417

Memory Book  
Ashley Kuperus 320-894-7850

**Cont - Area D Vice Commander - John Jones**

post—it's about all of us working together, showing up together, and supporting the mission as a district.

When posts collaborate—whether it's events, membership drives, or community outreach—we amplify our impact. We share the workload, we share the success, and most importantly, we strengthen the Legion as a whole.

That is the standard we are setting across Area D.

**Final Thought**

This is the stretch run.

Let's finish strong—and let's do it together.

**JOHN JONES**

**Area D Vice Commander**

**7<sup>th</sup> District Membership Director**

**John Jones**

Comrades,

As we move into May, I want to take a moment to recognize the continued effort across District 7 and speak plainly about where we stand—and where we need to go.

**Where We Stand**

District 7 continues to show grit and commitment. Many of our posts are pushing hard toward their goals, and that effort does not go unnoticed. However, we cannot afford to coast—this is the time of year when momentum either carries us across the finish line or fades. If your post is at or near the goal, excellent. Now is the time to help another post get there. If your post is behind, this is not the time to slow down. This is where leadership matters most.

**What We Need to Do Now**

**1. Pick Up the Phone**

Reach out to members who haven't renewed. A simple call goes further than any letter. Veterans respond to veterans.

**2. Get Back Into the Community**

Membership grows when we are visible. Attend events, support local activities, and remind people that the Legion is still active, relevant, and here to serve.

**3. Bring in the Next Generation**

We must actively recruit younger veterans. If we don't, we risk becoming an organization that talks about the past instead of shaping the future.

**4. Own Your Role as Leaders**

Commanders, Adjutants, Membership Chairs—this is our mission.

Membership is not one person's job; it's a full-time effort.

**District 7 Strength** What makes District 7 different is simple: when we lock in, we get things done. I've seen posts step up, support each other, and push

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**BLOOD CHAIR – Jan Ekert**

Out of 74 Posts in the 7<sup>th</sup> District, I received Blood Reports from 11 Posts, that 63 Posts short. The good news is that the top 3 posts donated or were involved in donations of 490 Units with the total donated through the efforts of the 11 Posts reporting resulted in 704 Units of Blood, A lot of lives will be saved through those Units. The top 3 Posts were Post 167 Willmar with 300 Units, Post 453 Watkins with 126 Units, and Post 186 Olivia with 64 Units. Great job to all of the Posts that supported or held a Blood Drive. Look to donate again this year at the Department Fall Convention.

**Jan Ekert**

**Blood Chairman**

**LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Jan Ekert**

**Minnesota American Legion 2026**

**Legislative Priorities**

Minnesota American Legion 2026

**Priority 1:**

It has been 18 years since the Minnesota Legislature reset the property value levels for the Disabled Veterans Homestead Market Value Exclusion. Meanwhile, property values rise and rise, diminishing the intention of this benefit.

The first level of market-value exclusion is \$150,000 for veterans rated by the VA at 70 to 100 percent disabled. The second level provides an exclusion of \$300,000 in value for veterans rated 100 percent permanent and total.

House File 3727 raises the amounts to \$225,000 and \$450,000 respectively. Its companion is Senate File 615.

We ask state lawmakers to approve these bills and show their respect for the sacrifices the

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**Cont - District Membership Director**

**John Jones**

Forward when it matters.

That’s what we need right now. Wishing you all a merry May!

**John Jones**

**District Membership Director**

**COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:**

**LEGIONVILLE Chair - Victor Gades**

**LEGIONVILLE Chairman Victor Gades**

**VA and R - REHABILITATION CHAIR - Keith Seidler**

30 Posts reported out of 74 Posts in the 7th District. 12 of the 30 Posts that reported have a Post Service Officer. Over 160 Veterans were served this past year in some capacity, including funerals. A total of 1,130 regularly and occasionally scheduled volunteer hours were reported by Posts. \$3,016 was contributed this past year by Posts to VA Medical Centers. Posts encouraged and supported youth and aided Veterans and their dependents in a variety of ways, including scholarships and donations to a number of organizations. Some of the donations listed included...the Eagles Healing Nest, Camp Bliss, Armed Forces Service Center, Let's Go Fishing, Scouting America, Boys Legion Baseball, Veterans Valor Farm, and Prairie Woods Special Hunt.

Respectfully,

**Keith Seidler**

**7th District VA&R Chairman 2025-2026**

**NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS (NSFR) , Jan Ekert**

This is a part of the weekly report that anyone sitting on the NSFR Committee gets. I thought that this might be of interest to all.

**Top Highlights:**

- **Iran Conflict:** Operation Epic Fury reached its 60<sup>th</sup> day on Friday, May 1st, a key deadline under the War Powers Resolution of 1973. This law lays out a timeline for when lawmakers must be notified of hostilities and when a President is required to withdraw American forces from a conflict in the absence of congressional authorization. President Trump formally notified Congress about new hostilities in a March 2<sup>nd</sup> letter, starting the 60-day timeline that expired on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. Last week, President Trump extended the ceasefire with Iran indefinitely. Iran’s nuclear program remains a central issue as the U.S. blockade remains over Iran’s ports. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, a Pentagon official

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**Cont - LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Jan Ekert**

most disabled veterans have endured. Without them, we wouldn't have a Minnesota to govern.

