

NATIONAL AMVETS RIDERS



Long Range Plan (LRP)

Five-year strategic plan 2016

AMVETS Riders Strategic Plan Index

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2016 AMVETS spring National Executive Committee in Washington DC, the Long Range Planning committee was formed by the AMVETS Riders NEB from the direction of RNP6, National President Don Cox. It was determined that it was time to embark upon a major Long Range Plan (LRP), to move beyond just operating year to year. The member appointed to chair the committee is the National 2nd Vice President. He will have the discretion to appoint committee members as needed to accomplish this goal of creating and maintaining a living document that may be amended by the NEB at the discretion of the membership. Out of that discussion, President Don Cox charged our National officers to facilitate the process. This was the first, to my knowledge, that the AMVETS Riders has ever attempted to do a comprehensive LRP, engaging all national officers and with an eye to synthesizing an operational relationship with the AMVETS, Ladies Auxiliary, and Sons of AMVETS.

This LRP developed with input from our members, strategy sessions with our NEC, and guided by our Long Range Planning Committee, will become our baseline for guiding the development of our annual operational plans as we move forward over the next five years. As with all plans, this is a starting point from which to deviate. It will also serve as our marketing and Brand awareness document to share with potential funders.

All of this effort brings us here, to take action on a long overdue organizational responsibility, to adopt a visionary LRP. We are respectfully asking that each of you continue to give your genuine, deliberate and thoughtful consideration as we work together to create a new direction for a dynamic Veterans Service Organization that will continue to meet the demands of all generation of veterans. The challenge is not changing our image, we actually have to move beyond our comfort zone, our comfortable circle of older friends, and embrace younger members who are perfectly capable of assuming leadership roles that will take the AMVETS Riders into the future, remaining relevant in the service of this nation's veterans.

LRB/LRS,

National Executive Committee
2015-16

AMVETS Riders MISSION STATEMENT

We the AMVETS Riders are a dedicated and patriotic group of motorcycle riders who hold true to an unwavering respect for our Nation, our Flag, and our Military...past, present and future.

We are committed to the freedom of this Nation, and to provide community service and fellowship, and to preserve and support the aims and goals of the AMVETS National organization.

AMVETS Riders GOALS and OBJECTIVES

1. This Organization is formed for furthering the Aims and Purposes of AMVETS.
2. Be positive and assertive in forming Chapter and Department Riders.
3. Be active in support of all our Veterans and Communities through fund raising and volunteer work.
4. Increase the number of Departments to establish a true national coverage and responsiveness to the current member demographics.
5. Diversify and expand revenue streams.
6. Fully develop and expand AMVETS Riders Service Program.
7. Modernize the database and forms to become completely integrated and digital.
8. Create and implement a Silver Helmet Award for outstanding Veteran support to be awarded at the annual Silver Helmet Award ceremony in Washington DC.
9. Become best known for our Leadership and Service impact; as a motorcycle organization that makes a difference for our nation's heroes.
10. See an annual membership increase of 10% in the Chapters and Nationally.

SUMMARY

The AMVETS Riders Strategic Plan is focused on the long-range organizational mission, and goals and leaves the detailed annual planning to the staff who conducts the daily activities of the organization. The staff develops the annual and deliberate operational plan, including the budget, which is required to implement the guidance from the Long Range Plan. The LRP is the baseline for that exercise.

The LRP does not authorize any specific actions or expenditures. The budget for each year must still be approved annually by the AMVETS Riders Finance Committee and the NEC. Any actions to change the organizational structure based on LRP recommendations would still require adherence to the CBL and/or the appropriate actions to modify the CBL. AMVETS Riders must be transparent and work towards improving the organization and that requires Loyalty, Respect, dialogue, change and commitment to the Mission.

The Strategic Plan covers a five-year time line and is reviewed and reported on to the officers and NEC by the Long Range Planning Committee. Annually, the plan is reviewed and adjusted as necessary based on achievements and changing circumstances.

