



Promoting our Mission
by working our Programs
Department of Minnesota

**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
2025-2026
Department President
Robin Dorf
February 2026 Unit Mailing**

State Veterans Service Bldg. 20 W 12th St #314
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-224-7634 Email: deptoffice@mnala.org
Website: www.mnala.org

**“Many people will walk in and out of your life but
only true friends leave footprints in your heart.” — *Eleanor Roosevelt***

As we enter the month of friendships and love I feel so blessed to have so many friends in the American Legion Family. One of the privileges of representing Minnesota is meeting so many wonderful giving members.

Membership is so important for our organization. Our membership chairman Kollette Kaehlert is doing a wonderful job working the program. It truly takes a village, and our milestones happen with all members, and both unit and district membership chairman.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We need 85% by March 1st. This will give us some grace period to be eligible for the Department Merit Medallion at National Convention. This award focuses on recognizing and celebrating departments that strive for and achieve business management excellence. Minnesota is working hard to achieve this with the help of many members behind the scenes. I will share more information but PLEASE we need to focus on the first step of 85% membership.

I hope you took the time to attend your district midwinter conference this year, and you were inspired and excited to continue working our programs. Our department theme this year, Promoting our Mission by Working our Programs, was front and center in each district. As always, make sure to share what you learned with your unit members.

I put a challenge out on social media to end 2025 with twenty-five new donations to any one of our American Legion Auxiliary Department of MN programs. We had sixteen members take the challenge and donated a total of \$1,750.00!

Have you signed up for the 2025-2026 annual reporting information zoom meetings? On Monday, February 9th and Tuesday, February 10th at 7pm we will be focusing on the unit level reporting. Both evenings will be the same information so you can pick the night that works for your schedule. Thursday, March 19th at 7pm will be for district chairman. Email department secretary Christie at christie@mnala.org to receive the link.

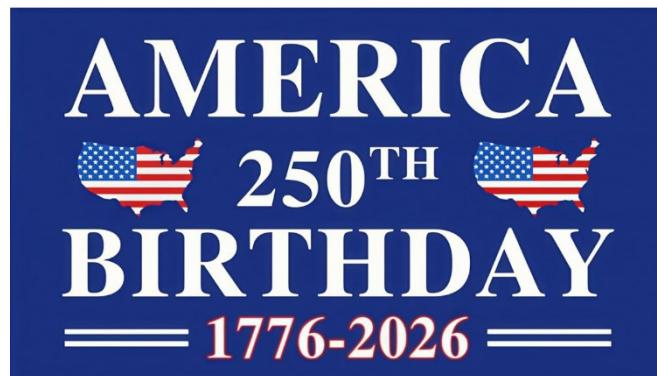
Thank you to the district chairman who have hosted a Poppy Palooza in their district. We have some incredibly talented chairman who have made these special for our members to attend. Has your district

planned one yet? It is not too late! Need help planning contact department chairman Hope or your fellow district poppy chairman. It would be great to see each district participate.

Scholarship time is now! Make sure to check the scholarship information on our department and national websites. Each scholarship has its own requirements and due dates. Please emphasize that they read the requirements and follow all rules to qualify.

February is Americanism month. Make sure to read Americanism chairman Tamara Thayer's article in this month's unit mailing for more information.

SAVE THE DATE
National President Pam Ray
July 2-5, 2026
More information on her schedule
but make plans to see her in
the Forest Lake 4th of July Parade



Flyer will be in the next unit mailing.

**American Legion Family
Department of MN Leadership
Testimonial**

Saturday, June 27, 2026
5pm Social ~ 6pm Dinner ~ 7pm Program ~ Band until 10pm

Thank you for your continued support of the Minnesota President's Project. I know we can make the goal of \$35,000.00 to help our Minnesota veterans participate in an Honor Flight. A reminder to send your donation to the department office with Presidents Project in the memo line. We can only count donations through the department office.

The American Legion Family Appreciation Rally is Saturday, March 14th in Bloomington. Go to the American Legion website to get your tickets. The Department Executive Committee will be meeting in the morning prior to the lunch.





Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Americanism Chairman, Tamara Thayer
tlthayer@gmail.com

Top Reasons to Enter the American Legion Auxiliary Essay Contest in 2026

Why Students Should Participate and What They Can Gain

Introduction

The American Legion Auxiliary Essay Contest is a prestigious annual event that encourages students to reflect on patriotic themes, civic responsibility, and community service. Thousands of students (grades 3 to 12) participate annually exploring the fundamental rights and freedoms we enjoy today. As the 2026 contest approaches, students may wonder what makes this opportunity worthwhile. Below are some compelling reasons to consider entering the contest this year.

1. Recognition

Winning or placing in the contest brings public recognition, certificates, and sometimes opportunities to be featured in publications or at ceremonies. This acknowledgment can boost self-confidence and enhance resumes or college applications. Many American Legion Auxiliary essay contests offer small monetary awards to winners at the local unit, state, and national levels. District 3 has added competition at the district level for the third time with additional prizes. At the national level a winner in each class will receive \$50 and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund. Most units put a picture of the winners in the newspaper and recognize them with a certificate. While the prizes may vary, the prestigious winners all have something to be proud of to add to their portfolio for future job applications or college applications.

2. Personal Growth and Skill Development

Writing an essay for the contest helps develop critical thinking, research, and communication skills. Participants learn to organize their thoughts, articulate their ideas clearly, and express themselves persuasively—valuable abilities for academic and professional success.

3. Civic Engagement and Patriotism

The contest encourages students to explore topics related to patriotism, Americanism, American values, history, military support, and civic duty. The topic or theme is chosen by the national Americanism Program Chairman each year. By participating, students deepen their understanding of national heritage and the importance of contributing positively to their communities.

4. Networking and Community Connections

Engaging in the contest connects students with local American Legion Auxiliary members and fellow participants. This network can provide mentorship, future volunteer opportunities, future involvement in other auxiliary sponsored youth activities, and lasting friendships.

5. Encouraging Service and Leadership

The American Legion Auxiliary emphasizes service to others and leadership in the community. The essay contest aligns with these values, inspiring students to think about how they can make a difference and develop leadership skills.

6. Opportunity to Share Your Voice

The contest gives students a platform to share their perspectives on meaningful issues. It's a chance to be heard and to inspire others through thoughtful writing.

Conclusion

Participating in the American Legion Auxiliary Essay Contest is more than just a writing exercise—it's an opportunity for personal development, recognition, and meaningful engagement with patriotic and civic themes. Students who choose to enter can gain invaluable skills, support, and confidence for their future endeavors.

I encourage all auxiliary members to reach out to youth in local schools, homeschooled, youth groups, etc to find participants for this year's contest. This year's theme is:

“Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday and the Veterans Who Fought for Our Freedom.” This year’s theme encourages youth to reflect on the significance of America’s 250th birthday and the sacrifices made by veterans who have fought for the nation’s freedom.

