



10TH DISTRICT AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026



DISTRICT 10 COMMANDERS MESSAGE

Greetings 10th District,

Winter is fully upon our area. The freezing temperatures and dangerous road conditions can be so life threatening so please stay safe and use caution. Look out for one another.

As we concluded mid-winter conference and the important training and comradery in gathering together to learn ,prepare, and continue the good works in our posts and communities I am reminded that foundations and uniting together strengthens us and the pillars we dedicate our time to are a worthy endeavor of our time.

We have our **District Oratorical Contest on February 7th** where our youth gather together. There will also be a **DEC Meeting** in the same location as well that morning at **10:00 AM** to discuss mid-winter and our upcoming Spring Conference. There is a zoom Option.

We have much to prepare for in the coming months to ensure that our post reports are turned in by April 1st. This year's **spring conference is April 25th, 2026** - letters will be going out soon with pre-registration and ads. It is so important to give our hosting post advanced numbers so they can in turn create a memorable conference.

Gratitude and appreciation have been heavy on my mind. I wanted to make a request of the 10th District in your posts. Mother's Day is coming up, many of us were shaped by the women in our lives, the first Auxiliary was formed before we became an American Legion November 10 this is so close to Veterans Day. Many of our posts would not run as efficiently or as well without not only the support of our families, but the tireless hands and hearts that our Auxiliaries Units provide. Often in my travels to each area, not only have I seen the tradition and dedication of our legionnaires, but the Auxiliary do so much to ensure we have successful events and are dedicated to serve their communities as well. **I would ask that on May 9th, 2026**, the day before Mother's Day, that we invite them and serve them an Auxiliary Appreciation Dinner in your local posts. To honor those that have spent countless hours serving our posts and the events. The role the Auxiliary plays is important in a family. May we take the time to see these wonderful people that step up and step in with helping hearts and hands. Please take pictures and send them in to preserve the memories of expressing our gratitude to our Auxiliary. Set a standard and an example.

The Buddy Checks are alive and well and thank you to those that have reached and just asked are you doing, okay? , and how are things going to myself and others. Thank you for meeting the challenge issued by our Department of Wisconsin American Legion Membership leader Gerald Hook and our beloved Wisconsin Department Commander Nathan Bond to reach out and check on one another.

As the 10th District Commander, I want to express to you what an honor and a privilege it is to serve you in the 10th District. Your dedication, humor and individual talents collected together is a strength to forge on in the coming year and whatever challenges that may come. Let us not forget why we do what we do.

May hope fill you and purpose drive you; God Bless and keep you until we gather together again.

Felicia M Decker 10th District Commander

Email: fmdeckerlives2@gmail.com

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2026 MEMBERSHIP DUES? Legion Family Memberships expired on December 31, 2025





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DISTRICT 10 AUXILIARY PRESIDENT'S

I hope that everyone had a lovely Christmas and a wonderful start to the new year! As 2026 begins, so also begins a HUGE birthday party for our country! We will Celebrate 250 years of this Constitutional Republic—this experiment that so many other countries of that time thought could not stand the test of time. We have proved them wrong, and this July will be the biggest and best Celebrate250! Have you begun plans at your post? It's not too late—you have 5 months to plan! Let us know what you are doing to Celebrate250!

We just came back from our Mid-Winter Conference in Green Bay, where we had several workshops, including working together as the American Legion Family, Public Relations (which includes using Social Media), and Reporting. I also picked up some information on preventing veteran suicide, which we all know has become an epidemic—and one that I am certain we all want to see squashed. I will be looking at ways to bring more awareness of veteran suicide to the Tenth District before we lose another veteran to this tragedy.

