Executive Summary

Department Fundraising Committee

Reporting Period: September 16 – October 14, 2026
Prepared for: Board of Directors

1. Executive Overview

The Department Fundraising Committee met on September 16 and October 14, 2026, to review current fundraising efforts, evaluate future revenue-generating opportunities, and establish plans for sustainable fundraising operations. The committee focused on the Freedom 250 fundraising ticket campaign, preparations for a Bingo fundraiser during the 2027 Midwinter Conference, surplus coin sales, and potential future initiatives, including a gun-related gift card raffle and a Ruck March.

The committee made significant progress in planning the Midwinter Conference Bingo fundraiser, including approval of the event by the Department Executive Committee (DEC), selection of the event date, assignment of responsibilities, and preliminary approval of cash requirements and pull-tab activities. Coordination with the State American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) was also initiated to offer a bake sale during the event.

Financial accountability, required licensing, event logistics, and continued communication with department leadership remain important priorities as the committee moves from planning toward implementation.

2. Key Discussions and Fundraising Initiatives

Midwinter Conference Bingo Fundraiser

The Bingo fundraiser emerged as the committee's primary upcoming initiative. The DEC approved the activity on October 10, 2026. The committee subsequently voted to hold the event on Friday evening, January 15, 2027, to maximize attendance during the Midwinter Conference.

The committee established several preliminary event plans:

- Provide Bingo games, with Karen Ritter leading event coordination and logistics.
- Offer pizza by the slice and beverages, with Chris Sherbourne responsible for identifying vendors and negotiating arrangements.
- Invite the State ALA to host a bake sale. ALA President Donna Snodgrass accepted the invitation, with formal confirmation expected October 16, 2026.
- Permit pull-tab sales during the event and conference weekend, with an anticipated $600–$800 available for payouts.
- Establish a $1,300 cash box for Bingo operations and change.
- Consider pull-tab pricing options, including 50-cent options and bundled purchases.

Karen Ritter and Kayla Rector confirmed that Bingo balls, spinners, and backup equipment are available.

The committee still needs to determine whether pizza and beverages will be sold at cost as an additional fundraising activity or offered for a recommended donation. This decision will affect pricing, revenue expectations, and event procedures.

Freedom 250 Fundraising Ticket Campaign

The committee reviewed challenges with the current Freedom 250 ticket campaign. Chris Sherbourne reported that attendance at the Tulsa State Fair was approximately 80,000 participants lower than the previous year, which may have contributed to reduced ticket sales. This was identified as a possible contributing factor rather than a confirmed explanation.

The committee's follow-up efforts are intended to improve ticket tracking, accountability, and visibility into campaign performance.

Surplus Department Coin Sales

Approximately 700 Oklahoma coins were identified in the headquarters office. The committee initially considered selling them for $5 each at district meetings and conferences.

After consultation with Michael Kerr, chair of the Marketing Committee, the fundraising committee voted to support allowing the Marketing Committee to manage coin sales. This arrangement is intended to generate revenue for the Department while providing the fundraising committee with an additional potential fundraising opportunity through coordinated efforts.

Future Fundraising Opportunities

The committee discussed several additional initiatives for further development:

- **Gift card raffle:** Sam McPherson will lead further exploration of a raffle involving a gift card associated with a firearm or another item of the winner's choice.
- **Ruck March:** Sam McPherson will continue developing an in-person and virtual Ruck March concept. Kayla Rector and Tyler Rector expressed interest in participating in the planning process. A profile award may be incorporated into the activity.
- **Ongoing fundraising ideas:** Committee members were encouraged to continue submitting ideas that could generate sustainable revenue for the Department.

These initiatives remain in the development or planning stage and will require further review before implementation.

3. Financial and Operational Considerations

The Bingo fundraiser requires coordination of cash, potential payouts, food and beverage arrangements, and applicable licensing.

The committee approved the following preliminary cash provisions for the event:

- **$1,300** for the Bingo cash box.
- **$600–$800** anticipated for pull-tab payouts.

The committee also discussed verifying the fundraising committee budget to determine whether an additional DEC vote is required. Patricia Mathes-Kerr and Sam McPherson will review the budget and clarify the approval requirements.

The required special ABLE Commission license for the Bingo activity must also be obtained. Shirley May and Sam McPherson are responsible for this task.

These financial amounts represent planned or authorized provisions documented in the meeting notes; they should not be interpreted as confirmed expenditures, total event costs, or projected net fundraising revenue.

4. Action Items and Accountability

Midwinter Conference Bingo

- **Shirley May and Sam McPherson:** Obtain the required special ABLE Commission license.
- **Karen Ritter:** Lead Bingo event planning and logistics.
- **Chris Sherbourne:** Identify pizza and beverage options and negotiate arrangements.
- **Patricia Mathes-Kerr and Sam McPherson:** Review the fundraising budget and determine whether additional DEC approval is necessary.
- **Committee leadership:** Clarify whether food and beverages will be sold at cost or offered for a recommended donation.
- **Committee leadership:** Maintain communication with the DEC regarding planning progress and event arrangements.

ALA Coordination

- The State ALA president accepted the invitation to host a bake sale, with formal confirmation anticipated October 16, 2026.
- Patricia Mathes-Kerr has contacted ALA leadership to identify a representative for the Fundraising Committee.

Freedom 250 Ticket Accountability

- **Chris Sherbourne:** Ensure Elmo May has access to the current fundraising tracking roster.

Additional Fundraising Initiatives

- **Sam McPherson:** Continue developing the gift card raffle and Ruck March concepts.

- **Committee members:** Continue submitting new fundraising proposals.
- **Marketing Committee:** Coordinate surplus coin sales following the committee's recommendation and vote.

5. Board Considerations and Recommended Next Steps

The committee has established a clear direction for its immediate fundraising priorities. The following areas merit continued oversight and coordination:

1. **Event readiness:** Monitor licensing, logistics, food and beverage arrangements, and ALA coordination ahead of the January 15, 2027, Bingo fundraiser.
2. **Financial oversight:** Confirm budget availability, required approvals, cash-handling procedures, and accounting arrangements for Bingo and pull-tab activities.
3. **Fundraising accountability:** Ensure outstanding Freedom 250 tickets are reconciled and campaign tracking information is accessible to designated committee members.
4. **Revenue diversification:** Encourage further development of the Ruck March, raffle, and other fundraising opportunities, subject to applicable approvals and requirements.
5. **Sustainability and collaboration:** Continue integrating the broader American Legion family into committee activities and establish processes that support continuity through future leadership transitions.

6. Upcoming Meeting

The next Department Fundraising Committee meeting is scheduled for **November 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**, due to the second Wednesday of November falling on Veterans Day.

Conclusion

The Department Fundraising Committee has advanced its fundraising agenda, with the January 15, 2027, Midwinter Conference Bingo event serving as its primary near-term initiative. The committee has assigned key responsibilities, established preliminary financial provisions, and pursued collaboration with the State ALA.

Continued attention to licensing, financial controls, ticket accountability, and event logistics will be essential to successful implementation. Further development of additional fundraising activities may help diversify departmental revenue and strengthen long-term financial sustainability.