

Montana Legionnaire



DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

IRENE DICKERSON

As Department Commander of the American Legion, Department of Montana, I want to share my vision for strengthening our organization's programs, membership, and presence in communities across our state in the years ahead. Our future success depends on stronger coordination and communication at every level of leadership. Our Zone and District Commanders are essential partners in carrying out the mission of the American Legion. By working closely with them, I believe we can ensure that every post—large or small—has the support, guidance, and communication it needs to thrive.

Strengthening Communication and Support for Local Posts

One of my central priorities is improving communication across the Department. We need to provide more consistent guidance and support to districts and posts that are facing challenges with membership, programs, or community engagement.

We have posts that are doing incredible work, and we have posts that need help. Our responsibility at the Department level is to make sure no post feels isolated. When we communicate clearly and support one another, we grow together.

Membership Growth Through Community Engagement

Membership growth remains a top priority for me. I want to see us attract new members, reengage former members, and demonstrate to our communities why the American Legion continues to matter.

To accomplish this, we will encourage posts to host community fairs, conduct revitalization events, and take a more active role in local activities.

Visibility matters. When the American Legion shows up—at fairs, school events, community projects, and other local activities—people see who we are and what we stand for. I believe community involvement is one of the strongest tools we have for membership growth.

Renewed Commitment to Children & Youth Programs

I am also committed to strengthening Children & Youth programs across Montana. These programs have long been a cornerstone of the American Legion's mission, and I believe they deserve



renewed attention and collaboration with local school districts.

We are committed to working with Montana's schools to identify new ways to increase student participation in Legion-supported activities. Our youth programs build leadership, citizenship, and service—values that strengthen our communities and help prepare the next generation for the future.

A Unified Path Forward

My vision for the Department is rooted in the American Legion's longstanding mission while embracing new opportunities for growth and modernization.

Our vision is simple: stronger communication, stronger programs, and stronger communities.

By supporting our posts, investing in our youth, and engaging with the people we serve, I believe the American Legion Department of Montana can continue to honor our legacy while building a vibrant future.

I look forward to working with our members, posts, districts, and communities across Montana as we move forward together.

Duane Cunningham

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Don't Wait for a Problem to Read your Bylaws



As we settle into a new American Legion year, August is a good time for every Post to take care of one of those responsibilities that is easy to put off: reviewing your Post Constitution and Bylaws. For many Posts, these documents were written years—or even decades—ago. They may have been amended along the way, passed from one Adjutant to another, or stored safely in a filing cabinet. But when was the last time your Post actually sat down and read them? Your Constitution and Bylaws should not be documents that only come out when there is a disagreement. They are the framework for how your Post operates, how decisions are made, and how the rights and responsibilities of your members and officers are protected.

Do Your Governing Documents Still Fit Your Post?

Start with a simple question: **Do our Constitution and Bylaws accurately describe how our Post operates today?** Look at your officer positions and their duties. Review how and when elections are conducted, how vacancies are filled, what constitutes a quorum, how meetings are called, and what authority belongs to the membership versus individual officers or the Executive Committee. Pay particular attention to the financial authority. Your governing documents and adopted policies should provide clear safeguards for expenditures, bank accounts, contracts, property, financial reporting, and the authorization to commit Post funds. Good governance protects the organization—and it protects the officers and members who volunteer to lead it.

"We've Always Done It This Way"

Those may be some of the most dangerous words in any organization. Tradition is an important part of The American Legion, but tradition and governing authority are not the same thing. Institutional knowledge should not exist only in the memory of the member who has been around the longest. When questions arise, members should be able to look to the Post's governing documents and understand how the organization is supposed to operate. That becomes particularly important during leadership transitions. New officers should not have to learn the rules by trial and error or depend entirely upon the previous officer to explain how things have always been done.

Make Sure Your Documents Agree

Posts are part of a larger organization, and Post governing documents cannot conflict with the governing authority of The American Legion at the Department and National levels. Reviewing your documents periodically provides an opportunity to identify provisions that may be outdated or inconsistent with higher governing documents. It is also worth remembering that not every operating procedure belongs in your Constitution and Bylaws. The Constitution should establish the fundamental structure and purpose of the organization. The Bylaws provide the rules governing its operation. More detailed procedures that may need to change more frequently can often be addressed through standing rules, policies, or other properly adopted procedures. The goal is not to make your governing documents longer. The goal is to make them clear, useful, and current.

