

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

AMERICANISM COMMITTEE REPORT

07-11-25

11:02 A.M. Meeting called to order by Jim Austin in the White Fish room, Kewadin Casino 2025 Convention. 36 guests, 2 visitors

Committee members present: Jim Austin, Doug Carrigan, Fred Young, Tim Hill.

Motion by Doug Carrigan to have Tim Hill as the recording secretary. 2nd by Fred Young, passed.

Motion by Jim Austin to have Fred Young as co-chair. 2nd by John Harper., passed.

Minutes from last Convention read. Motion to accept, Cameron Wojie 2nd Fred Young, passed.

Meeting paused: ANEC Brett Holt introduced National 1st Commander Mathison.

Meeting resumed:

Scouting report delivered by Doug Carrigan. Motion to approve by Tom Chernetski, 2nd by Fred Young, passed.

Boys State report delivered by Jim Ellis. Motion to approve by Tim Hill, 2nd by Cameron Wojie,. Passed.

Baseball report delivered. Motion to approve by Cameron Wojie, 2nd by Mike Globke, passed.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution by Doug Carrigan to remove the Religious Award from the Eagle of the Year Award. Mike Bruce from the 19th District, a 69 year old scout gave a request that all Posts reach out to the Scouting Community and get involved.

Fred Young gave a report on the Junior Shooting Program.

PDC Steve Striggow gave a report on Great Lakes National Cemetery. 35 people per day are buried. As of the end of June 2025, 68,827 have been buried.

Comments made for the Good of the Legion by Cmdr Jim Austin.

11:51 a.m. Motion by Tim Hill to adjourn, 2nd by Cameron Wojie, passed.

Respectfully Submitted
James Austin

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

AMERICANISM COMMITTEE REPORT

07-11-25

11:02 A.M. Meeting called to order by Jim Austin in the White Fish room, Kewadin Casino 2025 Convention. 36 guests, 2 visitors

Committee members present: Jim Austin, Doug Carrigan, Fred Young, Tim Hill.

Motion by Doug Carrigan to have Tim Hill as the recording secretary. 2nd by Fred Young, passed.

Motion by Jim Austin to have Fred Young as co-chair. 2nd by John Harper., passed.

Minutes from last Convention read. Motion to accept, Cameron Wojie 2nd Fred Young, passed.

Meeting paused: NNEC Brett Holt introduced National 1st Commander Mathison.

Meeting resumed:

Scouting report delivered by Doug Carrigan. Motion to approve by Tom Chernetski, 2nd by Fred Young, passed.

Boys State report delivered by Jim Ellis. Motion to approve by Tim Hill, 2nd by Cameron Wojie,. Passed.

Baseball report delivered. Motion to approve by Cameron Wojie, 2nd by Mike Globke, passed.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution by Doug Carrigan to remove the Religious Award from the Eagle of the Year Award. Mike Bruce from the 19th District, a 69 year old scout gave a request that all Posts reach out to the Scouting Community and get involved.

Fred Young gave a report on the Junior Shooting Program.

PDC Steve Striggow gave a report on Great Lakes National Cemetery. 35 people per day are buried. As of the end of June 2025, 68,827 have been buried.

Comments made for the Good of the Legion by Cmdr Jim Austin.

11:51 a.m. Motion by Tim Hill to adjourn, 2nd by Cameron Wojie, passed.

Respectfully Submitted
James Austin



Dept of Michigan Am. Legion
Attn: Boys State Committee
212 N. Verlinden Ave.
Lansing, Michigan 48915

A WEEK THAT SHAPES A LIFETIME

2025 BOYS STATE AFTER ACTION REPORT



Michigan Boys State Class of 2025

Political Night, June 26, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcFDIBwXAI8>

PROGRAM DATES - June 22-28, 2025

PROGRAM LOCATION - Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Mich

LEADERSHIP

- Program Director - Mr. Mark Brejcha, Legionnaire
- Deputy Director - Mr. James Ellis, Legionnaire
- Program Coordinator, Ms. Ashley Zimmer, Department
- Education Staff - Mr. Ben Vasquez, Boys St Alum 2006
- Chief of Staff - Mr. Kevin Sherman, Legionnaire
- Sons of the American Legion - Mr. John Beeman

Scott Kelly

PERSONNEL

- Delegates - 108 (one from Alaska, one from Japan)
- 20+ Intending to Apply for Military Academies
- 1 Wheel Chair Junior Counselor
- 1 JROTC Delegate (Jackson)
- Edu Staff & Counselors - 15
- Legionnaires, SAL, & Volunteers - 22
- Distinguished Visitors -
 - Mr. Dan Cooper, Department Commander
 - Mr. John & Diana Mella, Past Department Commander

CITIES

- Adams, Jackson, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Washington

SPEAKERS

- 2024 Boys State Governor, Mr. Ben Vanderhyde, Lowell HS
- GVSU VP for Student Affairs, Ms. Jenny Hall-Jones
- Leadership Forum - Dr. David Bobb, Bill of Rights Institute
- Graduation Speaker - Boys St Alum '73, Colonel Rick Steinke