**Priority 2:**

Help the Department of Minnesota advocate on behalf of charitable gambling operations in Minnesota. We want to see meat raffles (i.e. paddle tickets) go to a \$5 cap, instead of \$2, with a \$500 prize limit, instead of \$70. We also want to see tax relief for charities should a sports-betting bill pass the Legislature.

**Priority 3:**

Make the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force some sort of official entity, whether that is a nonprofit organization or a child of the state government. For many decades it has existed in a quasi-limbo state. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the CTF hopes to change that this session.

**You can check the status of these priorities by looking up the file numbers.**

**Jan Ekert**

**Legislative Chair**

**REPORTS AND THEIR DUE DATES:**

**MAKE SURE AND MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS, ALSO SEND ONE TO THE DISTRICT CHAIR AND THE DISTRICT ADJUTANT**

<b>Consolidated Post Report</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>June 1<sup>st</sup></b>	
<b>Post Service Officer</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>May 1<sup>st</sup></b>	
<b>Community Service</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>June 1</b>	
<b>Annual Post Data Report</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>April 12</b>	
<b>Blood Reports</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>April 30</b>	

**Cont NSFR – Jan Ekert Chair**

stated that the conflict has cost about \$25 billion so far.

- **DHS Funding:** After delaying a vote on the Senate-backed DHS funding bill for over a month, the House approved a DHS funding bill that would fund all of DHS, to include the Coast Guard, except its immigration enforcement agencies, ending the department's 76-day shutdown.

**Operations:**

- The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency identified and repatriated 10 service members.
- Processed support requests for 20 American Legion posts across 13 departments, including 21,080 rounds of ammunition, 48 rifles, 250 clips, 5 endorsement letters and 2 contact verification.
- Processed awards for JROTC, 4 Scholastic Excellence, and 4 Military Excellence medals across 2 schools.

**Jan Ekert, National Security Foreign Relations Chair****Baseball Chairman - Joe Dollerschell**

05/25/2026

Registrations for 2026 American Legion baseball teams here in Minnesota is nearly complete as of this writing. Today, there are 411 teams registered to play in 5 different divisions. This is a record high number of teams for any state. The local American Legion Clubs here in District 7 are to be congratulated for their continued support of this great program. 41 of those teams registered are based in your District 7. Breaking those numbers down looks like this.

- 3 division 1 junior teams
- 16 division 2 junior teams.
- 3 division 1 senior teams
- 19 division 2 senior teams.

Rosters have not been completed yet, but we can estimate that those 41 teams will feature some 450-500 players and 75-100 coaches. That's a big footprint that you and your American Legion clubs and membership are having on hundreds of young men in District 7 here in western Minnesota. Throughout the course of the baseball season, these young men are learning skills that will stay with them and guide them as they enter the realm of adulthood. These go well beyond the skills of the game alone. I encourage all American Legion Clubs and members to continue their support of this great program. By my count, there are around 56 American

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**District 7 Junior Shooting Sports Chairman  
Carl Wilson, Chair****District 7 Junior Shooting Program  
Update**

The District 7 Junior Shooting Program continues to make steady progress as another successful season comes to a close. This year, our young shooters competed in eight competitions, representing the district with dedication and pride. Overall, they performed well and gained valuable experience that will continue to build their skills and confidence moving forward. At this time, District 7 still has one active junior shooting program, located in Brandon, Minnesota and proudly sponsored by Post 278. While participation is currently centered in one location, the program continues to grow, and interest among youth remains strong. Looking ahead, there are exciting plans to expand the program in the coming year to include BB gun shooting. This addition will help introduce younger participants to the sport and create more opportunities for growth within the district. As the season wraps up, the Junior Shooting Program will take its traditional summer break, with activities set to resume on September 1st. During the offseason, many of our participants stay active by competing in 4-H shooting sports programs, continuing to sharpen their skills throughout the summer months. District 7 remains committed to developing and expanding opportunities for youth shooting sports and looks forward to another successful season ahead.

**Carl Wilson**

**District 7 Junior Shooting Chairman**

**Cont - Baseball Chairman - Joe Dollerschell**

Legion Clubs based in school districts where these teams are based. Regular season play will commence soon after the high school season ends. For most teams, this means we will get under way around the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June. Playoffs begin typically the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July and end with state tournaments in 5 divisions, either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of August. In 2026, one state tournament will be hosted by a District 7 team. That will be the Division 2 Senior tournament hosted by the Glenwood/Lowry team at Minnewaska High School from July 30-August 2. The organizers there have been building up to what I know will be a fantastic event. I encourage you all as American Legion members to try to attend some or all of the games there. We can also look forward to state tournaments in our near future being hosted by Dawson, Granite Falls, and Alexandria.

**Joe Dollerschell**

**District 7 MN Legion Baseball Chairman**

**320-894-8181**

**AMERICAN EDUCATION - Bill Kuperus**

**Bill Kuperus**

**American Educations, Chairman**

**Nothing new to report**

**Boy Scouts - Chip Manson**

**Nothing new to report**

**Chip Manson**

**District 7 Scouting America Committee Chair**

**Nothing to report**

**Many of the Committee Chairs have chosen to provide their reports/Updates at the District Convention May 30<sup>th</sup> at New London. We Look forward to seeing all of you there.**

**7<sup>th</sup> District American Legion  
Jan Ekert, Adjutant  
31693 733 Ave  
South Haven, MN 55382**