Know How to Make Changes

Before making amendments, read your existing amendment provisions carefully. How much notice must be given to the membership? What vote is required? Does an amendment need to be presented at one meeting and voted upon at another? Are there additional Department requirements? Following the amendment process is just as important as the amendment itself. A good idea adopted through an improper process can create unnecessary questions later. Once changes are approved, update the complete document. Do not leave future officers searching through years of meeting minutes trying to determine which version is current. Keep an official copy, record the dates of adoption and any subsequent amendments, and ensure more than one officer knows where those records are located.

A Simple Challenge

Before your September meeting, pull out your Post Constitution and Bylaws. Look at the date. Then sit down with your officers and ask: "Do these documents accurately describe how our Post operates today?" If the answer is yes, great. Make sure your officers have access to them and keep them available for your membership. If the answer is no, we're not sure, or—perhaps most importantly—"Where did you find those?" then you have identified a worthwhile project for the coming year. The Department is not encouraging Posts to rewrite governing documents simply for the sake of rewriting them. We are encouraging every Post to make sure the rules under which it operates are current, accessible, understood, and followed. Strong Posts are built on strong membership, good leadership, transparency, and consistency. Clear governing documents help provide the foundation for all four. Take a little time now to review yours.

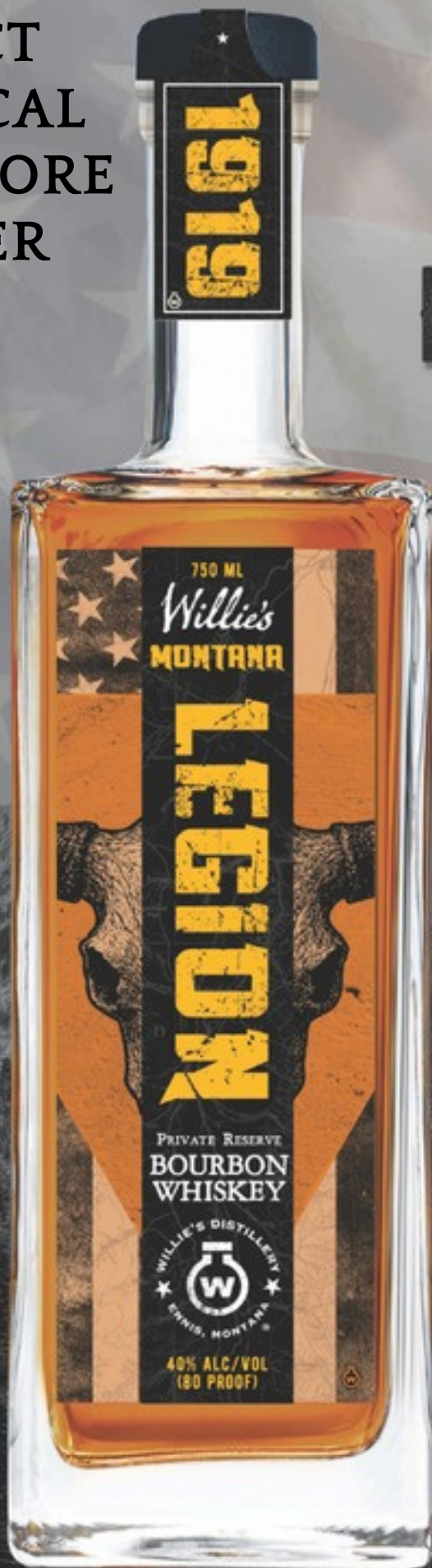
It is much easier to answer questions about your Constitution and Bylaws when everything is running smoothly than to discover the answers for the first time when there is already a problem.

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Department Vice Commander

Brian Carpenter

Bringing the Ideas Home: Montana's Way Forward on Membership



Earlier this month, members of The American Legion from across the country gathered in Indianapolis for the 63rd National Membership Workshop. Montana was there with a purpose: to learn, to listen, to share what has worked in our state and, most importantly, to bring home ideas that we can put into action.