ISSUED APPAREL

- Delegates - 1 Dress Polo, 2 T-Shirts, Lanyards, Backpacks
- Edu Staff, Legionnaires, SAL, & Vols - 2 Polos, 1 T-Shirt

2025 DONATIONS

- \$27,700 - Legion Posts, SAL, Businesses
- \$1,525 - Parents of Alumni

2025 MAJOR DONORS

- \$5K - Sedgwick, 11 Scholarships
- \$8K - SAL Post 28 Grand Haven for Polos & Tee Shirts
- \$5.5K - Legion Post 54 - 10 Scholarships & Office Supplies
- \$3K - Post 29 Jackson for Political Night & Staff Ice-Breaker
- \$1.2K - Department SAL - 3 Scholarships
- \$1K - Haworth Corp - Quiz Bowl and Chess Sets
- \$900 - SAL Squadron 34 - Program Expenses
- \$500 - SAL Squadron 29 - General Store

UP (Upper Peninsula) BUS EXPENSE - \$7K+ (9 Boys and 23 Girls)



EVENTS

- Quiz Bowl Competition
- 13 Folds Flag Competition (Jackson)
- Boys State Olympics
- Trip to Gerald R. Ford Museum for Political Night
- Whirligig Newsletter
- Band (13 member ensemble)

MEDIA

- Photo - Ms. Lisa Fountain (7th Year)
- Video Team - Headquarters, American Legion

AWARDS

- 2025 Governor - Xavier Evoy, Detroit Jesuit High School
- 1 ea Dwight Rich Citizenship Awards for Each City
- 1 ea Samsung Scholarship - Thomas Gunnerson, Saline HS
- 2 Boys Nation Senators -
 - Xavier Evoy, Detroit Jesuit High School
 - Gabriel Lencioni, Dearborn Divine Child High School

NEW IN 2025

- Bill of Rights Institute Civic Virtues - Storyboards, Hand-Outs, and Laminated Cards

CIVIC VIRTUES

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| ★ Courage | ★ Honor |
| ★ Humility | ★ Integrity |
| ★ Justice | ★ Moderation |
| ★ Prudence | ★ Respect |
| ★ Responsibility | |

Promotional 8' x 10' Backdrop



Promotional Roll-Up and Tablecloth at Social Studies Conference



Sons of the American Legion General Store



Night at the Museum - GRF Presidential Museum, Downtown GR



- 10 New Supreme Court Judges Robes
- Dedicated Quiz Bowl Set + 5 Chess Sets
- Perpetual Trophy for Flag Folding Team City Winners
- City Wooden Signage Replaced w/Triangle Convention-Style Signs

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Since the post-Covid era, we have been steadily growing the number of delegates attending the last three years: 98 in 2022, 110 in 2023, and 122 in 2024. This year, we took a step backwards with only 108 delegates. Areas of Michigan who have stepped up recruiting have been predominantly in the suburbs of Detroit, Lansing, Ann Arbor, western Upper Peninsula, and Traverse City areas, while Southwest Michigan (Zone 2), Northern Lower peninsula (Zone 4) continue to be our predominant “dead zones.” The I-75 corridor from the Sault to Detroit is also a “dead zone,” with Sault St. Marie, Gaylord, Grayling, Petosky, Midland, Bay City, Saginaw, and Flint producing little to no delegates.

Of the 108 delegates, 60 high schools were represented, but only 34 of roughly 380 American Legion Posts in Michigan participated in sending delegates to Boys State in 2025. That’s 9%. Compare this to a

similar midwestern state like Wisconsin, who have 500 Posts and 300+ of them, or 60%, participate in sending 670 delegates.

We met 2 of our 3 major goals this year - 1) Build the Team, 2) Increase funds from Donors, and falling short - 3) Increase our delegates by 10% [from 122 to 135].

Year-long prep work by the Department staff led by Ms. Ashley Zimmer is without peer. She is the heart and soul of the program and the wizard behind the scenes. Ashley painstakingly collects and organizes information from the delegates, the posts, parents, and the schools, and puts it all together in time for the curtain to go up in June.

Grand Valley State University is increasingly pleased to have us on campus and our relationship with their staff is solid and growing. Ms. Jenny Hall-Jones, Dean of Student Affairs, once again spoke at our opening assembly. She will be working with her admissions staff to consider offering a \$1,000 scholarship to freshman who attended Boys State at GVSU. We will also be looking to partner with their videography staff in hiring an intern to produce a promotional video in 2026. Their comfortable and new facilities, especially the Holton-Hooker Learning Center (air-conditioned dorm and classrooms) is also a huge selling point for us to continue our sessions at GVSU.

Our Education Staff all returned with Mr. Ben Vasquez leading the staff of educators who have been together for over 15 years. Amazingly, Mr. Vasquez returns from his current home in California each year to lead the staff. Hyiori Eldred took over the duties as the band director and did a fantastic job with 13 participants. We had a group of new junior counselors also that did a great job. They are all impressive. Our program cannot exist without the excellence of our Education staff.

