



# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

*Elks Care — Elks Share*



## Previous Officers can assist the next generation

We did it. We finished.

The retiring Officers deserve the thanks of all the Members for the successful way in which they have handled their duties in the past year. The work that was accomplished is a tribute to their leadership and effort. It is our hope they will continue to assist the incoming Officers with the work in which our Order is engaged. The fact that each one was a member of the leadership team marks each of them as one of the Lodge's most valuable Members. The experience and knowledge each of you possess has been, and will always be, invaluable to your Lodge.

Congratulations to the new Officers of every Lodge throughout our great Order. The Members of your Lodge placed their confidence and trust in



**Message from  
the Grand  
Exalted Ruler  
RANDY P.  
SHOOK**

you and your abilities; you should be very proud. You should consider it an honor to be chosen to be a leader within your Lodge. As the new leader of your Lodge, it is extremely important to put together a dedicated group of people, to create a plan and set the necessary goals for each committee to achieve success. The committee members are the people who work to make your Lodge a success

in your community.

Never be afraid to ask questions. Your best source of information is the former Officers whose knowledge and experience is at your disposal, just for the asking. They have been there, done that, and can give you excellent advice.

March is also a time when many Lodges participate in St. Patrick's Day celebrations such as parties or community parades. Please be safe during these celebrations.

Wanda and I want to wish everyone Happy Easter.

Finally, check your calendar for awards, citations, and contest deadlines.

Remember *"Elks Care — Elks Share"* and *"We Are THE Elks."*

God bless our great Order, our troops, and the United States of America.

## Deadlines near for Secretaries

Local Lodge Secretaries are reminded that they must have all membership records for 2023-2024 ready for year-end closeout finalized by 12:00 a.m. PT 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).

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 SECRETARY**  
Bryan R. Klatt

## GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

### Don't hesitate to loop in local officials

By **ANTHONY ALFONSO**  
Committee Member

Congratulations to the newly elected and appointed Officers of each Lodge.

While planning your Lodge installation, please take this opportunity to invite your city and county government officials to the ceremony. This is a perfect opportunity to report and brag to everyone in the crowd about the amount of charitable work your Lodge has done in the past year in your community. You should also share the national report with everyone.

As the newly installed Officers, it is important that you become familiar with the Government Relations Manual.

The purpose of the Elks government relations program is to help protect our rights to exist as a charitable organization. We must be vigilant in monitoring our local, state, and national government of any legislative action that would adversely affect the Elks' goals or mission.

Maintaining a positive relationship with our local, state, and national legislatures is important.

Some of you may feel what you have contributed is not worth reporting. Regardless of the number of hours, miles, or dollars spent, it all adds up and should be reported. We will not know what we have accomplished this past Lodge year until all of you tell us.

Reporting serves as a great recruitment tool. It is a part of our story that should be told to everyone you know.

Lodge Secretaries have access to shareable forms to track hours, mileage, and activities listed for Members to fill out when they volunteer for an event.

The Lodge chairperson should let the Members know there is a volunteer sheet and explain to them the importance of logging their volunteer hours.

We wish all of you the best in accomplishing your goals for this upcoming year.

## DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

# Study: Marijuana use linked with cardiovascular diseases

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**

National Director

After several years of fighting the legalization of marijuana, the Elks Drug Awareness Program decided that we should simply educate youth about marijuana and let states decide how they want to respond to the legalization efforts.

Not that we want to take an “I told you so” position, a recent article published in SciTechDaily indicates we were right in alarming youth about the dangers of marijuana usage. In part, the article states:

“Recent studies indicate that regular marijuana use may raise the risk of

cardiovascular diseases like heart failure and stroke, regardless of other health conditions. These findings stress the need for comprehensive research and awareness among healthcare providers regarding the potential heart health risks associated with cannabis use.”

Based on a sample of 150,000 participants, the 2023 study *Daily Marijuana Use is Associated With Incident Heart Failure: “All of Us” Research Program* found that marijuana raised the risk of heart failure among users compared to non-users, even when controlled for other health factors. The study was sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, a government-run agency for biomedical

and public health research.

From SciTechDaily: “Prior research shows links between marijuana use and cardiovascular disease like coronary artery disease, heart failure, and atrial fibrillation, which is known to cause heart failure,” said lead study author Yakubu Bene-Alhasan, M.D., M.P.H., a resident physician at Medstar Health in Baltimore. “Marijuana use isn’t without its health concerns, and our study provides more data linking its use to cardiovascular conditions.”