The National Membership Workshop is one of those events where the value isn't simply found in the presentations. It is found in the conversations between sessions, around the tables and in comparing notes with Legionnaires who are facing many of the same challenges we are. This year's workshop brought together leaders from the post, district and department levels for training focused on recruiting, retention, welcoming new members, revitalization, leadership development and long-term organizational growth. National divided the workshop into four learning tracks designed to meet leaders where they are—from those learning the fundamentals of membership to experienced leaders focused on mentoring, succession planning and sustaining growth for the future. That last word—future—is important. Membership cannot simply be about reaching a number on a report. Our membership numbers are a measurement of something much larger: whether veterans in our communities know who we are, whether they see value in belonging to The American Legion, and whether the members we already have feel connected enough to stay. For Montana, the workshop created an opportunity to take a hard look at where we have been and where we want to go. We didn't travel to Indianapolis expecting someone else to hand us a magic membership formula. There isn't

one. Instead, we spent the weekend exchanging ideas with Legionnaires from across the country, talking through successes and failures, comparing strategies and looking for concepts that could realistically work in Montana. There was an incredible amount of energy in those conversations. When you put people in a room who genuinely want this organization to succeed, one idea quickly turns into three more. Montana brought ideas to those conversations, too. That matters.

We may be a geographically large department with a relatively small veteran population, but many of the challenges we face force us to think differently. Our posts can be separated by hundreds of miles. Some serve communities with only a few hundred residents. Others operate in Montana's growing population centers. There is no single recruiting strategy that will work equally well everywhere. Our way forward has to recognize that.

Growth Starts With Strong Posts

One message from the workshop was reinforced again and again: successful membership programs are built around active posts and meaningful engagement. We cannot ask someone to join and then forget about them. Recruiting is the beginning of the relationship, not the end of the job. When we welcome a new member, we need to introduce them to the post, explain what The American Legion actually does, invite them into our programs and give them an opportunity to contribute. Likewise, when a longtime member hasn't renewed, our first question should not simply be, "Where are your dues?"



It should be, "How are you doing?" Retention is built through relationships. That means Buddy Checks. It means personal phone calls. It means recognizing members for their service. It means making sure new members don't walk into their first meeting, sit alone and leave without anyone learning their name. And it means making our posts visible in their communities.

A veteran is far more likely to understand why membership matters when they have already seen Legionnaires sponsoring youth programs, conducting honor guards, assisting veterans, supporting families, advocating for veterans' benefits or stepping forward when their community needs help. Our programs aren't separate from membership. Our programs are why membership matters.

We Have to Meet Veterans Where They Are

Another important part of the conversation in Indianapolis was recognizing that the next generation of Legionnaires may not find us the same way previous generations did.



Department Vice Commander

Brian Carpenter

Bringing the Ideas Home: Montana's Way Forward on Membership

We have to be willing to go to them. That means community events, veterans events, college campuses, workplaces, family activities and online spaces. It means telling our story through social media and modern communication while continuing the personal, face-to-face conversations that have always been one of our greatest recruiting tools.

And when we meet a veteran, we need to spend less time immediately asking them to join and more time learning who they are.

What branch did you serve in? Where did you serve? What matters to you now? Do you know what resources are available to you? Those conversations build relationships. Relationships build trust. And trust creates membership that lasts.

District and Zone Leadership Must Be Part of the Team

Montana's membership plan also has to strengthen the connection between the Department, our zones, districts and individual posts. A district commander cannot simply be someone who receives a membership report and forwards it along. Our district and zone leadership should be coaches, connectors and resources. When a post is struggling, we should be asking why. When another post is succeeding, we should be asking what they are doing differently—and then sharing that information.

One of the best ideas reinforced through the national workshop is something very simple: successful posts can help struggling posts. We do not need to reinvent every solution eleven different times across Montana. If something is working in Miles City, maybe there is a piece of it that can work in Kalispell. If a post in Havre finds a successful way to reach younger veterans, let's share it with Helena. If a small rural post

develops an effective community event, that idea may be exactly what another rural post has been looking for.

