



The Elks Brief

Denison Lodge 238

Celebrating 134 years. 1892-2026

Official Publication of the Denison Elks Lodge #238 BPOE USA

A Fraternal Organization

January '26 Edition

[Click here to go to Lodge 238](#)

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Downtown Lodge

903-465-9610

301 W Gandy St. Denison, Texas 75020

Lakesite Social Quarters and RV Campground

903-786-2487

298 Elks Blvd. Pottsboro, Texas 75076



"So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

A Special Greeting from Grand Lodge

I am privileged to be able to carry a card that says I am a Member of an amazing organization. It's called The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and it is dedicated to acts of kindness and charity. As we enter a new year, it may be time to step back and reflect on the true meaning of that name—and what it asks of each of us.

The word “Benevolent” carries many meanings: a natural inclination to be kind and helpful, giving charitable gifts, wishing for the well-being of others rather than focusing on self-interest. Benevolence is the act of doing good and providing aid out of goodwill, without expectation of reward. Simply carrying a card does not automatically make any of us charitable or benevolent; those qualities must be practiced.

If we are to be charitable to the outside world—which is our primary mission—we must first learn to be charitable among ourselves. As stated in the initiation ritual, “Charity is the greatest of all the virtues.” That principle begins at home, within our Lodges. It calls on us to treat one another with respect, patience, and understanding, even when we disagree.

A Lodge, upon receiving its Charter, accepts the responsibilities that come with it, including its charitable programs and obligations. At times, we all need reminders of who we are and what we stand for. Those reminders are not meant to divide us, but to serve as a re-awakening. First and foremost, we are an Elks Lodge that happens to have a bar attached—not the other way around.

As we move into the new year, we must make a conscious decision to put Denison Lodge #238 ahead of personal agendas, disagreements, or divisions. Boycotts, infighting, and disengagement weaken the very organization we all claim to care about. Change begins when we choose the Lodge over conflict and unity over discord.

We should only want what is best for Denison Lodge #238. If we keep that principle at the center of our thinking, we give this Lodge the opportunity not just to survive, but to move forward together. Remember, it's for the Lodge.

Fraternally,

Russell Scott
Area Special Representative
Texas North District

Progress in Motion Update

As we begin the new year, there are several important items members should be aware of as we continue strengthening Lodge 238 and moving toward full, stable operation.

At our first January meeting, members will be asked to approve or reject proposed bylaw changes that would allow the Lodge to hold meetings at Lakesite. Copies of the proposed bylaws and house rules are available at the Social Quarters and may be reviewed by any member prior to the vote.

Elections are approaching in February, and this has understandably caused some confusion. The elections held in December were to fill vacant positions for the remainder of the 2025–2026 term. The upcoming elections in February will be for officer positions serving the 2026–2027 term. Nominations for these positions will be taken at the first meeting in February, with elections held at the second meeting in accordance with Grand Lodge Statute 3.090. Officers elected in February will assume their roles on April 1.

It's also important to address some of the conversations circulating among members. The leadership currently serving is focused on ensuring the long-term future of this Lodge. The concern over our charter was—and remains—real, and Grand Lodge has been clear that past operations are not acceptable. At this time, the District is allowing us the opportunity to manage our own affairs and demonstrate continued progress. While meaningful improvements have been made, we are not yet fully in the clear.

A fully functioning Elks Lodge requires active programs, engaged members, and shared responsibility. At present, too much of the work still falls on a small number of people. To move forward, we must continue filling open chairs and ensuring our Grand Lodge charitable programs are active and supported. Participation in these programs is an essential milestone in showing Grand Lodge we can stand on our own.

It's also worth clarifying expectations around social media. At the direct instruction of Grand Lodge, any posts containing alcohol imagery will be removed. This is not optional and is part of our responsibility to remain compliant. To ensure adherence to this guideline, all posts must first be reviewed and approved by the Board.

