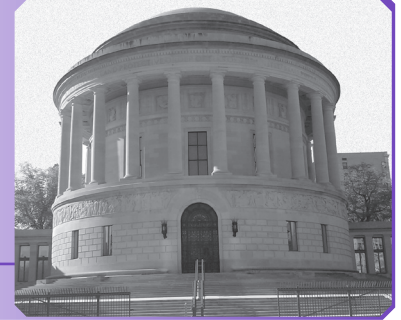




Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care – Elks Share



Set yourself up for success as Lodge year begins

April is here and hopefully spring has arrived. It always feels like a new beginning in April as the new Lodge year takes over.

As the new fraternal year begins, I want to congratulate the Officers for accepting their office and taking on the challenge of providing leadership within your Lodge.

Be sure to review and implement the programs of the 2025-2026 Grand Lodge Program booklet so you can continue to *Be The Difference* during the upcoming year. Strive to make sure you have all your committees prepared and they know their responsibilities. Stressing communication is the key.

Your Lodge must be ready to present a sound budget for the membership to



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler
BRYAN R.
KLATT**

adopt no later than the last regular meeting in April or the following regular meeting. The annual report for the previous year is also due May 1 so make sure that your financial reporting system is up to date.

The Lodge, at this time, should review the by-laws, house rules, and regulations to verify if any need updating.

It's for the good of the Lodge to make

everything orderly and to always prioritize the integrity and safety of the Lodge.

Many Lodges make a calendar of social events for the Lodge's upcoming year. Try creating a reasonable and achievable monthly list of events that will excite and attract membership.

Outside of your Lodge you are encouraged to establish a community project that emphasizes charitable work. Your Lodge life should always have a balance of what you do inside your Lodge and outside in the community you serve.

Don't forget to set aside May 1-7 as Elks National Youth Week. All Lodges are urged to sponsor programs dedicated to the youth of our country.

Remember to *Be The Difference* by promoting "*Elks Care—Elks Share.*"

Grand Lodge support for Lodge Officers

Congratulations to all newly elected Lodge Officers. The Grand Lodge Headquarters staff stands ready to support you throughout the year.

**GRAND SECRETARY
Carl T. Seibert**

Let's work together to advance quality membership growth and make this an outstanding year for your Lodge and community.

Pre-registration for Grand Lodge Convention Opens in April

Online pre-registration for the Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago opens April 1 on elks.org.

On-site registration—including credential pickup and distribution of lottery-issued tickets for the 100th Anniversary Celebration at the National Memorial—begins Friday, July 3, at noon in the McCormick Place West Building. Please note that exhibitor and vendor areas will not be open on Friday. Regular registration and vendor hours will

Please see **SECRETARY**, Page 3

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Winners announced for website awards

By **BRIAN RAWDING**
Committee Member

The goal of the Lodge Website Contest is to recognize Local Lodges which have excelled in the publication of their websites and/or Facebook pages.

The judging is based on content, design, news, Lodge promotions, Lodge calendar upkeep, Lodge leadership information, and Lodge committee information. A contestant may earn 3- to 5-star awards. The website is a vital part of keeping our Members informed of what is going on at the Lodge.

One important factor in judging the websites was up-to-date information both on the calendar and the Lodge Officer list.

The website or Facebook page is an excellent way to communicate community projects and encourage participation. Information is the lifeblood of our Lodges. This includes all functions, social events, community projects, and initiations.

The contest is limited to **one** entry per state. States with a Lodge website contest should forward their winner to the contest administrator.

Lodges without a state contest should send their entry to their area Fraternal Committee member, who will then determine a winner from that state and forward the entry to the contest administrator.

This year, 20 State Associations participated. The results are:

Five-Star Awards

- Chandler, AZ No. 2429
- Brainerd, MN No. 615
- Carson City, NV No. 2177
- Hillsboro, OR No. 1862

Four-Star Awards

- Calvert, MD No. 2620
- Hightstown, NJ No. 1955
- Sanford, NC No. 1679

Please see **FRATERNAL**, Page 3

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

CIP grant applications are open now

By **PATRICK ROELOFS**
ENF Communications Coordinator

The 2025-26 fiscal year is closed, and what a year it was! From unleashing gritty kids with the Elks Hoop Shoot, to helping the next generation of leaders achieve their academic dreams with scholarships, to meeting the unique needs of communities with Community Investments Program grants, Elks have proven that they always care.

As one chapter ends, another begins: Applications for 2026-27 Beacon, Spotlight, and Gratitude Grants are now open!

You may be eager to start building stronger



Hoop Shoot National Finals

April 18, 2026

Chicago, IL



communities in this new year, but before your Lodge applies for a Gratitude Grant, make

sure to wait until the fundraising numbers from the 2025-26 fiscal year are updated in May. Waiting to apply will ensure your Lodge gets the full extent of our thanks!