We should be trading ideas just as enthusiastically inside Montana as departments were trading them in Indianapolis.

Our Goal Is Growth—But Sustainable Growth

As we move into the 2027 membership year, Montana is taking a deliberate approach to membership goals.

We have looked closely at our previous year's performance, our veteran population, individual post performance and the realities facing communities across our state. Our goal is not to put an unrealistic number on paper and hope everyone somehow reaches it. Our goal is to create achievable growth and then build upon it. That means identifying where growth is possible, recognizing where posts need assistance, improving retention and giving our commanders the tools to lead their membership teams. We want growth—but we want sustainable growth.

One good recruiting year is not enough. We need to develop the next recruiter, the next post commander, the next district commander and the next generation of Legion leadership at the same time. That is why mentoring and succession planning were such important pieces of this year's National Membership Workshop. Strong organizations don't just find members. They develop leaders.

Montana Has Something to Offer

One of my biggest takeaways from Indianapolis was that Montana should never underestimate what we bring to the national conversation.

We went there to learn, but we also

went there with ideas.

We talked about what has worked here. We listened to what is working elsewhere. We challenged one another. We filled notebooks, traded ideas and came home ready to adapt the best of them to Montana. That enthusiasm is exactly what membership needs. We don't need 8,000 people doing membership work in exactly the same way. We need thousands of Legionnaires willing to have conversations, invite someone through the door, make a phone call, mentor a new member, help a neighboring post and tell people why this organization still matters. National can provide us with tools. Department can provide resources, training, and coordination. District and zone commanders can provide leadership and support. But ultimately, membership happens in our communities. It happens one veteran at a time.

The Way Forward

The challenge I would give every Montana Legionnaire this year is simple: **Don't wait for somebody with "membership" in their title to grow The American Legion.** Look around your community. Find the veterans we haven't reached yet. Call the member you haven't seen recently. Invite a younger veteran to an event. Bring someone to a meeting and sit beside them. Tell your community what your post is doing. Share an idea that worked. Ask another post what is working for them. Most importantly, remember why we want to grow. We aren't chasing membership for the sake of a percentage. Every additional member strengthens our ability to advocate for veterans. Every active post gives veterans another place to find

BRIAN CARPENTER CONTINUED

FROM PG 8

camaraderie and assistance. Every new Legionnaire creates another opportunity to serve a community, mentor a young person, conduct a Buddy Check, support a veteran in need or carry this organization forward. Indianapolis gave us plenty of ideas.

Now comes the important part.

It's time to put them to work in Montana.

We have a tremendous opportunity in front of us this year. If we communicate, share what works, support one another and remember that membership is ultimately about people rather than numbers, I believe Montana can do more than grow.

We can build something that lasts.

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Don't Let Your VA Care Fall Through the Cracks

Appointments, Referrals, and the Importance of Following Up. For many Veterans, getting into the VA health care system is only the beginning. Between appointments, referrals, Community Care authorizations, specialty providers, test results, and follow-up visits, there can be a lot of moving pieces.

One of the most important things a Veteran can do is stay engaged in their own care. That doesn't mean Veterans should have to navigate the system alone. It does mean knowing what you're waiting for, keeping track of the next step, and speaking up when something doesn't seem to be moving.

If your VA provider tells you they are placing a referral, make sure you understand what happens next. Are you being referred to another VA clinic? Are you being considered for Community Care? Is someone supposed to contact you to schedule the appointment? Do you need authorization before making an appointment yourself? Those distinctions matter.

For Community Care, VA approval is generally required before receiving care from a community provider. Once approved, the Veteran should receive an authorization letter identifying the provider, the care that has been authorized and how long that authorization remains valid. If you schedule your own Community Care appointment after receiving the referral, VA currently instructs Veterans to tell their VA health care team within 14 days so the appointment information can be added to their record and VA can coordinate with the community provider. Most importantly, don't assume that because a referral was discussed, everything else automatically happened.