As you are reading this newsletter, we are planning a Reporting Workshop to be held here in the Tenth District. I know some of you are thinking “Ugh, I hate reporting, I do not understand why we need to do this, it is so cumbersome, I don't care/don't want anything for what we do, etc, etc. Okay, I get it. Reporting can be difficult if you wait until the last minute and then try to recreate your activities. With the knowledge that you will learn during this workshop, we are hoping that we can bring that stress level down to the point that you will no longer despise your duty to report on the activities in which you participate. This does not only apply to the president or the program chair—but also to each individual member. Therefore, we want to fill the room with ALL members! Look for more information on this workshop in the near future! At this time, we are looking at doing this workshop in February, so that it will give everyone the information needed so that the Tenth District can have 100% Reporting! Yes, I know we can accomplish this! (I will let you in on a secret—100% Reporting does not mean participating in 100% of the programs. What it does mean is that you REPORT on every program, even if it means you say you did not do anything in that program. It will take only a few minutes of your time to do that—and we will show you how to do it easily online, if you wish! So watch your email and/or postal mail for the information on this workshop!

Upcoming events include the **Tenth District Oratorical Contest on February 7th** hosted by the Cumberland American Legion Post beginning at 1 pm (recommend that you arrive by noon so you are seated and ready to listen to these young orators). Did you know that the Oratorical Contest is open to the public? This is a wonderful, little discussed opportunity for our High School students to earn fantastic scholarships amounting to \$20,000 or more if they place in the top three at National. The students who participate in the Oratorical Contest represent our next leaders. We should encourage them to participate in the future—but let us also encourage the students who have prepared for this year's competition by attending the Tenth District Contest. I hope to see a large crowd to cheer for and encourage the winner from the Tenth District!

Also, on the horizon is our **Spring Conference, which will be held in Bloomer, on April 25th**. The American Legion Family in Bloomer is busy making plans for a successful Spring Conference and the information for that Conference will be going out to you soon. April 25th is also American Legion Family Day, and American Legion Posts across the nation are encouraged to open their doors to members of the community to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of the American Legion family, and to bring awareness to the “Be the One” initiative to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. Because our Spring Conference is on that same day, we need to be creative in our approach. Perhaps have yours on Friday, April 24th or Sunday, April 26th. Let us know when and how you celebrate American Legion Family Day!

For God and Country,
Teresa Steinke, President, Tenth District,
American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin
Email: teresa.steinke_cmx@yahoo.com
Phone: 715-828-7462



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DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE CHAIRPERSON – MARY TOWNSEND

The Department of Wisconsin Legislative Chairman Becky Mueller has issued a Legislative 250 Challenge. The challenge is for all Districts to report how many elected officials they have contacted from October 2025 to June 2026.

With the goal of reaching 250 by the end of the “Challenge”. The districts with the most contacts will be acknowledged at State Convention. The first quarter (Oct.- Dec.) the 10th District reported 125 contacts. The 250 Challenge is to bring awareness to any pending legislature that could impact the military or veterans. Also to be in contact with elected officials concerning important matters from the local to national levels.

What is a considered a contact to an elected official?

Legion Action Alerts – I Alert completed = 1 contact

Written letters

Emails sent

Phone calls

Online surveys

Town halls

Office visits

***Always be respectful when contacting an elected official.**

Report the number of contacts made:

Keep a personal log of the number of contacts you made from January – March. Report these numbers by April 10th to your unit or County President. You can also send your contact numbers directly to me. Include your Unit name/number.

I have included an attachment on Legion Grassroots Action Alerts.

If you have any questions about the Legislative Program, please contact me at (715) 234-5155 or getmet77@hotmail.com

Mary Townsend – 10th District ALA Legislative Chair

DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIRPERSON – MARY TOWNSEND

Public Relations is the perceived reputation from within and without of an organization.

Internal public relations is an important link to your local Legion Family. How you interact with unit members, the Legion Post members and SAL & Legion Riders members is very important. Do you provide useful information, and communicate with all members of your local Legion Family? We should value and show appreciation to all members and keep them informed. Each member is a PR tool and can be used to promote Legion Family values. How to maintain a great Internal PR with Legion Family? Develop a newsletter, group text messages, special meetings to give updates, have a two-way flow of information. A well-informed member is a happy member!

External Public Relations is how the community views your local Legion Family. Do they know you exist and bring value to the community? Let your communities know who you are and why you are relevant.

