THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT of MISSOURI

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Media and Communications Commission

July 2016

Purpose: Internal: To educate, motivate, and inform The American Legion family of the mission and the programs of the American Legion Department of Missouri for the purpose of making them promoters of and participants in the activities and aims of The American Legion Department of Missouri.

External: To build awareness of and support for the primary mission and the purpose of The American Legion Department of Missouri, especially among individual citizens, the Missouri State Legislature, state and local government agencies, and corporate Missouri;

Such other purposes as may be assigned to it by the Department Executive Committee

Scope: This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applies to the Media and Communications Commission, Department of Missouri. It provides guidance on duties, procedures, and responsibilities for members of the Commission, and general information for other members of the Department of Missouri.

Authority: Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion, Department of Missouri, Inc. ARTICLE IX, Section 1.

References:

a. Resolution 1, 2013 National Convention, establishing the National Media and Communication Commission.

b. Public Relations Toolkit, produced by the National Public Relations Commission of the American Legion.

Membership:

The commission shall consist of 9 members, including the chairman, who are appointed for three year terms.

a. The nine members of the commission are appointed by the Department Commander, with the approval of the Department Executive Committee (DEC) to serve three year terms with three of the members' terms expiring each year.

b. Each year the Department Commander shall recommend to the DEC one member to serve as Commission Chairman for a one year term.

c. Of the nine members who shall be appointed upon adoption of this SOP and the consolidation of the Public Relations Commission and the Publications Committee, three shall be appointed for a term of three years, three shall be appointed for a term of two years, and three shall be appointed for a term of one year.

d. Each year, the Department Commander may recommend to the DEC either the reappointment of Commission member(s) whose term are expiring, or the appointment of new committee member(s) to replace member(s) whose terms are expiring.

6. **PROCEDURES:**

Responsibilities of the Public Relations Commission

(1) The Commission shall provide policy oversight of ***The Missouri Legionnaire.***

(2) The Commission shall provide policy oversight of the Department of Missouri web presence.

(3) The Commission shall promote public relations concerning The American Legion and its programs utilizing all forms of traditional media, social media, and other forms of communication so as to communicate with all levels of the public (including Legionnaires)

(4) The Commission shall encourage all Posts to use all forms of traditional media, social media and other forms of communication to reach and inform their membership and the members of the local public.

(5) The Commission shall use all available forms of communication to inform the residents of Missouri of programs, events, and other actions that may have a positive impact on their communities, their schools and youth so that they have an opportunity to participate in the many positive American Legion Programs.

(6) The commission will conduct or arrange for classes and training for the members of the Department of Missouri on topics such as: How to write Press Releases; How to write a Resolution; How to use Social Media, etc.

(7) Members of the Media and Communications Commission are encouraged to become members of the American Legion Press Association and to subscribe to the National Publication: ***Dispatch.***

Responsibilities of the Public Relations Commission Chairman

(1) The Chairman is expected to write an article related to public relations for each issue of ***The Missouri Legionnaire***.

(2) The Chairman shall call for a meeting of the Commission members to be conducted at the Department Convention, Fall Conference, and Spring Conference. The Chair may call for additional meeting as needed.

(3) The Chairman may be called upon by the Department Commander to prepare or assist in the preparation of orations for his/her use at various public events and holidays.

(4) The Chairman may be called upon to write and distribute news/press releases concerning American Legion programs, conventions, conferences and other topics as needed, for example press release announcing the election of Department Officers.

(5) The Chairman shall prepare and submit the Media and Communications budget to the Finance Commission.

7. **MEETINGS:**

Department Convention

1. The Commission shall meet in closed session to judge and select the winners of the Post Newsletter competition. The Commission shall also review all "Toot Our Horn" submissions, insuring all submitting posts have met the requirements for recognition.
2. The Chairman or designee shall report the results of the Newsletter competition and "Toot Our Horns" awards during the Convention general session. Awards shall be presented at the Fall Conference.

The Commission may also hold an open meeting to address current and pending media and public relations issues at the call of the Chairman.

Department Fall Conference.

1. The Chairman or designee, with the assistance of the Department Commander, will present the Newsletter and "Toot our Horns" awards during the general session.
2. The Chairman shall call an open meeting to discuss any changes to the Public Relations program, to discuss any issues regarding the ***Missouri Legionnaire*** or Department social media site, to conduct training, and to insure that the Public Relations Awards materials are current or to discuss changes to them.

Department Spring Conference

1. Conduct Public Relations and Media training.
2. Discuss and review current Media and Communications programs for the purpose of improvement,
3. Based on the Department Commander's and the DEC's priorities, determine where Department media and public relations efforts need to be focused.

8. **ANNUAL POST NEWSLETTER COMPETETION**:

Using the guidelines attached (Attachment A) to this SOP, conduct an annual Post Newsletter Competition to recognize the most outstanding newsletters published by Posts located in the Department of Missouri.

9. **"TOOT OUR HOURNS" SUBMISSIONS**:

Using the guidelines attached (Attachment B) to this SOP, review all "Toot Our Horn" submissions to insure that each Post submitting a request for the award qualifies.