Follow up when something doesn't seem right. We've probably all heard some version of, "Someone will call you." Sometimes they do. Sometimes something gets delayed. If you have been waiting and aren't sure what is happening, follow up. Write down when the referral was discussed, which clinic or specialty it involved, and what you were told would happen next. When you call, keep notes about whom you spoke with and what you were told. The goal isn't to be confrontational. It's simple to stay informed about your own care. A good question can be as simple as: "Can you tell me the current status of my referral and what the next step is?" That one question can help determine whether you're waiting for scheduling, authorization, additional information, or something else entirely.

Pay Attention to Community Care Authorizations

Community Care can provide Veterans with access to important services outside VA facilities, but Veterans should pay close attention to their authorization. Your authorization letter tells you what care the VA approved, which provider is authorized, and how long the authorization lasts. If ongoing treatment is approved, keep track of your appointments and the authorization period. Don't assume that every additional visit, procedure, or service recommended by the community provider is automatically covered by the original authorization. If additional care is needed, you or the community provider may need to request another referral or authorization from VA. A little attention on the front end can prevent a lot of confusion later.



Use the Tools Available to You

Veterans enrolled in VA health care have several tools available through My HealtheVet on VA.gov.

Depending on the facility and type of care, Veterans can manage certain appointments online, review upcoming VA and Community Care appointments, request approved Community Care appointments, view some after-visit summaries, refill prescriptions and access medical records. Secure Messaging can also be a valuable tool for communicating with your VA health care team about non-urgent matters. Veterans can use Secure Messaging to ask routine health-related questions, provide updates, request referrals or prescription renewals, and ask administrative questions about scheduling. It also provides a record of the communication that you can refer back to later. Remember that Secure Messaging is intended for non-urgent, non-emergency communication.

VA's VEText system provides appointment reminders by text message and allows Veterans to confirm or cancel many VA appointments. Make sure the VA has your current phone number and pay attention to appointment notifications when they arrive. If you know you can't attend an appointment, cancel or reschedule it as soon as possible. That not only keeps your own care moving but may allow another Veteran to use that appointment time.

After the Appointment: Close the Loop

Following up is just as important after an appointment as it is before one. If you saw a specialist outside the VA, ask what happens next. Were records sent back to the VA? Was a medication changed? Did the provider recommend additional testing? Is another appointment needed? Does that follow-up care fall within the existing authorization, or does another request need to be made? VA and Community Care providers have systems for coordinating care, but Veterans should still understand their treatment plan and know what the next step is supposed to be.

Where Does Your Service Officer Fit In?

Your American Legion Service Officer is not your doctor, medical scheduler or VA health care provider. But Service Officers can be an important resource when you don't know where to turn.

A Service Officer may be able to help you better understand the VA system, identify the appropriate VA office or point of contact, explain available resources, or help determine whether an issue involving your health care may also affect a VA disability claim or benefit. Most importantly, don't wait until frustration causes you to give up.

Ask questions. Keep your paperwork. Check your appointments. Follow up on referrals. Use the tools available to you. And when you don't know where to start, reach out. Advocacy doesn't end when a claim is approved. Sometimes the most important advocacy is making sure a Veteran receives the care and benefits they've already earned.

For assistance with VA benefits or claims, contact your local American Legion Post Service Officer or an accredited American Legion Service Officer. For questions regarding medical appointments, referrals or treatment, Veterans should contact their VA health care team or VA medical facility directly.





Meet Your District Team

Eleven Districts. One Mission.

Across Montana, our District Commanders serve as the link between the Department and local Posts. Whether you're looking for guidance on membership, programs, post operations, or simply need another Legionnaire to help navigate a challenge, your District Commander is there to support you. Take a moment to get to know the leaders serving your district—and don't hesitate to reach out when you need assistance.

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AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Montana's First Legacy Run Is in the Books Don "Breakdown" Goodnight

What an incredible weekend.

Montana's inaugural **American Legion Riders Legacy Run** is officially in the books, and as your Department ALR Director, I want to start with two simple words: **thank you**. What we accomplished August 14–16 was about much more than motorcycles and miles. It was about bringing our Riders and American Legion Family together around a mission, building camaraderie across our Chapters, raising funds for the Legacy mission, and showing our communities what the American Legion Riders are all about.

