

*The*

LEGION LINK

"Lil Leprechaun Fighting For Vets"Web Site: www.floridalegion.orgE-mail: mail@floridalegion.org

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Membership Report



Joe Magee
Department Commander
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I am sitting here writing my last Link article as your Department Commander and all I can think is "Wow, what a ride." I would like to thank all the members of the Department of Florida for allowing me to serve. It is hard to believe that the year is up. As they say, all good things must come to an end, though sometimes later would be better than sooner.

Enough crying, I was pretty active, not so much in previous months however, I did neglect to mention in my last article my trip to Rotunda West, Post 113 for the dedication and opening of the Veterans Memorial Park. Nice job done by all concerned.

"Wow, what a ride."

This month we are attending the Law and Order Ceremony at Post 191, Melbourne, thank you for the invite. From 191 it was off to Fern Park, Post 183 for the 6th District Picnic. I would like to thank the District Commander and Post Commander and his officers for their hospitality. I wold also like to thank Ruth and Jerry for inviting us to the 8/40 luncheon in Venice. After that was Indianapolis, same old Indy except it did not rain and actually had beautiful weather. However, it was a weekend of accidents, including my wife who sprained her wrist. I keep telling her swan dives would be better in water than on concrete.

After Indy, I was off to the 3rd District DCC at Post 57, Lake City. From there we were off to

Jacksonville for the 5th District DCC. There are still more DCC's coming up and I will attend as many as possible. After Jacksonville, I attended a Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony at Post 110 to honor those who gave their all to protect Charlotte County. Many thanks to Gambler and staff. Also, coming up is Boys State, Memorial Day, and of course, the State Convention.

Even though the year is coming to an end, do not forget, you must keep membership moving, get out your roster and call your delinquent members. Please keep the COTA donations coming in and I thank you in advance.

Next month you will have a new Commander, please give him the same wonderful support you gave me, support him every way possible for him to have as good of a year that I had, if not better. Pat would also like to thank everyone for their courtesy and hospitality during the course of the year, she would also like to thank the Department Staff.

2017 FREEDOM RAFFLE

1 TICKET = \$5
6 TICKETS = \$20
12 TICKETS = \$30

GET YOUR TICKETS!

TICKET AVAILABILITY ENDS FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2017 AT 5:00PM

Grand Prize: \$10,000

Second Prize: \$2,500

Third Prize: \$1,000

4th & 5th Prizes \$500

6th - 10th Prizes \$100

Visit Headquarters Office in Sabal at the Dept Convention.

*Donations are not necessary to enter. Please see official rules.





MAY 2017

3	4th District DCC
3	15th District DCC
3	16th District DCC
6	Post Officer Report Due
10	14th District DCC
10	9th District DCC
10	Poker Run & Bike Day
11	11th District DCC
11-17	National Flag Week
14	Army Birthday
14	Flag Day
18-24	Boy's State
18	Father's Day
20	Baseball Official Team Roster Due
21	First Day of Summer
23	Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
27	PTSD Awareness Day
28-2	DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
28-4	Dept Headquarters Office Closed

- Commander Joe Magee's Attendance Tentative
Events are subject to change.



Steve Shuga
1st Vice Commander



Dianne Boland
2nd Vice Commander

June is finally here! By now you have heard the various calls for increased membership renewals, submission of Consolidated Post Reports (National and Department), Award submissions, end of the year reports, forget-me-nots of Post election results, submission of Post Officer Reports (POR); reminders to attend your District Constitutional Conference to cast your votes for your next District representatives and to prepare for Department Convention to experience the change of your Department leadership for the coming term.

Some Districts have expressed a strong desire to get an early jump on their planning of activities, events, meetings, and other support for key dates. To facilitate the process, a planning calendar will be released shortly after Convention your Area/District Commanders and District Vice Commanders will be given key dates regarding events and activities during the Convention immediately after the completion of all caucuses.

July and August are going to be extremely busy! It will set an unprecedented schedule with a bundle of assorted activities, Post installations, Youth Law Cadet Program, Department Leadership Retreat, Boy's State, Boy's Nation, National Membership Workshop, Florida Baseball Tournament, Regional Baseball Games, 91st American Legion World Series Baseball in Shelby, NC; American Legion Legacy Run across the United States, and the 99th National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

As we prepare to close out the Lil Leprechaun's American Legion term, we must remain diligent and supportive. Post membership has spiked once again and we must press on to end June with a high percentage. Before you know it, we will be rapidly making great strides to start the membership process all over again as we embark on the 2017-2018 membership year come July 1st.



2017 DEPT. CONVENTION CLASSES REGISTER ONLINE

floridalegion.org/register

Pre-registration is required for Service Officer School, Legion Institute, and Foodhandlers classes.

ATTENTION

Don't Lose Your Charter!

In order to maintain a charter, each Post in the Department of Florida shall participate in at least one recognized program of The American Legion each year. Article X, Section 10c



All posts must complete a National CPR and the Department Addendum, or will be subject to review and possible revocation of charter.

Together we will secure the future for all veterans reinforcing our duty, honor, courage, and commitment, as we improvise, adapt, and overcome the challenges set before us.

This will be my last article this year as 2nd Vice Commander. It would be a sin if I did not thank everyone from our Legion Family (as well as the Legion office staff) for the trust and support you have shown me. It has been a fun year and hopefully you have learned a little more about the American Legion.

The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) and Addendum were due May 1st. I know many Posts still have not submitted theirs to Department and National. This information will be compiled with all other Posts nationwide and put into a summary which is then sent to Congress. This summary is "us" when the National Commander testifies on behalf of The American Legion.

Remember, the Department has a **Legion College** taught once a year. This year it will be **September 7-9, 2017**. Keep an eye on the web site or the Legion Link for additional information. You must first complete the prerequisite of attending the American Legion Extension Institute taught at our Convention or take the course online at National's website www.legion.org.

Remember to keep watch on the Department's website (www.floridalegion.org) and National's. They have a lot of information in the way of forms, manuals, flyers, speeches and much more. Get familiar with the websites. Both have a search engine to lookup information.

