

Americanism Division
Weekly Report to the National Commander
October 6, 2023
Ron Neff, Director – (317) 630-1203

American Legion Baseball

ALB Staff has begun preparations for the ALWS National Champions, League City Post 554, Texas to attend Game 2 of the Major League Baseball World Series on October 28, 2023. Game location to be determined.

Scholarships & Civics

The Committee on Youth Education of the Americanism Division will meet on October 7 and 8 in Indianapolis at the Sheraton City Center. During the meeting the Committee will review and recommend the list of Samsung Scholars and Cameron Richardson, of the Media and Communications division, will give a presentation on a new flag focused, patriotic graphic novel.

WEEKLY STATUS INPUT
Internal Affairs & Membership Division
Matthew Herndon, Director
(317) 630-1406
October 6, 2023

2023 Membership:

Membership as of October 5th was 92.54% of the 1,535,647 goal with 1421,095 current members (new recruits, renewals and DMS transfers). Total membership is 1,504,654 when new DMS and encumbered DMS are added into the total.

2024 Membership:

Membership as of October 5th was 57.52% of the 1,452,188 goal with 535,326 current members (new recruits, renewals and DMS transfers). The 55% target date is October 18th, 48 departments have already met or exceeded this target.

National Commander Seehafer Membership Goals:

Commander Seehafer has an expectation to engage members on a regular basis. With the Be the One initial, it is imperative for posts to contact members to check on their wellbeing and show them they are valued members of this organization. Whether it is through Buddy Checks or contacting members about their membership dues, members need to feel wanted and valued.

Retention:

As an organization, Commander Seehafer set a goal of 90% for retention. A column has been added to the daily, weekly, and target date membership reports for each department.

Our current retention rate is 55.75% at the traditional level. There are 82,756 department headquarters post members who were paid for 2023 that have not renewed for 2024 and 832,229 at the post level and who have not renewed for 2024.

As we see from above, there is a large pool of expired members within the posts and departments. There is the capability to immediately identify and start the engagement process to contact the member to renew their membership. Leadership at all levels need to emphasize bringing back their expired members. Post leadership must start the engagement process to show the member the value of membership for long-term retention.

Recruiting:

National Commander Seehafer set a goal of 78,000 new traditional members for the 2024 membership year. **To date we have recruited 21,776 new members into the organization at the local post level.**

Membership Excellence “Be the One” Dog Tag Coin:

To qualify you will need to recruit two new members into The American Legion, one to mentor and educate about The American Legion and one for growth. A new member is defined as any eligible veteran joining for the 2024 membership year who was not a member during the 2023 membership year. You can find the form at:

<https://www.legion.org/commander/pin>

Sons of The American Legion (SAL):

Commander Hall attended the homecoming of The American Legion Auxiliary President in Alaska. The SAL has surpassed the 2023 membership goal and is now at an **all-time high** and continues to grow.

2023 SAL Membership Info**(October 2nd)**

Total Actual Membership: 377,934 (102.76% of goal)
Renewal Percentage: 88.73%
Detachments at 105%: 19

2024 SAL Membership Info**(October 2nd)**

Total Actual Membership: 74,857 (22.54% of goal)
Renewal Percentage: 19.80%
Detachments at 10%: 56
Detachments at 25%: 28 (SAL 25% target date – October 18)

The National Emergency Fund (NEF):

Approved Grants:

2022 – 104 grants (98 members/6 posts) totaling \$261,761.75

Florida (Hurricane Ian) – 89 members; 3 posts
Florida (Hurricane Nicole) – 1 member
Kentucky (Tornado & Flooding) – 0 members; 2 posts
Louisiana (Hurricane Ida) – 2 members
Oklahoma (Tornado) – 1 member
Puerto Rico (Hurricane Fiona) – 3 members; 1 post
Tennessee (Wildfire) – 1 member
Texas (Tornado) – 1 member

2023 – 104 grants (94 members/10 posts) totaling \$352,640.45

California (Flooding) – 1 member
Florida (Hurricane Ian) – 87 members; 7 posts
Florida (Hurricane Nicole) – 1 member
Florida (Hurricane Idalia) – 3 members
Georgia (Hurricane Idalia) – 1 member
Tennessee (Hurricane Idalia) – 1 member
Illinois (Straight Line Winds) – 1 post
Oklahoma (Tornado) – 1 post
Vermont (Flooding) – 1 post

Hurricane season is upon us, and Hurricane Idalia hit the coast of Florida while we were in Charlotte at National Convention. We have begun receiving NEF grants for this storm, which is the typical timeframe to begin receiving NEF grant activity following a major disaster.

There was recent flooding due to torrential rains in New York City and New Jersey. New York governor Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency for five boroughs in New York, including portions of Hudson Valley and Long Island, and New York City mayor Eric Adams declared a state of emergency for the city. New Jersey governor Phil Murphy declared a state of emergency for all 21 counties in the state, and Hoboken, New Jersey mayor Ravinder Bhalla also declared a state of emergency.

Deadly wildfires and devastation in Lahaina, Maui in the Hawaiian Islands in early August should generate 4-7 NEF grants once those members are at a place to apply. The Hawaiian Governor and President Biden declared that area a disaster area. Death toll was initially thought to be 115, but local authorities believe that number to be 97. The state and Department of Hawaii has asked to NOT send supplies to Hawaii, as they are still trying to navigate how and where to receive them. Many departments have created fundraising campaigns within their state and will dialogue directly with Department of Hawaii leadership on best practices to get those affected the help they need.

And recently deadly flooding in the Northeast and Maine and Vermont have been declared disaster areas by the President of the United States. We have reached out to those departments regarding the National Emergency Fund.

An e-mail went out recently to all national and department leadership about the NEF, with the NEF Grant Application PowerPoint with voiceover instructions on how to complete the NEF grant application. This is done quarterly, usually, to serve as a reminder about the NEF. It also included a link to the video of PNC/IL Department Adjutant Marty Conatser on how they developed an SOP for disaster recovery, to include assisting with NEF grant applications.

There have been other storms and natural disasters throughout the country that we will continue to continue to monitor.

Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW):

Over 5,000 servicemembers, veterans, and their families were directly impacted by Operation Comfort Warriors in 2022, either by participating in an OCW-sponsored event or receiving care at a grant-receiving facility.

Application submissions for OCW grants continue to indicate an increase in the annual number of grants to individual veterans and federal medical care facilities.

2022 – 62 Grants totaling \$371,927.27

Completed:

Grants to servicemembers – 38

Grants to post/districts – 10

Grants for events – 9

Grants to federal medical care facilities – 5

2023 – 65 Grants totaling \$364,607.58

Completed:

Grants to servicemembers – 41

Grants to post/districts – 10

Grants for events – 9

Grants to federal medical care facilities – 5

Training:

The "How to Start a Post" training session hosted by The American Legion saw participation from 57 attendees, highlighting its significance. Among the participants, 44 were Legionnaires, while one attendee held dual membership in both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, and 10 were dual members of The American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion. These attendees were further classified by their Legion affiliations, with 30 coming from the Post level, 7 from County, 8 from Department, and 3 representing the National level. This substantial turnout underscores the Legion family's dedication and unity, underscoring their commitment to growth and community engagement.

Previously covered topics are available at www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays or if you would like other training resources, please visit www.legion.org/training. If you have suggestions for topics on future training or ideas for the training newsletter, please contact the training coordinator at legiontraining@legion.org.