For our first year, I could not have asked for a better group of people to make it happen.

We were especially honored to have **American Legion National Vice Commander Ben Headen** join us for our inaugural Run. Having a National Vice Commander ride alongside us and experience what we are building here in Montana made an already memorable weekend even more special. We appreciate Ben taking the time to be with us, meet our members, and support the Montana American Legion Riders.

The success of this Run belongs to a whole lot of people. I want to thank **Corvallis American Legion Riders Chapter 91** and everyone who put in the hours before the Run ever started. Events like this don't happen over a weekend. They take weeks and months of planning, phone calls, coordinating routes and stops, gathering donations, working with businesses, organizing volunteers, and figuring out all the little details nobody sees once the motorcycles start rolling.

To every Rider and passenger who joined us: thank you. Whether you rode every mile or joined us for part of the route, you helped make Montana's first Legacy Run something we can be proud of.

I also want to recognize the incredible businesses and community partners who stepped up to support us.

Young Grizzly Harley-Davidson in Missoula welcomed our Riders and helped provide a great home for our gathering and Sunday celebration. Their support of the motorcycle community and our veterans helped make this weekend possible.

Big Sky Brewing Company once again showed what it

means to stand behind Montana veterans and the American Legion Family. Their support of this Run and our mission is greatly appreciated.

We finished the weekend with one heck of a celebration. Shakedown County provided the music for our after-party, while Rooster Café and The Loaded Irishman helped keep everyone fed. They were all part of making the final stop of our inaugural Run a great one. And those are only some of the people who deserve recognition.

Thank you to every business, Post, Auxiliary Unit, SAL Squadron, ALR Chapter, sponsor, donor, volunteer, community member, and individual supporter who donated money, provided items, helped at a stop, shared our information, bought a raffle ticket, helped set up or tear down, or found another way to contribute.

Every dollar mattered. Every donation mattered. Every volunteer mattered. And every mile mattered.

One of the things I am most proud of is that this wasn't just a ride organized for the Riders. It became a Legion Family effort. That is exactly what I hope we continue building in Montana.

As Director, I also know our first year was an opportunity to learn. We'll take what worked, look at what we can do better, listen to our Chapters and Riders, and use all of it to make the next Montana Legacy Run even stronger.

Because there will be a next one.

If you missed this year's Run, start thinking about joining us in 2027. If you rode with us this year, bring another Rider next year. If your Chapter wasn't represented, let's change that. And if you own a business or know someone who wants to support Montana's veterans and their families, we would love to have you involved.

We started something this year.

Now it's our job to build on it.

To everyone who believed in the inaugural Montana Legacy Run, supported it, worked it, donated to it, or rode it—thank you.

I am proud of what the Montana American Legion Riders accomplished together, and I am even more excited about where we go from here.

Ride safe, take care of one another, and I'll see you on the road.



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

Legacy Run Pictures





SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



Starting Strong: Growing, Retaining and Serving By Ray Morkeberg, Detachment Adjutant

A new membership year is underway, and the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Montana is ready to start strong.

Membership is one of our greatest priorities this year—and there is a lot to be excited about.

Across Montana, we have opportunities to grow existing Squadrons, charter new ones and introduce more eligible Sons to everything the SAL and the greater American Legion Family have to offer. But growth isn't only about recruiting new members. Just as important is **retaining the members we already have and bringing back those who may have fallen away.**

Every member matters.

That means reaching out before a member becomes a non-renewal. It means checking in with the guy we haven't seen at a meeting lately. It means making sure new members are welcomed and immediately given an opportunity to participate. And sometimes it means simply picking up the phone and reminding someone that they are an important part of our Squadron.

Most importantly, **retention comes from giving our members a reason to belong.**

People want to know their time matters. They want opportunities to serve, build friendships, support veterans and their communities, and see firsthand the difference their membership makes.

That is why one of the areas where you are going to see Montana's Sons stepping forward in a much bigger way this year is supporting the **Montana American Legion Highway Fatality Marker Program.** Most Montanans immediately recognize the white crosses standing along our highways. What many people may not realize is that this remarkable program belongs to The American Legion Department of Montana.

