



# VETERANS

## LET YOUR VOICES BE HEARD

A GUIDE TO HOSTING AND PROMOTING YOUR  
**SYSTEM WORTH SAVING**  
TOWN HALL MEETING

THE AMERICAN LEGION



## SYSTEM WORTH SAVING INTRODUCTION

This media kit is designed to help local posts and departments of The American Legion successfully promote System Worth Saving visits and town hall meetings in their VA health-care communities. These events are excellent opportunities to build public awareness through the media about The American Legion and its advocacy on behalf of veterans and their families.

American Legion-coordinated SWS visits and town hall gatherings through the years have helped veterans gain unobstructed access to VA care, voice concerns about quality and timeliness of care, receive earned benefits that were caught in the backlog, and hold VA management and staff accountable to their mission.

This SWS guide and materials aim to bring to these special events the most important ingredients: veterans and their families.

Among the helpful resources offered here to promote your local SWS visit and town hall gathering are:

- A timeline to help guide you through the promotion process.
- Templates you can customize and update with local information about your SWS event, to augment separate releases from National Headquarters to local media. *(It's OK to duplicate efforts because the goal is to increase external outreach via local/city/state media contacts.)*
- A message points sheet to provide you with talking points for interviews with local media.
- Recommended Facebook and Twitter posts that can be used at the state and local levels. If you tag **@AmericanLegion** in your posts, national staff will gladly repost or retweet your message, drawing more attention to your event.

Visit [www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/resources](http://www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/resources) to download these templates.

If you have questions, or want to provide feedback about this media kit, please contact any of the following American Legion national staff members:

**Roscoe Butler**  
Deputy Director  
VA&R Division  
[rbutler@legion.org](mailto:rbutler@legion.org)

**Edwin Thomas**  
Assistant Director  
VA&R Division  
[ethomas@legion.org](mailto:ethomas@legion.org)

**Henry Howard**  
Deputy Director  
Media &  
Communications  
[hhoward@legion.org](mailto:hhoward@legion.org)

**Holly Soria**  
Visual Media Manager  
Media &  
Communications  
[hsoria@legion.org](mailto:hsoria@legion.org)

Thank you for your dedication in making your System Worth Saving visit and town hall a success.



# SYSTEM WORTH SAVING TOWN HALL MEDIA PROMOTION MILESTONES

## 30 DAYS OUT

**National Headquarters Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division** establishes local venues and a local Point of Contact [**POC**] for the events.

**POC** receives media kit from **National Headquarters Media & Communications Division**

## 14 DAYS OUT

**POC** uses **MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE** to alert local media outlets of upcoming event.

**POC** begins using **SOCIAL MEDIA TEMPLATES, POSTERS AND ADS** to promote upcoming events.

**POC** sends **RADIO PSA TEMPLATES** to local radio stations.

## 7 DAYS OUT

**POC** schedules appearances in media outlets to promote the town hall. Use **MESSAGE POINTS** to aid in creating responses when doing interviews with local journalists.

**POC** uses **PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE** to disseminate information about the event to outside veterans groups or others who may be interested in attending the town hall or help promote the event.

## AT THE EVENT

**POC** uses the **SWS BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST** to get your post or town hall venue ready for event.

## 60 DAYS AFTER VISIT

Find the After Action Report for your local VAMC online at [www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/reports](http://www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/reports) to see the findings from the System Worth Saving Task Force visit. Issue press releases to share the results with local media, local VA and local legislators. Post to social media to share with your community.



## SYSTEM WORTH SAVING BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST

- Place signage outside and inside the venue to direct attendees.

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- Set up a check-in table with a guest sign-in. Greet arrivals and offer brochures and information from VA or other participating groups.

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- Set up a separate information table, staffed with Legion members, to distribute brochures and information about The American Legion and your post. Suggested titles available online at [www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications) include:
  - Annual Report
  - American Legion Charities brochure
  - American Legion Family Membership Applications
  - How We Help
  - Post-9/11 Veterans
  - This is The American Legion
  - Why You Should Belong
  - American Legion Baseball Promotional Booklet
  - Boys State Program
  - Legacy Scholarship Handout
  - Children & Youth Programs
  - Operation Comfort Warriors Booklet - How You Can Help
  - Oratorical Contest Promotional Brochure
  - The American Legion & Scouting
  - Troop Support Pamphlet
  - American Legion Child Welfare Foundation

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- Supply sodas, water, tea, coffee and light snacks for visitors.