Essential to our success is:

Increasing and retaining membership and enhancing our Chapters and Departments to speak with one voice as advocates of veterans.

Developing the programs and services to meet the needs of all segments of our membership while demonstrating to all veterans the benefits of an AMVETS and AMVETS Riders membership.

Continually improving and expanding our communications that will enhance our role as the leader in effective veteran advocacy.

Ensuring adequate financial resources to support AMVETS Riders goals and objectives as outlined in this Long Range Plan.

STRATEGIES BY AREA: ADMINISTRATION

BACKGROUND

Administration is the main function of the National AMVETS Riders Officers. Our membership numbers have been inaccurate as a result of database neglect by Chapters and Departments not submitting Dues remittance forms in a timely manner, if at all till the next dues cycle. An archaic payment and application structure we have used for years without update. The HQ, which should be managing all programs, needs current up to the minute information.

Fund raising for the National Riders has been effective for the most part to offset admin cost such as National officer travel. In the past the National 2nd Vice was in charge of fundraising. Then after the 2015 Convention, the Immediate Past National President took on the role of fundraising. Fund raising is currently working but with the history of some past Presidents not staying engaged raises the question of do we need a committee or co-chair?

Key administrative positions within National Riders are paramount to the organizations success. With limited budgets, these key positions are relying on their personal computers which may be out of date or prone to viruses due to having to pay for their own.

The National Secretary currently keeps in her possession, multiple boxes and filing cabinets with paper files, past DRF's, Charter Applications...etc., If something catastrophic would happen to those file cabinets and boxes, the entire AMVETS Riders history would be lost.

CURRENT SITUATION

Over the past several years, we as a staff have looked to trim the budget down to the bare essentials and reduce the cost of administration for the members; however, you can only cut so far until you become ineffective. At some point there needs to be an investment in the organization and infrastructure in order for the organization to move to the next level.

We should use our strategic plan for the roadmap ahead and then year by year fund the objectives that will take us to the execution of the plan. Not, create a budget without any goals in mind, approve the budget and then decide what we can do. A Long Range Plan eliminates those problems and allows a budget, based on objectives and goals, to be developed in support of the annual operational plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current way of submitting DRF's and revalidations are archaic and rely on the USPS. In 2016 a trial was conducted with the Riders Department of Missouri that was completely digital. Payments were made through a third party pay system and seemed to work well. This system of digital, online reporting of DRF's and revalidations should be introduced to the Departments and Chapters without departments for the 2017 dues year. Full implantation should be completed within three (3) years, by the dues year 2020.

Fund raising for the National Riders should be a group effort pushed by the entire NEC to include the Department Presidents. The Immediate PNP should remain as the chair for fundraising but there should also be a co-chair to ensure National coverage and continuity. The National Treasurer is by default involved due to having to receive and distribute funds, so the National 2nd Vice President should work closely with the PNP on fund raising. Full implementation should be completed within one (1) year, by convention 2017.

We as an organization have survived on one aging laptop owned by the National Riders, it is time to incorporate line items in the budget for current laptops or tablets, owned by the National Riders, with updates for the National Secretary, National Communication Officer, and National Publications Officer. These positions keep and file all National records and should be preserved with reliable equipment. The resourcing of a current laptop for the National Secretary should be completed within one (1) year, by Convention 2017. The laptop/tablet for the Communication Officer and the Publications Officer should be completed within one (1) year, by convention 2017.

Currently, National AMVETS Riders requires each Officer to use personal computers to conduct National Riders business related to their position. If a National Officers computer is vulnerable, it hinders that Officer in the charge of their duties. Coverage of Norton anti-virus for ten (10) personal computers is currently available and should be expanded to all National Officers.

Self-insurance by the National Riders for computers used by the National Officers should be built into the budget to cover catastrophic events to ensure that the Officer has the ability to complete his/her charged duty. This coverage would be on a case by case event and discussed by the NEB to repair an Officers computer.

