

THE ARKANSAS



LEGIONNAIRE



CONVENTION ISSUE 2026

An Official Publication of The American Legion Department of Arkansas

For God and Country

HEAR YE - HEAR YE!

**THE 107TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
WILL SOON BEGIN:**



**Department Convention - 18-21 June
18 June - Hotel Check-in for Training/Convention
19 June - Training Day
20-21 - Department Convention**

"I believe our flag is more than just cloth and ink. It is a universally recognized symbol that stands for liberty, and freedom. It is the history of our nation, and it's marked by the blood of those who died defending it."

~John Thune

Arkansas Legionnaires Modernize at 2026 Mid-Winter Conference

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The American Legion Department of Arkansas met January 9–11 to approve several landmark initiatives aimed at modernization and fiscal growth.

Key Highlights:

- **Digital Innovation:** The DEC authorized a new Virtual Gaming Post and moved District Commanders to a modern electronic mail system.
- **National Leadership:** In a major move, Michael Westergren was formally nominated for National Vice Commander.
- **Financial Growth:** To bolster outreach, the DEC approved \$4,000 budget increases for both the Commander and the Membership Committee. Additionally, funds from maturing Post Closure CDs will be moved into growth and income funds.
- **New Policies:** New rules were established for the Legion Riders (requiring 5 members to form a chapter) and a standardized document retention system was adopted.
- **Property & Personnel:** The Department resolved to offer a buyout for the Kensett property and finalized a new annual contract for the Department Adjutant position.

The conference concluded with the adoption of updated procedures for appeals and executive sessions, ensuring the Department remains transparent and mission-ready for the year ahead.

107th Annual Department of Arkansas Convention

Program of Events

Friday June 19, 2026

8:00 am- Noon	Registration	Silver City 6
8:00 am – 9:00	Executive Committee Meeting	Silver City Room 1-2
9 :30 am	Joint Opening Session	Silver City Room 1 & 2
Program Call to Order		
Advance Colors		
National Anthem Sung by TBD		
Invocation		
POW/MIA		
Pledge of Allegiance		
Preamble to the Constitution		
Introduction of Department Officers		
Introduction of Past Department Commanders		
Introduction of Department Auxiliary Madam President		
	Patty Tucker	
Introduction of SAL Detachment Commander		
	Michael Chenoweth	
Introduction of ALR Department Director		
	Johnny Kelly	
Convention Committee Instructions		
	Kevin Caldwell	

Welcome and Greetings

North Little Rock Mayor Representative	Terry Hardwick
VA Regional Office, Fort Roots, N. Little Rock	Patrick Zendervan
ALA President	Patty Tucker
VA Medical Director Little Rock	Dr. Michael Moore
VA Medical Center Director Fayetteville	George Velez
VA Volunteer Coordinator Fayetteville	Sue Hess
VA Volunteer Coordinator LR	Michael Dobbs
Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs	Wayne Rethven -Chief of Staff
VFW Commander	

Meeting and Room Announcements

11:30 am – 1 pm **RECESS / LUNCH**

*******Certification of Delegates Cease at 12:00 Noon*******

1:00 pm **CONVENTION RECONVENES** Silver City Room 1 and 2

1:00 pm Roll Call for Quorum

1:15 pm Certification of Credentials

1:20 pm Convention Rules

1:30 pm Activities Committee Report

1:45 pm Americanism Program

Reports:

Boy Scout Chairman

Baseball Chairman

Boys State Chairman

Jr. Shooters Chairman

Oratorical Chairman/Foundation Report

2:15 pm Membership Report

2:40 pm American Legion Riders Report

3:00 pm Financial Officer Report

3:15 pm Training Committee

3:30 pm Policy Committee Report

Announcements:

