

JOE MARUZZI  
WALTER GEISS

## OUTLINE AMERICAN LEGION PRESENTATION

American Legion, OLATHE  
POST 153

### 1. Background

- a. Post WW1, in Paris – AL chartered by Congress in 1919 as “a patriotic organization for benefits for those serving in the military” during ‘the war to end all wars’. Historically had the lead in the national discussion on benefits for all veterans’ service organizations. There are currently nearly two million members representing 12000 posts in the United States.
- b. By 1921, there were 347 Posts and 22000 members in Kansas. There are now 276 Posts and 21000 members in the State.
- c. The membership of the Legion has been decreasing steadily in the past few decades and thus its ability to serve its veterans as effectively.

### 2. Discussion: Typical Activities

- a. Many communities rely primarily on the Legion Posts for much if not all certain non-profit sector support. These facilities are aging and becoming more costly to maintain, particularly with waning membership.
- b. As memberships dwindle and Posts are closing across the State, it is ever more critical to ensure to provide a State infrastructure that supports continued operational success from a business standpoint. Kansas Legions are at a major disadvantage to most states in that it has archaic laws limiting access to non-members for many of its social and commemorative activities. To wit, only members and their own guests may partake of alcoholic beverages in the Club Room of Legion Posts. The Clubroom is usually a restaurant lounge setting where small social events are typically held.
- c. Most Posts have much larger Halls and outdoor facilities that are not legally able to serve alcoholic beverages to non-members. Even non-profits go elsewhere to hold major events because of

this prohibition. The loss of revenues is truly devastating to our ability to meet our aging Posts ever increasing operating costs as well as to attract new members.

- d. Typically, Olathe Post 153 facilities upkeep for the past two years include: HVAC, Kitchen exhaust, roof repairs, parking lot repairs, clubroom, hall, shed, pavilion painting, etc. At this rate, we will not be able to keep the doors open for more than another 2 years. Many Posts are in similar or even more dire situations.