The path forward is clear, but it requires continued involvement from every member. This Lodge can succeed if more members lean in, step up, and help carry the work. Together, we can rebuild a strong, active Lodge that reflects the values and purpose of the Elks.

Chris Brown
(214) 883-7723

Committee Descriptions & Vacancies

On the following page, you'll see a visual overview of our committee chairs. Those highlighted in green represent positions that have recently been filled—an encouraging sign of progress. Chairs highlighted in red remain open and still need volunteers. Each month, we will spotlight a few of these open roles so members can better understand where help is needed.

Americanism Committee

Promotes patriotism and respect for our nation's traditions through programs that honor the flag, support veterans and active-duty military, and encourage civic responsibility. [**Americanism Manual**](#)

Elks National Foundation (ENF) Committee

Supports and promotes the charitable programs of the Elks National Foundation, including scholarships, youth initiatives, veterans services, and community grants. We are seeking a volunteer to chair this committee and help coordinate amongst the affiliated subcommittees.

Standing Relief Committee

Provides support and assistance to members and their families in times of need, coordinating aid, resources, and outreach to ensure that no Elk is left without help during emergencies or hardship. We are currently seeking a volunteer to chair this Committee.

Membership Committee

Focuses on recruiting, engaging, and retaining members and promoting the benefits of Elks membership. We are currently seeking a volunteer to help coordinate with prospective new members via email and guide them through the application process.

Fraternal Committee

Promotes fellowship and camaraderie among members by planning social events and programs that strengthen friendships and foster a welcoming lodge environment. [**Lodge Activities Manual**](#)

Accident Prevention Committee

Promotes safety within the lodge and at lodge-sponsored events by identifying hazards, recommending precautions, and educating members on accident prevention and safe practices. [**Accident Prevention Manual**](#)

Please consider volunteering for one of these open positions.

Exalted Ruler

Gene Handeland

Esteemed Leading Knight

Jamey Lenard

Esteemed Loyal Knight

Tabitha Lenard

Esteemed Lecturing Knight

Dan Kovach

Secretary

Jennifer Skitt

Treasurer

Chris Brown

Esquire

Open

Tiler

Open

Inner Guard

Steve Hejny

5-Yr Trustee

Larry Wilford

4-Yr Trustee

Carlos Murillo

3-Yr Trustee

Rick Berube

2-Yr Trustee

Michael Taylor

1-Yr Trustee

John Dooley

Chaplain

Josh Cole

Auditing & Accounting:

Open

Activities Committee

Emily Bernardo

Community Projects

Subcommittee

Open

Youth Activities Subcommittee

Jim Magellas

Larry & Jana Wilford

Steve Hejny

Hoop Shoot Subcommittee

Rick Berube

Stacie Hargrove

Drug Awareness

Subcommittee

Open

Fraternal Committee

Open

Americanism Subcommittee

Open

Elks National Foundation

Subcommittee

Open

Flag Day Subcommittee

Open

Elks Memorial Day

Subcommittee

Open

Membership Committee

Chris Brown

Jamey Lenard

Veterans Services

Subcommittee

Michael & Rebekah Berg

Accident Prevention

Subcommittee

Open

PER Association

Gene Handeland

Standing Relief Subcommittee

Open

Public Relations

Open

Ritualistic Subcommittee

Jack Duncan

Soccer Shoot Subcommittee

Open

Government Relations

Subcommittee

Open

State Major Project

Subcommittee

Open

Bulletin Editor

Chris Brown

Scholarship Committee

Open

House Committee

Mike Mutchler

Sweetheart

Tabitha Lenard

Interlodge Chairman

Open

Grant Coordinator

Veronica Buten

A Word from the Exalted Ruler

As we begin the new year, I want to thank those who have helped improve our Lodge's processes and those who have stepped up to fill open roles. I encourage more members to consider stepping into these important roles—ask questions, explore what fits best for you, and know that our Board is here to help guide you. Together, we can make 2026 a year of progress and stronger community at Lodge 238.

