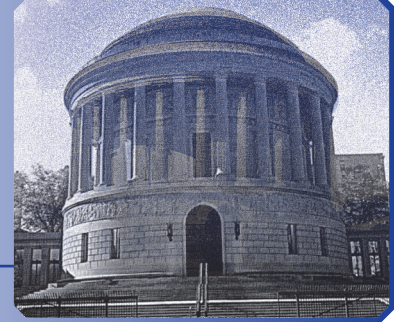




# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



## Keep in mind 4 important observances this month

*Elkdom's Heart for America* has significance in May as we think about Elks National Youth Week, Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day, and Mother's Day.

The first week of May is Elks National Youth Week. Honor the youth in your community at the end of their school year. A variety of certificates are available online, including ones for Student/Teenager of the Year/Month and the Elks JROTC Awards Program.

Memorial Day is Monday, May 26. It is a wonderful time when we can recognize and commemorate the men and women of all services for their sacrifices and hard work that kept our country safe and prosperous. Elks have a heart for remembering our departed service members.

Please find ways to acknowledge them by attending or participating in



### Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

**DOUGLAS A.  
SCHIEFER**

a Memorial Day parade, working at a cemetery ceremony to put flags at service members' graves, or planning a memorial ceremony at your Lodge. Memorial Day is not the only day that honors veterans.

Many of us may not automatically think of Armed Forces Day, which honors those currently serving in the U.S. military, held this year on Saturday, May 17. It was designated as a day for the unification of the armed forces to be

celebrated together instead of celebrating each branch individually. God bless our troops who served throughout the history of our country.

Happy Mother's Day to the important ladies in our lives. Mother's Day is Sunday, May 11. We need to extend our heartfelt thanks to all mothers, the women who have made our world a better place. Find a way to honor the mothers in your life and plan a Lodge activity to let them know how much they mean to us.

Our Grand Lodge Convention in Kansas City is just around the corner and we hope that you are able to attend. There's nothing like being together and finding out that we are all one powerful family who loves the Elks.

God bless you, God bless our troops, and God bless America!

## Pre-register and acquire badges for convention

Pre-registration for the Kansas City Grand Lodge Convention is available at [elks.org/convention/prereg.cfm](http://elks.org/convention/prereg.cfm) through June 25.

The online pre-registration fee is \$50 for all Members, while the on-site registration fee will be \$60. A current credit card for PayPal will be needed. There is no fee for a non-Elk spouse or guest.

**GRAND SECRETARY**  
Bryan R. Klatt

On-site registration will open on Friday, June 27, from noon to 4 p.m. When you arrive at the Kansas City Convention Center, go to the designated pre-registration line in the Registration area. You will need your e-mail confirmation and current membership card to receive credentials (and voting credentials, if qualified) for you and your spouse or guest. A registration badge will

Please see **CONVENTION, Page 2**

### G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

## Clearly define your Lodge roles

By RICK GATHEN  
Membership Marketing Director

A strong, well-structured leadership team is essential to growing and sustaining membership in any Lodge. By aligning leadership roles with key membership initiatives, Lodges can create a dynamic and engaging environment that attracts new Members, retains existing ones, and strengthens the overall organization.

Below is a strategic approach to Lodge leadership to consider, ensuring each Officer plays a pivotal role in membership growth and engagement.

### LEADERSHIP ROLES

**Exalted Ruler (ER) – Executive Leader.** Sets long-term strategy, leads Officer teams, and ensures Lodge growth.

**Secretary – Membership & Records Administrator.** Manages applications, renewals, and automated billing to maintain accuracy and retention.

**Leading Knight – Membership Growth & Marketing Chair.** Develops recruitment campaigns, oversees sponsorships, and drives social media engagement.

**Loyal Knight – Community Relations & Outreach Chair.** Builds partnerships with businesses, charities, and civic groups to increase visibility.

**Lecturing Knight – Leadership Development & Engagement Chair.** Leads mentorship programs and feedback initiatives to improve member experience.

### SUPPORTING COMMITTEES

**Marketing & Digital Media.** Expands digital outreach and visibility.

**Ritual & Tradition.** Preserves Lodge traditions to strengthen Member connection.

By aligning leadership with membership goals, Lodges can enhance recruitment, retention, and overall growth, ensuring a strong and engaged community for maximum membership growth.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Number one with a bulletin

By THOMAS W. FRAKER Committee Member

A heartfelt round of applause to the 18 state associations that entered the Contest I – State Bulletin Contest. Since 2023, seven more states have joined the contest.

Each participating state demonstrated a remarkable effort in producing high-quality bulletins that reflect the values of our Order. From covering major events to recognizing individual Members' contributions, these bulletins play a crucial role in preserving our traditions and inspiring future generations of Elks.

Your dedication, creativity, and commitment to the Elks' mission have truly shone through your entries. Your participation highlights the strength and unity of our organization and inspires others to get involved and make a difference.