Tamara Thayer, Department Americanism Chairman

Seasonal Depression, or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons — SAD begins and ends at about the same times every year. If you're like most people with SAD, your symptoms start in the fall and continue into the winter months, sapping your energy and making you feel moody. These symptoms often resolve during the spring and summer months. Less often, SAD causes depression in the spring or early summer and resolves during the fall or winter months.

Don't brush off that yearly feeling as simply a case of the "winter blues" or a seasonal funk that you have to tough out on your own. Take steps to keep your mood and motivation steady throughout the year.

The worst months are typically: January and February, when daylight is at its lowest, though symptoms often start building in November and can linger into early spring. These winter months mark the peak severity for many, with symptoms improving as days lengthen in spring.

Common Symptoms

- Feeling listless, sad or down most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Low energy or fatigue.
- Oversleeping or difficulty sleeping.
- Increased appetite, especially for carbs, leading to weight gain.
- Irritability or restlessness.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Thoughts of death or suicide (seek immediate help).

Causes & Risk Factors

- **Reduced Sunlight:** Less sunlight affects serotonin levels and melatonin (sleep hormone).
- **Biological Clock:** Changes in daylight can disrupt your internal body clock (circadian rhythm).
- **Location:** More common in areas farther from the equator with shorter winter days.
- **Demographics:** More prevalent in women and younger adults.

Treatments & Self-Care

- **Light Therapy (Phototherapy):** Using a special light box.
- **Psychotherapy (Talk Therapy):** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective.
- **Medication:** Antidepressants may be prescribed.
- **Lifestyle:** Get regular exercise, maintain consistent sleep, go outdoors, and eat well.

When to Seek Help

- Don't dismiss it as "winter blues"; symptoms are overwhelming and disrupt daily life.
- ***If experiencing suicidal thoughts, call or text 988 in the US and Canada.***
- Contact a doctor or mental health professional for diagnosis and treatment.

Seasonal changes and bipolar disorder

People who have bipolar disorder are at increased risk of seasonal affective disorder. In some people with bipolar disorder, episodes of mania may be linked to a specific season. For example, spring and summer can bring on symptoms of mania or a less intense form of mania (hypomania), anxiety, agitation and irritability. They may also experience depression during the fall and winter months.

When to see a doctor

It's normal to have some days when you feel down. But if you feel down for days at a time and you can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, see your health care provider. This is especially important if your sleep patterns and appetite have changed, you turn to alcohol for comfort or relaxation, or you feel hopeless or think about suicide.



CHAPLAIN / MEMORIAL

Marsha Bible – Department Chaplain
5602 West Oakes Drive – St. Cloud, MN 56303
(320) 492-8977 marsha.bible@gmail.com

FEBRUARY, 2026

The Four Chaplains



February 3rd will mark the 83rd anniversary of the sinking of the United States Army Transport Dorchester and the legendary acts of selflessness of four Army chaplains who were aboard. Many people will celebrate this day on Sunday, February 1st. Four Chaplains Day honors the four chaplains who went down with their ship, as they gave their life jackets to other passengers. On Feb. 3, 1943, the United States Army Transport Dorchester – a converted luxury liner – was crossing the North Atlantic, transporting more than 900 troops to an American base in Greenland. Aboard the ship were four chaplains of different faiths: Reverend George Fox (Methodist), Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John Washington (Roman Catholic).

Around 12:55 a.m., a German U-boat fired a torpedo that struck Dorchester's starboard side, below the water line and near the engine room. The explosion instantly killed 100 men and knocked out power and radio communication with Dorchester's three escort ships. Within 20 chaplains spread out, comforting the wounded and directing others to safety. One survivor, Private William Bednar, later said, "I could hear men crying, pleading, and praying. I could also hear the chaplains' preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going." Another survivor, John Ladd, watched the chaplains' distribute life jackets, and when they ran out, they removed theirs and gave them to four young men. "It was the finest thing I have seen, or hope to see, this side of heaven," he recalled. As Dorchester sank, the chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying.

SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE
From "Grace for the Moment" by Max Lucado

Want to see a miracle! Plant a word of love heart deep in a person's life. Nurture it with a smile and a prayer, and watch what happens.

An employee gets a compliment. A wife receives a bouquet of flowers. A cake is baked and carried next door. A widow is hugged. A gas station attendant is honored. A preacher is praised.

Sowing seeds of peace is like sowing beans. You don't know why it works; you just know it does. Seeds are planted, and topsoils of hurt are shoved away.

Don't forget the principle. Never underestimate the power of a seed.

Plant goodness, harvest the fruit of loyalty, plow the new ground of knowledge.

This poem is in honor of our longtime members who have left this earth and continue to be missed every day....

MISS ME ~ BUT LET ME GO
Author Unknown

When I come to the end of the road
And the Sun has set for me
I want no nights in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free
Miss Me a Little – But Not Too Long
And without your head bowed low
Remember the love that we once shared
Miss Me – But Let Me Go.

For this is a journey that we all must take
And each must go alone
It's all a part of the Master's Plan
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick at heart
Go to the friends we know
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds
Miss Me – But Let Me Go.

Submitted by Margee Keller, Crookston Unit #20

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA
2025-2026 UNIT DECEASED MEMBER LISTING**

UNIT NUMBER

LOCATION _____

DISTRICT NUMBER _____

Send 1 copy to Department Chaplain & 1 copy to District Chairman



Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Children & Youth Chairman, Sandy Wersal
sandywersal@gmail.com

Created in 2002 by the National Children and Youth Committee, were two awards that can be presented throughout the American Legion Auxiliary year to recognize the heroism and leadership in community service of youth of high school age or younger. Thousands of Youth Hero and Good Deed awards have been presented to deserving since its inception.

I am asking units of Minnesota, if you know of a deserving youth, to nominate them for these awards.

There is what you need to know to put in for an award. Go to the National website at ALAforveterans.org, under the How to serve tab, go to the Youth Hero/Good Deed Award and fill out the information to be considered for an award. Not all nominations will get an award.

What you need to fill in is full name of the youth. Youths age and address. Date of deed and description of deed proffered. Submitted by ALA unit number, ALA Department of Minnesota.

ALA member name and membership number of the member filling out the form. Email and phone and address to ship award too. Your unit would set up a time to present award to the youth, great public relations for the unit and department, take pictures. Get approval of parents to post pictures.

Good Deed Award criteria:

Project demonstrates leadership in community service by planning, organizing, and executing a service project.

Project must be initiated by the youth being nominated.

American Legion Family membership is not a criterion for consideration.

Winners receive a certificate.

Youth Hero Award:

Demonstrates a physical act of valor.

Serves as an inspirational role model for the organization and the community,

Winners receive a medal and a certificate.

Questions or need help give me a call at 320-310-9417.



Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Community Service Chairman,
Tamara Martin
tamaramartin@gmail.com

Community Service Update – Continuing the Work Together

A new year gives us a chance to refocus, but our Community Service work never really pauses. The needs of veterans, families, and our communities continue through every season, and the work being done by our members—both seen and unseen—matters more than ever.

Community Service isn't about big projects alone. It's about showing up, staying consistent, and doing what we can with the time we have. Every card written, every donation made, every hour volunteered makes someone's day a little easier—and that impact reaches further than we often realize.

Community Service Projects to Continue

- Supporting local food shelves and meal programs as winter needs increase
- Veteran outreach through cards, visits, phone calls, and wellness check-ins
- Collecting and distributing winter items such as coats, hats, mittens, and socks
- Assisting veterans and seniors with winter challenges when possible
- Partnering with schools, shelters, and youth programs for seasonal drives
- Tracking volunteer hours and donations for Community Service reporting

Members are encouraged to take part at whatever level works for them. Whether it's an hour, an afternoon, or simply spreading the word, every effort counts.

American Legion Family Day – Local Post & Unit Planning

American Legion Family Day is organized at the individual Post and Unit level, giving each location the flexibility to design an event that fits their community. Family Day is a chance to strengthen connections, welcome new faces, and show what the American Legion Family is all about.

Planning ideas to consider:

- Selecting a date and location that works best for your Post or Unit
- Coordinating with Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Junior members
- Planning activities that are welcoming to all ages
- Including a simple service project that benefits veterans or the local community
- Organizing food, refreshments, or a potluck-style meal
- Assigning small committees to share responsibilities

Why Community Service Matters

Community Service is the heart of the Auxiliary's mission. It builds trust, creates connection, and reminds veterans and families that they are not alone. It also strengthens our own bonds as members, giving purpose to what we do together.

No act of service is too small. When many people do a little, the results are powerful. Your involvement—however big or small—helps carry forward the Auxiliary's promise of service, support, and compassion.

Thank you for continuing to serve, to care, and to make a difference in your community every single day.



**Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
MN American Legion Auxiliary
Girls State Chairman, Wanda Prescher**

Your Girls State Committee continues working on preparing for the upcoming 79th Session of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, June 14-19, 2026 at Bethel University in Arden Hills, MN

Please note that the week is arriving on Sunday and **leaving on Friday**. This is due to Juneteenth falling on Friday. The capital will be closed to us. Students will be going to the capitol on Thursday instead, leaving Friday am.

The following has been sent to all high schools, new Girls State Video, Brochure, Flyer and Letter.

Unit Presidents and Secretaries and District Chairman have received as well. All info was sent January 19th. You can also look at our department website mnala.org for the information if needed.

Unit Girls State Chairman should be calling schools and talking to your councilor's, set up a date for your presentation with the video, brochure, flyer that went out to all high schools. Unit Presidents and Secretaries and District Chairman will also have the same info if you need help.

Recruiting and sending in your money for sponsoring your citizen is what is needed right now. We are hoping to see the attendance be closer to 300 which would get us back to pre-Covid numbers.

Charitable Gambling Funds may be used for the reservation fee only. If used, please make checks payable to: **American Legion Auxiliary Foundation**.

Looking for younger ladies to join us as a Junior Councilor to be paired with a seasoned councilor for the week. We will be looking for help Sunday, June 14th with Registration, Shirt Shack and Button Making and during the week helping with Snack Night for the citizens. A good way to see what goes on at Girls State! Please let us know if you would be interested in helping!

Again, Thank You to our members and Units who have donated to the Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary Girls State All-Stars to date, the committee is so appreciative of your support!

Please call or email if you have questions and how we can help you.

Wanda Prescher: Chairman	507-254-0304	w.prescher1951@gmail.com
Peggy Tesdahl: Director	612-715-4889	ranpegt0814@hotmail.com
Amelia Tesdahl: Education	763-269-1212	ametes2014@hotmail.com
Renee Suess: Committee Member	763-300-2226	rseuss3@gamil.com
Jen Stolz: Committee Member	763-234-1198	jstolzde@gmail.com
Linda Kelly: Americanism	507-421-8270	lkkauxiliary@gmail.com



American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State

The 79th session of American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State will be held June 14-19, 2026, at Bethel University in Arden Hills. The ALA MN Girls State citizens will arrive on Sunday and leave on Friday morning before noon.

The school mailing to principals was emailed in January. The schools are aware that units will be contacting them to set up an appointment to meet with potential candidates from the Junior High School class to attend the 2026 ALA MN Girls State session. ***Please read all the information we have provided so that you are aware of the eligibility and qualifications required.***

- ❖ ***2026 eligibility updated to include MN ALA junior members living out of state and meeting all other criteria.***

There is no limit to the number of girls a Unit may sponsor to ALA Minnesota Girls State.

The registration fee remains at \$350 per citizen for the 2026 session. If there are no high schools in your community, please consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring a girl(s) from the Junior class in a neighboring community.

What can your Unit do to raise funds to send a girl to Minnesota Girls State? Here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ Units may hold different types of fundraising events
- ✓ **Charitable Gambling funds** may be used for the reservation fee only.
If gambling funds used make checks payable to: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
- ✓ Donations can be received from local businesses and/or community organizations.
- ✓ Their checks need to be made out to your Unit and then your Unit sends a check to the Department office for the reservation fee.
- ✓ Ask your American Legion Post or Sons of The American Legion Squadron to sponsor a girl or girls by writing a check to the American Legion Auxiliary.

A resolution, passed at the 2011 Department Convention, states that monies sent to the Department Office for reservations not used to sponsor a girl to ALA Minnesota Girls State would be placed into a Girls State Reservation Fee Fund. This fund is available for any unit to use ***one time every 3 years on a first come-first serve basis.*** If your Unit has a girl who is interested in attending and you do not have enough funds to reserve a place for her, consider applying to the Department Office in writing to request these funds.

All reservations are due by **March 31st** accompanied by your check. Once your Unit has submitted your reservation and payment of \$350.00 per girl, you will be sent Campwise registration information including your citizen's logon information. This information will be emailed to the name listed on the Reservation Form.

Please remember there are NO late arrivals and NO early dismissals. The 2026 Girls State session begins promptly at 3:00 pm on Sunday, June 14th and ends on Friday morning June 19, 2026. Citizens should start to arrive about noon. This will give them enough time to settle in and have lunch prior to the opening session.

All attendees must be registered by **May 1, 2026**. Our contract with Bethel University requires that we commit to a final number of reservations for citizens and staff on that date, so the deadline is very important.

The ALA Minnesota Girls State Committee has been working diligently to ensure that our citizens have a truly memorable week at ALA Minnesota Girls State. We look forward to welcoming a participant representing your unit and community.

Please refer to the Auxiliary web page at mnala.org for forms and other information about Girls State.

If you have questions, feel free to contact any of the members of the Department Girls State Committee. We are here to assist you!