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- Have adequate seating available, and be prepared to bring in more seats if the crowd is larger than anticipated.

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- Create a designated, clearly marked area for journalists covering the event. Set up a table with adequate seating, power strips and wi-fi accessibility information.

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- Place a microphone at the podium, and at least one wireless microphone or microphone stand for speakers in the audience. Test AV equipment early in the day well in advance - especially if you are renting or borrowing equipment. Have a backup plan in case a piece of equipment fails.

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- Use flags, podium covers or other items with The American Legion emblem to brand the town hall as an American Legion-hosted event. Members participating in the event should wear caps or other Legion-branded apparel.

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- Offer American Legion Family membership application brochures to guests as they exit the event. VA and Congress listen to The American Legion because we have strength in numbers.



## SYSTEM WORTH SAVING MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

### MEDIA ADVISORY

### **American Legion invites veterans to share VA experiences at (CITY, STATE) town hall meeting**

<b>WHO</b>	The American Legion Department of (STATE)
<b>WHAT</b>	The American Legion invites local media to cover the town hall meeting at (LOCATION) where veterans from around the area will share their experiences with the VA medical center. See contact information below to arrange coverage
<b>WHEN</b>	(TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE)
<b>WHERE</b>	(LOCATION) (STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE)
<b>WHY</b>	The town hall event is one of about 12 such events that the Legion will conduct around the United States this year. The Legion hosts these events to hear feedback from veterans about the quality of health care they receive at their local VA facilities.
<b>HOW</b>	Representatives from The American Legion Department of (STATE), The American Legion National Headquarters office in Washington, D.C., and representatives from VA and members of the (STATE) congressional delegation will listen as veterans share their VA care experience.

#### Contacts:

(LEGION HQ STAFF CONTACT), (PHONE NUMBER), (E-MAIL)

(LOCAL VA CONTACT), (PHONE NUMBER), (E-MAIL)



# SYSTEM WORTH SAVING

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

### SAMPLE FACEBOOK POST

Veterans in the (CITY, STATE) area: The American Legion is hosting a town hall meeting tonight to hear your health care experiences at the (NAME OF VA MEDICAL FACILITY). The town hall meeting begins at (TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE), at (LOCATION), (STREET ADDRESS, CITY). All veterans receiving care at the (NAME OF VA MEDICAL FACILITY) are invited to attend and share their experiences. American Legion representatives and VA staff will be on hand to answer questions.

### SAMPLE TWITTER POST

(STATE) #veterans: Discuss @VeteransHealth care (TIME) (DAY), (MM/DD) at our town hall, (LOCATION)

(ADD TAGS TO APPROPRIATE PARTIES, SUCH AS POST, DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT LEGION TWITTER FEEDS, VA FACILITY FEEDS AND LOCAL LEGISLATORS)



# SYSTEM WORTH SAVING

## SAMPLE RADIO PSA SCRIPTS

### 30-SECOND RADIO PSA

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** invites all (CITY) area veterans to a town hall meeting to discuss their **VA care**.

The meeting will be at (TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE), at (LOCATION)

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** hosts these events to hear feedback from veterans about the quality of health care they receive at their local VA facilities.

Join us at (TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE), at (LOCATION)

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** – Veterans serving veterans, their families and communities since 1919.

### 60-SECOND RADIO PSA

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** invites all (CITY) area veterans and their families to a town hall meeting to discuss their **VA health care**.

The meeting will be at (TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE), at (LOCATION)

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** will be hosting similar events across the United States to hear feedback from veterans about the quality of health care they receive at their local VA facilities.

Join representatives from The American Legion, VA, and local government at (TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE), at (LOCATION)

Call (PHONE NUMBER) for more information. That number, again is (PHONE NUMBER)

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** – Veterans serving veterans, their families and communities since 1919.



