

Convention Highlights

Saturday, July 19, 2014

National Council of Administration Meeting

Surplus Projected, But Challenges Remain

According to VFW's Budget and Finance Committee, the organization projects an approximate \$3.1 million surplus for this fiscal year. The surplus was attributed to unexpected estate gifts, salary savings on unfilled jobs, better-than-anticipated returns on investments and lower pension-related costs.

Quartermaster General Bob Greene said that despite the surplus, VFW still faces daunting, long-term financial challenges. He added that over the last 22 years, VFW has lost some 800,000 members and 5,000 Posts. In the last five years, VFW has averaged a loss of 40,000 members and 200 Posts per year.

The National Council of Administration voted to replenish the \$30,000 Charitable Contributions Fund contingent upon a budget surplus. VFW had expended \$21,250 from the fund through May 31. Established in 1997, it is used to satisfy some of the many small donation requests VFW receives annually. The \$100,000 Disaster Relief Fund expended a small amount last year. The Council voted to replenish that fund as well, on the same basis.

Vice President Joe Biden will be the featured speaker at 11 a.m. Monday at the Joint Opening Session. The doors to the convention center will open at approximately 5:45 a.m. All attendees must enter the morning session through metal detectors at the doors of Halls 4 and 5. Official convention badges must be worn for admittance to the hall. Also speaking Monday are Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.). Tuesday's speakers include acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan Gibson and Michael Lumpkin, assistant secretary of Defense for special operations. Lumpkin will be in charge of reorganizing POW/MIA search, recovery and identification efforts.

During closing remarks, Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki, Jr., encouraged members to take a message back to their Posts, Districts and Departments: "You think you can make a difference, and you do make a difference. Take this message not only to your house, but to the White House."

Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief John Stroud applauded Council members who are leaving and energized those staying: "Get ready, because we are going to get busy."

Commander-in-Chief William A. Thien encouraged members to mentor young veterans. "If you don't do anything else, take younger vets under your wings and teach them about the organization." He emphasized that this newest generation of veterans will one day lead VFW.

Members intending to attend the Commander-in-Chief's Reception Wednesday night must be at the installation of national officers that morning to receive a ticket. No ticket, no admittance, Adjutant General John Hamilton said.

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