



# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



## Deadlines, programs, training wrap up Lodge year

The Elks Lodge year is coming to a close but now is not the time to sit back and relax. You still have the opportunity to complete some unfinished projects and finish strong.

All of the various programs and awards for your Lodge and Members are due this month. Take the chance to review Elks programs on [elks.org](http://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 where you can make improvements next year to continue showing “*Elkdom’s Heart for America.*”

This is also the deadline for all yearly contributions to Elks National



### Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

**DOUGLAS A.  
SCHIEFER**

Foundation. I know your Lodge has met, or is close to meeting, the \$5.00 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.

Best wishes to all our new Lodge Officers who are going to be committed to governing the many practices and traditions that are fundamental to making our Lodges the best they can be. I hope that the transition will be smooth because it’s important that the experienced Officers mentor and help the new Officers to make the Lodge year a success.

Please take time to have a training program within the Lodge or district like the Elks Kollege of Knowledge that educates and trains new Officers

Please see GER, Page 2

## Membership stats must be finalized

Local Lodge Secretaries are reminded that they must have all membership records for 2024-2025 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 ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

### Getting involved feels so rewarding

By **WILLIAM C. BOHNETT**  
Committee Member

At the beginning of a new Member’s journey, they are often asked why they are interested in being an Elk. The common answer is that they want to be involved.

Do we get them involved? Absolutely!

Elkdom’s youth activities can not only get them involved, but they may have the time of their lives. Helping our youth is grassroots Elkdom—and very rewarding.

For instance, sponsor a golf outing with some of your local youth. The volunteers will be rewarded with a sense of purpose. This hands-on action will sell our great Order in many ways! All one needs to see is a smile on a child’s face and you’re hooked for life. Working with our youth can change a person. It’s a thrill seeing the excitement these kids show when they sink a long putt or chip a shot out of the sand trap. Junior golf teaches a child healthy competition and

fair play, and they might even make a new friend or two.

Elkdom’s youth programs such as the Junior Golf Program, Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot, or Antlers Program will not only get the kids excited, but Members and volunteers will also feel fulfilled for helping to steer our future leaders. Chances are the participants, both Members and kids, will share their experiences. This opens the door for new Members and motivates existing Members. And, of course, the kids are the big winners!

Our excellent youth programs are managed by very capable and motivated individuals, from the Lodge to the districts and states to the Grand Lodge level. There’s a chairperson for all the youth activities and events.

We are always available to work with every Member! The tools and guides on running our youth events are not a secret. Manuals, event details, and even funding options are readily available at [elks.org](http://elks.org).

# Enterprising Lodges can qualify for generous CIP grants

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**

ENF Communications Coordinator

March is here, and that means the end of the fiscal year is near! Over the past year, the Elks National Foundation has been blown away by your dedication and passion to helping Elks build stronger communities. The ENF would not be able to accomplish its mission without the help of its generous donors and volunteers.

The Community Investments Program gave Elks the resources needed to address the unique needs of their communities; the Elks Hoop Shoot unleashed gritty, hard-working kids; the scholarships programs helped the next generation of changemakers attend college; and so much more.

While the end of the fiscal year provides an opportunity to look back on what has been accomplished, it also serves as a reminder of all that can be achieved in the final weeks before the March 31 donation deadline.

If your Lodge reaches the per-Member-giving goal before March 31, it will be eligible for a \$2,000 Gratitude Grant next year—and there are four bonuses your Lodge can earn that bring the grant's total to \$4,000! If your Lodge has not yet qualified for the full \$4,000 Gratitude Grant, there may still be time. Ask your Fundraising Chair or visit [elks.org/cip](http://elks.org/cip) to learn how your last-minute donation may be enough to earn more CIP grant money for your Lodge.

Additionally, if you are a donor who has given for the last four consecutive fiscal years or more but has not yet given in 2024-25, you may be at risk of losing your place in the ENF Loyalty Club. On top of the exclusive pins and membership card stickers that ENF Loyalty Club members earn, members are also making meaningful differences in the communities where Elks live and work, year after year.

All donations must be received by March 31 to count toward the 2024-25 fiscal year. To ensure that your donation makes it to the ENF offices on time, consider giving online. It is safe, secure, and the easiest way to donate. Visit [enf.elks.org/donate](http://enf.elks.org/donate) to give today.

No matter how you chose to support the ENF this year, thank you for the ways you helped build stronger communities.

