



Governor Chantel Kidd welcomes 2014 RGS citizens

I'd like to welcome each of you to Rhododendron Girls State 2014.

You have all been given a grand opportunity, one you will likely look back on later in your life.

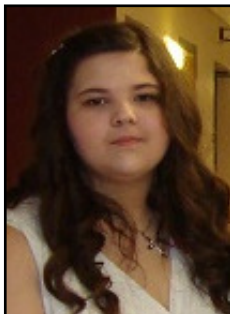
Throughout your week, you will learn many things about this country, its government and its veterans, while also getting to know your fellow delegates better than you would have thought possible before.

While you are here, your communities will be like your family and your friends, both old and new, will encourage you to be the best you possibly can be.

You will learn things that you may not have

known before. It is my deepest hope that each one of you will make the most out of this experience, and reap the benefits.

As your Governor, I will do my best to make sure that everyone enjoys this experience to the fullest, and I look forward to meeting you all at some point, and seeing the great things you will do.



You are all leaders, whether you realize it or not, that is why you were all chosen to be a part of this by your local American Legion Auxiliary groups.

The point of Girls State is to help you fulfill that potential inside of you, so when you return home at the end of the week, you will be able to do greater things than you may have thought possible in the past.

Just remember to enjoy your time here, and I promise this will be one of the greatest experiences of your life. I wish you all well, and I know we have a fantastic week ahead of us!

**Chantel Kidd, 2013
RGS Governor.**

GIRLS STATE SONGS

For she's a Girls State girl
and a girl you ought to know

For she's a Girls State girl not
too fast and not too slow

She's a scholar and a lady and
a girl that men adore

And every time you meet her
you want to meet her more

For she's a Girls State girl
and a girl you ought to -

A girl you ought to - a girl
you ought to know



Dept. President Debbie Fox says: 'Hello'

You have been chosen to attend the 2014 session because someone could see the leader in you.

Maybe it was your school Counselor, your Principal, or maybe an American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Chairman.

No matter which person it was, you are here at Wheeling Jesuit University to participate in one of the most successful Girls State programs in the Nation.

We have had future doctors, lawyers, Congresswomen, and community leaders attend our weeklong program.

No, we cannot take the credit for all their life achievements, but it is just possible that our program nurtured their leadership capabilities.

For 72 years, RGS has welcomed outgoing high school junior girls from all over West Virginia to participate in Americanism, Citizenship, Leadership, and Patriotism programs.

I charge each of you to make the most of our outstanding program.

When you go back to your communities and schools use the skills that you have learned this week.

With your help, our program will live on and on.

So make the most of your week and soak up all the information like a sponge.

Use your lessons in your life and make your sponsor proud that they choose you to attend RGS.



**Debbie Fox, Dept. President,
ALA, Dept. of WV, 2013-2014**

A man without a Girls State
is like a ship without a sail;

It's like a boat without a rudder;
It's like a fish without a tail.

A man without a Girls State
is like a raft upon the sand,

There's only one thing worse
in this universe, and that's a
Girls State, I said a Girls
State, I mean a Girls State
without a man!!!

RHODODENDRON
GIRLS STATE

Rhododendron Girls State was started in 1941 under the sponsorship and direction of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of West Virginia.

Boys State had been started two years earlier by The American Legion.

The first Girls State program started in Illinois and we were one of the pioneers in a citizenship training program for girls.

The program and organization were incorporated under the laws of West Virginia.

A Board of Directors and an Executive Board establishes policies, supervises its direction and promotes its continuance.

Mrs. R.E. Warman of Morgantown was named the first director and with Auxiliary volunteers initiated the program that you will enjoy this week.

Mrs. Warman had been both a Department President and a National Vice President of the Auxiliary.

More than 26,000 have benefited from its training and the annual numbers have grown from 156 to 416 in 2009.

Department Commander Nicholson



FRANK NICHOLSON, DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF WV, 2013-2014

West Virginia Department Commander Frank Nicholson was born and raised in Clarksburg, WV. He graduated from Victory High School in 1967. He served in the U.S. Navy from July 1968 to September 1972 as an Aviation Fire Control 2nd Class Petty Officer, serving one tour in Vietnam aboard the USS Constellation with Attack Squadron VA165.

Frank has been a member of the American Legion for 41 years and is a paid up for life member of Shinnston Post 31. He has held several offices, including one year as Commander, and is currently serving as Finance Officer and Children and Youth Officer for the past thirteen

years. He served a Third District Vice Commander for three years and Commander for four years.

He has been District Oratorical Chairman for the past 13 years. He has served as Department Vice Commander, Assistant Membership Chairman and Membership Chairman. He is the American Legion VAVS representative for the Clarksburg VA Hospital and has been on the Board of Directors for Mountaineer Boys State for 15 years.

Mr. Nicholson is a member of the Loyal Order of the Moose 929 and the Clarksburg VFW Post 573. He and his wife Roxie reside in Shinnston, WV.

Director Sirbaugh says: 'Welcome Citizens!'

Congratulations of being selected to the 72nd session of Rhododendron Girls State! You are among the elite group of outstanding your ladies across our beautiful state that have been chosen by your school and community because of your character, leadership, scholastic achievement, and your love for your country.

Our weeklong program is built around educating our citizens on city, county, and state government through educational classes and mock elections.

In addition, various elective classes, such as leadership and citizenship, enhance our program in hope that you gain an understanding and appreciation for your role as a United States citizen. The week also includes several fun activities for all to enjoy.

It is heard to believe that 35 years ago I was a citizen at RGS. It was one of the most fast paced, informative packed, and activity driven weeks of my life, but it was one I have never forgotten.

I promise that if you take an active part in this week's activities and open yourself up to new experiences, challenges, and opportunities; not only will you have a successful and enjoyable week, you will also establish many new and lasting friendships.

As our theme this year is "Forever on our Minds, Always in our Hearts," please remember all the service men and women who served, or are currently serving, our wonderful country; risking their lives and sacrificing their freedom in order to protect and

maintain the freedom and liberties we take for granted. Our prayers and sincere wishes are sent to all our Americans in uniform today for their safe return home.



MICHELLE R. SIRBAUGH, DIRECTOR



Dr. Thomas says: 'Welcome & enjoy!'

Welcome to what can and will be one of the best weeks of your life.

Rhododendron Girls State is about citizenship, leadership and patriotism.

It provides many of the best and brightest your women of West Virginia with opportunities to learn and grow.

The experiences and the friendships will last a lifetime.

Dr. Rosemary M. Thomas

Nearly 30 years ago I was honored to find myself where you are now and I can say without hesitation that it helped me become the person I am today.

It is a privilege to serve as your assistant director and I look forward to meeting you and working with you throughout the week.

I am certain this will be an amazing session.