Once again, thank you for making this year so pleasurable. I look forward to hopefully working for you all again next year.

Pre-planning is essential to run a successful term, as such it is important to know those who would be interested in serving us and would serve us best. I have asked Department to create a form, to be put on Department's website under forms. It is called "Become a Department Chairman". It asks a few questions about who you are, your background, and what are you interested in. It shouldn't take but five minutes to fill out. It can be found at <http://www.floridalegion.org/resources/legion-post-documents/forms/>. If you have any questions, please let me know.





Rick Johnson
3rd Vice Commander

Another year has come and gone quickly, and I hope that you were able to do everything that you set out to do. As we all know, awareness of our organization is extremely important, getting involved within our communities and being involved in our schools is the best way to raise that awareness.

We will have new officers taking positions after the Convention. Please do not wait until the last minute to put together your staff, your plan, and have an agenda on what you are doing in your meetings.

There are a lot of Posts out there with outdated by-laws. Commanders, please try to make it one of your goals to update them. This will prevent a lot of problems from occurring and will take care of the Post and the membership. Remember, we work for the membership, not the opposite.

In closing, thank you for all you do and continue to do and I look forward to another great year and please come by the hospitality room and say hello. I also want to thank Joe for a job well done and I know he had a lot of fun traveling out there and meeting you.

May God bless you and may God bless this great country of ours.

See you at the Convention.



Dennis Boland
NEC

To celebrate 100 years of service to community, state and nation, The American Legion is working with U.S. Mint and the U.S. Congress to produce limited-edition, exquisitely crafted, commemorative coins. Authorized by Congress, commemorative coins celebrate and honor people, places, events, and institutions in American society.

LEGION CENTENNIAL COIN PROPOSED

Unique among U.S. Mint products, these coins help raise money for important causes as well as commemorate important aspects of American history and culture. Proceeds from the sale of the coins would support the programs and services offered under the four pillars of our organization: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Children and Youth, and Americanism.

The American Legion begins its centennial recognition at the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, site of the 1st American Legion National Convention, in August 2018. In March 2019, the organization will celebrate its 100th birthday in Paris, and Sept. 16, 2019, will mark the 100th anniversary of the organization's congressional charter.

If authorized by Congress, coins minted would be issued only during the one-year-period beginning on Jan. 1, 2019

American Legion Legislative Division staff members are now working with congressional offices on bill language. Commemorative coin bills require a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and Senate.

Please ask our Florida Congressman and Senators to sign on as a co-sponsor and vote for legislation for the U.S. Mint to strike a limited-edition American Legion centennial commemorative coin with proceeds from sale dedicated to the organization's four pillars of service.

**DEPARTMENT CENTENNIAL COINS
AVAILABLE AT CONVENTION!**



Tom Gora
Sgt-at-Arms

"You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greater possessions, our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship".

Over the past year I hope I have served you well as the Department of Florida Seargent-at-Arms, and I thank you for your support and this opportunity to serve. That bolded sentence that opens my article every month is just a part of the charge the Seargent-at-Arms receives at installation, but is also a very important portion to me. How do I help members understand the importance of guarding against the loss of our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship? My main tactic is by providing education, by doing whatever I can to help members understand The American Legion history, our protocols and traditions.

In addition to personal appearances around the state, I write informative articles every month for the Legion Link, provided Sgt.-at-Arms Training at both the Fall Conference and Annual Convention, instructed the American Legion Extension Institute, and served as Chairman of the Florida American Legion College. Through all of this training I have reached 400+ members of The American Legion Family. I enjoy what I do, and have always believed that if you enjoy what you do and have some fun along the way, you will probably do it well. I thank our Commander and my friend, Joe Magee for making this a fun and productive year!

As this year comes to an end, I have never been more concerned as a citizen about our American Flag and the way it is disrespected by so many people. I feel many who disrespect it don't really understand what that flag stands for, what it represents; it is not taught in schools anymore! In the American Legion we have the programs and tools to make a difference in flag education! Use Americanism and all the educational materials to get out into our schools and communities to provide flag education! Members of The American Legion can and do make an impact in our communities, and I would urge all to get out there and promote respect for Old Glory by effective education and proper display of the American Flag! We talk about recruiting membership all the time and public promotion of the American Flag

VISIT YOUR TAG OFFICE RIDE WITH PRIDE





(Sgt-at-Arms Continued)

in our communities IS an effective recruiting tool!
Enjoy the words below, author unknown.

I Am The Flag

*I am the flag of the United States of America.
My name is Old Glory.*

*I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.
I stand watch in America's halls of justice.*

*I fly majestically over institutions of learning.
I stand guard with power in the world.*

*Look up and see me.
I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice.
I stand for freedom.*

I am confident. I am arrogant. I am proud.

*When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head
is a little higher, my colors a little truer.*

*I bow to no one! I am recognized all over the
world.*

*I am worshipped - I am saluted.
I am loved - I am revered. I am respected - and I
am feared.*

*I have fought in every battle of every war for more
than 200 years.*

*I was there. I led my troop.
I was dirty, battle worn and tired, but my soldiers
cheered me and I was proud.*

*I have been burned, torn and trampled on the
streets of countries I have helped set free.*

*It does not hurt, for I am invincible.
I have been soiled upon, burned, torn and
trampled on the streets of my country.*

*And when it's by those whom I've served in battle-
it hurts.
But I shall overcome - for I am strong.*

*I have slipped the bonds of Earth and stood watch
over the uncharted frontiers of space from my
vantage point on the moon.*

*I have borne silent witness to all of America's
finest hours.
But my finest hours are yet to come.*

*When I am torn into strips and used as bandages
for my wounded comrades on the battlefield,
When I am flown at half-mast to honor my soldier,
Or when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving
parent at the grave of their fallen son or daughter,
I am proud.*

**MY NAME IS OLD GLORY
LONG MAY I WAVE.**



Steve Newman
Chaplain

Hello, and a final greeting for my Legionnaires and your families and friends. It's hard to believe that my tenure has passed but as I have said many times before, I know whoever takes my position as Department Chaplain will do a wonderful job. I believe and feel in my heart you will support the next Chaplain as you have supported me over the past four years. Its bittersweet knowing this is my final month. I often wonder where the time has gone, it seems to pass by so quickly. It's been a wonderful blessing to serve you all to the best of my ability.

