

2015-16 *Annual Report*

# ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

*Meeting the needs of today's veterans*



# INTRODUCTION

It has been 70 years since the Elks National Veterans Service Commission was officially established, at a Grand Lodge convention in New York in 1946, formalizing a commitment to serving veterans that had been evident almost since the Elks were founded.

The Elks pledge *“So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them”*. Thanks to the work of our Elks volunteers, that pledge is backed by thousands of hours of Elks service to veterans and military members.

Since we began, the needs of military members and returning veterans have continued to change, and the Elks have adapted to those needs, remaining an ever-present ally to those who have served this country.

We hope you enjoy reading about our work this past year, and look forward to your support for another 70 years to come.



## In 2015-16 . . .

**1,254,830**

Hours of service Elks  
volunteers gave to veterans

**136,000**

Elks served veterans in their  
communities



The ENVSC launched the Welcome Home program, pledging to help end veteran homelessness.



The ENVSC debuted a new logo.

***That's not all . . .***

Read on to learn about our program successes, our stronger than ever partnerships, and what others are saying about the Elks' service to veterans.

# Freedom Grants

We increased the number of Freedom Grants available, and 180 Lodges received \$2,000 grants to serve veterans and/or military members in their communities.

Elks use these grants to provide food and clothing for homeless and hospitalized veterans, hold adaptive sports clinics for veterans with disabilities, repair the homes of military families and veterans in need, support student veterans and more.

Here are a few examples of this year's grant projects.



**TAMPA,  
FLORIDA,  
LODGE  
NO. 708**

hosted recreational outings and holiday events for veterans in transitional housing, and provided needed supplies to the housing facility.



**BOCA RATON,  
FLORIDA,  
LODGE NO. 2166**

partnered with Wounded Warrior Anglers of America, Inc. to facilitate a weekend fishing trip for veterans with disabilities.

**TRAVERSE  
CITY, MICHIGAN,  
LODGE NO. 323**

partnered with Operation Homefront to provide food baskets, cards created by students, and toys to Coast Guard families.



**HORNELL ELKS CLUB  
#364**

**HORNELL, NEW  
YORK, LODGE  
NO. 364**

hosted a family day in the park to support at-risk veterans, with a VA information booth, cookout, children's activities and gift bags for attendees.



# VAVS INFO

## By the numbers:

**145**

The Elks have VAVS Representatives in 145 facilities

**14,000**

More than 14,000 Elks volunteered at these facilities

**278,262**

Elks served 278,262 veterans

**344**

344 Deputy Representatives assisted

**\$550,000**

More than \$550,000 went to directly serve veterans in VA and other facilities

In 2015-16, the Elks had 145 Elks certified as VA Voluntary Service Representatives.

These Elks received monthly stipends to help hospitalized and recovering veterans relax, rehabilitate and thrive.