Benediction

Adjourn

Friday Schedule of Events

Hospitality Room Open
7:00 am – 9:30 am
Huntersville & DeCantilion

Vendor Hall
7 am – 7 pm
Silver City 6

Hospitality Room
11:30 – 1:00 pm
Huntersville & DeCantilion

8:00 – 12:00
Registration
Silver City 5

Convention Rules Committee
12:00 pm
Silver City 5

Hospitality Room
4:00-6:30 pm and 9:00 pm.-11:00 pm
– Closed during Red, White and Blue Party

Red, White and Blue Party
6:30 pm – 10:00 pm
Silver City Rooms 2 – 4

Saturday June 20th 2026

9:00 am **Open Session** Silver City Room 1 & 2
Call to Order - Colors in Place Hand Salute -
Invocation -
Pledge of Allegiance

Department Distinguished Guests / Awards

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – TBD
Boys State Senators – TBD
Boys State Governor – TBD
Oratorical Winner –

10:00 – 10:15 am **RECESS**
10:15 am Convention Committee Report Silver City Room 1 & 2
10:30 am Resolution Committee
11:00 am Constitution & By-Laws Committee
11:15 am Announcements
Hospitality Room (Morning, Noon, and Evening- Closes at 6)
Religious Services Sunday Morning
Delegate Selection Committee

***** 11:30 – 1:00 pm **RECESS/LUNCH** *****

1:00 – 1:30 Guest Speaker – TBD
1:30 pm Commander’s Awards
1:45 pm Legislative Report
2:00 pm Children & Youth Report
2:20 pm Post & District Awards (Children & Youth and Americanism)
2:30 pm Membership Awards
2:45 pm Department Officers Reports
3:30 pm Recess
Colors in Place, Hand Salute – Benediction - Recess

Sunday June 21st 2026

7:00 am - 7:30 **Religious Service** Silver City Room 1 & 2
8:00 am Call to Order
Colors in Place, Hand Salute - Invocation – Buster Bush
Unfinished Business
1. Resolutions
2. Any Remaining Reports
New Business from the floor
Good of the Legion/Announcements
Election of Delegates to National Convention
Election of Department Officers
Commander’s Farewell Address
Installation of Department & District Officers
Announcements

- **Introduce Newly Elected Department Commander**
- **Introduce Newly Elected Department Auxiliary Madam President**
- **Introduce Newly Elected SAL Department Commander**
- **Introduce Newly Elected ALR Department Director**

CLOSING CEREMONY

Saturday Schedule of Events

Hospitality Room Open
7:00 am – 8:30 am
11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Huntersville & DeCantilion Rooms

Vendor Hall
7 am – 3 pm
Silver City 6

SAL Convention
9:00am – 12:00 pm
Silver City 5

Past Dept. Commanders Lunch
11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Razorback West

Legion Rider Convention
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Silver City 5

Foundation Meeting Working
Lunch Blue Dog Room

Western BBQ Buffet 6:00 – 9:00
Silver City 5 & 6 (Ticket holders
only)

Sunday Schedule of Events

Announcement: Newly Elected Department Commander and Officers, in keeping with Article 1, Sec. 1, of the American Legion Department of Arkansas By-Laws, the first 2025-2026 Executive Committee will meet on Saturday June 29th, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at Department Headquarters. Also meeting will be the Policy, and Budget & Finance Committees.

The American Legion Department of Arkansas
Department Convention

Held on
June 2026
Department
Convention

Resolution

Page 1 of 1

No.:

Title: To Establish Quarterly Meetings of the Department Executive Committee.