Through the years, I have had a great opportunity to meet so many wonderful Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Legion Rider members, your families, and friends. God has truly blessed me and my wife Adriana who, without her support and love none of this would have been possible.

Remember with God's love and grace you will meet your future endeavors and challenges with ease. With him everything can be possible. Have faith and believe, you will surprise yourself. As everyone knows life will always be full of surprises. Meet your challenges head on with God, as He is your strength and pillar. Remember always that God is the answer for everyday life and struggles.

So, with those few thoughts in mind I bid you a final farewell and God's blessings. May God be with you always.



Larry Sheets
Judge Advocate

I have attended a few Post meetings and find that most of them do not make a proper Finance Report at their general membership meetings. I have seen Finance Reports scribbled on tablet paper, and the membership not provided a copy. I even attended one meeting where the Finance

(Judge Advocate Continued)
report was given orally.

I would remind all Posts that the **Department Constitution Article X, paragraph 21** states the following:

Each Post shall make reports to the membership of the Post at least once a month, concerning the status of all financial activities and all facilities of the Post. Such report shall include, but is not limited to total income, cost of sales, expenses, accounts receivable, accounts payable, inventory, a profit and loss statement, any agreement concerning use of facilities and any other information necessary to provide the membership with sufficient information to make decisions concerning these activities and facilities.

Please take heed of the above and start making correct and informational Finance Reports, the Post membership deserve to know what is going on with their Post Finances.

I received a call from a Post Commander who said nobody wanted to serve as Commander of the Post, nor would anyone accept a nomination to do so. The **Department Constitution, Article X, paragraph 12** states:

The local Post shall be officered by the following officers who will be elected annually by the Post: Post Commander, Post Vice Commanders (as many as may be required, Post Finance Officer, Post Sergeant-at-Arms, Post Historian Post Chaplain. If a Post fails to elect the above officers they are putting their Post Charter in jeopardy. If the Post Charter should be suspended, the Post will be closed for the length of the suspension, and the club room or the Lounge will be closed as well.

You need to consider the ramifications of your actions.

DON'T FORGET TO VISIT EMBLEM SALES
Located in Headquarters Room Sabal

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- Patriotic Merchandise
- Legion Family Merchandise

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www.floridalegion.org/feedback





Jerry Brandt
Membership Chair



Sid Damsgard
Central Area Commander



John W Rose
Northern Area Commander

It has been great Serving as Your Membership Chairman for the Past 2 Years. We need to stay strong in our efforts to assist our fellow veterans, our community and children and keep the United States of America strong.

As a reminder, we need to work smarter at membership, this time of year we need to start planning for next year.

When we do an Open House, or any other event, we currently do the following items for planning:

1. What are we serving?
2. Who is cooking?
3. Is there a Band?
4. What time is the Celebration starting?

What we don't think of is:

1. What program is the funds going to? (Boys State, C&Y, shipping of packages to our troops, ETC.)
2. Who is contacting the local newspaper or radio station to advertise the event?
3. Who is setting up the Membership Table? (Ensure Auxiliary and S.A.L. are included)

Now is the time to start thinking on this. Ensure that the whole Family is included in these events. Ensure that local sources can add this to the newspapers, Facebook, etc. with not only the information on the event but the reason for the event.

A few events that you should be currently planning for is the following:

- ◊ July 4th, Independence Day
- ◊ August 4th, U.S. Coast Guard Day
- ◊ September 2nd, VJ Day, WWII
- ◊ September 4th, Labor Day
- ◊ September 11th Remembrance
- ◊ September 15th, POW/MIA Recognition Day
- ◊ September 16th, American Legion Day

In regards to recognition, check out the Department of Florida Award Manual, there are awards available. Please go to www.legion.org and check out the "National Commander Charles E. Schmidt 2017 Membership Incentive Pin". This is for any Legionnaires who recruited 1 new member or 3 new members this year. Let me know if there is anything I can do to assist.

As we approach the end of the 2016-2017 year I want to thank the Central Area commanders for their hard work. It has been a long time since we have had this much success in membership. Commanders Anthony, Allen and Sloat, job well done. We have been near the top or at the top all year. Our organization depends on dedicated leaders such as yourselves to keep the light in the window, letting those know who we are and why we are here.

To the next Commander, good luck in the upcoming year. My only wish is that the District Commanders let the chain of command work. This experience has taught me that most issues encountered within the Districts are brought directly to Department and do not use the Area Commanders. This being the case, I wonder if this level of command is necessary.

Although we call ourselves an organization we are a large business in need of streamlining. Area Commanders should not be just someone to only attend fund raisers and Area Balls but someone who has the knowledge to assist when problems arise.

Maybe I was lucky and every Post in the area had no issues which is remarkable considering the diversity of our members.

My prayers go out to District 7 Commander Steve (Tony) Anthony and wish him a speedy recovery. Tony has served the Legion for many years and we hope he is able to come back to us very soon.



"Last Man Club" is this summer movie season's MUST SEE film. The award winning film is available beginning May 23rd via Video OnDemand, iTunes, and Cable/Satellite.

www.thelastmanclub.com

Congratulations to all of you for the hard work you have done.

A special thank you to those who have made the 100% Membership Goal

3rd District

Post 83 MacClenny 105.263%
Post 215 Jasper 100.00%
Post 322 Lake City 100.00%

4th District

Post 210 Ocala 153.333%
Post 166 Homosassa 129.091
Post 237 Beverly Hills 126.772
Post 236 Williston 104.80%
Post 149 Newberry 100.00%

5th District

Post 372 Jacksonville 158.904%
Post 202 Keystone Heights 111.644%
Post 197 Jacksonville 102.963%
Post 250 Middleburg 101.461%
Post 129 Jacksonville Beach 101.133%
Post 9 Jacksonville 100.962%
Post 102 Hastings 100.00%
Post 401 Hilliard 100.00%

17th District

Post 187 Deland 108.696
Post 45 Palatka 103.431%
Post 259 DeBary/Orange City 101.111%
Post 380 Daytona Beach 100.00%

Convention is coming up which is a good time to have members receive training. Remember to complete all the end of the year reports as this is how we provide the data to National Headquarters so our National Commander can let Congress know all we do.

