

Feb. 23, 2024

Greetings,

We hope you enjoy this week's National Council Weekly Update on the pertinent happenings of your VFW departments.

Development

As we transition from our peak season in Development, we are pleased by the ongoing positive outcomes, which serve to affirm the economy's return to a more favorable trajectory. Initially projected at \$3.1M, our revenue for February has already exceeded expectations, reaching \$3.2M as of Feb. 16. While mindful of the remaining time until the fiscal year's end, I remain optimistic about sustaining the upward trend.

This week's Development Campaigns are listed below:

- Feb. 21 Appeal:
 - Sustainer invites email #2 to all Friends of Freedom.
- Feb. 22 Appeal:
 - Voice of Democracy state winners audio email to all Friends of Freedom.
- Feb. 23 Appeals:
 - Spring birthday card package to member and nonmember donors.
 - February wallet tool with cards and check package to lapsed nonmember donors.

Contact: VFW Development Director Kelly Jones, KellyJones@vfw.org.

Programs

- VFW National Convention 2nd Annual Cornhole Tournament:

We are kicking off the call for Cornhole teams!

Join us for this instant VFW classic experience presented by veteran-owned KC Crew, the largest adult sports league in Kansas City. All proceeds from the event will go toward VFW PACT Act benefits assistance. The PACT Act expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances.

The 2nd Annual VFW Cornhole Tournament Series will consist of two tournaments over two days! Each tournament will have a different theme to help include each military faction as well as the general public. The event is all in good FUN to raise awareness and funds for VFW PACT Act benefits assistance and to support our veterans.

This is a celebration of our veterans, the people who fought for our country with the selfless spirit that defines our communities. It is a two-day event where we set aside ego and come together to raise awareness and funding for our VFW Accredited Service Officers.

VFW Cornhole information, registration and details can be found [here](#).

Contact: VFW Programs Director Lynn W. Rolf, III, LRolf@vfw.org.

Human Resources

- New Hires:
 - Riley Brandes is a new Member Services Advisor in the Member Services Department in the K.C. Office.
- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
 - Shipping Receiving Clerk (FT and PT) – K.C. Office.
 - Member Services Advisor – K.C. Office.

Contact: VFW Human Resources Director Sari Maple, SMaple@vfw.org.

Administrative Operations

- There are currently 52 Posts under suspension, three of which are new. There were no processed Post consolidations pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws. The organization has 5,654 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 17 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 15 Administrative Removals/Actions and 15 membership eligibility challenges.
- Currently Administrative Operations has 82 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, 17 of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 45-60 days.

Disciplinary Action Guide:

There have been recent updates to the Disciplinary Action Guide that outlines the process to successfully complete a disciplinary action. We have included information to the guide that encompasses sentencing guidelines which is located as an appendix at the end of the guide and outlines sentencing/penalty considerations, clarifications, and examples.

The guide is available on the Document Repository in the “Guide to Disciplinary Action” folder or on the VFW website behind the login under My VFW/Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates/ Training/Training Guides & Standard Operating Procedures.

Department Inspections:

As the Department Inspection initiative is well underway for the 2023-2024 term, we would like to share some of the common items that have been identified by the inspection team during their visits. We are halfway through the scheduled inspections for the year so the items below may change as we are able to gather more data. Please understand the list of items below is not all-encompassing but are the most commonly identified concerns the team encounters during the inspections. Some of these items are considered deficiencies pursuant to the National Bylaws but some are simply issues that can assist a Department in their daily operations, if implemented.

Most Commonly Identified Concerns:

- Failure to have proof of eligibility for all District Commanders, Senior Vice Commanders, and Junior Vice Commanders on file at the Department (Ref. Section 416).
- Departments are not properly bonded pursuant to Section 703 of the National Bylaws.
 - Failing to ensure **all** officers accountable for funds are bonded.
 - Departments not securing a bond that covers the required amount of all funds.
 - Departments do not have VFW National listed as additional insureds.
- Lack of or incomplete and outdated Standard Operating Procedures (HQ’s staff, Service Officers, and HQ’s operations).
- Lack of defined Adjutant/Quartermaster duties specific to the Department.
 - Lack of Employee Handbook.
- To include policies approved by the Department Council of Administration and signed by all employees and Department officers.
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Travel Policy
 - Vehicle Use Policy
 - Use of Credit Cards
 - Code of Ethics
 - Information Technology/Security

- The Department Council of Administration should be approving Budgets, SOPs, Policies, Employee Handbooks, etc., but are failing to maintain proper records or meeting minutes showing approval of these items.

We look forward to another successful year of inspections and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Quentin Carroll at QCarroll@vfw.org.

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Director Quentin Carroll, QCarroll@vfw.org.

Membership

- Encourage Post leadership to start planning their springtime recruiting events now. Mitigate challenges early to ensure success! Order up-to-date recruiting/training resources on the My VFW page once logged in on vfw.org.

For questions, refer recruiters to the VFW National membership department, Membership@vfw.org.

- If you have a topic for training, we would love to hear from you! Contact us by emailing Membership@vfw.org. Follow our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership>.

Contact: VFW Membership Interim Director Corey Hunt, CoreyHunt@vfw.org.

Meetings and Events

- Opened eShow Friday, Feb. 16, 2024 (new platform for processing convention exhibitor applications/paperwork and have begun getting responses from the exhibitors signing in to exhibit for 2024 through this new system. To date, 20 exhibitors have signed in with the system.
- Finalizing details for March Washington Conference including reception on March 3, 2024.
- Housing assignments finalized and forwarded to Louisville housing manager.
- Reminder: **Housing opens March 18, 2024.**
- Ongoing, working with legal on upcoming meeting contracts and addendums.

Contact: VFW Meetings and Events/Exhibits Director Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM, VKane@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service

- GI Bill Stifled by Overregulation: VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Kristina Keenan spoke on a legislative panel at the midwinter meeting of the National Association of State Approving Agencies. These agencies have responsibility to review,

approve, and monitor all programs and schools to ensure quality education for those using VA benefits such as the GI Bill. Keenan presented the VFW's concern that overregulation has caused too many schools to stop participating in the GI Bill program due to increasingly burdensome requirements. She also stressed the need for student veterans who take some or all college courses online to receive a more realistic monthly housing allowance, currently set at half the national average. The VFW supports increasing this amount to ensure that veterans do not experience housing insecurity while pursuing an education.

- Veteran Hearings in the House: The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held four hearings on various issues facing veterans and one on VA itself. The full committee held an oversight hearing on reports of sexual harassment at VA. Subcommittee hearings included a deep dive into the VA Home Loans program, use of artificial intelligence, the Electronic Health Record upgrade, and VA's spending in compensation and pension programs. [Watch the hearings.](#)

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, PMurray@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

- NVS director attended meetings of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) and participated in a roundtable discussion about Legislative and Veterans Benefits priorities and new initiatives in Crystal City, Virginia.
- NVS leadership met with representatives from the Veterans Health Group to discuss potential collaborations related to Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Fort Campbell, Fort Bliss, Fort Meade, NSA Annapolis, and NSA Washington, D.C.
- NVS BDD leadership conducted a quarterly meeting with the National Capitol Region Pre-Discharge claims reps.
- NVS health team participated in the VA Advisory Committee for minority veterans.
- NVS health team participated in the VA VetResources Community Network session.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli, MFiglioli@vfw.org.

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