



The American Legion
Third District
Nathan Olson
District Adjutant

Helping Veterans Connect

We Are on the web!
www.mnthunderingthird.org

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 3 rd District Mid-Winter Conference Lonsdale MN
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Joint Rally 1st & 3 rd District Faribault MN

Volume 11 Issue 5

The Commanders Corner

Thundering Third, well we all made it to 2026.

Now for this New Year, I hope it brings you kindness, respect, calm mind and prosperity in all that you do. I believe that everyone is important and that our impact on this world will continue to show for generations.

In this New Year, I ask you to reflect on yourself and the impact you make on so many people lives. I know some of you are like me and question if anything you do really makes a difference. It does, even just sharing a smile with someone can be contagious. That smile could be the one thing someone needs to change their either day around because now that feel like they were seen.

As Members of the American Legion, we are look at as Mentors to so many. Mentorship is hard because we develop a personal relationship that grows and changes over time. One thing many mentors struggle with, is that as the person we have been guiding starts down their own path, it may not be our way of doing things. We need to see past the but we have always done it that way before. That doesn't mean how we have done in the past is wrong but it does mean how we doing it going forward might need to change. We need to respect how things were done in the past but also see how things can adapt and grow towards the future. We need to show understanding and support even when things are run a little different. I ask those who are on both ends of this to take a moment and reflect find patience, understand and common ground.

I look forward to the 2026 year. Please feel free to reach out to me.

Amy Larsen
Thundering Third Commander
612-306-4438

The Chaplains Corner

Happy and Blessed New Year Thundering Third District!

As I was pondering what to write about to start this new year off, I really struggled with finding a topic. It seemed so too predictable to write about resolutions again this year (as I'm sure you've reread that article so many times now you have it memorized 😊 JK as the kids say.

And then as these things go I was working on a presentation for another organization using stars as a theme. What popped in my head was curiosity about using stars for navigation. So, I began to read and research and watch way too many You-Tube videos.

What I found was there's evidence pointing to the Babylonians using the stars as far back as 1000 BCE and the evidence for Polynesians using the stars goes back even further. Up until 2006 the U.S. Navy still taught celestial navigation as it's called. With the advent of GPS, it was considered outdated until the realization hit that what if the satellites fail or a terrorist act takes them out? In 2016 the navy went back to teaching it – sextants and all.

Then I reflected on how about 2000 and some years ago some very wise folks from the east used a bright and brilliant light to guide them to a cave in Bethlehem. Follow the star was there only guidance and yet it worked and they were successful in finding that small child they were searching for.

Which leads to that presentation I was working on about stars. With the theme of Star WORDS – notice the play on words there – I invite people to read through a list of words and spend time with them. Instead of writing resolutions that seem to go by the wayside by mid-January – what if we took time to choose a word or two to be our Guiding Star for the year ahead.

Now I invite you to look over this much shorter list of words and choose one or two. What will be your guide in the year ahead? Where do you want 2026 to take you? Who will walk with you? How will you make this word the center of your day – perhaps with your morning coffee and devotions or evening reflection at days end?

Star Words

Joy	Journey	Wonder
Rest	Mercy	Beloved
Compassion	Hope	Grace
Connection	Hospitality	Peace
Comfort	Creativity	Discernment
Zeal	Appreciation	Pray
Clarity	Listen	Vision
Patience	Empathy	Be

This list of “star” words is not complete - it never will be.

What it is, is a starting point.

A place to begin your journey into this new year

Blessings! Chaplain Cindy Yanchury

SAL UPDATE

No report this month.

Membership Update

Here is the membership report as of January 1, 2026.

Each District had several Posts reach **100% membership**—some smaller Posts and several larger ones as well. Outstanding work!

As of **December 28**, we are **2nd place nationally**, right behind South Dakota. Great job! We are only **1.07% out of first place**, so keep up the momentum. We are just **338 members behind last year**.

Please continue pushing **renewals**, as they will significantly improve our retention rate. We are currently at **80.56% retention**, and my goal is for the Department to reach **95%**. Keep working hard—we can get there!

Once again, please pass along the **new member membership challenge**:

Below is the information for my **New Year's Membership Challenge**, running from **January 1, 2025, through March 1, 2025**.

Challenge Details:

- To qualify, you must sign up a **minimum of three (3) new members** during the challenge period.
- The **top four (4) recruiters** with the highest number of new members will each receive:
 - **Two (2) box-seat tickets** to the
St. Paul Saints – Department of Minnesota American Legion Night
 - **Friday, May 22**
 - Each ticket includes **free food and refreshments**

Important:

Only **new members signed up between January 1, 2025, and March 1, 2025**, will count toward this challenge.

So please—get out there and sign-up new members!