Again, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support this year.





Fred Matthews
5th District Commander

April and May marked the beginning of the end for the 2016-2017 Legion year in programs and membership for the 5th District.

Legacy and Boots on the Ground Rides for charity marked the activities under taken by Chapters 233, 401, 88 and 9 of the Legion Riders. Always there to make these events a success were District Chapter Director Rusty Crowdus, Area Director Jim Wineland and Virna Keener who always captures the events on camera.

Post 197 completed celebration of its 70th Anniversary in April with a proclamation from the Mayor of Jacksonville, Lenny Curry and visitation by NECA of North Carolina Patricia Alston-Harris. It was during this month that Post 197 topped 100% in membership for the year.

Election results by the second week in May show that a third of the Posts in the 5th District have chosen new Commanders and officers for the coming year. Post 88, 37, 197, 137, 129, 244, 194, and 202 will all have new Commanders for the 2017-2018 Legion year.

Delegates to the 5th District Constitutional Conference elected new officers for coming year: Commander- Troy Horsley, Vice Commanders- Danny Rodriguez and Roy Havekost.

5th District Commander of the year award was presented to the Commander of Post 372 Myra Jowers. The work of this husband (Carl- Adjutant) and wife (Myra-Commander) duo resulted in a 158% increase in membership, participation in Boys State, fundraising efforts that included two car shows, District Committee Chairpersons of Blood Donor and School Medals, District Training and Post revitalization, and establishment of the first ever Auxiliary Unit, all done without a Post Home made them the hands down favorite for this year's award.



5th District Rider Director Rusty Crowdus (center) led the district riders to an all time high in participation.

(5th District Commander Continued)



Legion Rider family of the 5th District poses during a break in the Boots on the Ground fundraiser ride.



Post 372 Commander Myra Jowers received the Commander of the Year award for the revitalization of her Post. At press time, the Post had achieved 158% of its 2016-2017 membership goal.



Department Commander Joe Magee on DCC trail with award winners of the 5th District at Post 137 in Jacksonville.



Sid Damsgard
Children & Youth Chair

Many thanks to Post 117, Palm Bay for hosting this year's Children and Youth picnic. Special thanks to Gene, Bruce, Jim, Dawn and the whole crew; you really know how to throw a party. We managed to raise about \$4500 for COTA, Beads of Courage, and Special Olympics. With more funds coming in we should be able to present the family groups with a sizable check at Convention.

(Children & Youth Chair Continued)

To all sponsors who sent us checks, thank you, if not for your support we would not be able to have such a fun event. I was waterlogged for days from my turn in the dunk tank, I think there was some serious cheating going on but in the end, it was worth it.

There is still plenty of time to hold events to benefit Children and Youth before convention. If we can help in any way please let us know. With the picnic over, I have the time to attend any event if you contact me on the Legion address for Children and Youth. Feel free email the details of your event to me.



Tom Gora
Legion College Chair

Get in on the training and experience, don't be left behind! The more knowledge members have about The American Legion, the more they are able to help make this a better organization, and should also help you as you prepare to advance to District or Department, office if that is something you would like to do.

Completing the American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI), and attending The Florida American Legion College are both great opportunities to learn about the organization and its operations.

The ALEI class will be offered at the Annual Department Convention in June, pre-registration is required and the next Florida American Legion College Class is scheduled for September 7-9, 2017.

These are two great educational opportunities and I hope you take advantage of them! Graduates of the 2017 FALC Class will receive their graduate polo shirts at the Annual Department Convention.

If you won't be there please, ask a member of your Post in attendance to pick up your shirt.

FLORIDA LEGION COLLEGE
September 7-9, 2017





Loretta Young
JROTC/Shooting Sports Chair

We have come to the end of the Legion Year, and it has been very active with the ROTC/JROTC/ Shooting Sports Programs. To wrap up the Year's events, I had the pleasure of attending the Army State Marksmanship Meet that was held at Island Coast HS in Cape Coral. This is an outstanding example of Post participation and District support for our Youth Programs. I must give a special "Thank you" to the 13th District Chairman, Don Teasley on his outstanding performance of having this State Championship being held at the local school in the District and the trophies and awards sponsored by the American Legion. There were 28 teams competing in an all-day event which was held on Saturday, April 22nd in the school's gymnasium. The cadets compete in this event for kneeling, prone and standing position in the "Sporter Category". We were also privileged to have our NEC, Dennis Boland and our 2nd Vice Commander, Dianne Boland who both enjoyed seeing our cadets at their best.

The National Marksmanship Competition Postal Match results are also in and the State of Florida is proud to announce a state winner, Jessica Lee Montcrieff in the "Sporter Category". There are 15 Precision and 15 Sporter finalist that will be competing in the National Tournament to be held in Colorado Springs at the USA Olympic Training Center from July 18-23. During the competition, the participants in both categories will shoot a .177 caliber air rifle in three positions - prone, standing and kneeling. One competitor in each category will win a \$5,000 scholarship provided by the Legion and the Sons of the American Legion. A \$1,000 scholarship is provided by the Auxiliary for the 2nd place winner in each category. The precision and sporter champion will also receive an all-expense paid trip to the American Legion's National Convention in Reno, NV to be honored along with the other Youth Champions. As a National Tournament Staff Member, I will also be at the competition in Colorado Springs to volunteer with our National Representatives to conduct this event and share in a very exciting competition. More information and videos can be found on the National website under Programs.

I would hope that many of our Posts are able to present and attend the various "Year End Awards"

(JROTC/Shooting Sports Chair) at the ceremonies and Military Balls to give honor to our youth who have many outstanding accomplishments throughout the year. Many thanks for all your hard work and I would hope to meet some of you at our State Convention next month. I hope every has a pleasant and safe summer.