Wanda Prescher, Girls State Chairman

Peggy Tesdahl, Girls State Director

Amelia Tesdahl, Girls State Education Director

Renee Suess, Girls State Committee Member

Jennifer Stolz, Girls State Committee Member

Wanda Prescher – Department Girls State Chairman
Cell: 507-254-0304 Email: w.prescher1951@gmail.com

Peggy Tesdahl – Girls State Director
Cell: 612-175-4489 Email: ranpegt0814@hotmail.com



American Legion Auxiliary

Minnesota Girls State

20 W 12th St #314, St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-224-7634

Email – deptoffice@mnala.org

APPLICATION FOR RESERVATION – PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE

Return by MARCH 31st to:

American Legion Auxiliary - Department of Minnesota State
Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th St. - Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155

Unit Number _____ Unit Location (city) _____ District _____

1. How many girls is your Unit sponsoring to Girls State? _____
2. Name of the High School(s) you are sponsoring a girl(s) from _____
3. Amount of reservation check enclosed _____ (\$350.00 per girl)

NOTE: Checks should be made payable to: ALA Dept. of MN unless you are using gambling funds.

Checks from Gambling Funds should be made payable to: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation

Please note: There are no restrictions limiting the number of girls a Unit may sponsor to Girls State from the same high school. Consider sponsorship of a citizen from outside your Unit/area. Check Home Schools, Charter and Private Schools.

Upon receipt of your Unit's reservation fee(s), your space will be reserved for this year's session and your Unit will receive an information packet and the forms needed to register **each** Girls State citizen you are sponsoring.

Information of Unit Member the citizen packet(s) should be sent to:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Position in Unit: _____

Email: _____

AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY
Minnesota
Girls State

20 W 12th St #314, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-224-7634
Email – deptoffice@mnala.org

“What is the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State?” “What will these young women be experiencing during that week?” We hope the following information will answer some of your questions.

American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State is a program for young women who have just completed their junior year of high school. American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State is a week-long experience of learning about Minnesota government at the local, county and state levels by their participation in the process. It is a week of intensive study and involvement. The participants will organize and participate in the various levels and branches of government. Every girl will hold a government office or will become a member of the House or Senate.

Each girl is a citizen of a city, a county, and the state as well as a member of a political party. The week begins with instruction in city government, electing city officials and organizing their city government. Next is the county, followed by the state level. At each level, the citizens learn the election process and then actually elect, organize and carry on the business of government. They participate in precinct caucuses through state conventions to learn the political process.

Highlights of the week include campaigning, elections, Inauguration of the ALA MN Girls State Governor and State Constitutional Officers, debating bills in legislative sessions held in the House and Senate Chambers, and conducting Mock Trials in the Judicial Center at the Minnesota State Capitol in St Paul.

Unlike a summer or recreational camp, American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State is a week of studying and learning by involvement. Included in this mailing is a schedule of a typical day's activities so you may see the type of program that is promoted and the pace expected of the citizens.

The citizens also have the opportunity for group living. For many, it will be their first exposure to dormitory living, sharing a room and/or bath facilities and limited access to a telephone. Meals are served in the University cafeteria. This week is a good preview of college dorm life.

The citizens have both an opportunity and a responsibility. The opportunity is participating in a program of government with some 200 other young women from throughout Minnesota. The responsibility is to learn as much as they can about government and sharing their gained knowledge and experience with their school and their community when they return home.

If you have any questions concerning the American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State program, please contact your local American Legion Auxiliary Unit or contact us at the address above.

We look forward to having a representative from your school participate in Minnesota Girls State
June 14-19, 2026.

Wanda Prescher
Girls State Chairman

Peggy Tesdahl
Girls State Director

Amelia Tesdahl
Girls State Educational Director

Renee Seuss
Girls State Committee

Jen Stolz
Girls State Committee

Reach out!



Contact your local
American Legion Auxiliary
to sign up!

For more details contact
the Department Office at
651-224-7634

Girls State is made
possible with
the help of our
Committee:

Wanda Prescher - Chairman

Peggy Tesdahl - Director

Amelia Tesdahl - Education Director

Renee Suess - Committee Member

Jennifer Stolz - Committee Member

See you this summer!



 **AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY**
Minnesota
Girls State

79th ANNUAL

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE

What is it?

ALA Minnesota Girls State is a diverse group of young women who share a common desire to learn. From small towns to urban areas, the citizens' diverse backgrounds add spirit to the program. The purposes of the ALA Minnesota Girls State program is to provide Americanism and good citizenship training, and to inform our participants about the duties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of government as practiced in a democratic society.



ALA Minnesota Girls State "Citizens" study the Minnesota city, county, and state governmental processes. Citizens are divided into two fictional political parties gaining knowledge of the operations of a two-party system. They formulate their cities electing the officials and then proceed to elect county and state government officials.

Activities include political party campaigning, caucusing, debating, and voting. Parliamentary procedures are also used in the processes. We are proud to feature a variety of speakers during the week. Past speakers have included: Mayor of White Bear Lake Jo Emerson, Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall, State Auditor Julie Blaha, Secretary of State Steve Simon, and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, as well as Gold Star families, veterans, and first generation Americans.

Requirements

- ★ She must have completed her junior year of high school in a Minnesota public, charter, home school, parochial or private school or be a resident of Minnesota and have at least one more semester remaining prior to graduation
- ★ She must demonstrate an interest in American government and have a high scholastic rank. She must have high moral character with strong leadership abilities
- ★ She must be a citizen of the U.S. or have legal residency
- ★ She must have no marital status (National ALA Mandate)
- ★ She must not have attended any other ALA Girls State session
- ★ She must be physically healthy and able to live independently
- ★ She must respect the American flag and be willing to pledge allegiance to it



June 14th to June 19th
at Bethel University in
St. Paul, MN

Objectives

To develop leadership and pride as American citizens, to educate citizens about our system of government, to instill a greater understanding of Americanism, and to stimulate a desire to maintain our democratic government processes



ATTEND MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE 2026

"Girls State was one of the best weeks of my life! I highly recommend any Junior interested to apply!" -Kate O.



**APPLY FOR A
SPONSORSHIP TO
ATTEND!**

Complete the attached
form and return to the
Post or contact us!

WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

Candidate must be in her junior year. She must be attending a Minnesota public, charter, home school, parochial or private school or be a resident of Minnesota.

BENEFITS OF ATTENDING:

Attending Girls State is not only an excellent learning opportunity; it's an impressive accomplishment that looks great on a resume. Those who attend leave with life-long skills in leadership & self confidence. Are you up for the challenge?

WHEN:

The Minnesota program will be **June 14-19, 2026** at the Bethel University campus in Arden Hills, MN. You must be able to be present the entire duration.