Origin: Past Department Commanders: Kevin Caldwell, Marie Wilbanks, William Sheets

Type: Department

Assigned To: Judge Advocate and Resolutions Committee

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 1 of the By-Laws of The American Legion, Department of Arkansas, presently requires only two meetings of the Department Executive Committee (DEC) each year, one following the Department Convention and one immediately preceding the next Department Convention; and

WHEREAS, the administrative, financial, and operational responsibilities of the Department have increased substantially, requiring more frequent oversight, coordination, and timely decision-making; and WHEREAS, Article I, Section 6 of the By-Laws authorizes the use of Internet meeting services for DEC meetings, thereby enabling efficient, cost-effective participation by Department leadership; and

WHEREAS, the period between the Mid-Winter Conference in January and the Department Convention in June is a critical operational window in which Department programs, membership efforts, and administrative actions require consistent monitoring and guidance; and

WHEREAS, holding two of the quarterly meetings via virtual meetings on such platforms as Microsoft Teams or other such platforms for Virtual Meetings and the D.E.C. shall then determine the best times to conduct such added meetings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the Department Convention of The American Legion, Department of Arkansas, assembled in regular session in June 2026, that Article I, Section 1 of the By-Laws be amended to read as follows: "The Department Executive Committee shall meet quarterly, with one meeting held within twenty-two (22) days after adjournment of the Department Convention, one meeting held immediately preceding the succeeding Department Convention, and two additional meetings conducted via Microsoft Teams. These virtual meetings shall be scheduled on a Saturday at approximately 10:00 AM, with reasonable notice provided by the Department Commander."

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this amendment shall take effect upon adjournment of this Department Convention, in accordance with Article XVIII of the Constitution and Article X of the By-Laws.

Resolutions Subcommittee Recommendations

Committee/Commission Chairman Signature and Name

- Approve
- Approve with Amendment
- Reject
- Receive and Record
- Consolidate with _____
- Refer to Standing Commission or Committee on _____

The American Legion Department of Arkansas
Department Convention

Held on
June 2026
Department
Convention

Resolution

Page 1 of 1

No.:

Title: To Clarify the Role of District Commanders at Such Meetings being Added to D.E.C.

Origin: Past Department Commanders: Kevin Caldwell, Marie Wilbanks, William Sheets

Type: Department

Assigned To: Judge Advocate and Resolutions Committee

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution of The American Legion, Department of Arkansas, provides that District Commanders may attend meetings of the Department Executive Committee (DEC) and may serve as alternates for their District Executive Committeemen, but they are not voting members unless acting in that alternate capacity; and

WHEREAS, District Commanders are the primary operational leaders within their districts and regularly participate in DEC meetings to provide updates, coordinate programs, and support Department initiatives; and

WHEREAS, District Commanders frequently serve as the Alternate representative on the DEC when the elected District Executive Committeeman is unable to attend, and while they do not possess a permanent vote, they may be granted voice when recognized by the Chair; and

WHEREAS, District Commanders are responsible for implementing Department programs, supporting Posts, coordinating membership and training, and ensuring compliance within their districts, and therefore must remain fully informed of Department Executive Committee deliberations in order to effectively execute Department policy and maintain continuity of operations; be it

RESOLVED, by the Department Convention of The American Legion, Department of Arkansas, assembled in regular session in June 2026, that Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution be amended to clarify the role of District Commanders as follows:

"District Commanders shall be recognized as attending members of the Department Executive Committee with voice when recognized by the Chair, but without vote except when serving as the alternate for their District Executive Committeeman as provided in this Article."

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this amendment shall take effect upon adjournment of this Department Convention, in accordance with Article XVIII of the Constitution and Article X of the By-Laws.

Resolutions Subcommittee Recommendations

Committee/Commission Chairman Signature and Name

- Approve
- Approve with Amendment
- Reject
- Receive and Record
- Consolidate with _____
- Refer to Standing Commission or Committee on _____



ALLEN EDWARDS

FOR DEPARTMENT COMMANDER 2025-2026

Allen Edwards is a Coast Guard Veteran (8 years), a successful small business owner in land management, and a dedicated family man. Since 2014, Allen has been a fixture in the Arkansas community—first in Law Enforcement and now as a proven leader within the Legion.

Proven Leadership:

Post Commander (Post 2): Serving his 5th term.

SE Area Commander: Currently serving as 1st Vice.