*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](http://elks.org/enf).*

Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities  
**ONE CIP GRANT AT A TIME**

The Elks National Foundation's Community Investments Program puts

**\$16.3 million**

directly into communities where Elks live and work.

Scan the QR code below to start building a stronger community today with an online donation.

[elks.org/ENF](http://elks.org/ENF)

## GER From Page 1

to do their job. Mentoring new Officers can make a smooth, prepared transition.

New Exalted Rulers you must list your committee appointments and give the list to the Lodge Secretary. Secretaries, please give this information to your District Deputy for the Lodge directory. This information then should be entered into CLMS2.

What would we do without our Secretaries who keep everything in order? Thank you for your service. I know it's a busy time for you as you are preparing the year-end reports.

Leaders of the Lodge, it is time to solidify your budget for the upcoming year and make any adjustments that are needed. This is also a time to evaluate what needs to be fixed. Any successful endeavor takes teamwork.

March is the time to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. One thing we all know how to do well is to have fun and fellowship with our Members in Elkdom.

Thank you for your service. God bless you all, God bless our troops, and God bless America!

## GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

# 17 states feature sites to behold

By **BRIAN RAWDING**  
Committee Member

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

### 5-Star Awards

Colorado	Florida
Kentucky	Maine
Massachusetts	Mississippi
New Jersey	New York
Oregon	Pennsylvania
Texas	

### 4-Star Awards

Connecticut	Georgia
Kansas	MD-DC-DE
New Mexico	Oklahoma

Congratulations to all participants.

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, providing pertinent details, and informing non-Elks 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. Certificate awards will be available at the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee booth at the Grand Lodge Convention in Kansas City.



## GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

# Charitable reporting helps to tell Elks' story

By **JOHNNY L. JONES**  
Committee Member

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee assists Lodges and State Associations in the promotion of, and interaction with, local, state and federal elected officials.

It is helpful if these individuals understand the Elks and the charitable work we do. We recommend that public officials be invited to Lodge events. Allow them to speak and interact with Members. Show them our end of year reports to allow them to be aware of the amount of work done by our Order.

Three new resolutions concerning Government Relations were passed at the 2024 Grand Lodge Convention in Austin, Texas. These resolutions added the charitable reporting obligation to the Secretary's official responsibilities and formalized the standing of the Government Relations Committee at the State

and Local Lodge Level. Exalted Rulers will now also appoint a Government Relations Committee, of not less than three, when other committees are appointed.

While Charitable Reporting is now a formal duty of the Secretary's position, this can be delegated to another individual. The Secretary still has ultimate responsibility for the completion of the reporting.

Your Lodge and State Association Government Relations Committees should be vigilant in monitoring local, state, and national legislation for its effect on the Order's interests.

As the time for our new Elks year approaches, Exalted Rulers, Lodge Officers, and committees have been elected and appointed. Your Lodge year has been laid out. Please take time before the new Elks year begins to familiarize yourself with the Government Relations Manual. The manual will help you perform your duties for the upcoming year.

As a reminder, all State Associations and Local Lodges must submit their Charitable Reports by May 1.

District Deputies have been asked to check on charitable reporting during their visits to Local Lodges. This is yet another tool for State Chairs to utilize to ensure that charitable reporting is being completed.

Our charitable reporting allows us to have the privilege of operating as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Use reports as valuable recruiting tools to show prospective Members just how much work we contribute to our local communities.

Our committee wishes you all the best in your endeavors. Remember to document your miles, hours, and dollars spent performing the works of the Grand Lodge, your State Association, and your Local Lodge to show all the charity that has been done by our Members.

## DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

# Choosing the best DAP leadership

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**  
National Director

In many Lodges, March is seen as a time to wind down the Elks year and to plan for the coming year's activities. Last month, Officers were nominated and elections were held. Now is the time for Exalted Rulers, especially new ones, to fill Lodge Committees.

Choosing the right people to lead these committees is essential to ensure a Lodge's success. This is especially true for Drug Awareness. If you want your Lodge to have a successful Drug Awareness Program, make certain you have selected the right chairperson. Make certain that your Lodge DAP Chair knows who your State Association Chair is and encourage them to be in contact with one another.

Remember that your Lodge does not have to participate in every activity or aspect of the Drug Awareness Program, but whatever it does do, you will want it to do it well. If you're just starting out in DAP, start slowly. If you've been engaged in the DAP for some time now, consider adding another component, and as always communicate with your State Chair. Don't forget to include the activities of your Drug Awareness Program in your charity book. This often-overlooked

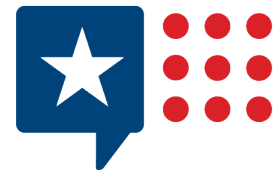
aspect of your DAP shortchanges your activities if they are not entered.