For questions about the Gratitude Grant and its bonuses, please contact the CIP team at lodgegrants@elks.org or by calling (773) 755-4730.

As a thank you to Lodges that met the previous fiscal year's per-Member-giving goal, the Elks National Foundation offers Gratitude Grants of up to \$5,000 to help Elks serve their communities. To find out more about Gratitude Grants and the Community Investments Program, visit enf.elks.org/GratitudeGrants.

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Keep up with your reporting efforts

By **MYRON SHANNON JR.**
Committee Member

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is here to make sure we are on top of all federal and state laws that might come into effect soon.

There is a way to stay in front of this. If you have a politician living in your jurisdiction, ask them to be a Member.

By doing so, you can receive some information about new laws that may be just starting in the legislature.

At our Lodge, we have a state senator and an assemblyman as Members. We have found that they are a great fit for our Lodge.

The Charitable Giving Report is to capture all our charitable works we do as Elks. We are doing a great job so far in reporting, but we all can do better.

We need to put our noses to the grindstone so we can reach \$6,000,000 this year. We have asked all Lodges to get a Government Relations Committee started and have a Member to help input the information into CLMS. Make sure the report sheets are easily found and easy to fill out.

Support the Veterans Memorial Restoration Trust by donating

For 100 years, the Elks National Memorial has honored the courage and sacrifice of those who served our nation. This anniversary offers an opportunity to extend that legacy with your personal tribute. Your contribution supports the Elks Veterans Memorial Restoration Trust and the continued care and upkeep of this historic building.

You may give in honor of Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt or choose to honor a veteran who made a lasting impact on your life.

Donations honoring a veteran of **\$100 or more will be displayed on the Veterans Video Tribute wall** at the Elks National



Convention.

Members who make a dedication honoring a veteran at the **\$500 level or above will have the veteran's photo added to the Tribute Video Wall.**

Your gift strengthens the preservation of the Memorial as we approach the Centennial Celebration on July 4, 2026.

Contribute at elks.org/donate100.

Celebrate Independence Day with Elks pride at Wrigley Field

Elks Day at Wrigley Field will be Saturday, July 4 at 7:08 p.m. as the Chicago Cubs face the St. Louis Cardinals.

Tickets will be limited so early planning

is encouraged. Watch elks.org/elksday for updates. **GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!**

#ElksDayatWrigleyField #ElksUSA
#CommunityFriendshipCharity

AWARENESS From Page 4

The Drug Awareness Program is also going through changes.

Our websites are ever developing, and we hope you will like what we have done. We are also bringing in new leadership at the Director level.

At the end of this month, I will be stepping down as the National Director.

On my next birthday, I will be turning 80 and it is time to pass the baton to younger leadership.

I cherish the time I have led the program and look forward to all the great possibilities under the new leadership.

Thank you for the honor you have bestowed upon me and may God bless you all. The future is in your hands and it looks great!

BE THE DIFFERENCE

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Antlers Program continues to grow

By **MAC KIDD**
Committee Member

As the new Lodge year begins, there will be new leadership in your Lodges. This is a great time to start an Antlers Program.

The Elks' youth activities program provides young adults with group activities and charity work. For people between 12 and 20 years old to join, it's like junior training for the Elks.

Challenge your new Officers to visit the Lodge Activities website at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/ to explore the Antlers information along with all the other programs that are available.

Antlers Lodges are a great way to provide community service opportunities for students to include on scholarship applications and college applications.

It is also a way for these young men and women to give back to their communities. Antlers can be involved not only in their own community service programs but also those of the sponsoring Lodge.



With the number of weather-related disasters that we have been having in our nation, there are no shortage of service projects available for Antlers to participate in, whether helping with tornado cleanup, gathering supplies and delivering to those affected, cooking and providing meals, checking on elderly during ice storms, etc.

As interest in the Antlers program continues to grow, Antlers have a logo they can put on letterheads, flyers, clothing, and hats.

We encourage you to promote this with your Antlers Lodge to increase their footprint in your community to gain more interest in your Antlers Program.

The Activities Committee would like to receive photos of your Antlers Lodges to display in our booth at the Grand Lodge Convention. Please send photos of your Antlers Lodge participating in a community service project helping their community. The photos can be emailed to kiddkovesheep@gmail.com.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Leave your membership doubts behind

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Director

When it's time to renew your Elks membership, a question may cross your mind: Does my membership really matter?

Yes. It does. So leave your doubt at the door.

When you walk into your Lodge, you walk into a place where veterans are honored, children are protected, and communities are lifted. You stand shoulder to shoulder with Elks across this nation—past, present, and future—who

believe in service, compassion, and doing the right thing.

Your membership is not symbolic. It feeds families. It funds scholarships. It supports veterans. It changes lives.