Thank you for everything you do, and let's keep this momentum going into the new year

Calendar of Events

Jan. 1	New Year's Day	
Jan. 24	3 rd District Mid-Winter conference	Lonsdale, MN
Jan. 31	Joint Rally 1 st & 3 rd District	Faribault, MN
Mar. 14	Appreciation Rally	Bloomington, MN

May 15 – 16	3 rd District Convention	New Prague, MN
June 27	Commander's Testimonial	New Prague, MN
July 9 – 11	Department Convention	Willmar, MN

Position Endorsements

Post 594 endorses Cindy Yanchury for the position of Department of Minnesota Chaplain for 2026-2027.
 Post 45 endorses Mark Dvorak to attend the National Convention for 2026 in Louisville KY.
 Post 594 endorses Wayne Beierman for the position of Vice Commander Third District for 2026-2027.
 Post 594 endorses Mark Doble for the position of Vice Commander Third District for 2026-2027.
 Post 594 endorses Barrett Kirchenwitz for the position of Finance Officer Third District for 2026-2027.
 Post 95 endorses Jim Entinger for the position of Third District Commander for 2026-2027.
 Post 96 endorses Tim Swan for the position of 3rd District Vice Commander for 2026-2027.
 Post 1776 endorses Joe Tappanainer to attend the National Convention for 2026 in Louisville KY.
 Post 1776 endorses Carla Tappanainer to attend the National Convention for 2026 in Louisville KY.
 Post 1776 endorses Carla Tappanainer for the position of Vice Commander Third District for 2026-2027.

What's Happening in the District

We have two open committee seats available and we are looking to fill both positions immediately.

One open seat on the finance committee and one open seat on the convention committee. If anyone is interested, please contact Commander Amy at 612-306-4438.

Diane Jankowski scheduled the District Oratorical Contest for 7 February 2026 at the St. Paul Park American Legion.

We would love to have a lot of **volunteers**, as well as **students** participating in the contest. Please reach to any District Officers with any interest.

Lonsdale has completed its three-year term for hosting Mid-Winter and it is time to start thinking about who wants to host it beginning next year.

Former Woodbury Post 501 Commander Tom Grezek and Post member Dale Johnson manning the Wall of Thanks table. The Wall of Thanks is an annual event to raise money for local charities and to honor veterans or members currently serving in the military.



Below is the Registration form for the upcoming Mid-Winter Conference being held at the American Legion Post 586 in Lonsdale MN on Saturday, January 24, 2026.

The 2026 Third District Mid-Winter Conference will take place at Post 586, Lonsdale American Legion, located at 115 – 2nd Ave. NW, Lonsdale, MN 55046. The venue is one block north of the Veteran's Memorial on Main Street. The conference is scheduled for **Saturday, January 24, 2026**, and will Start at 9:30 AM.

This conference is open to all members of the Third District Family. The morning session will begin with a joint gathering.

Guest speaker Boima Freeman from the Minnesota Department of Commerce will address the conference. He will provide valuable insights into fraud and prevention.

To register for the conference, please complete the official pre-registration form. Only one registration blank should be submitted per person.

Mail completed forms to:

American Legion Post 586
Attn: 3rd District Mid-Winter Conference
PO Box 66
Lonsdale, MN 55963
Phone: 507-744-2387

Checks for lunch should be payable to American Legion Post 586 Conference.

We would appreciate receiving your registration by January 12, 2026. However, walk-ins are certainly welcome.

- Lunch cost is \$15.00
- POST_____ UNIT _____ SQUAD#_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

- One registration blank per person



**WE HAVE 8
BOX SEAT
TICKETS
TO AWARD FOR
LEGION NIGHT
AT CHS FIELD!**



**AMERICAN
LEGION**



American Legion Night at CHS Field is Friday, May 22.
Commander Linda Dvorak is tossing out the first pitch,
and the New Prague Area Honor Guard
is presenting the colors during the national anthem.

**THE CHALLENGE:
TOP 4 RECRUITERS
OF NEW MEMBERS
BETWEEN JAN. 1 & MAR. 1
WILL EACH RECEIVE
2 BOX SEAT TICKETS,
WHICH COMES WITH FREE
FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS.**



Winners will be announced March 14 at the Appreciation Rally in Bloomington.

Winners to sit with the department commander during the game.

Minimum qualification: recruit at least 3 new members.

To enter, submit the full names and member IDs of the new members to Membership Director Joe Bares by 5 p.m. March 12 via email at jebares@yahoo.com or via mail to 843 Lodge Drive, Jordan, MN 55352.

(Any transportation, lodging or additional expenses are not included.)