Your members are a great external PR tool, as they share about the great things the Legion Family

Is doing! Here are ways to promote good external PR:

- Newspaper articles, “humbly brag”
- Social media – posting about events
- Proudly wear your Legion Family branding
- Contact other civic groups, work with them on a special event to show unity
- Highlight your veterans of the Post – share their stories with the community
- Be known for purposes and promote programs

Practice good internal and external public relations to elevate your local Legion Family!!

For more information about PR, please contact me at:

Mary Townsend getmet77@hotmail.com or (715) 234-5155



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SERVICE TO VETERANS

The weather right now brings to mind the song “Baby It's Cold Outside”. As I am writing this, the wind is really howling out there; and this weekend, it sounds like it is going to be brutal wind chills! I am thankful that we are blessed to have warm houses to protect us from the treacherous elements, and pray that anyone who does need to be outside will be able to bundle up adequately to stay safe. Weather like this does make me pause, though, and take stock of the fact that many of us are not as blessed—even people who we may know. Please take the time to check on each other! Make sure those whom you know, whether it be close friend or a new acquaintance, are also safe, warm and with food in their kitchen.

The Community Cupboard, Augusta's food pantry, was open last night—and I saw many cars parked outside the building, each one waiting their turn to go inside and receive some much-needed food to help supplement what they are able to provide to their families. I think of others, like our homeless neighbors, especially our homeless veterans, who need shelter—a bed, clothing, a hot meal and most of all dignity, as they navigate the situation in which they currently find themselves. This is an area that is so near and dear to my heart; because, as my husband, Ken Piel, asked his fellow veterans when he founded Helping Hands for Veterans: “What does a homeless veteran look like?” Then he would hold up a small mirror, and ask them to each look at themselves in that mirror; while they did this, he would say, “But by the grace of God, this is what a homeless veteran looks like.” Ken was right! Except by the grace and blessings of God, we could all be in situations beyond our control. This is one of the reasons that American Legion Auxiliary, along with the rest of the American Legion family, have programs to address these situations. For our veterans who are in need, we have our Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) program. As the Department Chair of the Service to Veterans program, which is a program under VA&R, I would like to share this information with you. The statistics are staggering.

- America's homeless veterans have served in every war since World War II.
- About 1.4 million other veterans are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.
- Nearly half of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. Two-thirds served our country for at least three years, and one-third were stationed in a war zone.

The American Legion provides many resources online to assist its members in locating help for homeless veterans they encounter. Some of the resources are available at <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans>

The Mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is: In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve, by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security. As we consider our mission, let us work together to accomplish these goals, especially those concerning the health and welfare of our veterans! Along with accomplishing those goals, we also need to report those accomplishments! We will have more on how to do that elsewhere in this newsletter!

Teresa Steinke, Chairman

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DISTRICT CHILDREN & YOUTH – MAGARET LARSON GOOD DEED AWARD

Teen workers, Acacia Kunkel, Bella Rose, Anna Rose, Freya Fenstermacher, Ireland Meyer, Lainey Dombrovski, Tori Manikowski, Ruth Eby and Leda Hedin saved a Restaurant (Urban, Olive and Vine) in Hudson, WI while the owner spent months in the hospital with his wife. These teens not only rallied to save the Cafe, but its owner as well. Both Chad Trainor and his wife built their business with teen employees. On September 28, 2024, Carol Trainor collapsed on the floor and had a grand mal seizure. She spent the next eight months in the hospital in a coma with Chad by her side. Not once did Chad ask these teens to do anything extra. They just did it! The teens essentially ran the place. They were opening the Cafe in the mornings, ordering supplies, managing finances, training each other, came up with daily specials, and kept Carol's plants alive. They were covering things that needed to be covered - till Carol came back. Carol did not come back! She died in May, 2025.

Below is a picture of Acacia, Bella and Ruthie being presented with their "Good Deed" awards, and Children & Youth Chairmen Margaret Larson. The other six awards were mailed, as we could not get them all together at one time.



WOLF PACK CHARITIES DONATES TO CAMERON AUXILIARY

Wolf Pack Charities has shown its spirit of giving with a monetary donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 194 of Cameron. Its generous gift was used for the purchase of special Auxiliary cemetery emblems honoring the members from Unit 194.