Experience: Multiple District and Department-level committees.

The Department of Arkansas is stalling. Empty chairs and stagnant bank accounts are the symptoms; a lack of professional modernization is the cause. Allen Edwards is ready to transition the Legion into the 21st century.

Corporate-Grade Accounting: No more "handshake" finances.

Operational Audit: A Year One audit to ensure every cent of your dues is working for the veterans.

Transparency: Moving from "Who's in charge?" to "How are we serving?"

Strategic Partnerships: Stop begging for small donations from Arkansas giants like Walmart, Tyson, and JB Hunt.

Veteran Employer Certification: Creating a talent pipeline to turn corporate relationships into major sponsorships.

Modern Outreach: Reaching the 170,000 non-member veterans in Arkansas at National Guard armories.

Legion Outdoors & Virtual Posts: Engaging hunters, fishermen, and tech-heads where they live.

Family First: Making every Post family-friendly to ensure the next generation of leadership feels at home.

"We are losing members because we have stopped being useful. It's time to be useful again. It's time to lead with the professionalism our veterans earned."

VOTE FOR GROWTH. VOTE EDWARDS.



SUSAN NOLAND

FOR DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Arkansas Department | 2026-2027

**"Service at Every Level.
Communication for Every Member."**

VETERAN & LEGIONNAIRE I served in the U.S. Army (1991–1994) with duty stations from Korea and Okinawa to the Pentagon (via Ft. Belvoir). That global perspective taught me that no mission succeeds without a clear line of communication. Since 2022, I have dedicated myself to the American Legion and the Auxiliary, serving as your:

Department: Finance Officer & ALR Secretary/Finance Officer

District 16: Adjutant & Finance Officer

Post/Unit 20: Adjutant, Finance Officer, and Unit President

MY VISION FOR ARKANSAS Success isn't top-down; it's grassroots. My goal is to bridge the gap between individual Posts and the Department. Together, we will:

Recruit: Actively bring new voices into our ranks.

Retain: Provide the value and community that keeps our members home.

Communicate: Ensure every District and Post is "in the loop" and empowered.

I am Susan Noland, and I ask for your vote to serve you, our veterans, and the great Department of Arkansas.

CONVENTION RULES COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE 2026 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR THE 106TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS HAS AGREED ON THIS REPORT, SUBMITTED HERE FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

