

District 7 Newsletter

October 2025

Happy October District 7!!!

As always I hope this newsletter finds you all well. We have had a very eventful last few months in District 7. I apologize for the lack of Newsletters since March, finding a new balanced routine after the baby took a minute so this one might be a little longer and look a little differently than some past newsletter as we have a lot to catch up on, I will share some of the big highlights of the last few months. Next month I am hoping to move back to current and future events as our main focus. But until then.....let's catch up quickly!!!

DISTRICT 7 Fundraising

We wrapped up our Spring District Fundraiser in Bangor with a Brunch, Bingo, and Bloody Fundraiser. It was truly a great success again and it's because of your help and dedication to ensure we are able to better help care for our veterans, their families and our communities. And a BIG shout out to Bangor for hosting the event.

With that being said we are currently looking for another Unit to host our next District Fundraiser. Please reach out to me if hosting is something you would be willing to do. Not only has hosting been beneficial to the District but has also helped raise funds for the hosting Unit as well.

Department Convention

The Department Convention was held in Green Bay this year and was a blast. If you have not had a chance to attend one I would strongly encourage you to try to attend the 2026 Department Convention in Appleton this coming year July 15-19. It's a great way to continue to learn about the many opportunities our organization offers, see old friends and make new ones for memories that will last a lifetime.

Our newly elected Department President is Sue Hembrook, and her special project is Camp American Legion in Tomahawk. If you would like more information on President Sue's project

please reach out. If you are interested in donating towards President Sue's special project please remember to mail checks to the Department marked President Special Project. Additionally, Sue is focusing on America turning 250!!! President Sue's theme is "Honor our Country, Support our Veterans" Each District was given a National Park. District 7 is Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, so be expecting themes around that this coming year. President Sue is teaming up with Legion Commander Nathan Bond, Sons Commander Christopher Dannenmann and Riders Director Corey Doehermann promoting FAMILY FIRST. This year's focus will be working together as a family. Department leaders join the national leaders with emphasis on working together.

District 7's very own Christina Petranovich was elected as Department 1st Vice President., Congratulations Christina!!! Christina has BIG goals. She and her membership team are working on taking Wisconsin to 100% Membership over the next year!! (This is something that hasn't been done since District 7's very own Virginia Kodl was Department President!) In addition to 100% Department Membership, she is also working at 0 disbanded Units over the next year.

As Units and members of District 7, I would like our District to work hard at 100% Membership on District level. Heck, if we could go over 100% that would be even better. Please encourage your members to get their dues paid early this year. If your Unit is struggling for any reason please reach out as we want to help. Strong Units is what ensures the future of our organization and that is something we all hope to see continue for many generations to come.

A BIG Congratulations to the following District 7 Units, their presidents and members:

Department of WI Convention Awards

President's Award for Excellence – Becky Mueller, Department President
Mauston Unit 81, District 7

Children & Youth Certificates of Recognition – Joyce Endres Department Chairman
Humbird Unit 320, District 7

Education Certificates of Recognition – Diane Weggen, Department Chairman
Loyal Unit 175, District 7

Poppy Poster Award – Deanna Farley, Department Chairman
Julia Riihinen, District 7 (Class I)

National Convention

The National Convention was held in Tampa Bay, Florida this year and Wisconsin had some pretty exciting accomplishments. This year's new American Legion Auxiliary President is Pam Ray and her theme is "Mission Driven, Family Focused".

National Commander is Dan K. Wiley and his theme is "Better Together".

Below is a photo of the top two awards given from Central Division during the National Education Program report and the Department of Wisconsin won. I would also like to take a moment to mention and send a great big shout out to District 7's very own Diane Weggen. This is the 2nd year she has been the department chair, and the 2nd year she won this award!! Congratulations to the Department of Wisconsin and a Big Thank You again to Diane!!!



National Convention Awards

Central Division Education

Department Award Wisconsin

Diane Weggen, Chair

Just like the Department Convention if you have never attended a National Convention, I'd encourage you to put it on your calendar this coming year. Tampa was a blast and an experience I will never forget. The National Convention is moving back closer to us as it will be in Louisville, Kentucky August 28th - September 3rd. The National Convention has excellent break-out training sessions which are inspiring in addition to learning about what other Units all across this beautiful country are doing.

DISTRICT 7 Fall Conference

Shout out to Loyal Unit & Post 175 for hosting our 2nd joint American Legion Family meeting. We are undeniably still learning and tweaking this to bring you all the best experiences. We thank you for your patience as we learn and grow the District Family in this new family meeting setting. We learned about many exciting things going on in our district and were able to accomplish so much!!

First I would like to go over a huge goal set by our District 7 American Legion Family. As a Legion Family, we are focusing on fundraising to put a whole plane in the air for the La Crosse Honor Flight. Two reasons: their funding is about depleted, and they are in our district. We want to help ensure all our Veterans are able to take advantage of the Honor Flight opportunity.