Judging was based on four categories: Content, Layout & Typography, Pictorial, and General. Thank you to the many State Associations and their editors who entered. Keep up the great work!

5 Star ★★★★★ Awards

Table with 2 columns: State and Editor. Lists 5-star award winners from Florida to Washington.

4 Star ★★★★ Awards

Table with 2 columns: State and Editor. Lists 4-star award winners from Arizona to North Carolina.

3 Star ★★★ Awards

Table with 2 columns: State and Editor. Lists 3-star award winners from Idaho to Oregon.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

End the school year with recognition

By RICHARD W. THREADGILL Committee Member

This month marks Elks National Youth Week (May 1-7) where all Lodges should take time to recognize and honor the young people in our communities who perform at a high level in academics, athletics, and community service.

With most school years now coming to a close, use Elks National Youth Week to host a banquet or awards ceremony to honor a Student/Teenager of the Year, along with other youth awards. This program aims to find students or teenagers whose accomplishments deserve public recognition and praise.

If your Lodge doesn't currently run a Student/Teenager of the Year/Month program, now is the time to contact local school officials to review the program so that it can be launched in the fall when students return.

The Elks JROTC Award is another Grand Lodge Activities Committee program that provides an opportunity for Lodges to honor a high school cadet in their community.

This program has recently been approved by the military and is now fully sanctioned across all JROTC units. The full program will be published in the next

issue of the military uniform code (CCR 145-2) as a nationally recognized program listed as the "Benevolent & Protective Order Of Elks (B.P.O.E.) Award."

Recipients of this award are selected by a unit's Senior Army Instructor or Director of Army Instruction, with a focus on recognizing a cadet's community service work along with demonstrating outstanding leadership and patriotism.

Cadets that receive this award are now able to wear our award medal and ribbon bar on their uniform and can list our award as a recognized achievement as they progress through their academic and military careers.

These awards can have lasting impacts on the recipients. In addition to boosting self-esteem, these awards are used by students to help gain admission to colleges, win academic scholarships, and secure employment opportunities. Think of the impact your Lodge can have on your community by simply recognizing the work our young people are already doing.

More information about these programs, and other Activities Committee programs, can be found on elks.org/grandlodge/activities.

Many ways for Elks to help local youth

By TRACY LEOPOLD Committee Member

Although the school year may be coming to an end, this is the perfect time for your Lodges to start focusing and preparing for "back to school."

The Elks' programs are crucial for building strong, healthy communities. Through dedicated fundraising efforts, the Elks can continue to make a significant impact on youth development and create lasting memories for everyone involved.

CONVENTION From Page 1

be required to enter the exhibit hall and all business sessions.

All non-Elk guests, including widows and widowers of Elks, must register at the Guest Registration Station at the convention center to obtain registration badges. Guests need a badge to enter the exhibit hall, see the Installation of Grand Lodge Officers, or attend any other events where they are permitted.

Grand Lodge registration and its required fee are not included in any State Association's "package" arrangement.



Registration area at the 2023 convention

# CIP celebrates 20 years of success

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**  
 ENF Communications Coordinator

Twenty years ago, Carrie Underwood gained national fame by winning *American Idol*, the Chicago White Sox weren't historically bad (and won a World Series to prove it), *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* ended the Star Wars franchise (or so we thought), and the Community Investments Program was born.

When the CIP debuted in 2005, each grant was worth \$200, and we approved applications from 695 Lodges. A lot has changed since then, but one thing remains the same: the CIP's commitment to helping you build stronger communities.

This year, to commemorate the CIP's anniversary, the base level of the Gratitude

Grant will increase from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Every Lodge that meets the per-Member-giving goal of \$5 will have \$1,000 more to support community needs; Lodges will be eligible to receive a total of up to \$5,000 through additional bonuses.

With the Beacon, Spotlight, and Gratitude Grants, Lodges can receive up to \$11,000 to use in their community to help fight hunger, prevent veteran homelessness, or address other needs.

Now that's a reason to celebrate! Follow the ENF on social media and be on the lookout for more as we celebrate 20 years of the CIP.

*For 2025-26, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$18 million to fund the Community Investments Program. To learn more about the CIP, please visit [elks.org/CIP](http://elks.org/CIP).*

## GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

### Reports due ASAP

By **W. J. BRYAN**  
 Committee Chairman

Government Relations is more than just charitable reporting, although that is our biggest challenge. Past that, we are involved in a host of other items related to the government throughout the year, including property tax exemptions, public accommodation laws, music licensing, and even local issues like outdoor signs and smoking.

For this article, however, we emphasize our biggest challenge. Those charitable reports are due now!

Please get them in as soon as possible. This will save a lot of time and trouble for your District Deputy, State Government Relations Chairs, and Grand Lodge. Last year I was excited to report over half of a billion dollars in charitable activities. That is a great deal of hard work in the year, and we should all be proud.