## VETERANS LEATHER PROGRAM



**2,843**

veterans

received

**FREE**  
wheelchair  
gloves

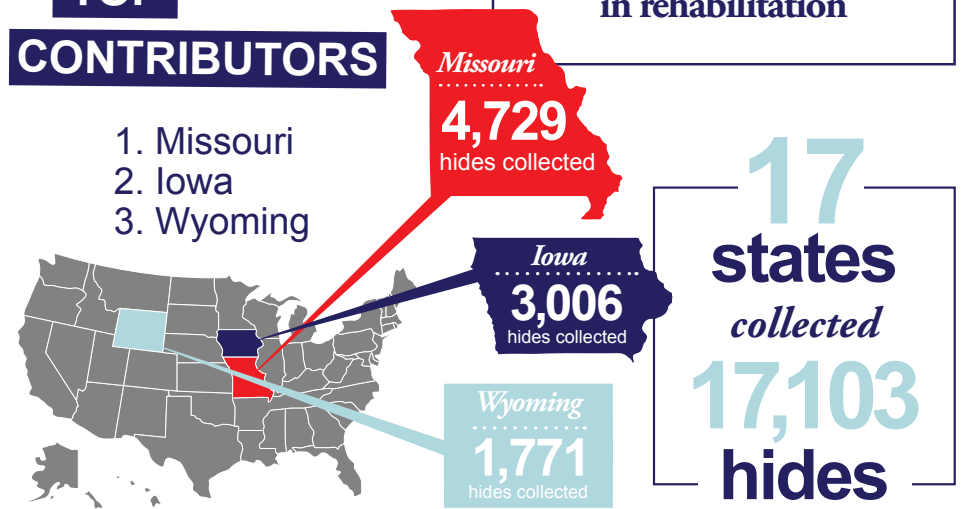
**26,928**

square feet  
of leather

was donated by Elks to Help Hospitalized Veterans, helping to provide free craft kits for veterans in rehabilitation

## TOP CONTRIBUTORS

1. Missouri
2. Iowa
3. Wyoming



**17**  
states  
collected  
**17,103**  
hides

# Welcome HOME

In 2015-16, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs and pledged to help end veteran homelessness. The Welcome Home program had a successful first year!

Lodges provided Welcome Home Kits to veterans exiting homelessness and moving into new homes, ensuring they had the supplies and support they needed for a fresh start.

Through the Elks Emergency Assistance Fund, the Elks provided more than **\$911,000** in assistance to **323 veterans**, with funds going to end or prevent homelessness.



*“The Elks . . . they focused in on the veterans in a way that other organizations haven’t. They’re coming from a totally different direction. They’re innovators.”*

– Cynthia King Myers,  
HUD-VASH Social Worker



We spread the word about the issue of veteran homelessness, sharing personal stories of veterans who’ve exited homelessness.



*“The Elks are one of many partners who are stepping up to make sure every Veteran in the City of Chicago has a place to call home.”*

Victor Lagroon , City of Chicago  
Veterans’ Affairs Director

We also partnered with the city of Chicago to create an emergency fund to prevent or end homelessness for more than **50 veterans**.

# Partnerships



Bugles Across America works with more than **5500 buglers** in **all 50 states** to perform live taps at thousands of veterans' funerals and memorial services each year.



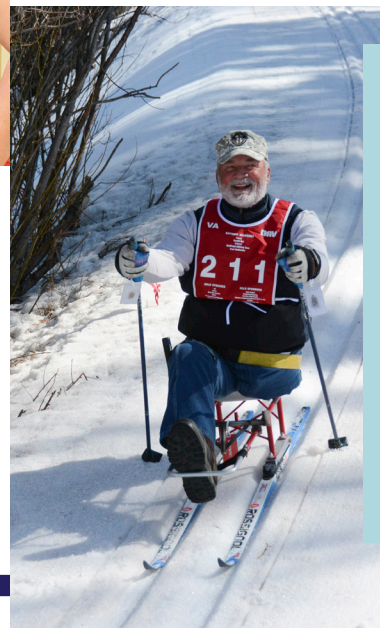
Elks partner with the VA to sponsor **6** different VA adaptive sports and arts events helping veterans rehabilitate, recover and thrive. Veterans Leather Program volunteers attended **3** of these events and distributed **2,870 pairs of wheelchair gloves** to veterans in attendance.



Elks partner with Re-Creation USA to provide entertainment and assistance for veterans in VA facilities across the nation. Performers put on **142 shows** for veterans, reaching **6,837 veterans** with their performances and personal visits.



Playing Cards for Veterans works with local casinos to retrieve their old playing cards, and help Elks send them to veterans homes, VA facilities, USOs and more. In 2015-16, **32,000 packs of cards** were distributed!