Area 1 Mark Doble

Post	City	Goal	Current	Percent of Goal
37	ST. PETER	229	198	86.46%
55	LE SUEUR	46	34	73.91%
74	HENDERSON	32	32	100.00%
79	MONTGOMERY	119	94	78.99%
108	LE CENTER	244	216	88.52%
144	BELLE PLAINE	74	61	82.43%
149	MORRISTOWN	109	79	72.48%
207	CLEVELAND	66	44	66.67%
311	ELYSIAN	178	123	69.10%
380	KILKENNY	12	8	66.67%
433	GAYLORD	74	63	85.14%
510	NICOLLET	104	95	91.35%
518	NORTH MANKATO	219	195	89.04%
Total		1506	1242	82.47%

Area 3 Kelley Ackerman

Post	City	Goal	Current	Percent of Goal
48	STILLWATER	147	123	83.67%
65	ROSEMOUNT	196	167	85.20%
98	ST. PAUL PARK	382	339	88.74%
225	FOREST LAKE	675	566	83.85%
424	INVER GROVE HTS.	60	48	80.00%
447	PRIOR LAKE	72	61	84.72%
491	BAYPORT	257	216	84.05%
501	WOODBURY	126	108	85.71%
507	MAHTOMEDI	44	32	72.73%
521	MENDOTA HEIGHTS	48	40	83.33%
620	HUGO	159	131	82.39%
643	SAVAGE	252	191	75.79%
Total		2418	2022	83.62%

Area 2 Jim Entinger

Post	City	Goal	Current	Percent of Goal
95	GLENCOE	74	67	90.54%
96	HUTCHINSON	418	353	84.45%
125	STEWART	38	33	86.84%
141	SILVER LAKE	158	140	88.61%
143	BROWNTON	56	49	87.50%
226	GIBBON	16	13	81.25%
250	ARLINGTON	33	30	90.91%
300	LAFAYETTE	45	36	80.00%
314	WINTHROP	50	48	96.00%
407	WINSTED	79	70	88.61%
408	GREEN ISLE	32	25	78.13%
463	LESTER PRAIRIE	37	29	78.38%
641	PLATO	19	15	78.95%
Total		1055	908	86.07%

Area 5 Marissa Lacourt

Post	City	Goal	Current	Percent of Goal
43	FARIBAULT	324	280	86.42%
44	LAKEVILLE	94	78	82.98%
47	HASTINGS	286	235	82.17%
54	RED WING	377	324	85.94%
78	KENYON	53	39	73.58%
142	CANNON FALLS	119	107	89.92%
183	ZUMBROTA	41	38	92.68%
184	PINE ISLAND	92	83	90.22%
189	FARMINGTON	115	74	64.35%
586	LONSDALE	123	109	88.62%
594	EAGAN	213	183	85.92%
598	BELLECHESTER	60	58	96.67%
Total		1897	1608	84.77%

Area 3 Wayne Beierman

Post	City	Goal	Current	Percent of Goal
2	SHAKOPEE	143	121	84.62%
3	JORDAN	57	59	103.51%
45	NEW PRAGUE	195	168	86.15%
57	CHASKA	240	204	85.00%
84	NORTHFIELD	161	139	86.34%
121	WATERTOWN	47	43	91.49%
150	WACONIA	222	186	83.78%
343	NORWOOD	41	34	82.93%
580	CHANHASSEN	364	277	76.10%
601	NEW GERMANY	36	35	97.22%
1700	BURNSVILLE	58	34	58.62%
1776	APPLE VALLEY	786	655	83.33%
1995	VICTORIA	11	10	90.91%
Total		2361	1965	83.23%

Grand Total 9251 7783 84.13%

COATES (Post at Large) 37 38 102.70%



Department of Minnesota 2026 Membership
as of 1/1/26

District Summary Including all HQ Transfers

	District	New	Pufl	Renewals	Hq Tran	Totals	Goal	% of Goal	Retention %
6	MN Dist 0006 LGN	144	1010	6485	68	7707	9043	85.226142	82.45073214
1	MN Dist 0001 LGN	93	740	4580	30	5443	6396	85.100063	82.60329295
2	MN Dist 0002 LGN	74	515	3739	11	4339	5104	85.011755	83.83918013
3	MN Dist 0003 LGN	145	1485	6084	69	7783	9251	84.131445	80.85924976
7	MN Dist 0007 LGN	47	572	3263	4	3886	4645	83.659849	82.95479126
4	MN Dist 0004 LGN	27	246	1028	3	1304	1568	83.163265	80.63291139
9	MN Dist 0009 LGN	68	489	3431	26	4014	4829	83.1228	80.8708213
10	MN Dist 0010 LGN	126	875	4614	55	5670	6846	82.822086	78.72829051
8	MN Dist 0008 LGN	61	284	1948	14	2307	2857	80.749037	77.54605492
5	MN Dist 0005 LGN	24	228	763	5	1020	1305	78.16092	75.70664629
11	MN Dist 0099 LGN	7	194	1121	0	1322	1751	75.499714	72.69209508
	Sum:	816	6638	37056	285	44795	53595	83.572761	80.56185233

Always Remember to check out additional events and happenings on our website:

[Home | American Legion MN Thundering Third District](#)

Also Included is a link to the American Legion Department website:

[The American Legion Department of Minnesota – Veterans strengthening America](#)