Because of the vulnerability of personal computers and paper files, an on-line digital storage should be utilized for all files related to and accessed by National Officers. Within one (1) year, an on-line storage site should be investigated and approved for use, by Convention 2017 National Riders should be utilizing the on-line storage. Within three (3) years, ALL National Riders paper files should be converted to a digital format and installed into the on-line storage.

Summary of recommendations:

One year;

- A) Introduction of digital Dues remittance for to the Department level and Chapters without Departments.
- B) Fund raising by IPNP expanded to include The RN2V and involves all National Officers.

- C) Purchase of up to date laptop/tablet for National Secretary, anti-virus for all national officers.
- D) Tablet for the Communication Officer and the Publications Officer should be issued.
- E) Begin Officer computer self-insurance by line item budget. Any funds not utilized, rolls over and added to the next year's line item until a cap is reached as determined by NEC.
- F) Investigate, chose, and begin utilizing on-line storage for all Riders National files.

Three year;

- A) Full implementation of digital format submissions of DRFs' and revalidations by all Departments and Chapters.
- B) All National Riders files fully digitized and imputed into on-line storage with all National officer access.

STRATEGIES BY AREA: COMMUNICATIONS

BACKGROUND

Remaining significant and achieving greater national influence is more than simply telling the world about the AMVETS Riders great work. It's about our ability to play an active and impactful role both nationally and locally in addressing the emerging and future issues facing veterans. It's the "What's in it for Me?" and addressing the "What's against my best interests?". Enhancing the quality of life and empowering the success of our veterans, their families and the communities in which they live is our value proposition for our membership and their retention. AMVETS Riders, nationally, must provide Department and Chapter level support that will culminate in vibrant and effective services and opportunities at the local level.

CURRENT SITUATION

We have to break the traditional veterans organizational structure by being seen embracing the future locally within our communities, or Chapters will go away.

The "culture" of tomorrow's national landscape is highly complex and competitive, much faster paced and considerably more challenging for our members especially due to the plethora of Veteran oriented motorcycle organizations all vying for a piece of the veteran landscape. Our younger members will join AMVETS Riders because of our value proposition in bettering their lives, not just because it is the patriotic thing to do. Young members have specific demands and

they are the most connected generation in history via social media. They want to know what to expect in advance of engaging, and place great value in trust. They require transparent, honest information that is as personal as possible. They want to know exactly what they are paying for and what they will receive in return. Whether nationally or locally, AMVETS Riders must align and incorporate programs, services and support into the mix that not only fulfill our mission of service to all American veterans and the communities in which they live but opportunities that younger veterans are attracted, that meet their needs and afford them the opportunity to immediately engage. Dynamic programs that are family friendly, structured to capitalize on their immediate need to demonstrate their capabilities, including their savvy social media skill and mission mindset.

We must cut through the chaff of the competition (both the legitimate and well-intentioned, as well as the sharks and predators) to fulfill a specific direct engagement niche and impactful brand recognition all across America.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Revise and update the AMVETS Riders brand to realign with a renewed value proposition (e.g., our Leadership, Advocacy and Service)

Revamp our communications tactics from a traditional press release-centric mindset to a marketing and public relations-centric approach integrating new and social media. Within one (1) year, we develop a newsletter to be distributed quarterly from the NEC. Within three (3) years, develop on the National website, a way for members to add their e-mail to receive National Publications and updates.

Revise our National communications strategy and approach. The National AMVETS Riders should develop a professionally produced video that can be mass produced on DVD's and placed on the National website as a promotional and recruiting tool. This production should be completed within three (3) years.

One possibility is in five years we might be in a position to produce a television commercial to be broadcast nationally.

Summary of Recommendations:

One Year;

Develop a quarterly digital newsletter

Three Year;

Develop a way for members to add email to National web-site to receive Pubs and updates.

Develop and produce a recruiting and promotional video.