Jim Day
American Legion Riders

What a busy past few months! We had great success with the 1st ALR Summit, 2017 ALR Rally, 2017 Florida Legacy Ride and the Merry-go-Round (MGR) for Children and Youth. I want to personally say THANK YOU to all the volunteers that helped whenever and wherever needed. Without your help, there is no way we could keep making these events such a success.

As many of you know our Vice Chairman Manny Ayala has been battling some health issues. Please keep Manny and his family in your thoughts and prayers. Chapter 148 put together a very successful ride and fundraiser with the help of several surrounding Chapters. Thank you to all who could attend and contribute.

The ALR Summit. All I can say is WOW. For our 1st go, I believe it was a huge success. So much so, that we will be doing it again, Jan 17th-21st 2018 at the International Palms in Cocoa Beach, FL. All Legion Family members are welcome to attend and join in the sessions. The entire International Palms has been blocked and we have all the conference rooms reserved. Due to the high attendance in 2017 we will be extending the class sessions and start on Thursday. Wednesday (1/17/18) will be the meet and greet social. Opening ceremony will be Thursday morning followed by Florida ALR Leadership and Instructor meetings. The classes will start after lunch on Thursday and conclude on Saturday evening. Closing ceremony will be Sunday morning. Reminder, if you do not book using the ALR CODE you will be excluded from the breakfast. Booking is open:

American Legion Riders 2018 group. Your group has been assigned the group code of AMR18, please use this code when calling the reservation

(American Legion Riders Chair Continued) office. **The cutoff date for reservations is December 18, 2017.** Please make sure everyone in your group knows that the earlier they call in to reserve their rooms, the better. The number for reservations is **1-800-206-2747**.

ALR Rally: Fabulous job by District 5 and Chapter 283, Arlington. We had a great time on the rides and the food was outstanding. Chapter 283 Arlington sent a large donation to the Commander's charity of choice COTA. Check out the awesome numbers the ALR Rally Committee put together:

- o People from 7 different Districts
- o Representing 19 Posts/Units
- o We received \$4,475.00 in donations from Posts/Units
- o We received \$623.50 in private donations
- Total donation to COTA was \$5,779.

2017 Florida ALR Legacy Ride: We had a great ride this year. It was a smaller group of riders but had fantastic weather and comradery. We collected over \$15,000, rode 1,700+ miles and visited 2 Posts per day. We made it all the way down to Key West and had the opportunity to visit a superb tribute to Vietnam Veterans. We had a great year. Thanks to all the came out and rode, drove and supported.

THE DREADED END OF YEAR REPORTS: Yes, it is that time of year again. The EOY report is up online. This year the form has changed to give more detail as to where Chapter donations, hours and miles are being used for Legion Programs and community projects. Don't fret the form this year. Just fill it out best you can and lump things together if you need to. The important part is to get the numbers reported. If you have questions feel free to contact Jennifer at aladjutant@floridalegionmail.org. Going forward we will need to follow the form and track time and \$\$ for each line item.

<https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/legion-riders/alr-eoy-reporting/>

OFFICER REPORTS: Don't forget with elections and change of leadership the new Director needs to go online and fill out the form: <https://www.floridalegion.org/alr-officer-report/>

Finally, the MGR has concluded and the numbers and \$ are still being reported. The winner will be announced at the Convention end of June. District 1 and District 5 did a lot of riding and fundraising. The friendly competition was great to see all while supporting the Florida American Legion.

Riding For the Cause, Not the Applause.





Eunice Butts
Post Development Chair

It is hard to believe that our Legion year is coming to an end shortly. A lot has been accomplished, but there is still much to be done.

Post 400 members will be available July 1st, 2017, start early utilizing this program and hopefully you can get some paying transfers.

Start having Open House events or Post activities for the community. Start advertising three months in advance by radio, newspaper, flyers, social media, etc.

Special thanks to Jerry Brant for his humbleness in assisting me. Working together as a TEAM revitalizing and saving Posts was a wonderful experience. I will take this time to wish all new Officers and Chairmen within the American Legion Department of Florida to include Area, Districts and Posts, the very best for a successful 2017 - 2018 Year.

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much"

David Miller
POW / MIA Chair

FLORIDA LEGIONNAIRES PLEASE GET INVOLVED IN ALL THE POW-MIA PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES

First of all, I hope everyone had a great Memorial Day as I know our Department Commander Joe did by attending the program at Bushnell VA Cemetery. They put on such a great program, I attend it to honor my Dad who is laid to rest up there.

I hope everyone is keeping the POW/MIA issues on the top of their list of things to do. I will continue to try to get communications to let everyone know

(POW/MIA Chair Continued)

that our Country continues to try to get all former service men and women back to our Country, no matter where they were deployed to. We all need to realize how important these issues are to the family members of these missing comrades in arms. Still, many culvert operations have left many missing all over the world.

You must continue to contact your Congressional representatives and Senators to keep investigations going to bring them all home from ALL wars and conflicts. The National League of Families have their own website to get all the current POW/MIA statistics as well as the DOD website. Hopefully, all your Post homes have a POW/MIA table set up in your main hall or in a visible location for everyone to see. If not, and you need help setting one up, contact me by email or phone and I will help you. You can reach me by email or phone. My home number is in the Department roster, (727-393-0548) home (727-331-1652) cell.

Please imagine if you were captured or missing and think what it would do to your family and loved ones. Sometimes this goes on for days, months, years and decades. We need a full accounting to get them all home. Please get involved at your Post or in your community with a family who has a missing serviceman or woman. I am sure they will welcome any assistance and compassion you can bring to them.

Please keep our POW/MIA program going strong in the Department of Florida, and remember you could be captive or missing somewhere and your family would be devastated. Let us bring all these HEROES home! Hope to see you all at Department Convention!

GOD BLESS OUR MISSING HEROES LET US BRING THEM ALL HOME REMEMBER THEIR FAMILIES ARE WAITING FOR THEM



Gerald Kaufman
Security Commission Chair

We have seen an ever changing year with National Security. Our state and nation faced many challenges and we survived. The Department of Florida has been and will continue to be the center

(Security Commission Chair Continued)

of our organization here in Florida with the flow of information from NEC Dennis Boland and Adjutant Mike McDaniel coming frequently. I have visited many posts throughout the year discussing various aspects of National Security with officers and members and enjoyed the input from all of you.