National Veterans Golden Age Games  
 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic  
 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival  
 National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic  
 National Veterans Tee Tournament  
 National Veterans Wheelchair Games

# VOLUNTEER *Appreciation*

## 2015-16 Volunteers of the Year

### Arizona

David Lee Gnuschke

### California-Hawaii

Robert J. Anderson & Sheron K. Anderson

### Colorado

Jared Crabtree & Linda Steckmyer

### Connecticut

Gerald Gallo

### Florida

George Scribner & Mary Lou Scribner

### Idaho

Lyle D. Gessford & Geri M. Scaglione

### Illinois

Larry Burns & Amanda McNear

### Indiana

Andrew J. Gemmer

### Iowa

Mike Hoffman & Cindy Bethune

### Kansas

Edward L. Landers & Marilyn Greene-Landers

### Kentucky

James M. Hanely & Maranda Hill

### Louisiana

William Ed Parker

### Maine

Gregory Daniels & Lori J. Howlett

### MD-DE-DC

John A. Curran & Judith P. Black

### Massachusetts

James F. Folk & Jayne Morse

### Minnesota

David R. Seykora & Virginia van Sluis

### Missouri

Roger D. Woolridge & Cynthia S. Woolridge

### Montana

Doug Harbottle

### Nevada

Jerry W. Goodman

### New Hampshire

Donald E. Hunter & Debra A. Messer

### New Jersey

George Struble & Gina Mellon

### New Mexico

Ralph Brown & Martha Brown

### New York

Charles Yoko & Deirdre Vedovino

### North Carolina

Dallas O. Brisson & Sheila Charlene Walker

### Oregon

Dennis W. Schmidt & Suzanne Schmidt

### Pennsylvania

Jack E. Corbett

### Rhode Island

Karl W. Antonevich

### South Carolina

Johnny D. Davis & Della R. Spell

### Utah

Russell B. Shurtliff & Susan Somers-Shurtliff

### Virginia

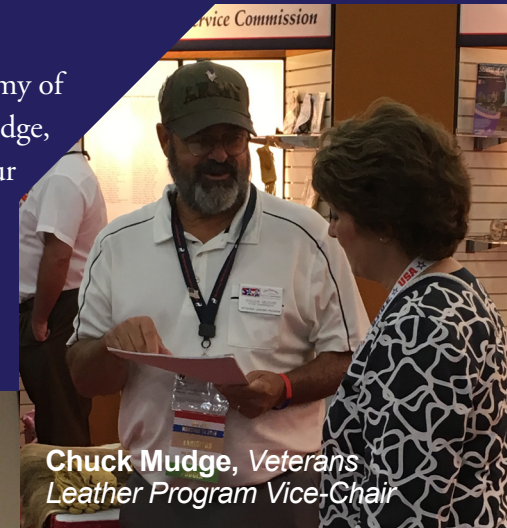
Richard J. Crawford & Susan McDaniel

### West Virginia

James F. Ackerman & Shirley Beard

# Appreciation

The cornerstone of our success is our army of dedicated volunteers. From our local Lodge, District and State Veterans Chairs, to our VAVS Representatives and everyone in between, we are indebted to and thankful for our generous Elks volunteers.



**Chuck Mudge, Veterans Leather Program Vice-Chair**



**Stewart Israel, Veterans Programs Chair**



**Dick Whitsitt, Convention Volunteer**

*Special thanks to our Program Chairs & convention crew!*



**Meredith Jamison, Convention Volunteer; Dennis McAleese, Veterans Leather Program Chair**



**Tom Jamison, Playing Cards for Veterans Chair**

Joan Mudge, Convention Volunteer (not pictured)

# Financial Information

Financial highlights for 2015-16 were summarized from the Financial Statements of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission, with the Independent Auditor's Report prepared by Cutrana & Company. The audit covered the period beginning April 1, 2015, and ending March 31, 2016. Complete financial statements, including all notes, may be obtained by contacting the Elks National Veterans Service Commission.

## Revenue and Support

**\$2,463,750**

Appropriation from Elks National Foundation, Inc.

