

August 7, 2007

Comrades,

Statewide we are off to a pretty good start this year. We have some areas we need to pay special attention too and pick up the pace. The priority area at this time of the year is Membership Recruiting. As of this morning, the Department is only showing 20 new members recruited, 31 members reinstated, and 414 continuous members paid. This count brings the Department Membership Percentage to 3.99%. In order for the Department to be at 100% Membership by Mid-Winter, our membership totals should be double what they are right now.

I applaud those Posts which have conducted a Membership Drive already this year. Please keep up the good work. However, Membership Recruiting is a statewide team effort. We need all Posts to focus on their efforts right now and if you have not already done so; please conduct a Membership Drive and/or call your continuous members in an effort to have them pay their dues. Department Headquarters has a membership drive scheduled for September which will benefit all Posts in the Department but we cannot do it all ourselves. Our New Mexico National Guard Units continue to deploy from around the State but we still are not interacting with these Units the way we should be. If you have a National Guard Unit or Military Installation close to your Post, it will only benefit both you and the Military Member if you interact with them and make attempts to recruit them into our great organization. I will be arranging a meeting with the New Mexico National Guard Commander (General K. Montoya) after the National Convention. If there is a Guard Unit that has not been contacted by a VFW Post, then Department Headquarters will send a Membership Recruiting Team into that unit in an effort to recruit and assist them with their needs.

As of this morning I received an update from National Headquarters which shows 16 Posts have NOT paid their registration for the National Convention. I will forward this list to the respective District Commanders to ensure these fees are paid. Speaking of our District Commanders, I really want to thank our District Commanders for their hard work, professionalism, and caring attitudes they have displayed thus far this year. I am quite confident the Department has a good TEAM of leaders which will ensure our goals and missions are accomplished this year.

The last area I want to address is programs. Most schools will resume their sessions during the month of August. Post VOD, Patriots Pen, and Citizenship Education Chairmen should be making plans to contact schools in their respective locations. Please don't wait until the last minute to solicit participation and gain entries for these programs. If you start now, you give the students and teachers more time to complete and submit their entries. Let's all work together and make this year a record breaking year for participation in these programs. Who knows, maybe the Department of New Mexico can have a First Place Winner two years in a row! If you have any questions on these programs, please contact either R.G. LaFrance (State VOD-Patriots Pen Chairman) or Don Teweleit (State Citizenship Education Chairman).

In closing, many of our communities have upcoming County Fairs, Festivals, Fiestas, and other events which attract Veterans. Please stay aware of your Community Events and schedule Membership Drives to be conducted in conjunction with these events. Remember, there is no "I" in TEAM and we must all work together and "**SHOOT FOR THE TOP**"!

Thank you all for what you do and please contact Department Headquarters or myself if we can be of any assistance to you.

In Comradeship and Service,

B.J. Lawrence
State Commander