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## FEDERAL SUPPORT DOLLARS REACH HUNDREDS OF LEGION BRANCHES RELIEF FOR STRUGGLING BRANCHES HIT HARD BY PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for everyone, including the organizations that serve Canada's Veterans and their families.

Today, The Royal Canadian Legion announced the Legion branches that will receive support through the Veterans Organizations Emergency Support Fund. The Legion—one of the largest Veterans organizations in Canada—received \$14 million from the Government of Canada to distribute to its branches across the country. This funding will help Legion branches with operational expenses such as rent, insurance, utilities and administrative costs so they can focus on providing important programs, services and support to Veterans and their families, and continue their strong community presence.

The \$20 million Veterans Organizations Emergency Support Fund was announced in November 2020 as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. It was created to support Veterans organizations experiencing financial challenges due to COVID-19. This funding allows them to cover a range of operational expenses allowing them to focus on delivering important community and Veteran and family services.

"The Legion's branches are some of our most important partners in supporting our Veterans, and in making sure

that Canadians remember the sacrifices they've made. I'm proud that the Government of Canada is able to provide them with the funding they need to make it through the pandemic as we continue to work together on behalf of our Veterans and their families." The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

"It's a relief to know our Branches will be able to continue with their amazing work, without the burden of financial stress looming in the background. This is the outcome we envisioned, and we once again thank Veterans Affairs Canada and our government for the aid package and for recognizing the crucial role of our Branches in supporting Veterans, their families and communities."

Tom Irving, CD, Dominion President, The Royal Canadian Legion

**Quick Facts**

In addition to The Royal Canadian Legion, the Veterans Organizations Emergency Support Fund is also providing financial support to ANAVETS, True Patriot Love, VETS Canada, and an additional 38 organizations.

The Veterans Organizations Emergency Support Fund is part of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. The plan has helped protect millions of jobs, provided emergency support to families



and kept businesses afloat throughout the pandemic.

Over half of The Royal Canadian Legion's 1380 Branches received close to half the support dollars available for transfer from a federal aid package today.

In total, just over \$7.2 million dollars distributed by the Legion's National Headquarters went to 701 Branches who recently applied for financial assistance provided through Veterans Affairs Canada. More funds will be disbursed in the coming weeks. Many locations have been struggling to keep up with operational costs in the aftermath of closures and cancelled events.

"I'm literally ecstatic to know

that our Branches have now received desperately needed help," says Dominion President Thomas D. Irvine. "It's a relief to know they will be able to continue with their amazing work, without the burden of financial stress looming in the background," he says.

The Legion received \$14 million dollars out of a \$20 million dollar package earmarked for Veteran Organizations as part of Bill C-4, approved earlier this fall.

"The Legion's branches are some of our most important partners in supporting our Veterans, and in making sure that Canadians remember the sacrifices they've made," says The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs and

Associate Minister of National Defence. "I'm proud that the Government of Canada is able to provide them with the funding they need to make it through the pandemic as we continue to work together on behalf of our Veterans and their families."

Branches are happy to turn a new corner with this welcome help.

With restrictions on gatherings, La Ronge Branch 371 in Saskatchewan had barely any income and was dipping into savings to operate. They trimmed costs by cancelling their Wi-Fi and phone, lowered the heat and unplugged appliances.

"The Legion is important in our community and I was envisioning an end to what has been in town for 55 years or more," says Branch President Shaune Lapworth.

With close to \$9,000 dollars in new funding, their outlook has changed. "This support will enable us to keep our doors open and keep doing what our Branch tries to do. This will help us keep operating until the COVID dilemma settles," he says.

Further south at Yorkton Branch 77, the worry has dissipated for now, with the receipt of over \$15,000 dollars.

"I'm excited and pleased," says Branch President Ken

Gordon. "The biggest thing is it will help keep the Legion a viable presence in our community." He says the support funds will help cover things like insurance and utilities and ultimately allow them to continue with their work.

The Legion's headquarters will offer a second application opportunity in January to Branches that could not make the initial December deadline. If available, additional funds will be distributed in a third round.

"This funding will not only ensure many Branches can make it through the pandemic, others will not have to close," says Irvine. "This is the outcome we envisioned, and we once again thank Veterans Affairs Canada and our government for the aid package and for recognizing the crucial role of our Branches in supporting our Veterans, their families and communities."

**About The Royal Canadian Legion**

Founded in 1925, the Legion is Canada's largest Veteran support and community service organization. We are a non-profit organization with a national reach across Canada as well as branches in the U.S., Europe and Mexico. With close to 260,000 members, many of whom volunteer an extraordinary amount of time to their branches, our strength is in our numbers.