We will continue to educate our children about the possible dangerous effects of using marijuana and other substances of abuse.

## ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

# Meet your community’s top need by combining CIP grants

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**

ENF Communications Coordinator

When John F. Malley founded the Elks National Foundation in 1928, he envisioned it would “unite the forces of the Order into a mighty army for the service of mankind.”

The Community Investments Program is that army.

When the CIP began in 2005, it had a budget of \$350,000 and a dream of making John F. Malley’s vision come true. Now, with a budget of nearly \$16 million, the CIP has grown into a philanthropic powerhouse. Though so much has been accomplished already, the CIP is not stopping any time soon.

The new \$500 Gratitude Grant bonus for 2024-25, which will be awarded to Lodges that increase their fundraising by 10 percent over the previous year, marks new territory for CIP grants.

“With the new bonus, Lodges will be able to earn \$10,000 in small CIP grants alone,” said ENF Assistant Director Debbie Doles. “It’s been a dream of ours to get the CIP to this point. In the past decade, the program has quadrupled.”

CIP grants are foundational to the mission of the ENF. They are often used to combat food insecurity; support people experiencing homelessness; serve veterans and military members in need; promote youth community service; and meet other unique needs in their communities.

Now, Elks will be able to build stronger communities like never before.

While the Gratitude Grant, Beacon Grant, and Spotlight Grant can be used for three different projects, spreading them out is not always the best way to make a substantial difference in the community.

“The most successful CIP Lodges combine their small grants to address one need in their community,” Doles said. “\$10,000 goes a long way toward meeting a need. Becoming an expert in a certain area of aid is a great step toward finding your Lodge’s niche and receiving an Impact Grant.”

Though the Impact Grant is not available for every Lodge, this new bonus allows Lodges to make the same, meaningful difference in their communities.

John F. Malley’s dream for the ENF was big, but the hearts of Elks are bigger. As the CIP reaches another milestone, Lodges can continue to be proud, knowing they are truly a “mighty army for the service of mankind.”

*For 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$16 million to fund the Community Investments Program. Lodges meet local needs through CIP grants that offer Elks opportunities to serve their community in ways that will raise the Lodge’s profile, energize the membership, encourage former Members to return to the fold, and gain the notice of people who want to be part of an organization that’s doing great things. To learn more about the Community Investments Program, please visit [elks.org/CIP](https://elks.org/CIP).*

## MAKE GIVING EASY & JOIN THE CLUB!

### Sign up for our monthly, sustaining giving program—the ENF Fidelity Club!

- Give automatic, regularly scheduled donations each month from your credit card or bank account.
- Receive special membership benefits and recognition pieces.
- Update, adjust or modify your gift any time online or by calling us.
- Sign up by scanning the QR code and make a sustaining difference in Elks communities today!



Elks  
National  
Foundation, Inc.



Use the QR code to sign up today.

## GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

# Activities brochures, manuals, videos are clicks away

By **WILLIAM M. WISEMAN**  
Committee Member

With the new year in front of us, we have the opportunity to renew and grow our youth programs. Spring and summer are approaching. 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 Scouting, youth recognition, Elks JROTC Awards, Soccer Shoot, the Antlers Program, and Junior Golf. 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 site for your use. You will also find a number of forms and

certificates. The videos available are Community Projects Contest, the Activities Committee, Antlers Program, Student Recognition Program, JROTC Award Program, Public Safety Medals of Valor/Service, The Dictionary Project, the Soccer Shoot Program, and Junior Golf Program. The Activities Committee video provides an outstanding overview of our programs and can provide excellent info for 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 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.

### Junior Golf

With focus on Junior Golf, the following are some helpful resources:

**American Junior Golf Association** — offers the Leadership Links program, which gives young people the opportunity to give their time and talent to local charities.

**First Tee** — an international youth development organization that introduces golf to kids and teens.

**Drive, Chip & Putt Championship** — a free nationwide junior golf competition that focuses on the three core golf skills.

**USGA** — developed guides for non-profit golf programs.

**PGA Junior Golf Camps** — runs 180 camp locations nationwide.

**Hook A Kid On Golf** — offers tools for a community to introduce the game, teach fundamentals, and provide a fun and competitive format for play.

Make this summer fun, safe, and successful by promoting the Elks through our many youth programs.

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! It is a way to keep the community aware of our good works.