Deadline for applications is February 28

**The American Legion Auxiliary
MINNESOTA GIRLS STATE 2026**

CANDIDATE APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St Zip: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Alternate Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent/Guardian Primary Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian E-Mail: _____

High School: _____

High School Activities: _____

Other Activities: _____

Leadership/Service Activities: _____

Attach a short essay explaining why you are interested in participating in Girls State. Your statement can include how you can contribute to or what you hope to gain from the experience. This essay will have significant impact on your possible selection to participate in Girls State.



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2026
Department Junior Conference**

The 62nd Annual Junior Conference of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota is hereby called to be held at the Stewartville American Legion Post 164 1100 2nd Ave NW Stewartville, MN 55976 at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 11th for the purpose of:.

1. Presentation and judging of awards
2. Reports from the District Honorary Junior Presidents
3. Election of Department Honorary Junior Officers
4. Other business for the good of the Junior Auxiliary

Conference Schedule

All events will be held at the Stewartville American Legion Post 164 1100 2nd Ave NW Stewartville, MN

Registration	Friday, April 10 th 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Saturday, April 11 th 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Advisory Committee Meeting (See below for who attends)	Friday, April 10 th 7:30 p.m.
Processional Practice a.m. Senior Advisor/Senior	Saturday, April 11th 8:00
Judges Meeting Saturday, April 12th 8:00 a.m. (All Senior members are requested to attend)	
Conference Call to Order	Saturday, April 11th 9:00 a.m.

The Advisory Committee is comprised of the Department Junior Activities Chairman, Honorary Department Junior President, Secretary, First Vice President, Second Vice President, District Junior Presidents, and District Junior Activities Chairmen. Also included are the Department Junior Conference Parliamentarian and Senior Secretary.

Processional - Each district is encouraged to bring their District Colors. Per the Standing Rules, Junior Color bearers should wear navy skirt or navy slacks and white blouses or appropriate attire.

Conference Location

The Department Junior Conference will be held at the Stewartville American Legion Post 164. The conference is hosted by the 1st District. Housing information for the Junior Conference is attached to this Call to Conference.

Registration Fee

The registration fee for the Department Junior Conference is \$15.00 per person and should be paid when you arrive at the Stewartville American Legion check in for the Conference. To prepay please send your check along with your registration form. Checks should be made payable to Tenth District American Legion Auxiliary.



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Delegates

Each organized group shall be represented by two delegates with two votes at the Department Junior Conference, plus one additional delegate for each fifteen members or major fraction thereof. (Standing Rules) Delegate strength is determined 30 days prior to Department Junior Conference.

Junior Membership	Number of Delegates
1-7	2 delegates
8-22	3 delegates
23-37	4 delegates
38-52	5 delegates
53-67	6 delegates
68-82	7 delegates
83-97	8 delegates
98-120	9 delegates

Only Junior Members will be allowed to speak on the Conference floor. Please remember that Senior members are advisors only and this is the Juniors Conference. Juniors will be seated by District with one advisor per District. If space allows one advisor per Unit may also sit with the Juniors. The District Junior Activities Chairman will be the Senior Advisor for her District if she is present.

Eligibility to hold office (Standing Rules)

1. No officer shall succeed herself in the same office.
2. Any Junior officer must be classified as a junior member the year she holds office.

Endorsements

Endorsements for Department Honorary Junior Officers shall be sent to the Department Office as soon as possible. The Department Office will send them to the District Junior Activities Chairmen, District Honorary Junior Presidents, Department Honorary Junior President, and the Department Junior Activities Chairmen prior to the Department Junior Conference (Standing Rules).

Endorsements should state the candidate's name, age, district, offices held in the Unit and District and years of membership.

Send endorsements to: American Legion Auxiliary
State Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th Street- Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155
or email to deptoffice@mnala.org



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2026
Department Junior Conference**

Friday Evening Activities

On Friday evening, April 10th a fun evening is planned for the Juniors beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Anoka American Legion. The 1st District is busy planning so that the Juniors can make new friends, rekindle friendships they already have, and have lots of fun together. Food and beverages will be provided for Friday evening and is included in the registration fee. Food will be served from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This will be a fun time for everyone. Registration begins at 6:00 p.m. and the Advisory Committee's meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Department Honorary Junior President's Project

Department Honorary Junior President Anastasia and the Juniors of Minnesota's project this year is raising funds to repair the plumbing for the cabins at Legionville.

Completed forms needed:

Please complete the enclosed forms and return them as noted on each form. It is important that attendees register (both Junior and Senior members) including their names, addresses, phone numbers and email address.

1. Pre-registration form (in duplicate) so that our Department Honorary Junior President can make tentative committee appointments prior to the Conference. Due date is Friday, March 13, 2026.
2. A Media Release Consent Form must be completed for each Junior member and signed by their parent or guardian.
3. The registration form for the local committee indicating the number attending from your Unit is also attached. This helps the local committee to plan supplies for activities and food that is needed. Deadline for registration is Friday, March 13, 2026.
4. The registration fee for the conference is \$15.00 per person and will need to be prepaid or at the conference when you arrive. Checks should be made payable to 1st District American Legion Auxiliary.

Any questions regarding the Department Junior Conference please contact me at 763-843-0875 or brandichristensen21@gmail.com

**Brandi Christensen
Department Junior Activities Chairman**



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2026
Department Junior Conference**

Poppy Contests

It is the responsibility of the District Junior Activities Chairman to see that all District entries are brought to the Department Conference.

- There is no limit to the number of entries per Unit for the contests
- Only one entry per Junior per contest
- All entries must include a large or small, or a combination of the Poppies.
- All white tags must be removed from the Poppies
- All entries must be at the Department Junior Conference by 9:00am on Saturday, April 11th 2025, for judging.

All entries must have a sealed envelope attached with the contest name and class number on the envelope.

Inside of the envelope must have the Juniors name, Unit number, location, and District number on a card inside

Classes for each contest

Class I	Ages 6 years and under
Class II	Ages 7 - 12 years
Class III	Ages 13 - 18 years

Awards

1st Place	\$10 cash award for each class
2nd Place	\$5 cash award for each class

Small Poppy Table Display

To the Junior member in each class with the best Small Size Poppy Table Display using Honorary Department Junior President Anastasia's theme "***Be the SUN in Veterans Lives***" using the Sunflower

Poppy Corsage/Boutonniere Contest

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy corsage or boutonniere using Honorary Department Junior President Anastasia's theme "***Be the SUN in Veterans Lives***" Her symbol is the Sunflower.

Poppy Memorial Day Wreath

To the Junior member in each class with the best Poppy Memorial Day Wreath with the poppy as the focus of the wreath.



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2026
Department Junior Conference**

MEDIA RELEASE CONSENT FORM

1. I, the undersigned, hereby authorize American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota to photograph me, take motion pictures of me, take video footage of me and/or make electronic sound recordings of me (herein referred to as photographic or electronic reproductions) as well as use my name and likeness.
2. I authorize the use of any such photographic or electronic reproductions and my name and likeness for any purpose, including, but not limited to, educational and other public media as may be deemed appropriate by the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota. I understand that I may be identifiable from such photographic or electronic reproductions for non-profit public purposes.
3. I understand that I will not be compensated financially for such uses.