Five year;

Investigate the possibility of producing a television commercial.

STRATEGIES BY AREA: DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND

BACKGROUND

During the 2016 NEC, a discussion was brought up on how do we get more recognized by the AMVETS. The NEB had decided that we must put our foot in the door and let them know how vital we are to the organization. Our Membership, Programs and compliance with federal tax regulations are at a higher percentage than our parent organizations. We now have Riders in ALL levels of the AMVETS organization and with the contacts that come these positions must be used to expand our "Brand" to not only be recognized by the AMVETS, but nationwide as the premiere Riders organization. New Chapters and Departments are paramount to the growth the National AMVETS Riders

CURRENT SITUATION

At this point in our growth, it is past time to come together. We must look alike, act alike, and project ourselves as the premier motorcycle veterans' organization in the United States. With the writing of the unified By-Laws that will encompass the same Constitution and By-Laws from the top down is a good start but we must do more to improve our image and get our "Brand" out there. One of the topics discussed was being included in the AMVETS annual Silver Helmet awards. The Idea was presented to AMVETS Commander Jim Pidgeon and he received it very well and approved the idea. Much discussion was focused on what our award would be?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approval of a Unified By-laws is paramount to moving to the next level. It will be incumbent upon National and the Departments to set the example and enforce the uniform codes to the Chapters. If we take pride in our uniforms, then the Chapters will. The Unified By-laws will be in effect within one (1) year at the Chapter / Department level and should be fully compliant within three (3) years, 2019.

The research involved in presenting a Silver Helmet award will be long and tedious. We as a Riders nation need to discuss our award. Some suggestions are “Volunteerism for our troops”, “Military entertainment support” and “Veteran support with motorcycle”. These are mere suggestions but we should do the research and have a solid plan to approach AMVETS with our award proposition. This plan with requirements should be in place in one (1) year, by convention 2017, and our implantation with funding to be completed WITHIN three (3) years.

Currently our CBL allows a state with three (3) Chapters and 50 members to form a Department. We as National should target those states that have at least three Chapters and engage with them to foster an environment that the Chapters realize the relevance and importance of having a Department as the Department leadership should be the respective product knowledge experts in their respective positions. With our current rate of growth, I don't believe it impossible to have another Department within one (1) year, currently Pennsylvania is eligible. Within three (3) years, have one more and in five (5) years have another one for a total of 12 Departments at the end of the five-year period.

Summary of Recommendations:

One Year;

Unified By-Laws in effect at the Chapter and Department level.

Plan with requirements for the development of a Silver Helmet award.

One additional Department for a total of 10.

Three Year;

Chapters and Departments fully compliant with Unified By-Laws.

Full implementation with funding of an AMVETS Riders Silver Helmet award.

One additional Department for a total of 11.

Five year;

One additional Department for a total of 12.

STRATEGIES BY AREA: FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

BACKGROUND

The National Treasurer has evolved to an Accounting department, the Treasurer currently focuses on supporting the daily needs of AMVETS Riders National Headquarters with daily, monthly and annual non-profit accounting support. This is a lean department that relies on a hands-on Controller. When necessary, we utilize the services of outside consultants for issue resolution or investigation. Annual audits have been conducted by National Executive Committee members at the annual convention and as per a resolution at the National convention in Birmingham, Alabama 2015, an external audit is mandated.

CURRENT SITUATION

This position will evolve with the organization. Currently, the National Treasurer is not only responsible for the day to day operation and accounting of the National Riders but he is also responsible for the pay outs of the all the fund raising activities. The National Treasurer utilizes a Finance committee for an annual review of the financial records at the National convention and an external audit is being investigated on frequency and cost. Overall improvements in any scenario include reducing manual transactions and automating as many manual processes as possible. Starting within one year, we would start setting aside a fund by line item for the production of promotional items listed in communications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the current directive of an external audit to be performed, the recommendation is to perform an external audit whenever a new National President takes office.