You may not always see the impact—but it's there, every day, in every community we serve.

Being an Elk means showing up. It means caring. It means belonging to something bigger than yourself.

So, renew with pride. Move forward with confidence. You are an Elk. And that matters. Leave your doubt at the door.

VETERANS From Page 4

With community support, Freedom Grants, and a dream, Elks can achieve anything when it comes to uplifting veterans throughout their community.

Does your Lodge have a big idea for

veterans? Are there organizations or nonprofits that would make a good partner for your Lodge on a project that serves local veterans?

Freedom Grant applications go online April 1. Every Lodge is eligible to apply for up to \$1,000 to serve local veterans in need.

SECRETARY From Page 1

resume Saturday, July 4, at 8:00 a.m.

The online pre-registration fee for all Elks Members is \$70. On-site is \$80. There is no fee for non-Elk spouses or guests.

A registration badge is required for entry into the exhibition hall and all business sessions.

Membership Balance Discrepancies

If you see the alert, "Your CLMS membership count does not match that of Grand Lodge" on April 1, there is no need for concern. This discrepancy can occur, and most corrections will not be processed until the last week of May.

You may continue working in CLMS as usual. If your count is out of balance on April 1, please email your active membership roster and a screenshot of your CLMS alerts to grandlodge@elks.org for review.

FRATERNAL From Page 1

Lebanon, OH No. 422

Broken Arrow, OK No. 2673

Vancouver, WA No. 823

Three Star Awards

Redwood City, CA No. 1991

Jupiter, FL No. 2469

Logansport, IN No. 66

Elizabethtown, KY No. 2891

Houma, LA No. 1193

Ferndale, MI No. 1588

Saratoga-Wilton, NY No. 161

West Shore-Harrisburg, PA No. 2257

Tooele, UT No. 1673

Mannington, WV No. 388

Elks Lodges celebrate 100-Year Anniversaries in 2025-2026

South Haven, MI No. 1509

instituted October 21, 1925

Bradenton, FL No. 1511

instituted July 4, 1925

Fort Pierce, FL No. 1520

instituted February 25, 1926

Millinocket, ME No. 1521

instituted February 25, 1926

Arcadia, FL No. 1524

instituted May 21, 1926

Des Plaines, IL No. 1526

instituted June 25, 1926

Goodland, KS No. 1528

instituted June 28, 1926

Elks Members build facilities for veteran support

By **EMILY CRUZ**
Programs Associate

Sometimes, dreaming big can feel like achieving the impossible. But with help from the Elks and your local community, big dreams can be made a reality.

With the help of a Freedom Grant, Elks at Kingman, AZ Lodge No. 468 are making dreams come true for local veterans.

The Lodge partnered with their nearby American Legion chapter to convert their old Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce building into a veterans' thrift store.

With Freedom Grant funds, Members were able to furnish the thrift store with

items like clothing racks, shelves, hangers, and office supplies.

Thanks to these efforts, veterans in the community will have the ability to save money on clothing and home goods.

If a veteran comes into the thrift store and can't afford an item, they are given the opportunity to work at the thrift store to pay for the cost of the items they'd like to purchase.

Project Manager Nani Chrimes shares that the grant project "provided a relationship with the community and veterans to provide household items for

veterans moving into permanent housing. Community donated usable items and veterans could shop in the thrift store to save money."

Even with the success in opening this new thrift store, Kingman Elks aren't finished with building infrastructure to serve veterans in their community.

The Lodge's next steps are to build a greenhouse adjacent to the thrift store so local veterans will be able to grow their own food.



Please see **VETERANS**, Page 3

Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
**Benevolent and Protective
ORDER OF ELKS**
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April 2026

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DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Participate in DEA's Take Back Day and more in April

By **WILLIAM BRYAN**
National Director

It's no joke. April is a very big month for the Elks' Drug Awareness Program.

Submissions for our three major contests—the Essay, Poster, and Video Contest—must be forwarded to the Commission by the middle of this month.

For all the details, please visit our training site: training.elksdap.org. This site will give you all the information you will need for a successful contest in your Lodge.

The next National Prescription Drug Take Back Day will be held Saturday, April



25, 2026. Events will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. local time.

For sixteen years, DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day has helped Americans safely dispose of unneeded medications—those that are old, unwanted, or expired—to prevent drug

misuse and abuse.

Take Back Day offers free and anonymous disposal of unneeded medications at nearly 4,500 drop-off locations nationwide. Your Lodge could make a big impact in your community by participating in this activity. To learn more about Take Back Day—and every day is Take Back Day—dea.gov/takebackday.

Lastly, as most Elks know, April is a month of change: new Exalted Rulers, new Lodge Chair Officers, new opportunities.

Please see **AWARENESS**, Page 2