

TENNESSEE AMERICAN LEGION

BOYS STATE

Vol. 75, No. 1, Sunday, May 25, 2014
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee

AMERICAN LEGION CELEBRATES 50 YEARS AT TENNESSEE TECH, 75 YEARS IN STATE

Over the past 50 years, tens of thousands of young men from across the state have learned to be better, more educated citizens by spending the week surrounding Memorial Day on Tennessee Tech University's campus at American Legion Boys State. Boys State also celebrates its 75th anniversary in Tennessee this year.

The program ranks as the best in the country because of the opportunities given to high school juniors from across the state. During the week they will receive instruction and advice from the state's governor, military leaders and government officials. And this year the number of participants will be close to an all-time high, with more than 630 young men attending.

"This milestone anniversary is possible because of the established relationship between the American Legion and Tennessee Tech University," said Judge John J. Maddux Jr., circuit court judge for the 13th judicial district, who has overseen the program for three decades. "These two organizations work together to produce a top-notch product."

Beginning Sunday, delegates will be immersed in learning state government by running a mock 51st state, Boys State. They will organize political parties and establish city, county and state governments by election, complete with primaries and political campaigns. American Legion posts across the state sponsor delegates and fund the activities held at Tennessee Tech.

This year's session also will feature an address from Gov. Bill Haslam. U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander will be the featured speaker at Saturday's inauguration of this year's new ALBS governor. One of the first successful campaigns Sen. Alexander won came at Boys State, where he was elected governor.

For the 10th consecutive year, Boys State will host the SCALES program, the Supreme Court Advancing Legal Education for Students, during which the Tennessee Supreme Court will hold a special session to hear oral arguments in two actual Supreme Court cases.

Logan Parsons, 2013 Tennessee ALBS governor, will participate in the opening orientation and memorial service. State Rep. Ryan Williams of Cookeville will lead a discussion on major political issues in Tennessee on Monday. Major Gen. Max Haston, Tennessee adjutant general, will be a guest speaker on Thursday.

Meet your 2013 Governor Logan Parsons

Logan Parsons came to Boys State with no experience running for office, but his entry into campaigning ended with great success. Parsons won the hearts and votes of delegates who elected him their 2013 Governor.

Parsons, the son of Jennifer and Bruce Parsons, attended Cumberland County High School. He has two brothers, Caleb and Trevor, and he is the grandson of Evelyn Parsons and Janet Stone. He served as captain of the basketball team and participates in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and as a reader volunteer for young students. He plans to pursue an education and career in business.

Parson's campaign speech to all delegates focused on his core beliefs.

"I am a man of faith," Parsons began. He talked about conquering fear and shaking knees through his belief in God. "I have your backs," he told delegates, whom he referred to as brothers. "I am a man trying to listen to the voice of the people and labor to get that voice heard."

Parsons says he enjoyed campaigning, and his favorite part was just stopping people and starting conversations. It was a new experience and one that stretched the limits of what he knew he could do.

"Here I learned that you can have success if you open your heart to people and if you speak with genuine concern," Parsons said. "Building friendships has been the best part of my experience."

AMERICAN LEGION

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic, mutual-help, war-time veterans organization. A community-service organization which now numbers nearly 3 million members -- men and women -- in nearly 15,000 American Legion Posts worldwide. These Posts are organized into 55 Departments -- one each for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico, and the Philippines.

The American Legion's national headquarters is in Indianapolis, Indiana, with additional offices in Washington, D.C. In addition to thousands of volunteers serving in leadership and program implementation capacities in local communities to the Legion's standing national commissions and committees, the national organization has a regular full-time staff of about 300 employees.

