March 31, 2020

To all of our South Carolina American Legion Family:

As you know the COVID – 19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented current and potential threat to the health and safety of all Americans, including the citizens of South Carolina. It has resulted in significant disruption to all our lives, and according to most national and state authorities will continue to have a significant impact on the health and safety of American citizens for the foreseeable future. As a result, families, businesses, and organizations have been forced to make very difficult decisions regarding the planning and scheduling of events involving the gathering of numerous people.

Following much thought and deliberation, the Palmetto Boys State Committee has recommended to The American Legion South Carolina Department Executive Board that the 2020 Session of The American Legion Palmetto Boys State be cancelled, and the South Carolina Department Executive Committee has voted unanimously to follow the Boys State Committee’s recommendation and cancel this year’s session of American Legion Palmetto Boys State. We will be posting this announcement on the PBS website and other social media platforms today. This has not been an easy decision to make, but as things increasingly become more critical in our state and nation, it was one that had to be made. While we are heartbroken the session will not occur, we feel that this decision is in the best interest of our posts, the PBS delegates and staff, as well as the entire state of South Carolina.

Despite the cancellation of the session this year, all posts are encouraged to continue and complete their selection process for this year because all delegates who are selected and entered into the registration system by June 7, 2020, will be considered “selected delegates” for the 2020 session of American Legion Palmetto Boys State. The American Legion Boys State Committee and our COVID-19 Task Force have been working to find a way to honor the outstanding young men who are selected to attend the program. This will include delegates being given a “selection certificate”, a PBS shirt, and they will have the opportunity to buy a graduation cord and other merchandise through an online platform later in the year. Being a “selected delegate” will also do several very important things: 1) it will provide the opportunity to use this honor on resumes, college applications, etc; 2) it will provide them with the opportunity to apply for American Legion Palmetto Boys State scholarships offered by a number of colleges and universities across the state should these universities offer the scholarships this year, as well as the local and National Samsung Scholarships; 3) it will establish a pool of delegates who may potentially remain eligible to participate in some manner in the 2021 session; and 4) it will give the posts the opportunity to honor the delegates who are selected just as if they had attended the program.
The selection of delegates can be done virtually or through phone interviews if a post has not completed the selection process. While posts are not required to complete the process, we wanted to give you the option to do so for all the reasons listed above.

PBS will not be charging posts for tuition this year, and for those posts who have sent checks in already, you have the option of having the checks returned (or money refunded if the check has already been deposited) or being given credit for your selection of delegates for next year’s session.

We know that there will be questions for posts and delegates in the coming weeks. Selected delegates who are already registered in the registration system will receive information from us as well. Please refer the selected delegates to the American Legion Palmetto Boys State website (www.palmettoboyssstate.com), where we will have a “question/answer” document posted. If posts have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Todd McDonald, our American Legion Liaison at 803-463-7901 or by email at todd@toddmc-donald.me. If you are unsure of an answer, please make sure to ask.

If you have already selected delegates, please reach out to them with this information and let them know they will be receiving information in the coming weeks from the PBS staff. Also let them know they MUST go into the registration system and finalize their registration. Many of their emails are going to spam, so they need to look there before reaching out to us. At this point, please tell them the week has been cancelled, but they will get a “selection certificate” so that they can use it in the ways described above.

On behalf of The American Legion Department of South Carolina and the staff of American Legion Palmetto Boys State, I want to personally thank you for your work for and support of this great program. This has been a trying time for everyone involved, but we will persevere and I can assure you that the staff of Palmetto Boys State is committed to doing whatever it takes to continue the tradition of excellence this program has demonstrated since its inception in 1940. Take care and stay well.

For God and Country, I remain in service to all veterans and Legionnaires of South Carolina,

Walt Richardson
Department Commander