We doubled our Legionnaire and SAL staff this year; from 11 to 22. Each member brought a skill-set needed for the program. The SAL team was our MVP. They headed-up the new General Store, transportation, set-up and tear-down, and made the Legion/SAL team

seamless. We look forward to bigger and better things in the future with our SAL partnership. Also on staff, we had the 6th District Commander (Roger Deaton), 8th District Commander (Gene Nethaway), certified medics (Wendy Retzloff & Gene Nethaway) and an on-site photographer in her 7th year, Ms. Lisa Fountain.

The UP is back! Tom Cherneski, along with Marie Brunswick, and Howard Seid have created an energized team in the western part of the UP. Nine boys and 23 girls on the UP bus is proof enough that the UP is back and better than ever. Next year, we may need two buses.

District 6 made their grand entrance on day one with a mini-bus pulling into the parking lot and off-loading delegates from the Brighton area. We also had a delegate from Oscoda fly a Cesena to Riverview Airport near GVSU and one delegate joined us from Fairbanks, Alaska.

With focused preparation by our Deputy Director, Mr. James Ellis, our orientation and graduation ceremonies went smooth from start to finish. A positive event experienced by all. We felt that the 200+ parents in attendance at graduation were pleased with the hands-on learning and unique experiences their son had that week.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AREAS FOR 2026

- Create a marketing strategy to reach our target audience.
- Create an alumni association.
- Sign a multi-year contract with GVSU.
- Produce a promotional video for 2026.
- Continue to partner with Gerald Ford Museum.
- Return to Federal District Court of West Michigan
- \$1,000 Scholarship for Boys State Alum to attend GVSU

For God and Country,

MARK S. BREJCHA

MARK S. BREJCHA

Director, Michigan Boys State



Michigan American Legion Baseball Report

To: Americanism Committee & General Membership

From: Terry Myers

Date: July 8, 2025

This year marks the **100th Anniversary of American Legion Baseball**, a century of fostering sportsmanship, leadership, and community among young athletes across the nation. We are proud to continue this tradition here in Michigan as we prepare for our upcoming state tournaments.

We are pleased to provide the following update on the Michigan American Legion Baseball program:

Senior Teams Participation:

Our Senior Legion Baseball teams are preparing for the upcoming state tournaments:

- **Class AA Tournament:**
July 23–26/27 at Gerace Baseball Field, Midland, MI.
- **Class A Tournament:**
July 23–26/27 at Lakeshore High School, Stevensville, MI.

The 27th will be used only if needed for weather delays or bracket requirements.

Note on Team Participation:

This year, we have **fewer teams participating** due to several Class A teams, mainly in the Upper Peninsula, choosing to leave American Legion Baseball to participate in a newly formed local veterans baseball league. These teams are **not affiliated with Michigan American Legion Baseball**. We will continue to monitor program participation and look for opportunities to strengthen and promote Legion Baseball throughout the state.

Participating Teams:

Class AA:

- Adrian Post 275 (Adrian)
- Bay City Post 18 (Bay City)
- Big Rapids Post 98 Scarpelli
- Blissfield Post 325
- Escanaba Cubs
- Ishpeming Blue Storm
- John K. Fowler Post 239
- Midland Berryhill Post 165
- Mt. Pleasant Owen Barrett Post 110

Class A:

- Big Rapids Post 98 Yonker
- Gladwin Lightning Post 171
- Kingsford Greens
- Post 295
- Stevensville Post 568
- Three Oaks Post 204 Oakers

We look forward to a successful tournament season, providing opportunities for these young athletes to develop their skills while representing The American Legion and their local communities with pride.

Thank you for your continued support of Michigan American Legion Baseball.

For God and Country,

Terry Myers

Dept. Baseball Chairman

Michigan American Legion Baseball

Americanism Committee
Scouting Chairman
July 2, 2025

In March, I attended the Eagle Scout recognition dinner in Novi, along with other officers from the Department. When they were taking a group picture, all of us passed out Eagle Scout challenge coins.

Congratulations to Eagle Scout Michaela Witgen and Ronald J. Vilag for receiving the American Legion Adult Square Knot award for their accomplishments.

A reminder to those who are involved in the Scouting program, ask to see if all the signatures are there, we don't want a Scout disqualified. If you have any questions, you can contact the Department Headquarters.

Special thanks to new Detachment Commander Clive Seydell, Todd and Lori Fessenden, Duane and Barb Miller, PDC and Eagle Scout Barry Wood for lending his support and sharing in the experience at the Scout Outing Event at WilWin/Cygnnet Cove.

For those in the Scouting program, safeguarding youth is our highest priority. As part of our continued commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for every young person in our programs, we are announcing the launch of the new Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT).

This training replaces the previous Youth Protection Training (YPT) and reflects a significant investment in updated content, delivery, and compliance standards. SYT is designed to be more engaging, accessible, and aligned with current best practices in youth protection.

Deadline: All volunteers must complete SYT by May 31, 2026. If you completed YPT before May 22, 2025, it will be honored until May 31, 2026, after which SYT will need to be taken.

Respectfully submitted

Doug Carignan

Scouting Chairman