



WHITE LETTER 02-22
MEMBERSHIP

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Department of Utah

OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

PO BOX 148000, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, 84114-8000 • WWW.UTLEGION.ORG • P: (801) 539-1013

Dear Comrades,

August 13, 2022

Greetings to all, with this note I want to establish a few basic ground rules.

1. Our numbers are our strength. Recruiting & Retention, (membership) is every member's job.

Vice Commander Ninzel and I attended the National workshop on membership July 29 & 30 in Indianapolis. While at the gathering, we were called to present to Mr. Jim Troiola the lead candidate for the National Commander job our membership plan. Thanks to the studious, detail oriented, advanced work by Ninzel, the presentation was well received. At the conclusion, the likely commander levied a 2023 membership year goal on the Department of Utah, 7035.

With my approval, Vice Commander Ninzel is busy apportioning the numbers to the posts. I must emphasize our real (internal) objective is to achieve/welcome a much higher number of members into our ranks. Based on the VA assessment there are 128,000 veterans in Utah, my personal goal is 10% across the board. We have committees working hard to help pave the way, but every one of us, all current members have a duty to be an active recruiter.

2. A level playing field requires communication and an understanding of the functionality of myLegion. Everyone should have an account and learn how to use it.

National says the "Easy Button" (myLegion) for transfers is nearly ready for implementation. I am uncertain if or how it will work at the Post level and expect it will actually facilitate the Department level administrators in doing the transfer work. In the meantime, here are the elements needed to understand how Post 08 (HQ) is viewed and how it applies to the efforts of all other Posts.

Post 08 AD designator means the members' dues are encumbered to National (no Department or Post dues were collected). "Direct Membership Solicitation" (DMS) someone has joined the Legion through a direct recruiting campaign. Read more about it at this link:

<https://www.legion.org/dispatch/254629/value-dms-program>

If a DMS member (Post 08 AD) has paid dues for the 2023 year, that member can be transferred to a local Post by the Department. Until the Easy Button is up and running, the transfer will be completed using a Member Data Form. The form will be faxed or emailed to National for system input. (Vice Commander Ninzel will affect these submissions). (MSSForms@Legion.org) There is no requirement to have the member's approval for the transfer. Members will be assigned to the Post that is most likely or obvious to Ninzel. If any Post desires to have direct impact on the assignment, you need to communicate your requests directly to Ninzel. *Note, AD (paid 2023) transfers in, will count toward your Post total.*

Post 08 Proper: Typical members are those who have joined the Legion online, and/or members that have some public or political affiliation and want to remain somewhat anonymous. Transfer of Post 08 members have two basic requirements.

- a. The member cannot be transferred without being contacted by the receiving Post and the member has agreed to the transfer. Telephonic communication is authorized.
- b. Member that has paid Post 08 (2023) that is transferred into your Post does not count for your Post until dues are paid to the gaining Post (2024). Post 08 member unpaid for 2023 can be transferred into your Post subject to paying the gaining Post dues for 2023, in conjunction with the transfer. All Post-to-Post transfers require a Member Data Form (MDF) to be filled out by the gaining Post and the original sent to The American Legion Department of Utah Headquarters at: PO Box 148000, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-8000. Be sure to note the telephonic approval.

Membership gameplan phase one: Vice Commander Ninzel is working to launch a unified all-out effort on Saturday September 17. Option one, the preferred option is to assemble all Area, District and Post Commanders with Adjutants (and anyone else willing to spend the day on the phone). Using a central location preferably with internet connection, we'll distribute rosters of all 2020, 2021 & 2022 unpaid members, including all Post 08 members. We'll spend the day (09:00 – 17:00) making phone calls.

The reality of a well-executed phase one is that the number of nonpaid members that are on the roster represents nearly the total numbers needed to meet the 7035 National goal.

Option two is to conduct the same intense effort but conducting the phone campaign from each District assembled in one area to save travel. General idea is to have all nine Districts on a Zoom with Vice Commander Ninzel and me (responding to questions).

Using either of these options will require each District to join on a google drive spreadsheet so that real-time data can be populated to one roster. The mechanics of everything will be worked out and will be the subject of a zoom meeting with Area and District Commanders in the near future.

Phase two & beyond: The goal of phase one is to jumpstart the recruiting and retention effort. Phase two will be a highlighted focus on best practices with a commitment to work membership on an ongoing basis rather than putting it on the back burner until National or Department has cause to light a fire, e.g., proactive instead of reactive. *Every member on the Post 08 including AD list should be contacted by a potential receiving Post (based on a myLegion members in my area zip code search) at least every year to see if the member is willing to be transferred to your Post.*

Going forward I call on every Post Commander to personally make contact with every new member as quickly as possible once he/she joins your Post. Each Post should have a "well-oiled" welcoming process for new members, make them feel welcome and interested in being a member. Additionally, each Post should implement a "new member sponsorship" program, assigning an active Post member to be the contact/go-to-person to help a new member for his/her first year in meeting members, learning the ropes, and getting engaged in Post activities.

Finally, there is much to be done but I'm confident with your help and commitment the Department of Utah will raise to the occasion.

Thank you for your service and all that you will do for the Legion.

Doug Case

Doug Case,
Department Commander

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