Print Name _____

Title _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

PARENTAL CONSENT

I certify that I am the parent and/or guardian of the individual above, a minor under the age of eighteen years. I hereby agree to assume legal responsibility for his/her authorization referred to in this General Media Release.

Signature of Applicant's Parent/Guardian

Date

Address of Parent/Guardian (if different)

Cell Phone Number

City, State, Zip Code

Email Address

American Legion Auxiliary Department of Minnesota

State Veterans Service Bldg. - 20 W. 12th St. Suite #314 – St. Paul, MN 55155 | P: (651) 224-7634 | F: ((651) 224-5243 | (888) 217-9598
deptoffice@mnala.org | Website: www.mnala.org



**Department of Minnesota
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Department Junior Conference**

Please complete this form so that the local committee can make their plans and have an accurate count of people to expect for food and activities.

Friday Evening Activities - April 10, 2026

of Junior members _____

of Senior members/guests _____

Saturday Noon Lunch at the Conference -April 11, 2026

of Junior members _____

of Senior members/guests _____

Please list any special dietary needs or allergies for Junior and/or Senior members:

Unit# _____ Unit Location _____ District# _____

Motel where group is staying _____

CONFERENCE RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2025

Mail Reservations to:

American Legion Auxiliary Department Office

20 W 12th Street #314

St. Paul, MN 55155

Brandi Christensen

15780 30th Street

Watertown, MN 55388



**Department of Minnesota
Call to the 2026
Department Junior Conference**
Brandichristensen21@gmail.com

**HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS
2026 DEPARTMENT JUNIOR CONFERENCE**

**Comfort Inn Suites
7320 Airport view Drive
Rochester, MN 55902**

507-218-7903 to make reservations under American Legion block.

**\$89.00 plus tax
Check-in time: 3:00 pm (no early check-ins)**

Cutoff Date for block reservations: March 28, 2026



Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Leadership Chairman, Mary Kuperus
wmkuperus@tds.net

Leadership Workshop Opportunities

Reminder of the Feb. 21st Leadership Workshop at the Cosmos Community Center. Please register by Feb. 17th. Registration form was in the January Unit Mailing.

March 2, 2026, will be the third Leadership Workshop of the Auxiliary year. It will take place at the Roseau American Legion at 321 Main Ave N, Roseau, MN 56751. The workshop will begin at 10:00 and will be completed by 3:00 pm. A flyer is included in this mailing to pre-register. The cost is \$15.00, which includes lunch and course handouts. The deadline to register is February 25th. Please register early, so we know how many folders and the amount of lunch is needed. This workshop is hosted by the Roseau American Legion Auxiliary Unit 24.

March 21, 2026, is the fourth and final Leadership Workshop at the Redwood Falls American Legion, 100 Industrial Dr., Redwood Falls. The workshop will begin at 10:00 and will be completed by 3:00 pm. A flyer is included in this mailing to pre-register. The cost is \$15.00, which includes lunch and course handouts. The deadline to register is March 18th. Please register early, so we know how many folders and the amount of lunch is needed. Hosted by Redwood Falls ALA Unit #38.

Opportunities to Learn More

The ALA Academy has a lot of information for you to learn about benefits you have as a member and information about the American Legion Auxiliary programs. Log on to alaforveterans.org and search for [alaacademy](#) under the Meetings/Trainings tab. The following list is recordings of previous webinars. Control click on the webinar you would be interested in, and it will bring you to the webinar. This will only work on the emailed Unit Mailing.

[ALA Junior Patch Program](#)

[Celebrating Women of Service](#)

[Celebrating the Month of the Military Child](#)

[Compliance Matters](#)

[National Poppy Day](#)

[Tax-Exempt Status: Revocation and Reinstatement](#)

[ALA and Wellcare Medicare Advantage](#)

[2025 National Committee Member Training](#)

[Wreaths Across America](#)

[Scholarships Live](#)

[Exploring Leadership Styles](#)

[Constitution & Bylaws: Post-Convention Updates and Guidance for Dept and Unit Bylaws](#)

[Empowering Veteran Support: Grant Opportunities from the ALA Foundation](#)

[Membership Advantage: Discover your ALA Benefits](#)



American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

March 2, 2026
Roseau American Legion
321 Main Ave N, Roseau, MN 56751

Workshop 10 AM – 3 PM
\$15.00 Pre-Registration
Includes lunch & course handouts

Deadline to register: February 25th

Hosted by
Roseau American Legion Auxiliary Unit 24

Please register early!

Cut and return this portion with \$15 registration fee to:
Mary Kuperus, 313 Pine St SW, New London, MN 56273
Make checks payable to: Mary Kuperus

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Unit # _____ Unit Location _____

Legion _____ SAL _____ Auxiliary _____ Senior _____ Junior _____

District # _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Email Address _____



American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

March 21, 2026
Redwood Falls American Legion
100 Industrial Dr., Redwood Falls, MN 56751

Workshop 10 AM – 3 PM
\$15.00 Pre-Registration
Includes lunch & course handouts

Deadline to register: March 18th

Hosted by
Redwood Falls American Legion Auxiliary Unit 38

Please register early!

Cut and return this portion with \$15 registration fee to:
Mary Kuperus, 313 Pine St SW, New London, MN 56273
Make checks payable to: Mary Kuperus

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Unit # _____ Unit Location _____

Legion _____ SAL _____ Auxiliary _____ Senior _____ Junior _____

District # _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Email Address _____



Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Membership Chairman, Kollett Kaehlert
kkaehlertaux@gmail.com

Right now, the Department of MN has 19,652 members, which is 78.96% of our goal of 24,888, the National goal is to make 85% March 15, 2026. For any unit that makes 100% membership by January 31, 2026, they will receive a National Unit Award. As of January 14, 2026, there are 50 units that have made 100% membership, with 16 more that only need 1 additional membership and 8 that need only 2 to make goal.

Imagine the impact we could have on our **250th Birthday Celebration** for America if you spoke to just five people, and one of them joined! What an incredible effect that would have on our mission and the celebration we'll have on July 4th, 2026. The National goal is to make 85% March 15, 2026. For the District Chairman there is a Challenge out to make this Goal by February 14, 2026, to receive a gift from me. I know that all ten districts can make it.

Let's look at those membership numbers, where is your unit compared to your goal of membership and your percentage today of meeting that goal. I know that sometimes when you look and review numbers it can seem like a lot, let's break this down.

- 1 – Look at your goal, determine how far you are away from reaching that goal.
- 2 – Ask yourself WHEN do you want to hit that goal?
- 3 – Now, take what you have left for the goal, break it down into the weeks of what action needs taken to reach the goal.

