



THE AMERICAN LEGION MOUNTAINEER BOYS STATE WEST VIRGINIA'S PREMIERE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

April 1, 2020

Friends of The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State,

It is with a heavy heart, we write to inform you that The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State has been cancelled for 2020. This decision has been the hardest decision to make during one of the hardest times of our lives. Please know this decision was made after thorough deliberation with our program's senior leadership and based on the current national and state-wide effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Legion Auxiliary Rhododendron Girls State, The American Legion Boys Nation, The American Legion National Oratorical Finals, and Junior Shooting Sports Competitions have also been cancelled for 2020. West Virginia becomes the 21st state to cancel Boys State this year.

Since 1936, The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State has been West Virginia's Premier Leadership Academy, and this is officially the 3rd time in her history that the program has been cancelled. It hasn't been since the food rationing of WWII that she has stepped aside for the safety of West Virginia's youth. This would have been the 83rd American Legion Mountaineer Boys State.

The health, safety and security of our citizens, staff and many volunteers remain our primary consideration. Throughout West Virginia, educators are working diligently to continue to engage students through unplanned and unprecedented distance learning opportunities, it seemed unfair to ask them to continue with the nomination and selection process. American Legion Posts are closed, recruitment and fund-raising activities are also suspended. Many of our sponsors throughout the state are also closed or are out of work due to being under our state's stay-at-home order. We appreciate all our volunteers, alumni, veterans and sponsors and encourage you to continue to remain safe and follow the guidance of your local health officials.

ALMBS would like to encourage all completed 2020 applications to be immediately transmitted to The American Legion Department of West Virginia without application fees. Our program would like to provide official notification to those who have already enrolled and were planning their attendance. ALMBS will be refunding posts and sponsors for any payments already received and deposited.

Many questions remain and we will get details out as they become available. We would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to all of the school personnel, American Legion comrades, sponsors and our American Legion Mountaineer Boys State staff and family for all of their efforts put forth towards the 2020 program. ALMBS is truly blessed with your support and we look forward to working with you as we immediately begin planning for the 2021 session.

If you have immediate questions that need to be answered, please contact us via email at almbs@wvboysstate.org. The American Legion Department of West Virginia Headquarters is currently closed to the public and operating remotely with limited resources at this time. We will respond as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,
Jim Davis, Director
Robbie Robinson, Assistant Director