The program traces its beginning to 1952, when six people were killed in traffic crashes in the Missoula area over Labor Day weekend. Floyd Eaheart, a member of Hellgate American Legion Post 27, proposed placing white crosses at fatal crash locations as a visible reminder for motorists to slow down and drive safely. The idea was adopted statewide in 1953 and has continued for more than seven decades.

Today, more than **2,500 Highway Fatality Markers** can be found along Montana's interstates, highways and roadways. Those crosses are sometimes mistaken for a government program. They aren't. The Highway Fatality Marker Program continues through the work of The American Legion Family, volunteers and supporters. It receives **no state or federal funding**, making volunteer labor, donations and community support essential to keeping the program going.

That is exactly the kind of mission where the Sons of The American

Legion can make a difference.

Across Montana, our Sons can work alongside their sponsoring Posts to identify markers needing attention, help repaint and restore existing markers, assist with projects supporting the program, raise funds for materials and help educate their communities about what those white crosses actually represent. This isn't simply about maintaining roadside markers.

The Highway Fatality Marker Program has always carried a highway-safety message. Every white cross reminds the thousands of motorists who pass it that someone lost their life there—and encourages all of us to slow down, pay attention and make it home safely.

For the SAL, it also gives our members something incredibly important: a mission they can put their hands on.

When people see SAL members working beside Legionnaires to support this program, they see the Legion Family serving Montana. When a new member spends a Saturday working alongside other Sons, he begins building friendships and connections within his Squadron. When a Squadron takes ownership of a project in its community, its members have something they can take pride in together. That is where membership, retention and service all come together. Strong programs help us recruit members. Meaningful involvement helps us keep them. Strong Squadrons create the environment where both can happen. So, as we begin this membership year, I'm challenging every Squadron in Montana to take a look around. Who can we welcome into the SAL?

Who hasn't renewed yet that we need to call?

Who used to participate but hasn't been around lately?

Who is eligible and has simply never been asked?

Where is there an opportunity to organize a new Squadron?

And once we get them through the door, what are we doing to make them want to stay?

Membership isn't a once-a-year campaign or simply reaching a percentage on a report. It's something we build every time we welcome a new member, call an old one, invite someone to participate or give our members an opportunity to serve. Supporting the Highway Fatality Marker Program is one of those opportunities. It connects our Sons directly to the mission of The American Legion, puts our members to work in their communities and helps preserve a program that has been part of Montana for more than 70 years. There is a lot of opportunity ahead of the Montana SAL this year. Let's grow our Squadrons. Let's retain our members. Let's bring back those we've lost. Let's charter new Squadrons where opportunities exist. And let's give every Son a reason to be proud that he belongs to the Sons of The American Legion. If we do that, the membership numbers will follow. Let's get to work.



THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



Department of MT President

Jackie Gangstad

I hope everybody has had a good summer and is surviving the heat. Hard to believe how fast this year is going, almost time for district meetings and fall conference. Remember, our fall conference is Oct 3rd in Helena, and we will have our meeting at Helena's post 3095, Villard Ave. The meeting will begin at 9 am. I will provide more information as it becomes available.

I hope everybody is selling tickets for our ALA Girl State fundraiser. Each unit needs to participate. This is a great program for girls to go to Helena and learn about our government. Gwen Marshall let me know that one of the girls, Claire, was selected for the Secretary of Agriculture. Gwen is working on a press release about the girl's nation delegates. So please do your part and sell, sell, sell. To help these girls learn, grow, and keep this program going. Make sure to send checks, not cash, to Leona Somerfeld at 550 15th Lane NE, Power, MT 59468. If you need more tickets, please call her at 406-788-1967. All money and tickets need to be mailed no later than October 15th so Leona gets them in time for the drawing. A selling point for those who say they won't float: let them know it would make a good Christmas present for the one person in their family or friend group who would enjoy it.

We need someone to take over for Sandy Runkel's position at Fort Harrison. It would be nice to have someone who lives close to Helena or can spend time there when the Christmas store is open. So, if you are interested, please let me know.

When I have definite dates for ALA Girls State and State Convention in Harve, I will pass this along.