Our year is coming to an end and I wanted to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU to all of our department officers and everyone that I have met throughout the state. I am running for the High Office of Department Historian and look forward to serving you in that capacity for the coming year. The members of the Florida Legion Family are the best in the Nation. Continue the good work and God Bless.



Roy Havekost
Social Media Chair

This will be my last article for the 2016-2017 term as Social Media Chairman. I have enjoyed this past year as well as the two previous years as chairman. I hope that everyone who attended one of my training classes in the past, walked away with at least a little knowledge and were able to apply it at the Post or District level via social media, in an effort to promote the programs, goals and objectives of the American Legion.

I will be instructing a class, at the Convention, on June 29th at 3:15pm in the Crystal N room. This class will address getting started as a Social Media Chairman and creating or revitalizing your Facebook presence at the Post or District level. Please double check the Convention agenda to confirm the date, time and location.

Social Media awards will be presented on Friday, June 30th during 'Commission and Committee Reports' at the General Session. I would like to personally thank all the Posts/Districts in the Department of Florida who have a presence on Facebook. I would like to see everyone receive an award, but unfortunately that is not possible. So, to those Posts/Districts not receiving an award this year, thank you very much for your continued support and use of Facebook, keep up the good work in the upcoming years.





(Social Media Chair Continued)

Remember, the use of Facebook by the American Legion communicates the goals and objectives to the community we serve. The future of the American Legion rests in getting the word out, and showing the community what we do for veterans. Facebook has become our partner to accomplish this effort.



Alan Cohen
VA&R Chair

(VA&R Chair Continued)

In closing, I'm proud to announce that we've made selections for the small and dedicated committee to fill the Department Chair for Women Veterans so for the first time in quite a while we'll be able to better serve our women veterans. Join me in welcoming aboard Susi Martinez and Joann Hirst.



Larry Roberts
VA Entitlements Chair

As the 2016/2017 VA Entitlement Chairman, it has been a very rewarding and challenging year. Some of the rewarding moments were assisting over 698 veterans and family members with VA, state, and local benefits, helping a couple of veterans with suicidal thoughts and got them help. I assisted homeless veterans in getting off the street, placing them in shelters and got them enrolled into the VA system. I planned and hosted several veteran benefit fairs, hosted a Challenge 22 Event for the 22 veterans that commit suicide every day; the event's purpose was to educate the community on the signs and symptoms of suicide, awareness and how to get them help this year. I also hosted and planned several presentations on why there's a need to help veterans, how to enroll into the VA, how to collect evidence for VA disability claims, PTSD, Agent Orange, State Benefits, and Death Benefits. I had the honor to go Tallahassee and talk to our state representatives about veteran's issues. I also had the honor to escort a Korean War veteran on the freedom flight.

Next year I plan to help even more veterans, I also plan to be more proactive and provide even more presentations to the veterans and their families. If you would like me to come out to your Post and give a presentation on why there's a need to help veterans, how to enroll in the VA, how to collect evidence for a VA Disability Claims, PTSD, Agent Orange, Death benefits and state benefits. Feel free to contact me about any questions. I would also like to challenge 22 Posts to host some type of an event on September 10th, 2017, Suicide Prevention Day. If your Post would like to host a Challenge 22 Event and you need ideas, please contact me.

It was about a year ago that I wrote what was to be my first Legion Link article. I had just taken the reins as Department VA&R Chairman and expressed to my fellow Legionnaires what an honor it was for me to have been chosen for this position. Thinking at that time that I would wade into unknown water, I quickly learned that between our seasoned VAVS volunteer representatives, Service Officers and Department Officers I was mistaken. I was pushed into the deep end of the pool immediately and am glad I was. My greatest hope at the beginning and even now is that I've lived up to the trust and hope that was placed in me. It's my wish to continue to do so for as long as I'm given the privilege to.

There are many people that comprise our team. Every volunteer at every medical facility and nursing home, our dedicated Post Service Officers and the list goes on. Together we've accomplished much this past year. Veterans who are hospitalized now have access to telephone calling cards so they can keep in touch with loved ones. We've engineered generous donations of motorized scooters to fellow veterans who need them, conducted stand-downs to help those veterans who've fallen on hard times to give them the sense of dignity they so rightly deserve and our Service Officers work with veterans and their families with the result being a positive impact on their lives.

Far from being last on the list is that our own David Miller, VAVS volunteer at the Bay Pines VA Hospital was chosen out of a field of over 500 national candidates as the NAC male volunteer of the year. It's often said that our Service Officers are our Unsung Heroes. While that's true, the quiet heroes are also all our VAVS volunteers. One such individual is James "Jim" Tewes, who volunteers at the Broward Outpatient Clinic. A multi-year Legion member and District Judge Advocate, Jim is at the clinic come rain or shine and helps run a concession stand as well as always being available to whatever clinic needs help any way they need it. As if that's not enough, you never know where he's going to show up anywhere in the county to volunteer his services at a veteran or other military-oriented event. Thanks for all you do, Jim.



Bob Brewster
Youth Law Cadet Chair

I am writing this article on May 13, 2017. At this time, we have 14 cadets confirmed and 1 more possible. By June 1st, I hope we will be above 15 cadets. This is 4 times the number of cadets who went through the program last year. Again, I am posting my home phone number 904-272-1619 and my cell phone number 904-635-4492 for those of you who have cadets attending this year's program. Make sure they have these numbers.

I hope to have the opportunity to speak about this program at the June Convention in Orlando, Florida. The value of this program is to get our youth to understand that all of the men and women who work as police officers, deputies, troopers, etc. are someone else's family members. They are down to earth people who have chosen their line of work because they wish to help people every day of their lives. Because of this program, I myself have met vast members of these offices, and I want to tell you that they have opened my eyes as to what they endure every day. I could not do their job.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the Convention this year.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 904-272-1619 (home), 904-635-4492 (cell), or email: brewsterrobert@bellsouth.net.