You just broke it down into smaller steps that are easier to obtain. Your next step would be how to reach those members who have not yet renewed. Call them, send them letters, let them know what you have been doing in your units/departments. Tell them why their membership is valuable. Listen to their concerns, make them feel needed and appreciated.

Have applications ready. We are an ALA family -It doesn't matter if your friends or family live in Kansas or all the way in Puerto Rico—sign them up. We are an ALA family.

Most importantly, believe in yourself, your work, your mission, and America! You've got this, and we are here for you.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Bulletin #23 as of 1-14-2026
2026 Membership
Celebrating Members
"Finding Members in Everyday Places"
Leading the Celebration is Kollett Kaehlert

DISTRICT	# of Units	Goal	Period Gain	Membership To Date	Percent of Goal	Membership LY 1/14/2025	Difference from Last Year
One	47	3,240	43	2,595	80.09%	2738	-143
Two	68	3,229	28	2,693	83.40%	2716	-23
Three	45	3,390	21	2,579	76.08%	2744	-165
Four	5	456	3	329	72.15%	348	-19
Five	7	344	3	244	70.93%	268	-24
Six	57	4,370	43	3,580	81.92%	3684	-104
Seven	49	2,427	21	1,926	79.36%	2000	-74
Eight	20	1,092	5	806	73.81%	811	-5
Nine	43	2,786	16	2,281	81.87%	2339	-58
Ten	40	3,146	74	2,389	75.94%	2528	-139
1982	1	408	0	230	56.37%	228	2
Depart. Total	382	24,888	257	19,652	78.96%	20404	-752

Group 1 (Even) <i>Jodi Hassing</i>	190	12,292	153	9,797	79.70%	10,087	-290
Group 2 (Odd) <i>Linda Kelly</i>	191	12,188	104	9,625	78.97%	10,317	-692

RANKINGS

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
83.43% District 2	81.92% District 6	81.87% District 9	80.09% District 1	79.36% District 7	76.08% District 3	75.94% District 10	73.81% District 8	72.15% District 4	70.93% District 5





There have been some phones calls to the office to ask about due dates for the poppy poster contest.

Units must have their **WINNERS ONLY** from each class to their District chairmen by **April 15th, 2026**.

District chairman must have their **WINNERS ONLY** from each class to me by **April 30th, 2026**.

The timeline that is used for reports is the best way to go on due date for Poppy posters. If for some reason you find it hard to meet these deadlines, please get in touch with me and we will talk about it.

I have included the poppy poster contest rules. The cover sheet can be found on the website along with the rules, www.alaforveterans.org then look for poppy information.

A huge THANK YOU to all the Units (districts) and individuals that have and are still making Poppies!

The Department staff is working with Districts and individuals to make poppies year-round now, so we do not run short again. If a Unit would like to make their own Poppies, please contact the Department Office.

Also, a challenge went out to each District to hold a Poppy Paloosa to increase the number of Poppy Makers in the Districts. District 3 has led the way in this challenge with 3, yes (3) Paloosa's scheduled, District 6 has 1 scheduled and District 7 has 1 scheduled. If you need help getting your Paloosa set up, please reach out to me and I will be happy to help.

"POPPY" SPRITZ COOKIES

1 cup butter — room temperature

⅔ cup sugar

3 egg yolks

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon almond flavoring (or other of your choice)

generous squirt red gel food coloring

2½ cups flour

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Thoroughly mix first 5 ingredients, then add gel food coloring to achieve the desired color. Add and mix flour in increments. Using about ¼ of dough at a time, force dough through a cookie press onto an ungreased cookie sheet using a wreath-shaped insert. Using a bit of extra dough, fill in the center of the wreath. Bake 7 to 10 minutes until set but not brown.

Cool completely. Decorate center by placing a drop of corn syrup in the center and sprinkling with black decorator sugar.

Place in 2"x2" cellophane bag, fold over, and staple to an ALA poppy bookmark

Poppy Poster Contest Rules

Units shall sponsor contests in local schools. When schools do not conduct activities, other youth groups — including Junior members — may participate under direct supervision of the unit.

Contest Classes

- Class I: Grades 2 and 3
- Class II: Grades 4 and 5
- Class III: Grades 6 and 7
- Class IV: Grades 8 and 9
- Class V: Grades 10 and 11
- Class VI: Grade 12
- Class VII: Students with special needs defined as: a. Those in special education classes.
b. A student recommended for special education classes but who has not been admitted due to a waiting list or various other factors.
c. A child identified as having a disability, but not in a special education class due to lack of facilities; identification contingent upon discretion of school officials.

Poppy Poster Requirements

1. Each poster shall have a fitting slogan not to exceed 10 words. Articles "a", "and," "an", "the" are not to be counted as words. The words "buddy" and "buy" cannot be used.
2. The words "American Legion Auxiliary" must be used in the design of the poster and will not be counted in the 10-word count.
3. Each poster must include a red poppy.
4. The department shall determine the closing date of the unit contest. The poster shall be on 11x14" poster board. (Drawing paper will not be accepted).
5. The United States flag may be used as long as there are no infractions of the flag code.
6. Posters will be judged using the following criteria:
 - 50% - poster appeal (layout, message, originality)
 - 40% - artistic ability (design and color)
 - 10% - neatness
7. Media used shall be watercolors, crayons, powder or oil paint, handmade paper cutouts, ink or textures, acrylics, pencils, and markers.
8. Written in ink on the back of the poster (not attached) shall be the class in which the entry is submitted, the name, address, age, and grade of the contestant and the name of the department.
9. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of artwork, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and artwork published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
10. The poster shall be the work of only one individual.
11. The label "In Memoriam" from the veteran-made poppy may not be used.

Poppy Poster Contest Judging and Awards

1. Each department shall establish its own procedure for judging.
2. A citation will be given for the most outstanding poster in each classification within the five divisions.
3. Unit members should follow deadlines and process for the department. All department entries are due to the division chairman by June 1.
4. While ALA representatives will do their best to return all posters, it is not guaranteed. We recommend participants take a picture or scan their poster for their records.
5. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of artwork, contestants and their legal guardians grant nonexclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and artwork published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.



POPPY POSTER CONTEST COVER SHEET

Each year, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) sponsors a Poppy Poster Contest for students in grades 2-12, including students with special needs. Grade levels are divided into seven classes. One award in each of the seven classes will be presented in each division. Winners will receive \$50 and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship fund. National winners will be posted at www.ALforVeterans.org after national convention.

