



# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

*Elks Care — Elks Share*



## March brings new leadership to our Lodges

The month of March brings us to the close of our Lodge year. Wow, does the time fly!

I hope all the Officers in your Lodge had a successful year in Elksdom. The work that was accomplished this past year is a tribute to your leadership and effort. The torch of authority is now being passed to the new Officers in our Lodges.

Congratulations to all of you who have stepped up to continue the great work in your community and, most of all, your Lodge. I wish you all success in achieving any new goals and successes in the programs for the coming year.

All may not be smooth sailing, but as the captain of the ship, I know you will guide its course to the best of your ability. Don't ever be afraid to ask a question. Utilize your Past



**Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler**  
**BRUCE A. HIDLEY**

Exalted Rulers in your Lodge to assist you. They have been there and can give you excellent advice. Ask them what worked for them—just maybe, this can also work for you. I encourage you to listen to your membership, as someone may have an idea for a fundraising event or Lodge function for all to enjoy. You can and will make a difference in your Lodges and communities by *“Promoting Elksdom With Enthusiasm.”*

As the new leader of your Lodge, it is extremely important to put together a slate of dedicated committee people. Your committee members are the ones who work to make your Lodge great. They are the ones who will be promoting in each of your communities that *“Elks Care — Elks Share.”* As the baseball season has started again, I'll use this analogy: Step up to the plate and hit a home run with all of your Lodge programs. Score that winning run as you run the base paths of Elksdom. **Win, win, win.**

The month of March is also a time when many Lodges participate in St. Patrick's Day. Lodge St. Patrick's Day parties or community parades are celebrated. Please be safe during these

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## Deadlines near for Secretaries

Local Lodge Secretaries are reminded that they must have all membership records for 2022-2023 ready for year-end closeout finalized by 12:00 a.m. PT on **March 31**. Failure to update records can,

**GRAND SECRETARY**  
Bryan R. Klatt

and probably will, cause membership totals to be out of balance in the Chicago Lodge Membership System (CLMS2Web).

Also, the Financial Reporting System (FRS) monthly and year-end financials must be filed by **March 31** [GLS: Section 13.040, 1.(g)], then every third Friday of the month thereafter. A Lodge's failure to comply with the new FRS program can result in fines being assessed. [GLS: Section 13.040, 2.(c)]

The input of required data for the yearly charity report must be provided and submitted by, on, or before **May 1** via CLMS.

## GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

## Learn about Elks' youth programs

By **WILLIAM M. WISEMAN**  
Committee Member

The pandemic has made it difficult for Lodges to promote our youth programs over the past year. With the new year in front of us, we have the opportunity to renew and grow our youth programs. Spring and summer are approaching, so we need to reach out to the children through the schools and parks and recreation facilities to encourage their involvement in our programs.

Now is the time to make your incoming Officers and committees aware of all the Activities Committee programs available to the Lodge.

Our organization sponsors fun youth activities that help all participants to become better individuals. These include such programs as Junior Golf, youth recognition, Youth Week proclamation, Elks JROTC Awards Program, Soccer Shoot, and the Antlers Program. Always

keep in mind the Community Projects Contest with your youth programs.

Our brochures and manuals along with many YouTube videos are available on the updated Grand Lodge Activities Committee website. You will also find a number of forms and certificates available on the website. The videos available are Community Projects Contest, The Activities Committee, Antlers Program, Student Recognition Program, Junior Golf Program, JROTC Award Program, Public Safety Medals of Valor/Service, The Dictionary Project, and the Soccer Shoot Program. The Activities Committee video provides an outstanding overview of our programs and can provide excellent info for the installation of new candidates.