## G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

# Elevating membership engagement

By **RICK GATHEN**  
Membership Marketing Manager

In an effort to further strengthen our membership program, we are thrilled to unveil a series of strategic initiatives aimed at fostering increased engagement and active participation that we will roll out at this summer's Elks National Convention in Austin, TX.

As we set our sights on the upcoming year, our primary focus is to increase the percentage of actively sponsoring Members, drive positive growth, and create a stronger sense of camaraderie within the Lodges.

In exploring innovative ways to showcase the achievements of our Members, we invite you to delve into the Honor Roll on [elks.org](http://elks.org), with a particular emphasis on the compelling Top Prosper Report. Our goal is to bring this report to life in Austin with significant changes, making it not only informative but also engaging and impactful for our Members. By doing so, we anticipate a surge in enthusiasm and involvement.

We are set to leverage the CLMS platform for automated e-mail blasts targeting new Members. Introducing the GER Awards Incentive program, we aim to celebrate those Members who actively contribute to the growth of our community by sponsoring new Members. This targeted approach is strategically designed to boost sponsorship rates, subsequently enhancing Lodge dues revenue and other Lodge financial streams. You will learn more about it at the convention.

As we embark on this journey to elevate membership engagement, these strategic additions to our program underscore our commitment to fostering a more thriving and active membership. We believe that by embracing innovation, leveraging technology, and addressing the evolving needs of our Members, we will not only witness a surge in sponsorship rates but also cultivate a stronger sense of unity and camaraderie within our Lodges. Here's to a year of growth, connection, and shared success!

## VETERANS From Page 4

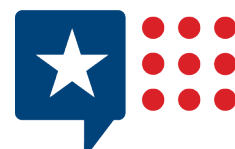
[veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net) to connect with someone online directly.

You can visit [veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net) to learn more and to print informational signs for the Lodge and wallet cards to share with others.

Finally, you can continue to build connections with the veterans in your community. Studies show that being a part of a community and having a sense of purpose can be protective factors. Welcome veterans into your Lodge and invite them to take part in your Lodge's service projects.

Together, we can provide veterans in crisis with the support and care they need.

**Veterans  
Crisis Line**



**DIAL 988 then  
PRESS 1**

# Elks can help with veteran suicide prevention

By **MARY K. MORGAN**  
Commission Director

An average of 20 veterans dies by suicide each day. Though this figure represents a slight decrease from the past, even one life lost to suicide is too many.

It can be easy to hear statistics like this and feel helpless. However, there are ways the average person can help. First, you can spread the word about resources.

The VA, in partnership with community organizations and nonprofits, is expanding access to care. Veterans in acute suicidal crisis may now go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for no-cost emergency health services. In 2022, the first year of

this policy, 49,714 Veterans and former service members used this benefit, which guarantees no cost care to eligible veterans — including emergency room care, inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days, outpatient care for up to 90 days, and transportation costs. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system or go to a department facility to use this benefit.

To use this benefit, any eligible individual who is experiencing an emergency suicidal crisis should go to the nearest ER as soon as possible — transportation costs are covered by VA — and tell the

ER staff they are covered by this policy. The ER staff or someone acting on the individual's behalf should notify VA right away by calling 844-724-7842 (TTY: 711) or using VA's Emergency Care Reporting (ECR) portal.

Another way you can help is to share information about the Veterans Crisis Line, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Veterans can dial 988, then press 1 to speak to someone in person. They can text 838 255 to text with a professional. Or they can visit

Please see **VETERANS**, Page 3



BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary  
**Benevolent and Protective  
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**March 2024**

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## GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

# All 18 entrants win top honor in State Website Contest

By **DENNIS J. GERLEMAN**  
Committee Member

I am pleased to announce the winners of this year's State Association Website Contest:

### 5-Star Awards

Arizona	Colorado
Connecticut	Florida
Georgia	Idaho
Kansas	Kentucky
Louisiana	Maine
MD-DE-DC	New Jersey
New Mexico	New York
North Carolina	Ohio
Oregon	Pennsylvania

Congratulations to all participants. This is the first time there were no 3- or 4-Star winners as **all** applying states upped their game to receive the top award of 5 Stars. All states should be proud of their work for promoting Elkdom via their websites.

Judging for the contest was based on five categories:

**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.

The contest is easy to enter. You are already doing the work so why not participate and get the notoriety you deserve? Congratulations again to the winning states.