**Bcc: All Legion Leadership**

**External Media**

**Health emergency forces cancellation of American Legion national convention**

(INDIANAPOLIS, April 8, 2020)  -- The American Legion’s 102nd National Convention, originally scheduled for Louisville, Ky., Aug. 28 – Sept. 3, 2020, is canceled due to public-health concerns, ongoing restrictions and uncertainties related to the global coronavirus-COVID-19 pandemic.

        “The safety of our members and compliance with state and federal public-health restrictions and guidelines made this decision not only prudent but necessary,” American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford said. “The commonwealth of Kentucky has taken emergency actions to prevent the spread of infections and to follow federal guidance that restrict public gatherings and urge social distancing. No one can say with any certainty when these measures will be lifted or in what manner.”

        The American Legion National Executive Committee approved a resolution Wednesday, April 8, by email to cancel the annual convention of wartime veterans and their families for the first time in history. The 2020 Sons of The American Legion National Convention is also canceled.

        “Local American Legion services – such as Buddy Checks, blood drives, meal delivery and volunteer assistance – remain the top priority of the organization as we navigate these challenging waters,” Oxford said. “Community efforts are now under way throughout the country and around the world, while many American Legion state and foreign departments are canceling or postponing their conventions and elections to protect public health in the midst of this pandemic. Normally, national convention delegates are appointed during department conventions. This year is anything but normal.”

        The 102nd National Convention is now scheduled for Aug. 27 – Sept. 2, 2021, in Phoenix. Terms of currently serving national officers, including National Commander Oxford, are extended until then, according to the resolution. Nationally appointed American Legion commission and committee chairpersons will also remain in their positions until the Fall 2021 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

The convention cancellation and extension of national officer terms are within the authority of the NEC, according to The American Legion’s constitution and bylaws.

Also Wednesday, the NEC selected Louisville as the site of the 2026 American Legion National Convention, the first available date.

With a current membership of nearly two million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, patriotic youth programs and Americanism. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 13,000 posts worldwide. From the drafting of the original GI Bill to the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), is the most influential voice for America’s veterans.

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Subject:  Resolution #3 – Cancellation of 2020 National Convention and awarding of 2026 National Convention

Attached please find a copy of Resolution #3, originating from the NEC Subcommittee on Resolutions concerning the cancellation of the 2020 national convention in Louisville, Kentucky and the awarding of the 2026 national convention.

Although all the votes are not yet cast, I would like you to know that a majority of the NEC has approved this resolution; therefore, the 2020 national convention will be cancelled and the 2026 national convention will be awarded to Louisville, Kentucky.

When we receive the rest of the votes, we will provide you with a final tally.  For clarification’s sake:  the national commander consulted at length with the Advisory Committee to the National Commander concerning the safety of The American Legion Family and the obligations which were forthcoming during the summer months.  They recommended to the national commander, who accepted their recommendation, that the attached resolution be sent to the NEC.

What the resolution does not say is that all national Legion meetings between now and September 30 have been cancelled.  That includes but may not be limited to:

* National Oratorical Finals
* Leading Candidate Orientations
* DSO School
* Membership Workshop
* Junior Shooting Sports
* Boys Nation
* American Legion Baseball regional tournaments
* The American Legion World Series
* Legacy Run
* Americanism Conferences
* Children & Youth Conference
* System Worth Saving and ROAR visits
* And any other minor meetings that may have been planned

It has not yet been determined when the national commander, the national vice commanders, national staff and the leading candidates will be allowed to travel again.  Last night, 1,800 people in the United States died from the coronavirus, and we do not know when this scourge will end.  That being said, we do not wish to expose any Legionnaire unnecessarily to the possibility of contamination.  We will let you know when travel will again be authorized, but we do not expect it to happen in the next few months.

The NEC, by passing Resolution 3, has also cancelled the SAL National Convention and has given up all rooms contracted for Louisville, Kentucky, for all members of The American Legion Family.  All housing contracts are void without penalty.  The NEC further recommends that departments and posts follow the lead of national, but that decision rests entirely in the hands of the leadership of departments and posts.  Irrespective of whether or not departments decide to hold conventions or some type of electronic communications for the purpose of electing officers, please be advised that the NEC recommends that you keep all current officers in place until next year.  National will be retaining all national officers, all commission and committee chairmen, and all commission, committee and council members until they resign or are replaced or reappointed during the October 2021 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

Resolution #3 also stipulates that the per capita dues for the American Legion National Organization will remain at $18.50 for 2021.

Should you have any questions concerning this memo or if I have left out anything that is important to you, please direct an email to me at d.wheeler@legion.org and I will respond as soon as I can.  If you have legal questions, please have your NEC or your department judge advocate direct those questions to the National Judge Advocate at k.bartlett@legion.org, but be aware that he cannot provide legal advice, only general information.  Questions concerning American Legion Baseball, and insurance or registrations for same should go to Americanism Director Jill Druskis at jdruskis@legion.org.