Poster Classes:

Class	Grade Level
I	2 and 3
II	4 and 5
III	6 and 7
IV	8 and 9
V	10 and 11
VI	12
VII	Students with special needs

Class competing in: _____

Sponsoring ALA unit: _____

Due date for student to return to ALA unit: _____

To Be Completed by the Student/Parent:

Student Name: _____

Address (Street, City, State, Zip): _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone: _____

School Name: _____

City/State of School: _____

Parent or Teacher Name and Signature: _____

Auxiliary Use Only (Must be completed for entry to be considered.):

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: _____

Signature of Unit Poppy Chairman/President: _____

Unit winner due to Department on: _____ Department: _____

Signature of Department Chairman: _____

Department winner due to National Poppy Division Chairman by June 1



Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Public Relations Chairman,
Michelle Weaver
weaver.michelle595@gmail.com

Happy New Year! I hope 2026 is off to a strong and inspiring start for you and your Units. January is always a natural reset point for our communications efforts, and it gives us a wonderful opportunity to highlight the mission, service, and heart of the American Legion Auxiliary as we move into Mid-Winter and beyond. As you support your Units this month, here are a few PR ideas and reminders to help keep our Auxiliary visible, connected, and celebrated across Minnesota.



January Promotion Ideas for Your Units

1. "New Year, Same Mission" Social Posts

Encourage Units to share short posts about:

- Why they serve
- What they're looking forward to in 2026
- A favorite memory from last year

These posts help reinforce our purpose and invite new members to learn more.

2. Highlight Mid-Winter Preparations

Share behind-the-scenes photos or quick updates as Units prepare for Mid-Winter.

This builds excitement and shows the teamwork that makes our events meaningful.

3. Showcase Community Impact

January is a great time to spotlight:

- Holiday service projects
- Donations delivered
- Volunteer hours completed
- Partnerships with Posts, SAL, and Riders

These stories remind our communities that the ALA is active year-round.

4. Promote Membership & Engagement

Encourage Units to post reminders about renewing membership or inviting new members.

A simple "Join us in service this year" message goes a long way.

5. Share Veteran & Family Support Stories

If Units have supported a veteran, family, or community member recently, encourage them to share the story (with permission).

These are some of our most powerful PR moments.



Mid-Winter Photos & Stories – Please Send to Me

As you attend Mid-Winter events, please remind your Units to take photos, capture quotes, and write short summaries of their experiences.

I am collecting:

- Photos from workshops, speakers, and gatherings
- Unit or District highlights

- Special recognitions
- Human-interest stories
- Any memorable or meaningful moments

Please send all Mid-Winter photos and stories directly to me so they can be included in District communications and shared across our platforms.



Thank You

Thank you for everything you do to keep our Auxiliary visible, connected, and represented with pride. Your work in Public Relations is essential to telling our story and honoring the service of our members and veterans.

If you need help with messaging, templates, or ideas, I'm always here to support you.

New Year, Same Mission

Share why your unit serves, what you're looking forward to in 2026, and a favorite memory from last year

- Share why your unit serves
- What you're looking forward to in 2026
- A favorite memory from last year



**AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY**

We are halfway through our year, but the VA&R program is still working to help our veterans. Our volunteers are still planning events and looking to the needs of our veterans.

The VA&R program is very dependent on donations, so for the past couple of years we have had a silent auction at our convention in July for the benefit of our VA&R program. Minnesota's American Legion Family loves silent auction – so many choices: baskets, home décor, crafted items, jewelry, Legion items. Baskets of all kinds are welcome – cooking, wine, lottery, entertainment and many other options. I ask you to mention it at an upcoming unit meeting for members that wish to donate or maybe your unit would sponsor a basket. All donations are greatly appreciated.

We will also have a bake sale and grab bags, so consider a donation for that, too.

We will also have a “guessing game”. It will be a Legion Family related question – not announced until convention. We will ask for a donation for every guess. The winner will receive a tray of “goodies”, and you know how much our family likes goodies. I am looking for donations of your famous baking items – cookies, buns, cake, donuts, candy, etc. Please let me know if you will be bringing something for the prize. I purchased a couple of big trays for the treats. We will have an extra tray in case two people guess correctly or if not, we will award the top two winners.

Our quilters are busy making quilts of valor. I received an e-mail from Hutchinson with this picture. Naomi Polzin made the quilt, and it was awarded to Steve Timm, Army Vet. Naomi's name will be entered in the drawing for the Quilts of Valor book. I know that there are other quilters out there (because I saw pictures in the Legionnaire magazine) that have awarded quilts since July – get those pictures sent in so I can show them off in our unit mailing and enter the seamstress in the drawing.





**Department of Minnesota
February 2026 Unit Mailing
Secretary's Notes**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 7: 2nd District Mid-Winter, Hardwick Post 78
Feb 7: 6th District Mid-Winter, Pequot Lakes Post 49
Feb 9 & 10: Annual Report Unit ZOOM Meetings 7pm
Feb 16: President's Day – Office Closed
Feb 28: Minnesota Oratorical Contest, Anoka Post 102
Mar 14: MN ALA DEC Meeting, Bloomington Post 550
Mar 14: Appreciation Rally, Bloomington Post 550 - 11a Turn-in
Mar 15: The American Legion Birthday
Mar 19: Annual Report District ZOOM Meeting 7pm
April 3: Good Friday – Office Closed
April 7: Annual Report Department ZOOM Meeting 7pm
April 10-11: Dept Jr Conference – 1st District Hosting
April 15: Purple Up Day!
April 15: Annual Reports Due to District Chairman
April 18: Good Friday – Office Closed
April 25: 9th District Joint Testimonial, Bagley Post 16
May 9: 4th District Convention, North St. Paul Post 39
May 16: 1st District Convention, Wild Wings Activity Center in Lake City (for now but location could change)
May 16: 2nd District Convention, Redwood Falls Post 38
May 16: 3rd District Convention, New Prague Post 45
May 22: American Legion Night at CHS Field, Saints vs. Omaha Storm Chasers, CHS Field, St. Paul
May 25: Memorial Day, local observances
May 30: 7th District Convention, New London Post 537
June 6: 5th District Convention, Holiday Inn, Bloomington
June 6: 6th District Convention, St. Augusta Post 621
June 6: 8th District Convention, TBD
June 13: 9th District Convention, Moorhead Post 21
June 14-19: Minnesota Girls State, Bethel University
June 14-20: Minnesota Boys State, St. John's University
June 27: Joint Testimonial Dinner (for department commander and president), New Prague Post 45
Reminders:

Memory book:

As Mid-Winters and Holiday Parties are happening all over our State, I am asking everyone to send me pictures of President Robin Dorf as she attends these many events. Please include details such as the date and location where the photo was taken, as well as a brief description of the activity or event. I ask you to only send digital pictures as President Robin has asked for her memory book to be digital this year. Thank you in advance! Email- ashley paige309@gmail.com

PLEASE RECYCLE YOUR OLD CHRISTMAS CARDS

We have an Auxiliary member that volunteers to recycle old Christmas cards into tags for our Gift Shop at our eight veterans' homes and four VA Medical Centers. I am collecting them for her. I will be at the Appreciation Rally in Bloomington in March and at several of the conventions in May. Please contact me if you need to make arrangements to get them to me. THANK YOU in advance. Linda Kelly 507.421.8270