The link to the Activities Committee site is [elks.org/grandlodge/activities/](http://elks.org/grandlodge/activities/). To view the YouTube videos in full screen

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## GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

# Top State Association websites balance visuals, info

By **RANDY J. SNELLENBERGER**  
Committee Member

This year it was my honor to evaluate the State Association Website Contest entries. A total of fourteen (14) State Associations chose to participate. Websites are reviewed for:

**1) Content:** coverage of Grand Lodge and State Association Programs and keeping content current.

**2) Layout:** menus, table of contents, accessibility, and ease of use.

**3) Design:** borders, colors, and overall aesthetics.

**4) Graphics:** overall continuity, window identification, and use of photos and graphics to maintain interest.

**5) Effectiveness in telling the Elks' story:** usefulness to Members, provides pertinent information, and succeeds in giving non-Elks important information about our programs.

Rather than viewing this contest as a competition, it is more an opportunity for State Associations to showcase their websites, provide visibility to the Elks, and duly recognize the hard work and dedication of state membership. All State Associations that participated are worthy of praise and should be congratulated.

The rankings are as follows:

### 5-Star Awards

Arizona	Connecticut
Georgia	Idaho
Kentucky	Louisiana
MD-DE-DC	Mississippi

### 4-Star Awards

Arkansas	Kansas
New Jersey	New Mexico
Washington	

### 3-Star Award

Utah

Website content varied between states. Maintaining current information is always a challenge. Website administrators rely heavily on State Committee Chairs and State Officers to provide the information to keep websites current.

Publishing open content to educate the public and encourage membership is wonderful; however, password protecting sensitive content and Member contact information is prudent. A website calendar could include important dates such as deadlines and Elks holidays to serve as reminders to Exalted Rulers and Lodge Officers and assist in Lodge monthly planning. Other platforms, such as Facebook and email blasts, are often used; however, a well-maintained website can be a resource to membership.

Again, **congratulations** to all State Associations and, hopefully, we can see more participants next year.

## GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

# Informing elected officials about Elks' charitable work

By **JAMES L. SOLANA**  
Committee Member

An important function of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is to assist Lodges and State Associations in promoting positive interaction and ties with federal, state, and local officials and agencies.

It is far more effective if your elected officials know about the Elks and the charitable work we do before we request their support for legislation. There are many ways to do this. We strongly recommend all Lodges to invite their elected officials to Lodge events such as youth banquets, award presentations, Flag Day ceremonies, holiday food basket distributions, and events honoring active military and veterans.

When you invite public officials to your Lodge, treat them with respect. Give them an opportunity to speak if warranted. Seat them with individuals with whom they will be comfortable. Accommodate their schedules. If they need to leave early, let them speak earlier than planned.

State Associations are encouraged to invite state officials or governors to their conventions and events. A State Association should also host open houses in Lodges located in capital cities especially when the legislatures are in session,

exposing all their state's elected officials to what the Elks do at the same time. All state legislators should be invited for refreshments or possibly dinner. Displays featuring the State Association Major Project and Local Lodge programs should be prominently displayed. Qualified Elks should be on hand to answer questions, provide explanations, and speak about our programs and our needs as a private organization. The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee also has an instructional DVD available to help your State Association hold such an event. Ask for it!

All Lodges and State Associations perform amazing amounts of charity for our youth, our special-needs children, our soldiers, our veterans, and those less fortunate. These are the things we are most proud of, the reasons we all joined. So, it's simple, make sure these non-Member public officials know all the great works we do. In other words, **brag about our charity!**

Don't be afraid to give your elected officials the year-end state and national charitable statistics compiled by the Government Relations Committee. The whole purpose of maintaining these records is to publicize the astounding amount of work done by our Order and to make sure our public and elected officials

are well aware of just how important the Elks are to their jurisdictions and constituents. Your local officials surely know the Elks do charitable work, but we guarantee they are not aware of the actual cash value of the charitable work the Elks do. When they see the compiled numbers, they will be astounded. The statistics should be mailed to your public officials, or better yet, publicly presented to them when they visit your Lodge. Remember to invite them often.

We recommend all Members know their local, state, and national legislators (available at [justfacts.votesmart.org](http://justfacts.votesmart.org)) and monitor the bills they support or oppose. Be sure to thank them when they support our interests, even if they are not successful.

