

75th anniversary of State honors history of program

By **TODD VOGTS**
Media Counselor

Staters arriving for the 2012 session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas happen to be part of a milestone-year for the program.

This session marks the 75th anniversary of the program in Kansas.

Boys State Director of Development Thane Chastain said it is an exciting time.

"Anything that reaches this number of years and has this kind of impact on so many is really significant," he said.

The American Legion Boys State Program began in Illinois in 1935. It was created by Hayes Kennedy and Harrold Card.

Chastain said those two men created it because at the time they saw a disconnect between the youth and democracy. Boys State aimed to reconnect the two.

Kansas got on board shortly after the inception, becoming the 5th chartered program in 1937.

So for this historical marker, Chastain said the goal of everyone involved is to honor the 75th anniversary while still focusing on providing a good experience for all the Staters.

"It's about showing respect for the people who got us to this point," he said. "We honor their memory by carrying on something that was important to them."

The anniversary is being honored in several ways, Chastain said.

A 75th anniversary logo was commissioned, and it has been placed on the backs of all the Stater and staff T-shirts. Also, a commemorative ring was designed, and it can be purchased through Jostens.

Special speakers will be making ap-



Staff Photo

VOLUNTEERS serving as the 2012 Boys State counselors listen to training presentations in preparation of the arrival of Staters.

pearances because of the anniversary.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback will be on hand, and the American Legion Director of Americanism, Children and Youth Jill Druskis will be present. Druskis is the person who oversees all Legion youth programs, such as Legion Baseball, Cadet Law and Boys State.

Special guests Andy Post from Minnesota Boys State and Mike Plunkett of Missouri Boys State will be here as well.

"Having these guests is an important thing," Chastain said.

Chastain said Staters are more aware and connected to the world around them thanks to the proliferation of technology.

This has set Kansas Boys State on a path and made it more sophisticated. A big step in this was the development of the computer simulation, which runs the entire state within Boys State.

Bill Mosely was the architect of this computer program, Chastain said.

Mosely's program put in motion

the concept of having Boys State run like the actual State of Kansas with all governmental departments and components being included and working together in the system.

Chastain said Mosely's program allowed everyone to have a job within the simulation.

"His vision is what we're still carrying on today," he said. "Even though we're a smaller organization, we're more agile. Everyone has something to do, and that makes for a better experience."

Instead of being a government camp as it used to be, Kansas Boys State is now a leadership academy.

"It's hard work to be a leader," Chastain said. "The goal is for them to be able to walk away with some real tools they can use to help them improve their lives."

However, the government is still a part of the program.

"The fact is it affects all of our lives," Chastain said. "It is a good model."

Mission First, Never Quit



By SCOTT BLEY
Executive Director

Bley's Bio

Stater Year: 2000

Stater County: King

Years with Boys State: 13

Profession: Music Teacher

Military Service: U.S. Army Reserve

Hometown: McPherson, KS

Fondest Memory of State: When I was a hall coordinator, a bunch of counselors worked up a song for the talent show. My job was to play the drum set part on the tabletop. I think you can still find the song on YouTube if you type "Kansas Boys State Cecilia."

Welcome to the 75th session of Kansas Boys State

Welcome to the 75th session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas.

An army of volunteers has dedicated many hours in the off-season to improving various aspects of the program so that each of you has a positive experience.

The theme for the week is "Mission First, Never Quit." Focus on the week. Whatever your job — or mission — is, always keep it in mind and never give up on it.

The fruits of our labors will soon be revealed during the course of this single week.

In short, we are excited that you are here.

I can distinctly remember my first day of Boys State back when I was a delegate in 2000.

I had a lot of feelings bottled up inside me, but excitement definitely wasn't one of them . . . more like uncertainty, confusion and fear.

Many of you are probably experiencing some of those same feelings. Don't worry — you are not alone.

You may be asking yourselves the same questions I asked myself 12 years ago.

What is Boys State? Why am I here? Is this a conspiracy by my parents to get rid of me for a week? Did I get sent here because I failed my

history class?

Unfortunately, I cannot answer those questions for you. Boys State means different things to different people, and, in the end, the reasons that delegates give for being here are as numerous as the delegates themselves.

Regardless of why you are here, the realization is that *you are here*.

Someone back home thought enough of you and your abilities to sponsor your participation in Boys State.

