

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP STANDING COMMITTEE
September 18, 2009

The meeting of the Department Membership Committee was called to order at 11:00 AM, September 18, 2009, by Chairman Tim Hernandez, in the Sunset East meeting room of the Eastin Hotel in Roseville, Michigan.

It was moved by 4th Zone Commander Tom Brown and supported by Tim Rollin of the 18th District to appoint Michael Buda as acting secretary, Vote taken, motion carried.

Roll call was taken and the following people were present:

MEMBERS: Tim Hernandez, Membership Chairman
Mike Bruntjens, U.P. Membership Director
Bernie Langlois, DMS Coordinator
Michael Buda, 1st Zone Commander
Charles Cox, 2nd Zone Commander
George Dolan, 3rd Zone Commander
Thomas Brown, 4th Zone Commander

Louis Oberle, 5th Zone Commander was excused

GUESTS: There were 41 guests present. Special guest, Bill Sloan, from the National Staff, Internal Affairs, and Membership was present.

OLD BUSINESS: Chairman Hernandez read the minutes of the previous meeting. It was moved by Tom Brown and supported by Nancy Frye to accept the minutes of the June 18, 2009 meeting of the Membership Standing Committee as read, motion carried.

Chairman Hernandez reported that Michigan finished in 15th place in the nation in 2009 membership with 95.157%. He thanked everyone for a great job by one and all.

Hernandez also reported that the 2009 Membership awards winners were published in the July/August issue of the Michigan Legionnaire.

Chairman Hernandez reviewed the Department Membership report dated September 16, 2009. He noted that the 5th Zone is in first place with 63.08% and the 19th District leads the district race with 64.40%. The Chairman thanked everyone for their efforts so far. We are in good shape to meet the next target date of October 12 at which we should be at 55% or better. Hernandez noted several districts still had some goose egg posts, those with no membership turn-ins, and asked the zone and district commanders to follow up on these posts and encourage all posts to remit timely and regular membership transmittals to Department. Chairman Hernandez also passed out Post Training brochures to the Zone Commanders to use in their travels and meetings.

DMS: DMS Coordinator Bernie Langlois reported that he has sent out over 1000 pieces of DMS related slips to the districts including 526 new DMS cards. Bernie also reported that any Post, District or Zone Commander who needs a copy of their area Green Bar sheet needs only to call Department and request them sorted by their local zip codes. This is a valuable tool to assist them in securing potential new membership.

Special Guests: Department Commander Carnie Jackson paid a visit to our meeting and spoke on the importance of membership citing that the Department 2009 membership year resulted in almost 81,000 members. National has set our 2010 membership goal at a very attainable 80,000 memberships and that although this is a challenging year due to the economic downfall our state is enduring we must all work together to accomplish this reachable goal. Commander Jackson stressed the importance of recruiting new members as our department needs them to survive and strive to develop the clout needed to influence our state and national legislators.

Past National Commander Tom Cadmus introduced the leading candidate for National Commander, Jimmie Foster, from the great state of Alaska. Candidate Foster related a story of how he originally joined the American Legion in Riverview Michigan at Post 389 while he served as an Army recruiter. He later transferred to Alaska. Foster remarked that membership is the life blood of the organization and that national is piloting several new methods to make it easier to join the American Legion and pay dues online. He offered an idea where if a member has lost his or her job due to layoffs, a Post may choose to allow the distressed member to renew their membership by just paying their state's per-capita rate so they can continue to belong to the American Legion. Candidate Foster thanked everyone for their time and wished all continued success with membership.

Bill Sloan, from our national staff, spoke on membership and post revitalization. The revitalization program started by Michigan has served as the model for several states to implement their own program. He urged everyone not to let the hard economic times be the reason for the downfall of membership. There were several success stories he related, one was of a post that started an American Legion Riders Chapter which proved to be the catalyst that increased membership and improved Post activities in their area. Bill also told of an Air Force base in the Panama City Florida area whose veterans were under served. A new American Legion Post was started as well as a Legion Riders Chapter and within four weeks they had over 100 members on their post roster. Bill also touched on the efforts national is making to make the American Legion more appealing to young veterans and spoke on the reorganization and redesign of the national web site which is forthcoming. Mr. Sloan took several questions from the floor concerning membership, revitalization and post closures. Bill will be at our Info Expo here at Fall Conference.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before this committee, a motion was made by George Dolan, supported by Tom Brown to adjourn the meeting, motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Tim Hernandez, Membership Chairman