Within one (1) year, the finance committee should begin setting aside funds for the production of promotional items listed under the communications strategy.

In three (3) years the National Riders should have enough saved to begin production of the promotional video/DVD.

In five (5) years, the National AMVETS Riders should be working towards the production of a television commercial, this can be enhanced with the recruitment of nationally branded sponsors.

Summary of Recommendations:

One Year;

An external audit should be performed with each incoming National President.

Begin setting aside funds for promotional items

Three Year;

Funding of promotional video/DVD

Five Year;

Working towards funding the production of a television commercial

STRATEGIES BY AREA: MEMBERSHIP

BACKGROUND

Database

The design of the membership roster is an excel spread that has limited access of three National Officers. The membership of Chapter and Department structure of the AMVETS Riders is tracked in our database. The structure of AMVETS Riders with its Chapters and Department leadership is reflected in the database. Often times, the National roster doesn't match Department and Chapter Rosters because of Chapters and Departments failing to submit paper DRFs' to Departments in a timely manner. Again, we are depending on the USPS and willingness of members to provide their information in a timely manner.

Membership

Recruiting Membership initiatives have historically come from the field. The Chapter members throughout the country are the main drivers of membership. Departments have supported recruiting and retention initiatives at Chapters through membership awards and a programs reporting. Membership in The AMVETS Riders has essentially been on a steady incline due to the addition of new Chapters but many gains are offset by the loss of Chapters, non-renewals and deceased members. Historically the core numbers have been inflated by the one-year grace period granted after an annual membership expires. The grace period essentially carries the member for one year after the membership expiration date.

Riders Membership initiatives that met with moderate success include awards at Department conventions to Chapters with greatest growth, greatest retention or most members. Chapters and Depts. have requested further introductive membership initiatives.

HQ is also supporting Chapter-recruiting initiatives by providing no cost professional brochures and handouts.

Membership is the responsibility of the Riders National 1st Vice President. The work overflow was delegated to other National staff and the accuracy of the dataset increased but at the time expense of now three Officers verifying input.

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

Infrastructure is on the path to total reliance on digital tools. The experimental transition has started at the Department of Missouri and we are realizing the time savings garnered by e-transaction, e-membership and e-recruiting. As we move to centralized data entry system based on an on-line storage site, membership personnel levels are adequate but require assistance during the annual database turnover (revalidation). The approach requires an overall program understanding to answer the questions posed by leaders as they grapple with managing member rosters in a digital environment. The digital transition will require hands on working period of about a year or two to understand the basic structural interactions.

Membership

As we transition to the next generation of members willing to engage with the AMVETS Riders, we will see the age models shift. They tend to be independent digital thinkers. Our challenge is to be or facilitate expertise in areas that speak to their needs, comradery enhancement and opportunities to learn. AMVETS Riders National and Department 1st Vice Presidents would need be perceived as the product expert for the on-line transition.

We will continue efforts to shape our message through our website and Facebook e-venues to engage members in areas of interest that may lead to affirmation of why we joined this organization to begin with; **Loyalty, Respect and Brotherhood.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated, the expired members and their information is carried for one year on the national data base spread sheet. Within one (1) year, a second excel spread sheet should be created to retain the expired member's information and the members transferred to the second list once their membership has expired.

Within one (1) year, the Membership committee should develop a membership drive. Chapter and Department awards should be developed, and consider offering all active duty Military, National Guard and Reserve members still enlisted, a free membership.

By year three (3) all Departments should be compliant with the e-filing of DRF's and revalidations.

By year five (5) all Chapters and Departments should be fully compliant on the e-filing and paper documents should only be accepted on a case by case basis.

Summary of Recommendations:

One Year;

Second spread sheet for expired members.

Membership committee should recommend and develop a membership drive

Free membership to all active duty, current National Guard and Reserves.

Three Year;

Departments fully e-file compliant.

