



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Finish strong with Elks programs, ENF contributions

The Elks year is winding down, but now is not the time to sit back and relax and ride the wave to the finish line. You still have time to complete some unfinished projects and make subtle adjustments to finish strong.

All of the various programs and awards for your Lodge and Members are due this month. Take some time to review Elks programs on elks.org to see what awards and certificates of achievement you can give to your Members. One great program is the Contest 'A' — All American Lodge Contest. Although you may believe your Lodge does not qualify for this award, you should still submit the application to see where your Lodge stands and



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

T. KEITH MILLS

where you can make improvements next year to continue *"Meeting the Challenge."*

This is also the deadline for all yearly contributions to Elks National Foundation. I know your Lodge has met, or is close to meeting, the \$4.80 per Member goal. There are also many ENF

awards and certificates for your Lodge and Members. These should be applied for and given out. ENF provides money to your State Association, as well as funding many grant programs for your community activities. The most common recommendation from your Grand Lodge Area Auditor is for Lodges to better use the ENF grants to help improve operations. Most programs funded by your Lodge could be funded by ENF, which creates even more opportunities for your Lodge to have a greater impact.

Newly elected Exalted Rulers, if you have not done so, list your committee appointments and give the list to the

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Deadlines near for Secretaries

Local Lodge Secretaries are reminded they must have all membership records for 2021-2022 ready for year-end closeout finalized by 10:00 p.m. ET on **March 31**. Failure to update records can, and probably will, cause membership totals to be out of balance in the Chicago Lodge Membership System (CLMS2Web).

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

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.

Elks Care — Elks Share

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Top SA websites are current, colorful

By GWENDOLYN B. PARKER
Committee Member

What a blessing to have the opportunity to evaluate State Association websites! I learned so much about State Associations and gained fantastic insights and ideas. There was so much creativity and excellent information and news, as well as vivid color and photographs.

Websites were graded on 1) content, 2) layout, 3) design, 4) graphics, and 5) effectiveness in telling the Elks story. Congratulations to the 2021–2022 award winners.

5-Star Awards

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

4-Star Awards

Arkansas	Kansas
New Jersey	New Mexico
Washington	

3-Star Award

Utah

I found that the best State Association websites tended to include:

- a calendar of events,
- current newsletters,
- details about upcoming events,
- information on conventions with registration forms and reservation information,
- Lodge directories with meeting dates and times, and
- lists of state officers and committee leaders with contact information.

Membership information is very important to those wanting to join or reinstate. After all, we all need more Members, don't we?

Other great ideas I saw on the websites included a newsletter archive; procedures and training manuals; supply forms and shirt order forms; bylaws; and minutes of meetings.

I spotted some issues with State Association websites, too. Webmasters should remove discontinued pages, old information, and pictures from 10 years ago. The biggest flaw in all websites was the lack of current information, news, and photos.

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

What does a Government Relations Committee do?

By **DAVE NITZE, SR.**
Committee Member

The work being done by your Government Relations Committee is essential to maintain our status as a non-profit, tax-exempt, private charitable organization, and is vital to the very survival of our great Order.

Members may wonder, What do people involved in Elks government relations do, exactly?

Lodge Chairperson: Establishes contact with legislators who represent their areas, providing them with information and charitable data and statistics concerning various Elks activities.

District Chairperson: Monitors legislative activity of the local government, encourages active involvement of the Lodges in their districts, and establishes contact with legislators in their districts.

State Chairperson: Shares information they receive with their district/Lodge chairs and with their Grand Lodge Area Members.

Grand Lodge Committee Members: This group is composed of eight members, one for each of the designated Grand Lodge Areas throughout the country.

There are seven main functions of the Government Relations Committee.

1. Charitable reporting. Ensure the charitable work being done by our Members, Local Lodges and State

Associations is reported as part of the Grand Lodge Annual Report.

2. Monitor legislation and laws. Watch for any proposed legislation or governmental action that might in any way affect our Order.

3. Advocate for or against legislation when necessary. Advocate for legislation that would help our Lodges and oppose any legislation or governmental action that would affect the ability of our Lodges to operate. Work to change existing laws when necessary for the benefit of the Order.

4. Promote programs between Lodges and their elected officials. Develop interactions with federal, state, and local officials and agencies.

5. Educate Members on public accommodations and other laws. Educate our State Associations and Lodges about existing laws that affect their day-to-day operations and how to comply with these laws and regulations.

6. Assist Lodges with IRS audits. What to do in case of an IRS audit?

7. Social networking/media. Assist Lodges to protect themselves when using social networking and all types of media.

Charitable reporting is necessary for our Order's survival. This is the only documented proof of the dollar value of the charitable work the Elks do.