Remember, we have a website. So please send photos or letters you would like posted for your unit to Candice Gehring at mtala.candice@gmail.com, and she will post them so everybody can see what great jobs you have been doing.





THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



MONTANA RIVER OUTFITTERS

Win a Montana River Outfitters guided float trip, down the White Cliffs on the Missouri River. For 3 days you and a guest can float 47 miles along the Missouri River, taking in the view while exploring this historic waterway.



All proceeds go to the Montana American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program.

\$20 per ticket. Drawing to be held
October 24, 2026

Any questions please call:
Leona at (406) 788-1967

Why Accidental Death Insurance Matters for Our Members in 2026 and Beyond

Life moves fast, and none of us expect an accident to change everything in a single moment—but it happens. Across all ages, accidental deaths remain one of the leading causes of loss in the United States, with car crashes consistently among the top contributors. When the unexpected happens, families are often left juggling urgent financial needs like daily living expenses, funeral costs, and the challenges of suddenly losing income.

That's exactly why accidental death insurance continues to be such an important—and practical—option for our Legion Family in 2026 and beyond.

Reliable Protection When Families Need It Most

Accidental death insurance through The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) provides cash benefits directly to your beneficiaries, regardless of any other insurance you may have. These benefits are designed to help families stay steady during a truly difficult time.

Better yet, this coverage is built with accessibility in mind:

- Guaranteed acceptance for all Legion Family members
- No medical exams or health questions
- 24/7 protection—at home, at work, in your car, or on vacation
- Cash benefits paid directly to your beneficiary

It's a simple way to add an important layer of financial security without jumping through hoops.

Your Coverage Helps Support Veterans, Too

Every time a member enrolls in an LIT program, it does more than protect their family—it strengthens ours. LIT generates valuable non-dues revenue that helps fund critical Department programs and services for veterans. In other words, choosing LIT coverage isn't just a smart personal decision; it directly supports the mission we all care about.

April Spotlight: Accidental Death Insurance

As we highlight this program in April, it's worth taking a moment to review what makes it so impactful:

What It Covers

- Cash benefits paid if a covered accident results in your death
- Guaranteed acceptance for all Legion Family members
- No medical underwriting
- Benefits paid even if you have other insurance

Why It Matters

This is one of the simplest, most flexible ways to strengthen your family's financial safety net. No exams. No complicated applications. Just straightforward, needed protection.

How to Enroll

1. Choose the amount of coverage that fits your family's needs.
2. Enroll easily—no medical questions required.
3. Enjoy quick activation: coverage begins the first day of the month after enrollment and first premium payment.
4. Risk-free review: if you decide within 30 days that the coverage isn't right for you, you can cancel for a full refund (as long as no claims have been made).

American Legion Department of Montana

Merchandise & Fundraising Order Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Order Information

Item	Price	Quantity	Total
Legion Pilsner (Case)	\$45.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Cash Calendar	\$20.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday T-Shirt	\$25.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday Long Sleeve T-Shirt	\$30.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday Crewneck Sweatshirt	\$45.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday Hooded Sweatshirt	\$45.00	_____	\$_____

Clothing Sizes (Please indicate quantity of each)

Size	Qty	Size	Qty
Small	_____	2XL	_____
Medium	_____	3XL	_____
Large	_____	4XL	_____
XL	_____	XL	_____

Total Amount Due _____

Order Total: _____



Delivery & Ordering Information

Legion Pilsner

- ☐ Pick up at the Department Office in Helena
 - ☐ Deliver through my District Commander (when available)
-

Legion Bourbon

The American Legion Bourbon is available through your local Montana liquor store.

If your local store does not have it in stock, please contact the Department Office and we will assist you with obtaining it.

Quantity Requested (optional): _____

Preferred Liquor Store: _____

2027 Red Shirt Friday Apparel

Pre-Orders Now Being Accepted

Payment Information

- ☐ Check Enclosed

Make checks payable to:

American Legion Department of Montana

Questions?

American Legion Department of Montana

PO Box 155

Fort Harrison, MT 59636

Email: amlegmtsec@gmail.com

Thank you for supporting the programs of The American Legion Department of Montana!