1. Recommend that Robert's Rules of Order be adopted for use during this convention, with certain modifications.
2. The order of business shall be conducted as outlined in the latest edition of the *Arkansas Legionnaire*, except when altered by action of the convention.
3. Voting strength of posts shall be based upon membership records accounted for by the department ten (10) days prior to opening day of this convention. The list of delegates and alternates from each post, shall be at department headquarters no later than noon on opening day. These lists will be accompanied by a registration fee of \$5.00 per delegate. Delegate fee must be paid in full on authorized delegates in order to vote your delegate strength. In the Department Convention each post with a current charter that meets all requirements for maintaining its charter as defined in the Department Policy Manual shall be entitled to one delegate and one delegate for each additional 25 members, or major fraction thereof, and to one alternate for each delegate. (ref; Sec. VI, para B. Policy)
4. When delegates address the convention for any purpose they must rise and while standing address the chair with its correct title of "Commander." Upon recognition, they are to clearly state their name, plus their post's name & number. Business is introduced by a motion, or by a resolution. The steps in making a motion and voting on it are as follows:
 - a. Obtain the floor – the member rises and addresses the presiding officer.
 - b. Make the motion – the member then states the motion. In order to state a motion properly, members should use the words "I move that..." when introducing a motion.
 - c. Second the motion – if anyone wishes the matter discussed. If the motion is not seconded, the motion is not before the assembly.
 - d. State the motion – the chair then states the motion
 - e. Discussion – after a motion has been stated by the chair, it is before the assembly for consideration and discussion. The maker of the motion has the right to open and close the debate. Discussion must relate to the immediately pending question.
 - f. Put the question – after sufficient opportunity has been given the debate, the chair repeats the motion and says, "are you ready for the question?"
 - g. Announce the vote – If in doubt as to the result, the chair calls for a rising vote, first for, and then against, the motion, asks the adjutant to count the votes, and then announces the results.
5. Any subject brought before the convention, not in line with and contrary to policies and principles of the American legion will be declared "out of order" by the Commander.
6. All those who have been recognized by the chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing. The chair has authority to clear from the floor and to have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the convention anyone who causes a disturbance that may interfere with an orderly procedure of the convention.
7. In the event of a debate, concerning any subject, each speaker shall be limited to five (5) minutes.
8. Two (2) delegates only, from any delegation are allowed the floor for any subject at one time.
9. The floor is granted only once to any delegate speaking on one (1) subject; except as may be granted by a two-thirds vote of the convention. Also, excepting the chairmen of this convention committees, who may speak as often as necessary in connection with reports of their respective committees.
10. In preparation for a roll-call, the delegation chairmen shall poll their delegates, who are on the floor at the time in order to announce their delegation vote, when called for.
11. If a poll of their post is demanded by a delegate, the convention secretary shall conduct an individual poll of the delegates and no discussion of the question is allowed.
12. Anyone without credentials as delegate, or as alternate, who may act in the absence of a delegate, shall not participate in any manner on any subject nor vote in this convention. An alternate may serve on any convention committee, however, as a direct participant and in addition to the other delegates.
13. Delegations may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit but must announce the vote in full units; no fractions!
14. A unit rule of voting by post shall not be enforced in the convention, over the objection of any delegate from that particular post.
15. Voting shall be by acclamation, unless a demand for the roll-call is made by three (3) or more delegation chairmen.
16. Amendments or resolutions offered from the floor at the convention must be in writing and shall be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration.

17. Resolutions originating in the several posts shall not be considered at this convention, unless a copy is received by the department adjutant at least ten (10) days prior to opening day of convention. Except the convention committees may originate and present resolutions they deem as proper.
18. When the final reports of convention committees and/or department officers have been approved, the nominations and election of officers shall be the next order of business.
19. The nomination of a candidate, for a department office shall be made from the floor of the convention. A post may present as many candidates as it chooses.
20. Nomination speeches are limited to five (5) minutes. Seconding speeches of two (2) minutes duration and no more than two (2) seconding speeches per candidate.
21. Nominations and elections of officers shall proceed in this order:

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN	
DEPARTMENT FOURTH VICE COMMANDER	(SE)
DEPARTMENT THIRD VICE COMMANDER	(NE)
DEPARTMENT SECOND VICE COMMANDER	(NW)
DEPARTMENT FIRST VICE COMMANDER	(SW)
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER	

22. Should more than (2) candidates be nominated for an office, the balloting continues until one (1) candidate receives a majority of votes; yeah. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, then the candidate with the lowest number shall be dropped after each subsequent ballot.
23. Those elected shall be installed immediately and before any further business is conducted (ref; Art. II, Sect 1, Bylaws)

DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

24. The number of delegates allowed is determined by the membership of each Department as shown at national headquarters thirty (30) days before opening day of National Convention. Each Department is allowed one (1) delegate per 1,000 members or a major fraction thereof, plus five (5) for the Charter and one (1) for the National Executive Committeeman; who's a constitutional delegate voting with the state delegation.

MEMBERSHIP DIVIDED BY 1,000 = DELEGATES
 PLUS THE CHARTER = 5 DELEGATES
 PLUS THE NECMAN = 1 DELEGATE

TOTAL NUMBER ALLOWED = _____

The Tenth Department Convention adopted a resolution providing for each district to elect one (1) delegate and one alternate to the National Convention. We recommend those delegates and alternates, elected at their district conventions, be now confirmed. We recommend too, that the Department Commander, Immediate Past Commander and the Department Adjutant be designated as delegates. All other delegates shall be nominated by a committee appointed by the department commander and being subject to approval by this convention.