The Lodge Secretaries have forms available with name, hours, mileage, and activity listed for Members to fill out when they volunteer for an event the Elks support at the Lodge or in the community. The Lodge Chairperson should let the Members know there is a volunteer sheet, and tell them why logging their volunteer hours helps the Lodge. Make sure it is in a location that is accessible for everyone. There should also be a list of activities that qualify. Did you know that attendance at Grand Lodge and State Association Conventions qualify?

We do this to keep our 501(c)(8) tax exempt classification status. Make sure to log information of non-Members who also volunteer.

When congress, your state legislatures, and county and municipal governing bodies are in session, keep watch for changes to laws affecting discrimination and harassment; U.S. postal regulations; sales tax and exemptions; alcoholic beverage control rules and regulations; bingo, raffles, and games of chance rules and regulations; and property tax exemption laws. All Lodges' day-to-day operations are affected in some way by these rules in their state and locations.

I hope this information gives some insight into what government relations is all about. I wish all the officers the best of luck for the coming year.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Junior Golf Program is fair way to reach green golfers

By **WILLIAM M. WISEMAN**
Committee Member

With spring now here and summer just around the corner, our Lodges need to step up and help rejuvenate our old youth programs and promote new ones. Our Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot, and Junior Golf programs are ideal for the Lodge to become involved without a major financial effort.

The Junior Golf Program provides your Lodge an excellent opportunity to interact with area youth through fun, instruction, and participation. It also serves as an excellent pastime to get our children away from all of their electronic devices for a time. For your Lodge, a program can be as simple as contacting your local golf course and working with the course's golf pro to set up a program for teaching young golfers skills and etiquette. The Lodge can also



collaborate with existing national and state programs.

Nearly every state has a junior golf program, including lessons and competitions in which the Lodge can participate. Here are a few national programs available to the Lodges.

• **Drive, Chip & Putt Championship** is centered on the fundamentals of the sport. Competition starts in May and runs through August, ending with the top 80 youth competing at the Masters. (drivechipandputt.com/)

• **First Tee** introduces the game of golf and its inherent values to young people. (thefirsttee.org)

• **American Junior Golf Association** partners with USGA to present the Leadership Links program, which encourages young men and women to develop charitable giving skills and service-oriented practices. (ajga.org)

• **USGA** produced some guides for non-profit golf programs over the years. (usga.org)

• **PGA Junior Golf Camps** have nearly 180 locations nationwide, all with world-class PGA facilities. (pgajuniorgolfcamps.com)

There are numerous opportunities to start or expand the Junior Golf Program at your Lodge. The Activities Committee is diligently working on upgrading the Junior Golf Program brochure and developing new Junior Golf Program guidelines. We urge all Elks Lodges to participate and promote the Junior Golf Program.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

DAP issues simple challenge for Exalted Rulers

By WILLIAM J. BRYAN
Assistant National Director

Recently, the directors of the Elks Drug Awareness Program cold called 100 Exalted Rulers from across the country. Each director contacted 25 ERs, none of whom were from the director's state. After a brief greeting and discussion, we explained the reason we called. We asked the ERs, "Do you know who your Lodge's Drug Awareness Chairman is?"

We were pleased that 37% of the ERs knew the name off the top of their heads. A few responses we got were:

- "I guess I am."
- "She just quit, so I'm looking for a replacement."
- "We don't have a Drug Awareness Program in our Lodge."



- "The D.A.R.E. officer at our school is."

However, that meant 63% did not know. Exalted Rulers are winding their year down in the next few months, but drug and substance abuse never winds down! If we learned one thing during the COVID pandemic, it's that drug abuse increased. Now is not the time to let our foot off the gas.

Thus, the directors of the DAP are issuing ERs the following challenge:

"Do you know who your Lodge DAP Chairman is, and do you know their contact information?" If you do, take a few minutes and e-mail us your Lodge DAP Chairman's name and contact information (i.e., e-mail address, mailing address, and home/cell telephone number).

The directors are in the process of creating an expanded contact list (that will remain private, secure, and **only** within the DAP).

Are you ready to take up the challenge? If so, please e-mail the information to: winkbryan@comcast.net. You will be placed in a drawing for a nice gift.

Thank you for your service to the Elks and your commitment to the Elks Drug Awareness Program.

Two Lakewood Lodges, one warm winter

By CATHLEEN DRAPER
ENF Communications Coordinator

Of the 30 places in the United States named Lakewood, five are home to Elks Lodges.

Roughly 1,800 miles apart, the Lakewood Lodges in New Jersey and Colorado used Community Investments Program grants to help their communities prepare for the cold months with children's winter coat giveaways.

Lakewood, CO Lodge No. 1777 used its Beacon Grant to purchase 140 coats in many styles and colors for children in preschool through sixth grade.

"The kids were so appreciative and thankful they could have a coat," said Grants Coordinator Venita Collier.

The Lodge distributed nearly 100 coats over two weekends. The remaining coats were brought to a local elementary school where they were given to students who couldn't make it to the Lodge.