POLICIES

Travel costs are not reimbursed to members of this commission for attendance at Department convention, conferences, or other called meetings.

Prepared by: J. Buckwalter and D. Shafer

Reviewed/Approved by: _____

Adopted: _____

2017 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER COMPETITION

The power and importance of a Post Newsletter is indescribable. Properly used, it is a very valuable tool for communicating to the members of the post the news, events, and programs that make The American Legion such a dynamic organization of veterans. Every post should be communicating their news to their members. This news gives the members a sense of pride and accomplishment and makes them want to be a part of their post and participate in programs if they are able to.

To recognize the importance of post newsletters, The Department of Missouri conducts an annual Post Newsletter competition to recognize the most outstanding newsletters. There are five awards, one each for the following categories based on membership: Cat 1: 15 to 50 members; Cat 2: 51 to 100 members; Cat 3: 101 to 200 members; Cat 4: 201 to 500 members, and Cat 5: 501 or more members. Only first place is awarded in each category.

Winners of the Newsletter competition are announced at the State Convention, and the awards are presented to each winner at the Fall Conference.

To compete in the Newsletter competition, each post should present one year of their Post Newsletter in a folder, binder or book. Judging is based on:

a. Neatness and legibility as well as the information contained in the newsletters.
b. Informative contents: Organized by activities/programs/news-information (from Post to Department and vice-versa).
c. Content: Organized articles by officers and/or committees.
d. Membership growth & retention: Newsletter contains information on recruiting, retaining, and renewing membership.
e. Calendar of Events: A timely list of events scheduled to take place in the post and other events of importance that members should be aware of. (Items should contain dates, time and location of each event and should reflect timely notice to all members so members can participate in the events.)
f. Judges Discretion: Judges overall opinion.

Any advertising contained in the newsletters should have a disclaimer to the effect that the below or above named business donates to and supports our Legion programs.

The Media & Communication Commission's goal is that every post that publishes a newsletter submits their newsletter for competition at the State Convention. All newsletters submitted for competition should be hand delivered to the Public Relations Newsletter/ Toot Our Horn judging room no later than 9:00 a.m. on Friday, July 14, 2017, or mail them to The American Legion, Department of Missouri, ATTN: Media and Communications Commission, P.O. Box 179, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0179 so they arrive NLT July 12, 2017.

For information concerning this program, contact: John Buckwalter, 660-626-3626.

"TOOT OUR HORNS AWARD PROGRAM"

A project of the Public Relations Committee, Department of Missouri

This program is to encourage each post in Missouri to promote the American Legion in local and state media; to increase participation in district and department functions; to improve public relations with non-members; to encourage posts to set and attain goals they can be proud of in support of American Legion and veteran programs; to encourage non-member veterans to join the American Legion, and to encourage posts to develop a line of communication between them and their members.

A 'HORN AWARD" will be presented to each post qualifying with "BARS" to be added for each completed membership year that the post participates in this program. This application MUST BE RECEIVED NOT LATER THAN JUNE 30th of the membership year that this award is being applied for. Post qualifying for their "HORN" or "BAR" will be announced at the Department Convention and the awards will be presented at the Fall Conference. Listings of all Post(s) receiving their "HONR" or "BAR" for the current year will also be published in the "*Missouri Legionnaire*."

REQUIREMENTS

Complete a minimum of 4 out of the following 9 categories:

____At least 6 advertisements, notice of meetings, or listing in local media (newspaper, television, radio, etc.) announcing post meetings.
____Publish a Post newsletter (attach copy of newsletter)
____At least 2 post members attend the State Convention (provide a list of those who attended, signed by Post Commander or Adjutant)
____At least 2 post member attend the State Spring and Fall Conferences (provide a list of those who attended, signed by the Post Commander or Adjutant)
____Post participation in a community event (parade, fair, troop rally, etc.) (Attach a photo, newspaper clipping, etc.)
____Philanthropic activity (e.g. benefits, fund-raisers for a charitable cause, food pantry collections, bell ringing for Salvation Army, etc.)
____Conduct a new member recruiting campaign
____Promote/advertise your post and activities using Facebook, E-Legion.org or other computer media.
____Attain 100% or membership goal for current year by December 31st.
____Maintain a post web presence (webpage, Facebook, centennial page)

Complete a minimum of 3 of the following categories

____Conduct monthly meetings
____One or more members of the Post is a District Officer (provide name(s) and office(s) held
____One or more members of the Post is a Department Officer (provide name(s) and office(s) held
____Host a District meeting
____Submit the Consolidated Post Report for current year (attach copy)
____Submit Certified Post Officer list to Department within 30 days of Department Convention.

Reporting is to be done on this form as soon as requirements are met but no later than June 30th of the current membership year.

Copies of substantiating materials must accompany this application.

Post Name and Post Number: _____

Membership year submitted for: _____, Date submitted: _____

SIGNATURE OF POST COMMANDER OR ADJUTANT: _____

SEND THIS APPLICATION AND SUBSTANTIATING MATERIAL(S) TO: The American Legion, Department of Missouri, ATTN: Media & Communications Commission, P.O. Box 179, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0179

This form up-dated on February 23, 2017