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celebrations. I'd like to close with an Irish blessing: *"May your heart be warm and happy with the lilt of Irish laughter, every day in every way, and forever and ever after. May the luck of the Irish be always with you."*

Thank you for all you are doing to make our great Order of Elks the greatest Order in the nation. God bless all of you. God bless our troops, past and present, and most of all, God bless America.

## GRAND LODGE AUDITING & ACCOUNTING COMMITTEE

# Begin preparations now for annual financial reporting

By **WILLIAM J. CHINN, JR.**

**Committee Chairman**

Lodges should begin preparations for closing out the Lodge year financial reporting.

Appendix K of the Grand Lodge Auditing and Accounting Manual contains a comprehensive list of steps that should be completed each year.

There are a few steps that can be accomplished prior to the March 31 year end date. These include:

- Lodge Auditing and Accounting Committee should review the requirements of Section 13.040 of the Grand Lodge Statutes for the Lodge's annual reporting.
- Review prior year financial evaluation and ensure required changes have been implemented.
- Ensure the Lodge's agreement with its Form 990 preparer is signed by both parties.
- Confirm that the preparer will complete all services prior to the

Form 990 due date to Grand Lodge of August 1.

- Prepare for the final physical inventory of Lodge supplies, club, food service and any other inventoriable items.
- Review the most recent Financial Reporting System (FRS) reports received from the District Deputy and verify agreement with the Lodge records. This includes making sure all prior years have been properly reconciled.

As a reminder, all annual reporting is now completed by submitting data into the FRS and uploading the required reports (Comparative Balance Sheet from the Lodge's accounting software and Form 990) using the link on [elks.org](https://www.elks.org). Paper copies of any reports are no longer accepted and should not be mailed to the Area Committee Member.

To assist Lodges in the preparation of the required financial data, the Committee has approved two Excel based aids. There is now an Excel Macro

along with instructions that will simplify the formatting of the monthly csv file submission. In addition, there is now an Excel file that can be used to close out the Restricted Funds at year end. Both the Macro and the Restricted Fund Closing file can be found on [elks.org](https://www.elks.org) under the Lodge Accounting/Financial Reporting/Training area, or using this link:

<https://www.elks.org/grandlodge/auditing/documents.cfm>

All Lodges should review the FRS reports provided by the District Deputy every month to ensure the data in the FRS reconciles to the Lodge's accounting records. If there are discrepancies, now is the time to investigate and resolve these issues. This will assist in allowing for the prompt issuance of the annual Financial Evaluation by the Area Committee Member.

Your Area Member of the Grand Lodge Auditing and Accounting Committee and your State FRS Coordinator stand ready to provide assistance to any Lodge.

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see how your Lodge can work together with them.

Don't forget about more traditional outreach organizations, like Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and AMVETS, to name just a few.

Be aware that younger veterans are less likely to be a part of traditional veterans groups and may be harder to connect with. Groups like the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, The Mission Continues, and Team Rubicon rally younger veterans to meet in their communities for service activities and social gatherings. Check their websites to find the local contact in your area. You can also reach out to student veterans near you. If there is a community college or university in your area, they may have a student veterans group or staff member responsible for veterans outreach.

Finally, work with what you have. Because of privacy laws, many organizations may not be able to share names. They can, however, share needs or ideas. And once your Lodge has built up some trust, they may be more willing to connect you with veterans directly.

Visit the Volunteer Resource Center at [elks.org/vets](https://www.elks.org/vets) for more information.

## Back-to-back gains look possible

By **RICK GATHEN**

**G/L Membership Marketing Manager**

We are in the homestretch of the year—the final numbers for the 2022–2023 Lodge year will be recorded on March 31. We are projecting 88,000 Members will be added to the rolls with lower than average cancellations.