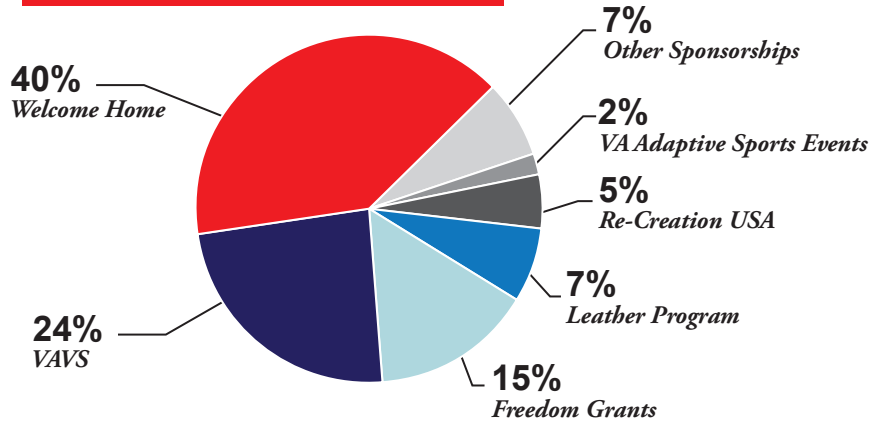
**\$17,336**

Other Contributions

**\$ 2,481,086**

Total revenue and support

## Programs and Partnerships



## Letter from the Commission

We are proud to report on this, another successful year.

We extend special thanks to Grand Secretary Bryan R. Klatt and the Grand Lodge staff, as well as to the Grand Lodge Sponsors for their assistance.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission operates thanks to a generous grant from the Elks National Foundation. We are very grateful to the ENF for their continued and generous support.

Respectfully Submitted,

*James L. Nicholson, PGER, Chair*  
*David Carr, PGER, Vice-Chair*

*John Amen, PGER, Secretary/Treasurer*  
*Paul D. Hesel, PGER, Past Chair*  
*Louis J. Grillo, PGER, Member*

# In Memory

of the Volunteers We Lost in 2015-16

## Richard Drabick

Mandarin/St. Johns, FL Lodge No.2866  
VAVS Rep., Clyde E. Lassen State Home

## Aurelio Arce

Bronx-New Rochelle, MO Lodge No. 75  
VAVS Rep., Bronx VAMC

## James Dement, PER

Poplar Bluff, MO Lodge No.2452  
VAVS Dep. Rep., Poplar Bluff VAMC

## James Ray Gailbreath, PER

Roebuck, AL Lodge No. 79  
VAVS Dep. Rep., Birmingham VAMC

## Richard Hazelbaker

Lawton, OK Lodge No. 1056  
VAVS Rep., Lawton-Fort Sills  
Veterans Center

## Jack Spellacy

Lakewood, OH Lodge No. 1350  
VAVS Rep., Cleveland (Wade  
Park) VAMC

## Raymond Valdez

Midwest City, OK Lodge No. 1890  
VAVS Rep., Norman Veteran Center

## Glenn A. Johnson, PER

Kankakee, IL Lodge No. 627  
VAVS Rep. IL Veterans Home – Manteno

## Gilbert Parry

Alhambra-San Gabriel, CA Lodge  
No. 1328, VAVS Rep., Los Angeles VAMC

## Vernon D. Pickenpaugh

Tampa, FL Lodge No. 708  
VAVS Dep. Rep. Tampa VAMC

## James L. Rooney, PER

Brookfield, IL Lodge No.1510  
VAVS Rep., Hines VAMC

## Archie "Joe" Biggers

Poway, CA Lodge No. 2543  
State ENVSC Chair & VAVS Dep. Rep.,  
San Diego VAMC

## Bobby J. White

Cleburne, TX Lodge No. 811  
VAVS Dep. Rep., Waco VAMC



“

*“Thank you to Elks across this great country for your generosity and loyalty to our nation’s heroes.”*

- Robert McDonald,  
U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs

”



Elks National Veterans  
Service Commission



@ElksVetsService



@ElksVets

[www.elks.org/vets](http://www.elks.org/vets)

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