The auxiliary shares its genuine appreciation to Kim and Brian Claudnic of Wolf Pack Charities for their support to this project. The auxiliary also commends Greg Hillgart for the donation of a handmade flag wall hanging.



Pictured left to right Mary Javner Unit 194
Kim Claudnic from Wolf Pack Charities
Patti Becker from Unit 194



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CANDIDATE FOR DEPARTMENT COMMANDER ANNOUNCEMENT



Hello Mighty 10th District,

My name is Larry Larson, Department Vice Commander and Past 10th District Commander. I am running for Department Commander and humbly ask for your support. I am retired from the US Army and am a 27 year Paid up for Life Legion member. I have held several positions at Post, District and Department level.

When I joined The American Legion, I found a purpose. Something I had been searching for. An opportunity to serve something greater than myself. An opportunity to help Veterans and their families. An opportunity to ensure they get the same benefit from The American Legion as I have received. As an instructor for the Wisconsin American Legion College, I get to witness firsthand the excitement and enthusiasm about what they have just learned and can take back to their Post and put it to use. That same enthusiasm is what I will deliver for you.

Larry Larson

10TH DISTRICT SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION REPORT

"I am very proud of my Squadrons and the communication that I have been getting the past 6 months. I have had 100% reporting, with 17 Squadrons." I'm hopeful to get all Squadrons posting activities on the 10th District S.A.L. Facebook page very soon.

Squadron Commander Rick Talford reported at The Legion Mid-Winter on activities and events in the 10th District by our amazing Sons of the American Legion as follows:

Squadrons have assisted with Funeral services, honor guards, Bingo, raffles, Community Meals, Veterans Day, Flag Day and Memorial Day activities, Holiday parades, Indoor fishing contests, Chicken Fry's, Fish Fry's, pancake breakfast, attend Legion Meetings. Donations to local food pantries, Camp Victory, backpack program, and Santa visits.

Rick A Talford
10th District S.A.L. Commander

AUXILIARY DISTRICT CHAPLAIN PRAYER

Fellow members of the American Legion Family:

This organization has been successful because of our diverse background. I am employed as a nurse. My spouse works for the University of Eau Claire. Everyone enlisted regardless of branch, belief or background takes the same enlistment oath. Each veteran has been trained and evaluated to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America.

With the many difficulties facing our nation and the world, I appeal to our members and ask the Lord to grant us guidance. We were founded on four pillars and we are a family. May we remember that the American Legion was built upon a foundation that has transcended through the years.

Help us to remember that we represent the Red, White, and Blue in this great nation. Like all families, we won't always agree, but we are stronger together. Dear Lord, please guide us in our thoughts and actions.

For God and Country,

Jeanne Flaskrud
10th District Auxiliary Chaplain



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NOTE – THERE WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL NEWSLETTER SENT AROUND FEBRUARY 10TH WITH INFORMATION ON THE DISTRICT ORATORICAL CONTEST AND EVENTS TO BE HELD IN MARCH AND APRIL

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 7, 2026	Legion 10 th District DEC meeting 10:00am at the Cumberland Legion Post
February 7, 2026	10 th District Oratorical Contest at the Cumberland Legion Post. Contest starts at 1:00 – Contestants and Volunteers please arrive by noon.
February 13, 2026	Fish Fry – Boyd American Legion 135 Clark Street in Boyd WI
March 13, 2026	Fish Fry – Boyd American Legion 135 Clark Street in Boyd WI
March 21, 2026	10 th District American Legion Riders Chili Cookoff – at 710 Pearl St, Prescott WI 54021 – more details in the Additional February Newsletter to be sent February 10, 2026
March 28, 2026	Vietnam Veterans Day – Horizon’s Event Center Tilden – more details in the Additional February Newsletter to be sent February 10, 2026
April 17-18, 2026	FREE Women Veterans Retreat at Camp Saint Croix - more details in the Additional February Newsletter to be sent February 10, 2026

Next Newsletter will be April 2026 – Deadline for articles and pictures will be March 30, 2026

To submit articles and events for the 10th District Family Newsletter send to: Teresa Isensee tisensee2173@gmail.com