What Makes a Great Post?

• There are over 12,000 AL Posts - NO TWO ARE ALIKE
  – Differences in size, wealth, assets, history, location, member attitudes, community support, personalities.
  – So, in general, what makes a great post?
Is it the size of your membership?
Is it the number in your bank account?
Is it the popularity of your bingo and raffles?

OR

Is it the impact you have on the lives of your members?
Is it the difference you make in your community?
Is it the effect that your programs have on all involved?
Is it the fact that your membership is growing (or at least maintaining)?
WHAT IMPACT IS THERE ON THE LIVES OF YOUR MEMBERS?
TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE

- Just as in the military, good leadership takes care of people
- Recognize those who do good things
- Submit people for the MANY awards at District and Department levels
- Submit the Post for awards (Local, Department, and National)

- Don’t encourage activity simply for the sake of awards, but don’t let good work go unrecognized
BUILD LATERAL RELATIONSHIPS

• Other Post Commanders, Officers, and Members
  – Find out their best practices to help your post
  – See if there are areas when you can join forces

• District Commander, officers, and committee chairpersons
  – Get to know what they do
  – Get to know them as people
ASSESS THE POST MEMBERSHIP’S ATTITUDE – BUILD INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

• Why should someone join your Post?
• Why should a new member renew and stay in your Post? (put yourself in their shoes and life situation)
• Why should new members get actively involved in Post activities?
• Would a woman/minority/young vet feel welcome at your Post?
• Would a woman/minority/young vet want to stay a member of your Post?
RELEVANT POST ACTIVITIES

• Your Post should have activities relevant to all members
• Members are different ages and lifestyles
• Do you have:
  – Veteran-oriented events
  – Family-oriented events
  – Children-oriented events
  – Community-oriented events
• Regularly scheduled vs. special events
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES YOUR POST MAKE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
The image of your post is what the COMMUNITY thinks it is, not what YOU think it is. And, DEFINITELY not just what you “want” it to be.
DETERMINE YOUR IMAGE

• Talk to local leaders and business owners
• Talk to school leaders
• Talk to community members at local events
• Find out:
  – What they know about the Post / IF they know about the Post
  – What they think about the Post
  – How the post can better serve them and the community
BUILD LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

• Mayor, town council, administrator, etc.
  – Ask how the Post can better help the community
• Local business owners and leaders
  – Join the Chamber of Commerce
  – Create partnerships
  – Maybe even find Veterans along the way
• Communicate the value of the Post
  – “State of the Post” presentation
What is the image of The American Legion in your community?

Is it what you expected/thought it was?
Is it what it should be?
How can you change it?
PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLKIT

- Guide to public relations in your Post
- Will answer most of your questions
- Examples of press releases, marketing materials, event planning, using photos and videos, working with local media
- Full of ideas and examples
- USE it! (https://www.legion.org/prtoolkit)
In most cases, the Post Commander should be the voice and the face of the American Legion in the community:

– First, DO great things in and for your community
– Then, make sure these things are PUBLICIZED and COMMUNICATED to the community
WHAT EFFECT ARE YOUR PROGRAMS HAVING ON THOSE INVOLVED?
Does your Post HAVE programs? Are you aware of what they are?

- [https://www.legion.org/programs](https://www.legion.org/programs)
- American Legion Baseball
- American Legion Boys State
- American Legion Boys Nation
- American Legion Junior Shooting Sports
- American Legion Oratorical Contest
- American Legion Scholarships
- American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement
- American Legion Amateur Radio Program
- American Legion Riders
- American Legion College
- National Emergency Fund
- Operation Comfort Warriors
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Citizenship Classes
- Veterans Education and Employment
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
- Flag Advocacy
- Get out the Vote
PROGRAMS DRIVE MEMBERSHIP
IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP GROWING (OR AT LEAST MAINTAINING)?
THE POST AND MEMBERSHIP

• Active, innovative Posts retain their members and draw new members

• Meaningful activities based around Legion values help create a positive reputation in the community

• A Post should be proud of its community, and a community should be proud of its Post

• We believe every Post activity is a membership activity – Why?
• The Legion’s great programs need funding and manpower to be effective
  –Membership provides both

• The Big Picture – the larger our organization, the more impact we have at all levels

• Each Post’s goal should be growth, even modest growth
BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

• Great Posts have great members.
• Great Posts are known in their communities.
• Great Posts have great programs.
• Great Posts grow!

• How? By setting and achieving goals.
SET POST GOALS

• Goals define what you want to accomplish; they define the purpose of your Post
• Goals direct attention and effort
• Goals regulate effort and motivate the need to act
• Goals make the organization persistent
• Goals help develop teamwork and planning
• People are more motivated when there are concrete, defined objectives to achieve
SETTING POST GOALS

• Membership-based goals
  – Recruiting and retention
• Program-based goals
  – Be better at what you do (not just bigger)
  – New programs
• Activity-based goals
  – New/better/different
MEETING THE GOALS

• Goals must be written and they must be visible
  – Posted on the wall
  – Published in the newsletter
  – On the website

• Talk about goal progress at meetings

• Let community leaders know your goals, if appropriate
• Keep track of where you are
  – Some goals need intermediate milestones
  – Members must be informed on how they are doing
• Hang up charts or progress reports in the Post
• Newsletter
• Celebrate and praise when goals are met
• Give special awards and recognition to those who excelled
• Focus on the positive things
• Use goal achievement as a springboard to the future – more goals
QUESTIONS?