TICKETS ARE SELLING OUT FAST

2017 DEPT CONVENTION
COMMANDER'S BANQUET
floridalegion.org/tickets



2017-2018 Dept Candidates

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Stephen Shuga

1ST VICE COMMANDER

Dianne Boland

2ND VICE COMMANDER

William Rick Johnson

3RD VICE COMMANDER

Eunice Butts
Jerry Brandt

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Andrew Burkett
Tom Gora

CHAPLAIN

Barry Roberts
Bill Reno
Willie W. Branch Jr.

HISTORIAN

Andrew Nagy
Gerald A. Kaufman
Jesse Figueroa

AREA COMMANDERS

CENTRAL AREA COMMANDER

Randall McNabb

EASTERN AREA COMMANDER

Daryl Bass Sr.

NORTHERN AREA COMMANDER

Lawson Dukes
Jeff Durden

SOUTHERN AREA COMMANDER

James F. Tewes

SOUTH WESTERN AREA COMMANDER

Dennis Walsh

WESTERN AREA COMMANDER

James Brennan

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

1ST DISTRICT COMMANDER

Raymond "Chuck" Olsen

4TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Victoria Van Buren

5TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Troy Horsley

6TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Michael Seidel

7TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

David Tucker

8TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Patricia Stiles
Jerry Faught

9TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Donald P. Schwiesow

12TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Bruce W. Thurber

13TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Rodney Hollingsworth
Michael "Gambler" Raymond

15TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Luther "Jay" Allen

16TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

John D. Sloat
Raymond A. Perez
Benjamin Droweinga Jr

17TH DISTRICT COMMANDER

Michael Wolohan

These are the candidates with endorsements on file with the Department of Florida as of 5/23/2017.

COMING SOON

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

AMERICAN LEGION

DEPT OF FLORIDA



< FRONT OF COIN



< BACK OF COIN

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT **CENTENNIAL COIN**

Visit emblem sales and pick up this special limited edition coin, commemorating 100 years of The American Legion.

Coins are available in three variations:

Standard

Our standard coin is 2" in diameter, polished silver and gold nickel **\$12**

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Our one troy ounce .999 silver coin is 1.5" in diameter, with a mirrored finish and includes an airtight capsule for safe keeping. **\$50**

.999 Silver with Gold Overlay

Our one troy ounce .999 silver with gold overlay coin is 1.5" in diameter, with a mirrored finish and includes an airtight capsule for safe keeping. **\$60**

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Get your limited edition pin at our emblem sales, commemorating 100 years of The American Legion.

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Our pin is 1.5", polished and textured gold-tone over nickel with a butterfly clasp. **\$5**

*The coin and pin shown above are representations of the actual coin(s).

Visit Emblem Sales or our website at www.floridalegion.org to view the actual coin(s) in full color.

FLORIDALEGION.ORG

AVAILABLE ONLINE

PROJECT: VETRELIEF



NEXT ADVOCATE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY - don't miss out!

During The American Legion, Department of Florida Annual Convention, we will be holding the next round of Advocate Training classes. The Convention will be June 29th-July 2nd and at the Marriott's Orlando World Center. We would love to have you join us and become a part of the PROJECT: VetRelief Team!

Class space is limited, so be sure to register ahead of time. Both courses will be in the **Atlanta/Boston** Room of the Convention area.

- Thursday, June 29th: 1:00 – 2:00 PM
- Friday, June 30th: 4:30 – 5:30 PM
(Class times are subject to change)

REGISTRATION LINK:

<http://www.projectvetrelief.org/classregistration/>

Calling all trained Advocates - We need your help to answer questions, spark the interest of the Legion Family, and pass out marketing materials at the PROJECT: VetRelief booth in the vendor area. We will need volunteers for both Friday and Saturday. Let Jennifer Cooper know if this is something you'd like to do, as we'd love to have your help!

We look forward to seeing you all there!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Thank you to all Posts and Squadrons that met the deadline and made a donation to help support Florida's veterans, active duty military, and their immediate family members through our PVR Challange.

Below are the results through May 22, 2017. The final numbers will be announced during Conventon:

LEGION

32 Posts participated by donating \$21,891

SONS

19 Squadrons participated by donating \$5,671

CHALLENGE TOTAL: \$27,562.00

If your Post or Squadron missed the deadline to submit your donation, there will be an opportunity for you to turn them in during the Department Convention this month. Be sure to bring your donations to Friday's General Session and listen for the PROJECT: VetRelief Donation Call.

Any Posts or Squadrons who plan to turn in a donation during the Convention, will receive a certificate in the mail following Convention.

	Year 2 (July 2015-June 2016)	Year 3 (July 2016-Apr 2017)
Number of Families	57	89
Amount Given	\$37,812.34	\$75,441.04

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **4th Annual RL James Charity Golf Tournament**

When: Friday, September 8, 2017



Where: Tranquilo Golf Club at Four Seasons Resort Orlando

Time: Registration - 7:00AM
Shotgun - 8:30AM

Host: RL James General Contractor

The event is put on by the PROJECT: VetRelief Board Vice President, Bob James. We would love to see the Legion Family join us for a day filled with fun and prizes, while raising money to support our service members!

Stay tuned for more information on how to participate and learn about the **new** sponsorship opportunities!



- **2nd Annual ALR Coral Head Music Fest**

When: Saturday, February 17, 2018



Where: Marathon, FL

Time: 11:00AM - 11:00PM

Host: Legion Riders Chapter 154

The Legion Riders Chapter 154 has chosen PROJECT: VetRelief to be the main charity of choice again this year and have set a goal to **double** their donation from last year.

Let's help them achieve that goal - Tickets and sponsorship opportunites are already available for sale. This is one event you will not want to miss, so start planning now!

For more information visit our website: www.ProjectVetRelief.org

PROJECT: VET RELIEF

Thank you to the following Posts and Squadrons for participating during this year's Challenge!



