

American Legion Auxiliary News Release

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Alaska's American Legion Auxiliary Experiencing Renewal; Eager to Share Accomplishments with Auxiliary National President During State Convention

NINILCHIK, Alaska – What can a volunteer leader in America's largest state expect to accomplish when she lives in this small community nearly 4 hours south of Anchorage? For Betty Randall, Alaska's American Legion Auxiliary President, the answer is simple: Plenty!

Randall will have success stories to share with the organization's National President when she attends the 86th state convention in Fairbanks April 24-26. Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan of Madison, Wisc., will be impressed by the depth of work undertaken by volunteers spread across Alaska to bring the organization's Girls State experience to more high school students.

Girls State is a nonpartisan program that teaches young women responsible citizenship and love for God and Country. Since its inception in 1937, nearly one million young women across the nation have had the opportunity to learn first-hand how state and local government works.

"The Alaska Girls State attendance was declining and quite a few members felt the program was in danger," Randall said. "Working with new directors and empowering an existing board of directors to make changes, we have taken great leaps forward this year including providing public service announcements throughout our state, holding countless meetings with school counselors, and even being part of Career Days at schools."

Has all the effort paid off? "We'll know how successful we've been when the registrations arrive later this spring and the final result will be measured when the citizens of Girls State show up in June," she said with confidence.

Randall's efforts extend to helping members of the American Legion Auxiliary get a sense of the larger contributions and needs of members across the nation. "I try to keep members informed on current needs, national projects and we even tried a special workshop last fall," she said with a smile. "It was the first time we tried a workshop. It was good and we learned a lot. In the future we'll do even better using this first experience to mold an agenda that is more focused and more interactive."

Her first love for service falls to helping veterans in Alaska's Veterans Affairs hospitals and nursing homes. "I have experienced great cooperation from our members when I have asked for things," Randall remarked. "One of the recent successes was a fund raising effort to provide special events programs at the VA that are not funded. Past state president Eva Aulston challenged everyone to meet or beat her \$100 donation. Ninety days later more than \$6,700 had been raised."

The 3,600 members of the Alaska American Legion Auxiliary can also point with pride and accomplishment to the annual Christmas Gift Shops for patients at the VA facilities. The events begin with fund raising activities and culminate by helping veterans pick out gifts for members of their families. "It's heart warming to talk with the vets and hear stories of how long it has been since they have been able to send a gift. You see the gleam in their eyes," she adds.

For Pulvermacher-Ryan, the visit with Randall and members of the Alaska American Legion Auxiliary will be a journey in seeing how so much is done by so few, for so many. She looks forward to the visit.

Empowering Women – Inspiring Communities

Affiliated with The American Legion, the Auxiliary is a veterans' support organization with members in nearly 10,000 communities. The organization sponsors volunteer programs on the national and local levels, focusing on three major areas: veterans, young people and the community.

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EDITORS NOTE: Bio and hi-res photo at:

<http://www.legion-aux.org/NationalLeaders/NationalPresident/index.aspx>