To make this fundraiser easy for all hosting locations, we have teamed up with West Salem's veteran-owned company Big Boar. Big Boar will bring in the entire meal for your event. They are charging us at cost for the plate. Meaning they will actually be taking a loss on every location they are partnering with as they still have time in preparation and the cost of travel. The only requirement is that the up-charge you choose for each plate (suggested amount for most areas in our district is \$15-\$20 per plate) goes directly to the Honor Flight Fundraiser. From there raffles (50/50, basket, etc.) held in connection with the fundraising meal could be kept for your location or donated towards the Honor Flight. The location with the highest amount of money raised will be given a traveling Hog Trophy for bragging rights.

Additionally, we will have a passport to encourage people to travel to our many fundraising locations Honor Flight Fundraisers. The more stamps you get for each location the more miles you get and for so many miles you will be entered to win a grand prize.

If this sounds like something your area would like to host, please let us know and we will get you the information you might need. This is the first Fundraiser like this ever done by a District Family and we are expecting it to truly be trail blazing for other Districts and Departments.

District 7 is planning a Bandstand (that's what Commander Chet has named it) event with our Family Leadership team. We have two weekends currently blocked off and we are working on a route as we speak. We will be picking 1 location in each county, and we will go there and want any members from any area to feel free to come and get the help you might need for any questions you might have. We want to meet you all, know you all, and hear your needs so that we can continue to lobby the Department and National with our needs. Additionally, we want to help make calls to your expired members, work on buddy calls and so much more.

Connection is something we are truly trying to accomplish on this tour through the District. We want to know You!!!! We are truly so excited and want to see each and every one of you at one of our stops. The weekends are October 24-26 & November 7-9. Once we have exact locations for each date set we will send that out to all of you to share. Please come. Without you this event cannot be a success!!!

The 7th District American Legion Riders would like us to let you all know that if your location is struggling with getting enough help for your Honor Guard at funerals to please reach out. They will put out a message to all to see if anyone is available to come help as all veterans deserve recognition for their service as they are laid to rest. If your post/unit needs assistance for an Honor Guard, please contact me and I will get you the District Riders Contact information.

We really focused this District Fall meeting around Family and helping each other. That includes partnering with neighboring Units for events.

The Department of Wisconsin and National Headquarters are encouraging all Units to plan something for American Legion Family day. It happens to be Saturday, April 25, 2026. When this was brought up there were concerns for small units or less active units. My answer was, "We are a Family!! All of us!!! Partner with them, plan a joint activity." Maybe plan a ceremony or just a social hour to get to know your neighbors. If you are struggling to come up with ideas please let us know we would love to help you. But please, please take the time to plan something

special with your local and if necessary neighbor American Legion Families to make this day a truly special one.

Guest speakers gave a wonderful presentation from The Fallen Outdoors. They informed us of the many outdoor activities they run at no cost to the veterans participating. They want as many veterans to know about their program which is also veteran-owned. For further information please check out their website at THEFALLENOUTDOORS.COM or contact Team Wisconsin, Team Lead Nick Kibler at WI.LEAD@THEFALLENOUTDOORS.ORG

This program offers so many wonderful outdoor opportunities for our veterans right here in Wisconsin. They also participate in Vetsgiving over Thanksgiving. If you know veterans in need this Thanksgiving season, please reach out to them and they might be able to help.

A date was set for our Holiday District get together. It will be Friday December 5th in Holmen. No meetings or business, just a great time with those in the district. Further information to follow on this event but wanted you to save the date!

Neillsville Post 73 has 2 long-time members and brothers taking part on the Honor Flight in October. If you would like to send them a card or letter please do so. To ensure arrival please have a post marked by Friday, October 3rd.

This can be mailed to: American Legion Post 73, % Facility Manager Vickie Dux,
6 Boon Blvd, Neillsville, WI 54456

And as a final request, District 7 American Legion 2nd Vice Susie Krueger was in a very bad accident back in July. She and her husband Steve have held a wide variety of offices on all levels over the years and have always shown up to help when asked. Now they could use our help. If you would like to send words of encouragement to Susie during her healing and rehabilitation journey or perhaps your unit would like to make a small donation to help offset the cost of Steve's travels back and forth to Susie. These items can be mailed to: The Krueger's
16380 Kellogg Ave, Norwalk, WI 54648

I was just kidding, **1 last request**. Please save the date for the Spring Conference and plan to have at least 1 representative attend from your unit (obviously, we would encourage each representative to bring a friend). Commander Chet and I are in a contest to see who can get the most posts/units to attend the Spring Conference (really all District activities). Spring Conference is Saturday April 18, 2026. We can't wait to see you all there!!!

Legislation

IF you have not please take the time to Sign Up for Alerts at:

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>

Go to the Legion Action Center to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.

NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address> Any questions, call Diane Weggen at 715-644-2668 or email dsweggen@gmail.com

The American Legion endorses the Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security (SHIPS) for America Act to improve the maritime security of the United States. This crucial domain has been overlooked for too long. Our members are clear in their belief that the US needs sustained investment in our national security to reduce the chances of armed conflict. Please take the time to send emails in regard to this matter as it is currently pressing.

GRASSROOTS ACTION CENTER Report Meeting Sign Up for Alerts Find Officials Find Legislations

America's maritime infrastructure is plagued by aging military and commercial vessels, dropping shipbuilding capacity, billions in maintenance backlogs for ports and waterways, a shortage of qualified mariners, and a plummeting sealift capacity. All of this while our competition with China intensifies. By the Numbers:

- The United States has a merchant fleet of 185 ships. China has 7,838.
- In 2023, the US built 0.1% of the world's ships. China built 50.7%.
- The US's goal for sealift capacity is 85%. It is currently 59% and dropping.
- America's sealift capacity was USTRANSCOM's number 2 readiness concern in 2021. It is now the top concern.
- The US is now expected to lose 1-2 million square feet of sealift capacity every year.
- The US has a \$163 billion and \$6.8 billion-dollar maintenance backlog for ports and inland waterways.
- As of 2023 the US had just 5 shipbuilding orders in shipyards. China had 1,700.

The American Legion has always advocated for a strong national defense. Our members served the nation in wartime and know the dangers of poor readiness. We cannot let the burden of these security failures fall on our service members. To prevent this from happening, Congress should pass the SHIPS for America Act now.

Poppy Reminder

It is that time of year again. It is time to order Poppies for distribution. Please remember Poppies can be distributed all through the year. Veterans Day is a perfect time to give each veteran a poppy. Units are encouraged to order early each year as the Department of Wisconsin is one of the only Departments that has 100% Veteran-made Poppies. So that takes a little bit of time as other Departments even order from ours. So please keep your poppy order on your unit's radar.

Past Presidents Parley (PPP)

Have you served as a President at the unit, county, district, or department level? If so, you are eligible to join the Past Presidents' Parley! Membership in the PPP is \$7.00 annually and FUNDS THREE SCHOLARSHIPS each year in the nursing and health career fields. If you are eligible to join the PPP, I would highly encourage you to do so. It is through the strong mentorship of our past that we can continue to lead with the new into our future. Past Presidents at all levels are also encouraged to help develop and mentor new leaders.

Go to **amlegionauxwi.org** then to Programs for Past Presidents Parley for information. Questions? Need more info?

Contact PPP Chairman Diane Weggen at dsweggen@gmail.com or 715-644-2668.

Americanism

This year's Americanism Essay Contest theme is "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday and the Veterans who Fought for Our Freedom". Please try to encourage this program in your local schools, Boy Scout Groups, Girl Scout Groups, etc.

Veterans Hockey Tournament for Mental Health

I would like to wrap this newsletter up with a moment of personal privilege within the District as these are all things very near and dear to my heart. I am always an advocate for our Veterans and their mental health and have a dying love for some Hockey too.

Black River Falls Post 200 is teaming up with Black River Youth Hockey and the Minnesota Warriors Hockey for a Mental Health Fundraiser for Veterans on Saturday, October 18th at the Milt Lunda Memorial Arena. Post 200 will be selling food to benefit the post as well. Tickets are free will donations but will need to be downloaded using the QR code below. Black River Hockey Team is still looking for Veteran Senior (Adult) Level Hockey players as well, so if you know any interested please send them my information. A little birdie told me there will be some special shoutouts to some local veterans that night too. So please, if you're able, stop in for an evening of fun supporting some of the people that mean the most to all of us, our Veterans!!



HOCKEY NIGHT WISCONSIN

DOORS OPEN 6 PM PUCK DROP 7 PM

VS



- SILENT AUCTION
- CHUCK A PUCK
- 50/50 SPLIT THE POT
- RAFFLE

OCTOBER 18TH 2025

PROCEEDS BENEFIT VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH



Milt Lunda Memorial Arena - Black River
Falls, WI

Upcoming Events

October 4	ALA in the Know at Loyal at 8 AM (If interested there is still availability to attend, contact Department Headquarters for more information)
October 18	Veterans Hockey Tournament for Mental Health in BRF at 7pm
October 21	Clark County ALA at Owen at 6 PM
October 24-26	District 7 American Legion Family Bandstand Travel weekend (more details above and coming separately)
October 29	PR Chat 6:30-8:00 PM on Zoom
November 7-9	District 7 American Legion Family Bandstand Travel weekend (more details above and coming separately)
November 15	National Mission Training in Minneapolis
December 5	District 7 American Legion Family Christmas party at Holmen Post
April 18, 2026	District 7 American Legion Family Spring Conference 8-9am Registration 9am Conference Starts, the meeting will be held at Sparta Post 100.

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