Now each of you is faced with a choice. What will you do with the week you have been given?

A world of opportunities awaits you. You alone must choose how you will spend your week at Boys State.

In the end, you will get out of the week what you put into it.

Will you take an active part in the Boys State simulation and government process? Will you work with one another to solve the problems that confront your cities and counties?

This choice is up to you. We wish you well in your decision. We wish you courage to face your fears. We wish you success for your week at Boys State.

The Staters Union is a designated forum of free speech. The print edition is published every day of Boys State by the Staters Union Staff. It is distributed for no charge throughout Kansas Boys State. All stories pertaining to Boys State within these pages refer to a simulated society, and editorial license may have been used to report the "facts" of such stories. Letters to the editor are encouraged and accepted. Letters must be signed and the writer's county indicated to be considered for publication. All letters are subject to editing for length, legal, grammatical and factual reasons. Letters should be taken to the Staters Union office in the basement of Marlatt Hall (Room 20).

Interested in Journalism **or Reporting?**

Run as your county's delegate for the Media Corps tonight! Only two from each county will be elected. Good luck!

System allows for text polling

By **DUSTIN HERMESCH**
Media Counselor

Who would win in fist fight between a hippopotamus and a crab the size of a hippopotamus?

Who is more likely to win a pie eating contest between Dick Cheney and Britney Spears?

If a Bulldog, a Retriever, a Poodle, and a Lab were playing poker, which one would win?

If you were asked questions such as these what would you answer?

Starting this year, Boys State is implementing a new source of technology to allow everyone a chance at showing their opinion in polled questions such as these.

Generally, the questions will be more applicable to the lives of the Staters this week.

They will cover areas such as, "Who would you choose between the current candidates for governor?"

The question would be asked of Staters, who would then text in their votes.

Staff members would then be able to announce the

results either in real time or on the following day.

The idea for using this technology came about when Coordinator Rick Wohlfarth and Executive Director Scott Bley attended the National Directors Conference.

The the system was showcased by the Boys State of South Carolina.

They had implemented the polling system during their 2011 session and have since devised a way to link the cell phones that they hand out to their Staters with each particular Staters ID.

This will enable South Carolina to take this polling system and use it for voting, when voting for positions such as Governor and Attorney General.

In Kansas, the program will be using this polling system to ask questions to the Staters about issues that come up during the week.

If you would like to conduct a poll via the text messaging system, please contact a member of the media staff.

If you have any other questions about this polling system, please speak to Rick Wohlfarth or Jake Ellis.

Meet Your Boys State Coordinators



Andrew Roozeboom
Program



Josh Cleek
Local Events



Colton Poort
Local Events



Rick Wohlfarth
Departments/PACs



Adam Doyle
IT/Office



Matthew Root
Legislature/State Offices



Tag Wall
Personnel

Staff members receive CPR certification

By **TODD VOGTS**

Media Counselor

Friday morning four Boys State staff members learned vital skills that can help save lives.

Marlatt Hall Coordinator Colton Poort, Legislative Counselor Riley Hall, Legislative Counselor Matthew Brandt and Spigarelli City Counselor Nathan Miller took part in a CPR and First Aid certification class at the Lafene Health Center, located on the campus of Kansas State University.

Personnel Coordinator Tag Wall organized the class, which entailed learning how to properly perform chest compressions, rescue breathing and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

"The main thing is that since we have so many folks and delegates on campus, it is really a strategy to be prepared for any emergency we might have on campus," he said.

Wall said with the heat of summer and the various health conditions of the Staters and the staff, having staff members ready and able to assist if needed is a good idea.

"It's just trying to be prepared," he said.

The four staff members from Friday morning weren't the only ones to get certified. Four other staff members also took the class in another session.

Wall said with these eight certifications it brings the total number of CPR certified staff members to approximately 25.

"We have Staters all over the place," he said. "So whether they are at rec, the residence hall or anywhere in between, they are covered."

Brandt said he saw a lot of value in being certified.

"Having members of the staff have CPR training is a huge step forward to help us ensure the safety of the Staters," he said.



Staff Photo

MARLATT Hall Coordinator Colton Poort practices chest compressions as part of the CPR certification class.

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staff for prices and details.

Marlatt Hall Basement — Room 020

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Facebook: search for "American Legion Boys State of Kansas"

Website: www.ksbstate.org