To be considered by the nominating committee, those Legionnaires planning to attend National Convention and National Committee meetings (as assigned) should turn-in their names to the convention secretary after adoption of his report. The Immediate Past Commander is chairman of the National Convention delegation and the Department Adjutant shall be the convention secretary. The chairman is authorized to fill vacancies in this delegation at the time delegates are certified to the National Adjutant.

If you are interested in attending the National American Legion Convention, please contact Department Adjutant at (501) 375-1104 and he will be able to tell you about the costs which will be incurred. National Convention will be held in Louisville, KY August 28 – September 3, 2026. We will be staying at the Omni Hotel Louisville, KY.. You will be required to pay your own transportation and accommodations. Hotel rate for Legionnaires is \$ _____ per night single or double (tax not included) but must be booked through the Department Adjutant.

★ 107th Department of Arkansas Convention – Two Nights of Entertainment! ★

US FRIDAY • JUNE 19

RED • WHITE • & • BLUE PARTY

★ Wristband Oass: \$5 ★

Kick off Convention Weekend with a burst of patriotic energy! Music, dancing, and a sea of red, white, and blue set the tone for a night of pure celebration. Grab your \$5 wristband and enjoy an evening filled with camaraderie, fun, and that unmistakable Legion family spirit.



🍷🔥 SATURDAY • JUNE 20

WESTERN BBQ BUFFET & ENTERTAINMENT NIGHT

★ Full Evening wristband pass (Buffet + Entertainment): \$45

★ Entertainment-Only wristband pass (after buffet): \$10

Saddle up for a Western-themed night packed with flavor and fun! Enjoy a hearty BBQ buffet followed by a full evening of entertainment. Your \$45 ticket covers the entire experience — great food, great company, and great entertainment. Prefer to skip the buffet? No problem — join the fun afterward with a \$10 entertainment-only ticket.



🎉 Two Nights. Two Themes. One Unforgettable Convention.

Patriotic pride on Friday. Western BBQ charm on Saturday.

Bring your friends, your Post members, and your dancing shoes — this year's entertainment lineup is ready to deliver a weekend you'll be talking about long after Convention ends.

'My Thoughts'

Greetings to the current and future Department of Arkansas Leaders:

This Department is in Turmoil and I think I may know some of the reasons and possible corrections needed to "*smooth the road.*"

This turmoil has been caused partially, by those who like to play 'gotcha', or feel that only they know how to perform the tasks properly, and are not inclined to share their knowledge. It has been caused by those who have not learned that there is no "**I**" in team. It has been caused by those who want to have a title but who do not want to participate or work with the other members of leadership. It is caused by those who ignore meeting notifications, or just fail to show up, and/or notify their alternate to attend the meeting in their absence.

I really believe that if you would look in your mirror and ask yourself "Am I guilty of contributing to this Turmoil," your honest answer to yourself would probably be 'yes partially'.

There are twenty-four (24) voting members of the Department Executive Committee. One from each of the sixteen Districts, plus the Commander, Immediate Past Department Commander, four Vice Commanders, National Executive Committeeman, and the Historian. Too many times we have had to delay the start of a meeting awaiting for one more member to join for a quorum of thirteen voting members. The average attendance for the immediate past special called virtual meetings has been 14 members!!! To each of the sixteen District representatives, you have two alternates, why haven't you notified your alternate to attend the meeting in your place when you are unable to attend?

DEC voting members, why do you 'sit on your hands' until three of four members speak, then you look around and vote with those three or four members even, if those folks may not be telling the 'rest of the story'.

If you believe in The American Legion **PLEASE** wake up and let's get our Department back to a viable Veterans Organization!!

Respectfully,

J.W. Smith
District One Executive Committeeman
Department Commander, 2016-2017