Five Year;

All Chapters and Departments e-file compliant.

STRATEGIES BY AREA: PROGRAMS

BACKGROUND

Quality Programs equal membership and membership retention. Riders have specific demands and they are the most connected generation in history via social media. They want to know what to expect in advance of engaging, and place great value in trust. They require transparent, honest information that is as personal as possible. They want to know exactly what they are paying for and what they will receive in return. It is the same for programs, AMVETS Riders

must incorporate programs into the mix that not only fulfill our mission of service to all American veterans and the communities in which they live but programs that younger members are attracted, programs that meet their needs and afford them the opportunity to immediately engage.

Riders seek dynamic programs that are family friendly, structured to capitalize on their immediate need to demonstrate their capabilities, including their savvy social media skill and mission mindset. Younger members are not looking for smoke filled canteens where older veterans sit talking about the old days that have few similarities to their recent experiences.

Programs reporting have identified numerous programs being conducted at the Chapter level that do not enhance or promote veterans causes and this is a concern. Members who are attracted to AMVETS Riders and join because their interests align with AMVETS Riders stated objectives of assisting veterans will soon become disillusioned if all our posts offer is a place to socialize. AMVETS Riders, at that point, becomes just another social venue. We all need opportunities to socially interact and there are many of them available. Socialization should be the by-product of an active AMVETS Riders Chapter that is truly engaged in service to veterans, not the sole purpose for existing. In Addition, younger members, that we must attract, need much more than just another social opportunity, they want to continue to serve and make a difference. They also want opportunities to do that not only with fellow Riders, but with their families.

CURRENT SITUATION

Programs are reported and tracked via a user-friendly online reporting system. For the reporting year 2015, the AMVETS Riders reported \$6.3 million in programs values with 89% of the Chapters reporting; that means that about 11% or 15 plus Chapters did not report any program activity. In the bigger picture, the AMVETS, with 185,000 members, reported \$27 million in programs values. The AMVETS Riders reported 27% of the AMVETS reporting with only 1.7 % of the members. Clearly the AMVETS Riders are the movers and shakers of the AMVETS organization at the local level. But we must not rest on our laurels and we MUST remember that we are AMVETS first. A successful Chapter will not only have great programs, they must also be involved with their Post and make it successful also. Without the Post, you have no Chapter.

National AMVETS Riders have historically donated \$2 of every members' National dues to a charity of the memberships choice by vote. In the past, some feelings have been hurt because their charities have not been picked, and justifiably so. During the spring 2016 NEC in Washington D.C., the Riders NEB discussed one permanent solution that fit the requirement of giving back to the Riders Nation. We discussed awarding five (5) \$2000 scholarships a year. These scholarships would only be awarded AMVETS Riders or their immediate family. The

definition of immediate family will be further defined in a separate document along with the criteria for the awarding of the scholarships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The finalization and implementation of the scholarship program should be completed within one (1) year, with the first of the scholarships being awarded at the National convention 2017.

Develop a complete training syllabus and alternative delivery venues including online/webinar availability to be completed within three (3) years.

With the new training tools, 100% reporting by all Chapters is possible within three (3) years.

Revamp the National Programs Awards and reward Chapters and Departments that report and maintain 100% reporting with at least two events a year for two consecutive years. This qualification should fall under the "Quality Chapter" award with the Department and/or Chapter 2nd Vice being awarded a gold star pin to be worn on the vest and be implemented within three (3) years.

In Five (5) years, we as a Riders Nation should strive to match AMVETS programs reporting.

Summary of Recommendations:

One Year;

Complete training syllabus and alternative delivery venues including online/webinar.

Finalization and implementation of the scholarship program.

Three Years;

Complete training syllabus and alternative delivery venues including online/webinar.

100 % reporting by all Chapters.

Implantation of a "Quality Gold star pin" for 2nd Vices reporting 100% for two consecutive years.

Five Years;

Match AMVETS Programs reporting.