

History of Rio Rancho Elks Lodge #2500

The early 1970s had many "Loose Elks" living in this small community of Rio Rancho. These Elks began talking to each other and formed an interested nucleus of determined men for the possibility of having an Elks Lodge in our area. As things happened, formal meetings were begun. These meetings led to getting enough interested persons to qualify to the Rules and Conditions of the Grand Lodge. The requirements were met.

Saturday, March 23, 1974 at Our Lady of Sorrows Gym, in Bernalillo, New Mexico, B.P.O Elks Lodge #2500 was made official. The initiatory ceremony was conducted by Exalted Ruler Edward Wood and Officers of Albuquerque Lodge #461. There were 336 Charter Members.

The Building Fund was started and a \$100.00 or more donation per person was accepted. A Land Agreement was made with Amrep Corp. and sent to Grand Lodge for approval. Grand Lodge approved the contract. The Membership was given the opportunity to select a building to be built on this property.

Lodge Meetings were held at the Secretary's Vista Grande Apartment Building the first year and at the Rio Rancho Auditorium on Sabana Grande Blvd. the following years. Many fund-raising functions were held at Our Lady of Sorrows Gym and at the Auditorium.

The Ground Breaking Ceremony for the new Lodge Building was held on March 27, 1976. The Stone was laid July 24, 1976 and the building was dedicated on September 11th. Our first regular meeting was held on the 1st, Wednesday of September, 1976.

Property to the North of our present building was purchased from Amrep Corp. in July 1980. This property was enclosed with a chain link fence and a concrete wall was built next to the American Legion.

Construction of a concrete slab began on July 17, 1980 on the east side of the Lodge Building. The slab was completed August 2, 1980. This slab will provide for the future building expansion of the Lodge Room and Recreation Room. The slab was used for outside events for many years.

Ground was broken on February 7, 1981 for the new Social Hall, Game Room and Walk-In Refrigerator on the south side of the present Lodge Building. The Grand Opening of this addition was February 14, 1982. The Walk-In Refrigerator was also in operation.

Saturday, February 22, 1986 was the beginning of the building extension over the east side concrete slab. This was the final addition to the original building. This addition provided the Membership with a new Lodge Room and Recreation Room. The first meeting held in the Lodge Room was December 17, 1986 and the dedication of the new facilities were held on June 13, 1987.

The hard work and dedication of a large group of volunteers, who persisted and were determined to have an Elks Lodge in our Community, did an unbelievable job. We are thankful to them for what we now have.

The majority of the volunteers were there at the first ground breaking ceremony for the Lodge Building on March 27, 1976 to the last room addition that was completed in December 1986. A survey was done in mid-July 1981 and showed that the average age of these dedicated Volunteers was 64 years and 5 months. Thank you again.

The last project on our property was the Motorola Tower. The Trustees signed a contract with Motorola Corp. in August 1996. The building of the tower was completed in June 1977. The revenues from this tower have provided the Lodge with a continuous monthly income.

This brief summation of what has happened over the past 25 years is a credit to Dedicated Elks who made B.P.O. Elks Lodge #2500 worthy of stature in our city of Rio Rancho.

John Nevards
1999