

Team South-

I heard something earlier today, that really made me think about what we are doing with our membership program with the Sons. I want to share some of those thoughts here.

For a moment, think back to when you first joined the Sons. Did you feel welcome at your first Squadron Meeting? Did you feel like you belonged to your Squadron? How did you feel when you walked into your post for the first time-welcome? Like you belonged there?

We are building an organization where new members are brought in and walls are brought down. We have to be an organization where all members – new and existing – are brought in. They need to feel a sense of belonging – not to just the Squadron; but, to the American Legion family.

Our organization is built on the foundation of our Veterans.

We welcome members – not just into the Squadron – but into a family – Legion, Auxiliary, and Riders.

Some things to consider:

1. Are we inviting?
2. Are we porch people or do we invite our members in? In other words, do our members get to the front door without getting inside?
3. For our members – is there a difference between being in the room or belonging in the room?

As leaders, we are called to walk across the room and offer a welcome hand to our new members. We have to step outside of our comfort zones to make our new AND existing members feel part of our Squadrons and American Legion family.

At our Membership Committee meeting at the Fall NEC, it was suggested that Squadrons should create their own Membership Committees. If your Squadron does not have one, now would be a great time to assemble a Membership Committee. This would be a great way to engage new or existing members to help support your Squadron activities.

A Membership Committee can:

1. Handle the administrative function of processing membership and maintaining Squadron Membership records.
2. Carry out the Membership program for the Squadron-the National Membership Committee created a Membership toolkit for Squadrons to use to carry out the membership program.

3. Work with your Squadron Leadership to mentor new and existing members.
4. Work on Member engagement.

It is vitally important to connect with our new members when they sign up. Even more important to get them to a meeting as soon as possible and engage them in the activities of your Squadron and Post.

The same applies to our existing members.

The key for all of this is to ensure the blending of both new and existing members in our Squadrons.

We say this year Every Member Matters – every member does matter whether a new or existing member, young or old, or whatever the situation may be.

We also say Membership Through Mentorship – Mentoring our new and existing members will maintain the connection, will make them feel included in something beyond the Squadron. It is important that all our members understand that as a member they are part of something greater than the local squadron. They are a part of our Legion Family.

Here are some next steps to consider:

1. If your Squadron does not have a Membership Committee, create one for your local Squadron. We do it at the Detachment and National Level. If we are a bottoms up organization, we should have one at each Squadron.
2. Work with your New Members to ensure they not only feel welcome, but more importantly, that they feel like they belong.
3. Work with your Existing Members to ensure they not only feel welcome, but more importantly, that they feel like they belong.

This may have been a bit lengthy, but this is something that was laid on my heart earlier today that I felt I had to share. Please share with your Squadrons.

Thanks!

Scott Williams

Southeastern Region Membership Chairman

SonsVADetADJ@comcast.net

571 888 2720

Virginia