Our new Grand Lodge Billing System continues to grow with 671,000 invoices printed and mailed in January. The billing program has made it easier than ever for people to pay their dues. If this all pans out, we will be in a strong position for the first back-to-back gain in 43 years. Remember: **All gas—no brakes!**

Part of this success is owed to the membership tools available at [elks.org](https://www.elks.org) and [join.elks.org](https://join.elks.org), which provide helpful, positive messages to reach out to new Members and retain the Members we have. However, growth in numbers doesn't come from any one special marketing trick. Instead, it reflects the way that Elks have made their Lodges attractive places for people to join.

We can achieve growth by continuing to be loud and proud about Elksdom, by ensuring that our Lodges are inviting to all visitors, and most importantly, by continuing to be the Best People On Earth.

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mode, click on the selected video title, click on "YouTube" text at the bottom right side of the screen, and then select the full screen symbol.

Do not forget to take advantage of the various program-related grants and appropriations to assist with the expense of your youth programs. Also, remember public relations is very important to all your programs! It is a way to keep the community aware of our good works.

## ENF REMINDER

The ENF's 2022-23 fiscal year closes on March 31, and donations must be in the ENF office by that date to count for the year. Any donations received after March 31, regardless of postmark, will be counted toward the 2023-24 fiscal year.

# Finding veterans in need is a few calls or clicks away

By **MARY K. MORGAN**

Commission Director

“Our Lodge wants to help, but we can’t find any veterans in need.” Sound familiar? Our office fields this question from time to time, particularly in areas without a VA facility nearby. Here’s how to get started.

First, the VA operates thousands of facilities, and not all are hospitals. They run housing facilities for formerly homeless veterans, offsite clinics, benefits offices, and Vets Centers. Many of these facilities, especially Vets Centers, are located away from traditional VA campuses. Contact the staff at these

facilities and ask how the Elks can help.

Additionally, the VA has dozens of outreach programs in each facility, from adaptive sports programs to skills-based classes to financial counseling and more. Keep an open mind, and research where the needs are, even if it means leaving your comfort zone and changing what your Lodge has done in the past.

Then, search online for veterans organizations in your area. There are more than 45,000 veterans nonprofits registered in the United States. There may be some just around the corner that you don’t know about.

You can also search for city, county, regional, or state veterans offices and let them know the Elks are there

to serve veterans in need. Check for veterans meetings and gatherings on community calendars, and ask if you can stop by to discuss the Elks’ support for veterans.

Many large nonprofits, like the Salvation Army, Volunteers of America, and even the YMCA, have programs specifically for veterans, military members, and their families. Reach out to these groups and



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**BRYAN R. KLATT**, Grand Secretary  
Benevolent and Protective  
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**March 2023**

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# Safely discard old meds, e-cigs on Drug Take Back Day

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**

Elks DAP Assistant National Director

Next month, the DEA will be continuing its effort to properly dispose of prescription drugs by holding the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at various locations throughout the nation.

To find a location in your area, go to this website: [apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1](https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1). You may also dispose of electronic smoking devices at the locations, but they do have some rules to follow:

- *DEA will also collect vape pens or other e-cigarette devices from individual consumers only after the batteries are removed from the devices. It is important to stress that the DEA is not responsible for removing the batteries from the devices.*
- *If the battery cannot be removed, individual consumers can check with large electronic chain stores who may accept the vape pen or e-cigarette devices for proper disposal.*
- *Individual consumers may also contact their local hazardous materials management facility to determine if they accept these devices, and for guidance regarding proper disposal.*

ERs should encourage their Members to participate in this successful attempt to properly dispose of medications. It’s better for the environment and makes your community safer.

In other news, the Elks DAP has just wrapped up a very successful media campaign and has set new viewing records with their award-nominated series *Awkward Conversations – Season 2*, featuring Jodie Sweetin and several guests. Efforts are underway for a Season 3, as the DAP and the DEA are currently in the planning stages to bring new and informative videos to teens, parents and schools. Visit the various Elks DAP websites for updates.