

Greetings Auxiliary Members.

Make your plans soon to attend the 2024 Winter Conference to be held January 26-28 at the Bismarck Hotel and Conference (former Ramkota Hotel). You will find the registration and banquet ticket order form for this event elsewhere in this publication.

Fred and I attended District 1 and District 10 meetings this fall. We were impressed by the Fairmount Sons of American Legion (SAL) Squadron that performed the opening ceremonies at District 10. The attendance in District 10 was impressive as well. Post 13 of Finley (District 1) did a phenomenal job serving the meal prior to opening session. Although District 1's attendance by Auxiliary members was disappointing, I met several phenomenal members.

In February, the National Executive Committee (NEC) approved an increase for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) grants. The increase from \$2,400 to \$3,000 is a result of the rising cost of living and inflation, which make it more difficult for families to afford their basic needs. The new grant amount took effect on October 1, 2023, the beginning of the 2024 fiscal year.

The updated grant award of \$3,000 is for Auxiliary members who have been affected by a natural disaster or other crisis and need urgent financial assistance. Information on the AEF Program and updated applications can be found on the national website at [www.ALAFORVeterans.org](http://www.ALAFORVeterans.org). You may also contact Department AEF Chairman Wanda Tostenson if you have questions.

Thank you, Unit Membership Chairmen, for your work to gather dues from your current members and new and rejoined members as well. By now, all officers and chairmen should be paid for 2024 and no unit should be experiencing a 'goose' egg. National President Williamson's membership theme this year is sled dog racing, so keep mushing on.

I wish each of you good health, and happy and safe holidays as you celebrate with your family and friends. Keep our veterans, active military, and their families in your prayers. Take care of yourself and others.

God Bless America.

Marcy Schmidt