

American Legion to host largest PA Boys State program in recent memory

Harrisburg, PA – February 15, 2015– The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania opened applications today for the 2015 session of Keystone Boys State (KBS), a weeklong civic leadership program held at Shippensburg University. This program has grown over the last 10 years, picking up a number of Governor School students, and will approach 300 KBS citizens from across the state this year. All High School Junior Boys (incoming Seniors) are eligible.

Boys State was founded in 1935 by two Illinois Legionnaires to teach young men about the rights, privileges and responsibilities of American citizens. The program focuses on hands-on participation in simulated city, county and state governments. Operated by students elected to various offices, KBS activities include legislative sessions, court proceedings, intramural sports, law-enforcement presentations, a band and recreational programs. The program has produced such notable alumni as President Bill Clinton, KBS graduate Adm. Jon Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, astronaut Neil Armstrong, noted national news anchor Tom Brokaw, Michael Jordan, Robert Griffin III and entertainer Jon Bon Jovi, among others.

“KBS teaches young men to have pride in their communities and be responsible, engaged citizens. Our alumni go on to be leaders in whatever field they choose to strive in – we have alumni who are doctors, educators, military leaders, athletes, elected representatives, scientists, businessmen . . .” said KBS Director Bob Munhall.

KBS is open to all male Pennsylvania residents who have completed 11th grade and have at least one semester of high school remaining. The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania helps match successful applicants with a sponsoring Legion post so that the program is free for participants.

While the program has grown significantly in recent years, organizers and sponsors say they’re making a special effort to enable more attendance this year. The program is free to the family because the citizen receives a sponsorship/scholarship from his local American Legion Post.

“We know there’s demand beyond what we’ve been able to support in the past. A lot of people think KBS is only for guys who want to go into politics, but that’s far from the case. For one thing, there’s a lot more to the program than that. As we like to say, it’s “a week that shapes a lifetime”, said Darren Fossett, KBS Dean and 2006 alumni. “Plus, it’s just an incredibly fun time – that’s what’s kept me coming back for all these years.”

Each year, two delegates are chosen to participate in the American Legion’s Boys Nation program in Washington, DC, where they build on what they’ve learned at Boys State through participation in a simulation of the U.S. Senate and meetings with Congressmen and the President of the United States. Both delegates receive a \$1,000 scholarship for college. All KBS citizens are also eligible to apply for a \$20,000 scholarship sponsored by The American Legion and the Samsung Corporation.

“Seeing how the federal government works, up close and personal, was just an incredible experience and it was amazing spending a week with 97 of the most talented guys in the country. I’m still in touch with a lot of the guys I met there,” said Tony Salvatori, 2014 KBS Boys Nation delegate.

Openings are available at the 2015 KBS, which will be held June 21-27 at Shippensburg University for 300 citizen delegates. Interested individuals can apply online through the website of the American Legion Department of Pennsylvania (<http://pa-legion.com/programs/student-programs/keystone-boys-state/>). Applications are due to the American Legion by May 15th.

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