In other news, the National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week (NDAFW) is an annual event focused on the science of drug use and addiction that educates and empowers youth to make decisions about substance use and their health. This year it takes place on March 17-23.

Why might you want to participate in this event? First, your Lodge will join hundreds of communities across the U.S. and around the world. Next, you'll be able to share the science on substance use and addiction. It will allow you to learn lifesaving skills focused on overdose awareness and response. Lastly, it helps empower youth to make informed choices about their health. If you'd like to know more about this event, simply go to the National Institute on Drug Abuse website, [nida.nih.gov/research-topics/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week/learn-about-ndafw](https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week/learn-about-ndafw).

As always, your State Chair is standing by to assist you in making your program the best it can be. Reach out to him or her for ideas and support. You just might find they have the answer. If they don't, please reach out to one of the directors.

## Veterans Crisis Line



**DIAL 988** then  
**PRESS 1**



**Hoop Shoot National Finals**  
**April 24-27, 2025 • Chicago, IL**

## Elks share their thoughts

Want to discuss the Elks? Check out the Membership Forum. Members use the message board to share constructive information every day.

[elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm](https://elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm)

# Welcome Home Kit offers new beginnings to veterans

By **EMILY CRUZ**

**ENVSC Programs Associate**

A new Elks year is near and many Elks are preparing to take on new titles and challenges. Similarly, veterans all over the United States are starting anew, transitioning into their new homes with the help of Elks and ENVSC's Welcome Home Kit program.

Unfortunately, many veterans exiting homelessness into their new homes start with nothing. With ENVSC's Welcome Home Kit program, veterans can receive small furniture, kitchenware, and home supplies to get a head start in their new home. Thankfully, with the aid of Lodge

volunteers delivering kits, veterans can always look to the Elks to help them receive the fresh start that they deserve.

Elks at Hopkins, MN Lodge No. 2221 worked together to go above and beyond for veterans by providing more than 210 Welcome Home Kits for the 2024-25 fiscal year! Kits from Hopkins Lodge included daily necessities like towels, trash cans, all-purpose cleaner, and dish soap, which are greatly needed as most veterans' benefits programs don't cover cleaning supplies. Lodge Members also spent \$2,500 of their own funds on kits,

which speaks to how much they truly care for veterans and their families.

Veterans receiving kits from Hopkins Lodge expressed their gratitude and appreciation. Some even sent multiple thank you cards to Elks volunteers. Veteran Susan wrote, "You have truly blessed me with essentials needed to thrive in my new apartment. Your support has meant so much to me during this time of transition. The generosity and true concern you share is contagious! Thank you!"



*Continued below*

**BRYAN R. KLATT**, Grand Secretary  
**Benevolent and Protective  
ORDER OF ELKS**  
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60614-1889

**March 2025**

**NON-PROFIT ORG.**  
**U.S. Postage  
PAID  
CHICAGO, IL  
Permit No. 5244**

## G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

# Final push can achieve historic 'Soar with Four' goal

By **RICK GATHEN**

**Membership Marketing Manager**

For the first time in nearly 50 years, the Order stands on the brink of an extraordinary achievement: four consecutive years of membership growth.

This milestone is within reach, but it will take focused action and commitment to make it a reality.

**Action is essential for Lodges with candidates.** Lodges must act swiftly to initiate candidates before March 31. Time is critical to ensure every prospective member is welcomed and fully engaged.

**Retention is the foundation of growth.** Membership growth is not just about new Members—it's about keeping the ones we already have. Persistent outreach, proactive communication, and proven strategies are essential to bringing back at-risk Members. Reducing delinquencies strengthens our foundation and ensures every Member feels valued and connected.

**Beyond the numbers: Building a legacy.** This effort goes beyond hitting targets—it's about creating stronger communities, fostering meaningful connections, and leaving a lasting impact. With

collective action, clear communication, and unwavering focus, we can end this year on a high note and pave the way for an extraordinary 2025.

Let's unite with purpose, seize this moment, and make history together. **The time is now—let's Soar with Four!**

*From Above*

If you and your Lodge would like to help veterans like Susan transition into their new homes, visit [elks.org/vets/welcomehome.cfm](https://elks.org/vets/welcomehome.cfm) for more information on the Welcome Home Kit program and details on how to get started.