CHALLENGE CENTRAL

CHALLENGE CENTRAL

	POST	DIST	AREA	LOCATION	GOAL	AMT DONATED	% OF GOAL
SAL	15	148	CENTRAL	Riverview	142	\$1,000	704%
	29	14	SOUTHERN	Miami	456	\$3,000	658%
	309	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Palmetto	340	\$2,000	588%
	67	14	SOUTHERN	North Miami	179	\$1,000	559%
	308	9	SOUTHERN	Hollywood	22	\$100	455%
	5	15	CENTRAL	Tampa	124	\$500	403%
SAL	283	5	NORTHERN	Jacksonville	249	\$1,000	402%
	158	16	CENTRAL	Treasure Island	292	\$1,000	342%
	125	16	CENTRAL	Gulfport	456	\$1,500	329%
	221	1	WESTERN	Niceville	333	\$1,000	300%
SAL	102	5	NORTHERN	Hastings	18	\$50	278%
	392	1	WESTERN	Panama City	74	\$200	270%
	382	1	WESTERN	Navarre	406	\$1,000	246%
SAL	117	12	EASTERN	Palm Bay	196	\$476	243%
	199	11	SOUTHERN	West Palm Beach	86	\$200	233%
	6	17	NORTHERN	Deland	440	\$1,000	227%
	131	3	NORTHERN	Greenville	22	\$50	227%
	284	4	NORTHERN	Belleview	440	\$1,000	227%
	378	1	WESTERN	Gulf Breeze	111	\$252	227%
	310	9	SOUTHERN	Hallandale	58	\$118	203%
	170	9	SOUTHERN	Coconut Creek	54	\$108	200%
	159	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Venice	286	\$500	175%
	59	3	NORTHERN	Branford	41	\$70	171%
SAL	57	3	NORTHERN	Lake City	728	\$1,121	154%
	158	16	CENTRAL	Treasure Island	137	\$200	146%
SAL	238	16	CENTRAL	Safety Harbor	188	\$250	133%
	47	11	SOUTHERN	Lake Worth	228	\$300	132%
SAL	340	1	WESTERN	Pensacola	799	\$1,000	125%
	7	16	CENTRAL	Clearwater	161	\$200	124%
SAL	25	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Lake Placid	123	\$150	122%
	224	3	NORTHERN	Cherry Lake	102	\$123	121%
SAL	283	5	NORTHERN	Arlington	838	\$1,000	119%
	92	9	SOUTHERN	Hollywood	254	\$300	118%
SAL	7	16	CENTRAL	Clearwater	865	\$1,000	116%
	321	9	SOUTHERN	Cooper City	131	\$150	115%
SAL	133	14	SOUTHERN	Palmetto Bay	273	\$300	110%
	54	5	NORTHERN	Fernandina Beach	92	\$100	109%
SAL	113	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Rotonda West	209	\$225	108%
	275	16	CENTRAL	Dunedin	334	\$350	105%
SAL	375	1	WESTERN	Southport	134	\$140	104%
	356	1	WESTERN	Lynn Haven	83	\$85	102%
SAL	259	17	NORTHERN	Debary/Orange City	90	\$91	101%
	81	12	EASTERN	Melbourne	119	\$120	101%
SAL	243	6	EASTERN	Oviedo	155	\$156	101%
	142	9	SOUTHERN	Pompano Beach	516	\$516	100%
SAL	385	9	SOUTHERN	Pembroke Pines	233	\$233	100%
	278	15	CENTRAL	Brandon	103	\$103	100%
SAL	24	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Bradenton	141	141	100%
	80	6	EASTERN	St. Cloud	101	\$101	100%
SAL	79	16	CENTRAL	New Port Richey	284	\$283	100%
	273	16	CENTRAL	Madeira Beach	4083	\$1,500	37%
SAL	69	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Avon Park	712	\$250	35%

*The Chart reflects donations turned in between July 1, 2016 and May 22, 2017

JUN
30
CANARY 3-4



DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

-JOIN US-
2017
**COMMANDER
& PRESIDENT**

BANQUET

menu

Fresh Greens Salad
Irish Potato Salad
Guinness Buttermilk
Fried Chicken
Braised Short Rib
Sheppard's Pie
Butter Braised Cabbage
Honey Glazed Carrots
Assorted Rolls & Bread
Various Desserts

*Menu is subject to change.

COCKTAILS: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
BANQUET: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

PURCHASE ONLINE
www.floridalegion.org

Join us, June 30, 2017, Department Convention at the World Marriott Center.

Yes, I would like to attend the Commander's & President's Banquet!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

of Tickets: _____ X \$40 each = Total Due \$ _____

Payment Type: Check Money Order Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Yes, I authorize my card to be charged for the total amount above.

Credit Card #: _____

Expiration: _____ CVV: _____ Signature: _____

*Tickets will be available for pickup during Convention located in the Headquarters Office.
Please mail to: The American Legion, Department of Florida, Attention: Event Coordinator, P.O. Box 547859; Orlando, FL 32854*

ONLY A FEW TICKETS LEFT!!!

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DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT
"CRYSTAL JI"



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE LEGION FAMILY:



DEPARTMENT
OF FLORIDA

* Free beer and refreshments while supplies last.

JUN
29
7:00-8:30PM

FREE*
BEER
LIGHT*
REFRESHMENT

LIVE
MUSIC BY
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2017

The American Legion Department of Florida 100% Target Report

16	John Sloat	97.67%
14	Gary Decker	97.33%
15	Jay Allen	96.84%
1	Raymond Olsen	96.78%
12	Bruce Thurber	96.78%
5	Fred Matthews	96.39%
6	Daryl Bass	96.07%
7	Stephen Anthony	94.49%
2	James Brennan	93.85%
3	Frederick Hutto	93.70%
8	Dennis Walsh	93.54%
13	Chuck Weinberg	93.30%
17	Paul Alexander	92.88%
9	Donald Schwiesow	90.69%
11	Robert Miller	90.58%
4	Victoria VanBuren	90.42%
Central	Sidney Damsgard	96.89%
Eastern	Felix Ayala	96.38%
Western	Jimmy Martin	96.24%
Northern	John Rose	94.03%
Southwestern	Andrew Burkett	93.41%
Southern	Joseph Motes	92.59%

as of 05/26/2017

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- We send you money – even if you don't have cancer

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