## SYSTEM WORTH SAVING MESSAGE POINTS

Over 2 million members make The American Legion the nation's largest and most influential veterans service organization

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As one of our founding pillars, the care and rehabilitation of America's veterans has been at the core of our mission since 1919

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The American Legion helped establish the U.S. Veterans Bureau, the forerunner of VA in 1921. Today, the Legion continues to advocate for adequate funding to cover medical, disability, education and other benefits for veterans and family members

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The American Legion has always believed in the quality of VA care. In 2003, The American Legion System Worth Saving task force initiated a series of visits to VA facilities throughout the nation. At each site, task force members investigate use of resources; note successes, challenges and limitations; and deliver after-action reports of their findings to Congress, VA officials and the public. **[www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/reports](http://www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/reports)**

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In 2014, more than 26 VA health-care facilities were linked to unique cases of mismanagement. The American Legion stood strong behind the mantra that the VA is a "system worth saving" while also calling for the resignations of top VA officials. At this time, the Legion revved up its veterans benefits and counseling centers - which began in 2003 as System Worth Saving visits - and they continue today. The Crisis to Confidence Report is available online. It illustrates the impact The American Legion had during this response to a national crisis. **[www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/crisistoconfidence](http://www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/crisistoconfidence)**

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During System Worth Saving visits, American Legion staff members and volunteers work with VA representatives to personally help veterans with their benefits claims. By connecting VA caregivers directly to veterans, we helped pave the way for a new era of improved VA care.

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The Legion hosts town hall events around the country to hear feedback from veterans about the quality of health care they receive at their local VA facilities.





## SYSTEM WORTH SAVING SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

### **American Legion invites veterans to share VA experiences at (CITY, STATE) town hall meeting**

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Legion, the nation's largest and most influential veterans service organization, invites all (CITY) area veterans and their family members to a town hall meeting to discuss their VA care.

The meeting will be held at (TIME) (DAY), (MONTH/DATE), at (LOCATION) (STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE)

The town hall is one of many such events that the Legion will conduct around the United States this year. The Legion hosts these events to hear feedback from veterans about the quality of health care they receive at their local VA facilities.

Representatives from The American Legion Department of (STATE), The American Legion National Headquarters office in Washington, D.C., and representatives from VA and members of the (STATE) congressional delegation will be in attendance.

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#### **About The American Legion**

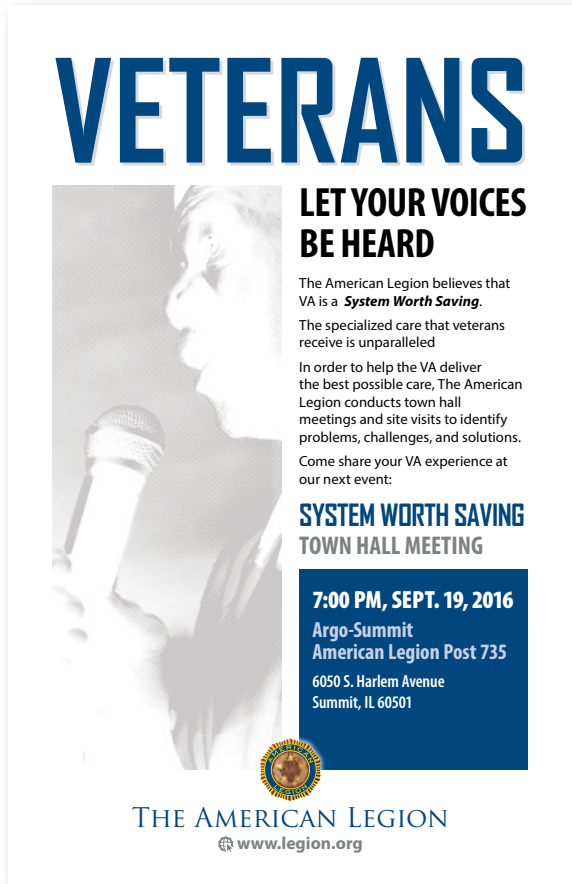
With a current membership of over 2 million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 13,000 posts across the nation.



# SYSTEM WORTH SAVING SAMPLE ADS AND FLYERS

Electronic files for print and digital ads and posters are available for download online.  
[www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/resources](http://www.legion.org/systemworthsaving/resources)

The PDFs have editable fields that can be customized with local event information.