Let's make that number grow. We are Elks and need to show it.



### 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](http://elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm)

### VETERANS From Page 4

their VA appointments.

Recently, Jones met a Korean War veteran named Andy who stopped by for coffee and conversation. She shared this story he told her about his experience with the Elks:

"Long ago, he was traveling through Texas in an old truck. The truck broke down while he was driving, but as luck would have it, it stopped right in front of an Elks Lodge. They took him in, fed him, got him a place to stay for the night. A couple of members who were mechanics fixed his truck up and sent him on his way the next day. He never forgot those folks."

Want to contribute? Visit [elks.org/vets](http://elks.org/vets) to learn more. You can also search to find a Representative near you, and contact them to offer your help with upcoming activities.

**CIP: 2024-25 Immediate Reactions**

With Community Investments Program grants, Lodges built stronger communities like never before.

**86%**  
of Lodges received at least one grant

**2.7** ❤️ ❤️ ❤️  
grants were approved per participating Lodge

**\$8,095.95**  
was granted per participating Lodge



Pictured above: Bates County, Mo., Lodge No. 2653 used a Beacon Grant to host Safety Village, a weeklong event that taught preschoolers about real-world safety. Throughout the week, 28 kids participated in fun activities and listened to guest speakers, including a police officer and fire fighter.

2024-25 CIP PROGRAM IMPACT	
Beacon Grant	\$7,480,500
Gratitude Grant	\$3,585,000
Spotlight Grant	\$1,718,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,783,500</b>

**Closing the Loop**

Due 30 days after the completion of a CIP project, a Final Report is required for each grant received. More than 1,000 Final Reports have been submitted, revealing that Lodges have already served more than 1.1 million people in their communities.

For 2024-25, the Elks National Foundation allocated \$16.3 million to the Community Investments Program. Lodges meet local needs through CIP grants that offer Elks opportunities to serve their community in ways that raise the Lodge's profile, energize 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](http://elks.org/CIP). To speak to CIP office staff, call 773/755-4730.

# Always be there with the Voluntary Service Program

By **HANNAH GRABER**

**ENVSC Programs Associate**

With the Voluntary Service program, Elks are supporting veterans every day of the year in more than 400 facilities nationwide. Thanks to the Boost Grant, Voluntary Service Representatives are planning new events for veterans.

In Yale, Michigan, Representative Scott Harris and Port Huron Lodge No. 343 will host a veteran lunch event with on-site services for attendees. This event started three years ago, when Scott and his Lodge held an event to spread information about the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, with help from a

Boost Grant.

This year, veterans will have the opportunity to share a meal together and access soft wave therapy, haircuts, therapeutic massages, and more. These events have been a tremendous success, connecting veterans with valuable resources from local service organizations and healthcare providers. This is an especially helpful event for a rural area.

At the State Veterans Home in Cameron, Missouri, Representative Samantha Barrett plans to use a Boost Grant to establish a pen pal program for veterans and local students. As a volunteer, Barrett

has seen how this program can reduce veteran loneliness and believes it will teach children about their history and who the veterans are. "I hope that this project will inspire the next group of ENVSC volunteers," Barrett said.

In addition to grant projects, volunteers also show up on a consistent basis to create relationships and offer support.

In Fort Collins, Colorado, Representative Carol Jones has continued a previous volunteer's tradition of providing a coffee station for veterans awaiting

Please see **VETERANS**, Page 3



**BRYAN R. KLATT**, Grand Secretary  
**Benevolent and Protective  
ORDER OF ELKS**

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**May 2025**

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## DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

# Mark calendars for prevention, awareness campaigns

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**

**National Director**

National Prevention Week, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is a public education platform showcasing the work of communities and organizations across the country that are preventing substance use and promoting positive mental health.

This year, National Prevention Week takes place from May 11-17. If your Lodge is interested in participating, you can learn more about how you can throughout the week and register for the events taking

place by going to the SAMHSA website. Recognizing National Prevention Week is a great way to enhance your position in your community.

The DEA has announced that May 10 is also National Fentanyl Awareness Day. This day is an effort to educate individuals about the dangers that fentanyl poses to the safety and health of Americans. Traffickers often mix fentanyl with other drugs like cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. It can also be found in vape pens, counterfeit pills, and ecstasy. Fentanyl is about 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine, according to the DEA.

Most people don't realize drugs can be laced with fentanyl, or with how much, resulting in overdoses.

The Elks Drug Awareness Commission's goal is to reach every child in our communities and educate them on the dangers of illicit drug use and abuse of legal drugs. We want our children to make informed decisions, not just during the month of May, but every day of the year.

If you want to participate in our various activities throughout this month—and every month—contact your Lodge DAP Chair or your State Association DAP Chair. Visit our booth at the Convention Center in Kansas City.