

Donations to Veterans Causes

I recently received the following e-mail "I am a reader of your column in "The Extra" and am writing to see if you could help me. This year I have decided to donate only to organizations that have a Minnesota address or a Fargo/Moorhead address. I am hoping that will keep the total donation in the state and not be given to organizations that are hired to solicit donations and take their share first. I would like to donate money to the Moorhead American Legion and the Moorhead Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am not sure how to do this and whether the local organizations have a fund set up for such donations and what the donations would be used for."

I reached out to friends from both organizations to find out the answer. The Moorhead American Legion, as do many MN Legions sponsors a couple program of which I am very familiar – Legion baseball which I participated in as a youngster and Boys State which I also was honored to be a part of. Boys State and Girls State are programs where the Legion sponsors young people to attend a state-wide conference designed to provide a learning experience on how our government works and how to be an informed citizen. One of the wonderful programs of our Legion is hosting of residents of the VA hospital for 'free' lunch at the post, paid for by donations. In addition, our Moorhead Legion supports other events at the VA hospital, our Red River Valley Veterans Concert Band, the Honor Flight, Color Guard service for Veterans funerals. These are primarily funded by gaming. Donations are accepted nationally at www.legion.org/donate

Our Moorhead/Dilworth VFW is also very active in supporting programs to help our Veterans and their families. Among the VFW sponsored programs are providing funds for the Veterans home in Fergus Falls, most recently purchasing a golf cart so residents can go outside in the park area by the home. Other projects Color Guard, Honor Flight, VA hospital and again funded primarily by gaming. Donations are accepted nationally at www.vfw.org

In Moorhead we also have the Legion Auxiliary and VFW Auxiliary. Both organizations are very active and provide assistance to Veterans and their families. One of the most rewarding programs of the Auxiliaries are the work they do with Veterans in our VA hospital and Veterans home in Fergus Falls.

Local Legion and VFW projects are funded mostly by gaming. However, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Moorhead is a 501(c)3 non-profit as recognized by the IRS. We work very closely with the VFW and Legion and are not restricted by gaming rules. We are specifically to connect Veterans, Servicemembers and their families with community support, training, services and resources. We provide financial assistances to Veterans, guard members and their families. We operate with no paid personnel, completely by volunteers. Donations can be directed to a specific program, but I recommend the donation be general. Normally a subcommittee reviews requests and brings their recommendations to monthly meetings where they are voted on by the members, all volunteers. There is virtually no overhead or administrative costs.