**VETERANS**


**LET YOUR VOICES BE HEARD**

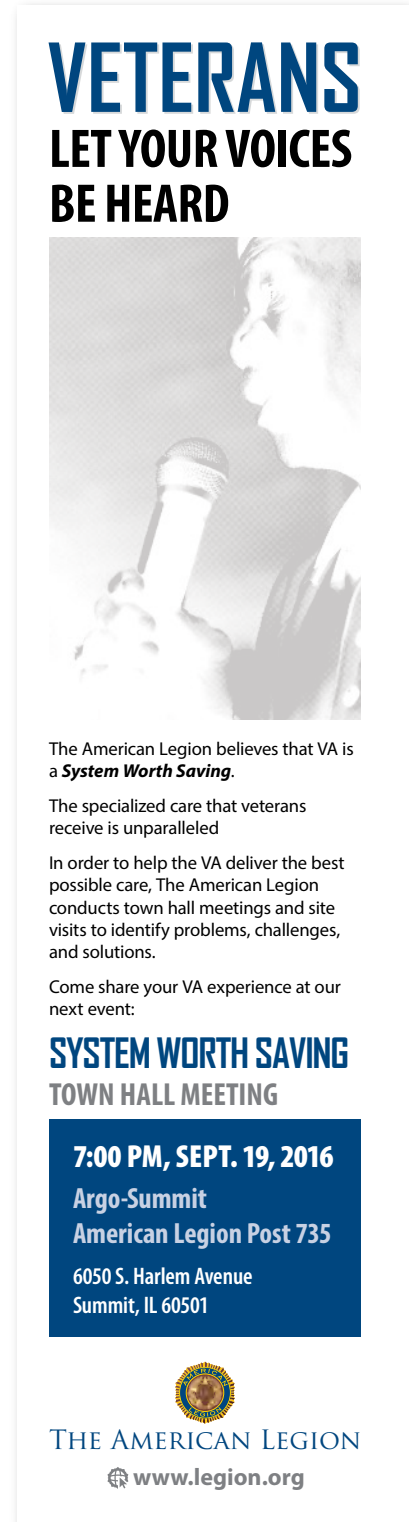
The American Legion believes that VA is a **System Worth Saving**.  
The specialized care that veterans receive is unparalleled.

In order to help the VA deliver the best possible care, The American Legion conducts town hall meetings and site visits to identify problems, challenges, and solutions.  
Come share your VA experience at our next event:

**SYSTEM WORTH SAVING  
TOWN HALL MEETING**

**7:00 PM, SEPT. 19, 2016**  
Argo-Summit  
American Legion Post 735  
6050 S. Harlem Avenue  
Summit, IL 60501

  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)



**VETERANS**


**LET YOUR VOICES BE HEARD**

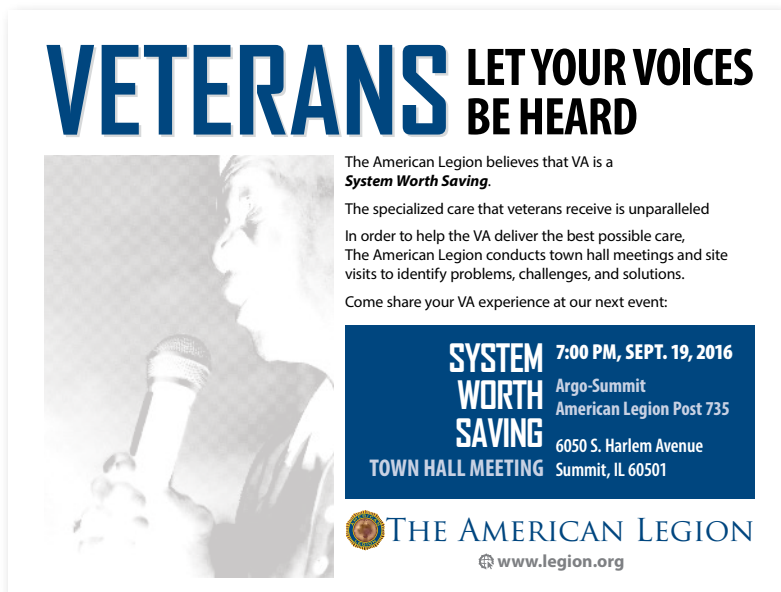
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