"The reason I joined the Elks was for the charity," said Collier, who has led the Lodge's CIP projects since 2005. "This is one of the projects with the most need that I have done."

Around the same time, Lakewood, NJ Lodge No. 1432 held its own coat event.

With the help of a Gratitude Grant, the Lodge purchased about 200 coats, and they gave away every single one at the event. After the event ended, the Lodge purchased 35 more coats for children who couldn't find one in their size.

"The very next day as I was driving to work, I saw kids waiting at the bus stop proudly wearing their new coats," said Joe Barina, the Lodge's Exalted Ruler. "It was then that I knew what we did made a difference."

Both Lakewood Lodges were heartened by the success of their projects, and both anticipate repeating them next year.

"Our Members thought this was fantastic," Collier said. "All the volunteers felt it was such an honor to do this."

CIP grant applications will likely open on April 1, 2022. Learn more at elks.org/cip.

A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Elks National Foundation helps Elks build stronger communities through programs that support youth, serve veterans and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. For more information on the ENF, visit elks.org/enf.



ELKS Do!

VETERANS From Page 4

- Initiate or expand your local food basket program to be especially diligent in including community veterans this year.
- Volunteer at VA food pantries. Be sure to wear Elks apparel when you do.
- Donate food and proceeds of your fundraisers to veterans housing facilities and shelters.

These are only a few of the many things we do to support our long-standing tradition of living up to our motto: **"So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."**

GER From Page 1

Lodge Secretary. Secretaries, please get this information to your District Deputy for the Lodge directory. This information then should be entered into CLMS2.

Finally, for all retiring officers, I would like to thank you for your commitment, dedication, and service to our Order. Retiring Exalted Rulers, please do not stop being involved. I understand some ERs feel they need to take a break, but your knowledge and experience cannot be replaced. Your new role is to provide assistance and guidance to your Lodge, new officers, and Members. Also, consider getting on a state committee. They need your help and experience as well.

Submit ENF Donations Today!

Like many areas across the country, Chicago is experiencing unprecedented delays in mail delivery. Please do not wait to submit Elks National Foundation donations—they must be in the Foundation's headquarters by March 31, 2022, to count toward this fiscal year. Donations received after that date will count toward 2022-23.

Don't let our treasured veterans suffer chronic hunger

By **JOHN AMEN, PGER**
ENVSC Chairman

As you know, the Elks support of our veterans goes back over one hundred years, even preceding the formation of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission 75 years ago. While we have achieved great success in helping those who have served, we still have much more to accomplish before we can rest on our laurels.

One area that receives little publicity is chronic hunger among our veterans. The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) defines food insecurity as a lack of access to sufficient food to support and sustain a healthy lifestyle. A study completed

in 2021 by another federal agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, found that from 2015 through 2019 more than 11% of all “working age” veterans—that is vets between the ages of 18 and 64—live in food insecure households. It is clear that food security is critical for the well-being of our veterans.

Our government has stated that food insecurity is a problem that impacts 1 in 8 people in our country. Furthermore, one-fourth of active-duty military and reserve members have had to rely on food bank donations to help feed their families. A

recent survey by the Blue Star Families organization identified that 14% of active-duty household respondents reported facing difficulty putting adequate food on the table during the previous year.

What can we as Elks do? We can implement programs that many Lodges are already doing in their communities. Here are a few suggestions as to how our Elks Members can help.

- Support your local food pantry to help veterans get access to healthy food.



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BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Momentum builds for membership gain as year closes

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

The last two years have been a serious test of the Order's resilience—but based on the results so far in the 2021–2022 Lodge year, we have been more successful than we could have hoped.

Throughout the fraternal year, we responded, recovered, and renewed, and we have generated some remarkable momentum toward a gain in membership. We are in the final stretch of the year: the final numbers for the 2021–2022 Lodge year will be recorded on May 31. We are projecting 85,000 members will be added to the rolls this fraternal year, combined

with lower-than-average cancellations. Our new Grand Lodge Billing System has also made it easier than ever for people to pay their dues. If this all pans out, we will be in a strong position for a gain in membership.

Part of this success is owed to the membership tools available at elks.org and join.elks.org, which provide helpful, positive messages for reaching out to new Members and retaining the Members we have. However, growth in numbers doesn't come from any one special marketing trick. Instead, it reflects the way 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 our Lodges are inviting to all visitors, and most importantly, by continuing to be the Best People On Earth.

A promotional banner for the Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals 50th Anniversary. It features a logo with a red and white deer head on the left. The text reads 'ELKS HOOP SHOOT NATIONAL FINALS 50TH ANNIVERSARY' in white and yellow. Below this, it says 'APRIL 30, 2022' and 'CHICAGO, IL' in large white letters, flanked by two blue basketball icons.