Fraternally Yours,
Gene Handeland
(903) 271-9264

A Word from the Secretary

Welcome to 2026! As we step into the new year, we look forward to renewed goals and exciting opportunities for Elks Lodge 238.

I would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt thank you to all of our new volunteers and bartenders who contributed to the success of our many December activities. Your dedication and support were instrumental in making the Hoop Shoot, Toy Drive, Gifts for Our Veterans, security implementation, Christmas Party, and New Year's Eve Celebration such a success. December was an exceptionally busy month, and it was truly inspiring to see our members come together in such a strong and collaborative way. January is one of our final months to gather volunteer hours, donations, and complete key events, and we encourage all members to reach out to any Board Member to learn how you can step up and assist during this important time.

Please be on the lookout for upcoming activities that may not yet appear on the calendar but will be announced via Facebook and email, including the Lot Lease Gathering, Committee Thank You Meal, and the Veterans Auction. We are also pleased to announce Emily Bernardo as our new Chair of Activities for the Social Quarters—be sure to follow her on Facebook for updates and announcements. Additionally, we are happy to welcome Susan Filtrante, who has joined our Lot Lease Team.

There are still many volunteer opportunities available, and we encourage all members to get involved. Your time and support make a meaningful difference, and we appreciate your continued participation.

Fraternally,
Jennifer Skitt
(469) 704-7503





2025-2026 SWEETHEART Tabitha Lenard

I'm excited to share information about the Sweetheart Program, a charitable initiative dedicated to supporting children with special needs and those in foster care. This program helps provide essential resources, opportunities, and assistance to improve the lives of these children and their families. Our goal this year is to raise as much as possible to further this important mission.

To help us organize meaningful events and reach our fundraising goals, we are forming a Sweetheart Program Committee. This group will coordinate fundraising activities, outreach efforts, and special events throughout the year. A strong, collaborative team will make a tremendous impact on the support we're able to provide.

If you're interested in lending your time and talents, please reach out to Tabitha Lenard. Your participation and ideas would be greatly appreciated as we work together to make a difference.

Thank you for your support of this vital program.

Tabitha

A Word from the Board

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas and wish all Elks a very Happy New Year!

As we kick off 2026, our mission remains the same—to re-establish ourselves as a noteworthy Elks organization dedicated to charity and to caring for our veterans, our children, and one another. We are deeply appreciative of the patience, support, and countless hours volunteered this year. Thank you to everyone who has lent a hand! Our success is directly tied to your volunteerism.

Please see the Board Meeting recap on the next page for updates and upcoming opportunities to get involved.

Fraternally,
Larry Wilford
Trustee of the Board



Board of Directors Meeting Recap – December 12, 2025

The Board of Directors met on December 12 to review Lodge operations, facilities, and upcoming initiatives. The following items were discussed:

Facilities & Grounds

Repairs related to the Corps of Engineers project are nearing completion, with most fencing reinstalled and remaining dock and walkway items still in progress. Additional maintenance needs are being evaluated, and ***members interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact a Trustee***. The beach flagpole, which was damaged during the flood, is also under review for repair or replacement. In addition, the burn pile has been fully removed. A sincere thank-you goes to Carlos Murillo and Wesley Clark for their assistance. Please note that dumping is no longer permitted in that area.

Operations & Oversight

In the absence of a House Committee Chair, oversight of the Social Quarters continues to fall under the Board of Directors. Jenni Skitt is serving as the Board's point of contact and will report back as needed on operational matters.

Septic System Update

A second inspection of the septic system has been completed. Written findings and recommendations are pending, after which the Board will review and determine next steps.

Charities & Programs

The 2025–2026 Hoop Shoot was successfully completed, with Lodge #238 advancing finalists in four age groups. The Board extends its thanks to all who stepped in to help make the event a success. Planning is already underway to expand and strengthen this program in the coming year.

Bylaws Update

Updated Lodge bylaws were reviewed and approved by the Board and presented to the membership for review. Pending member approval at the next Lodge meeting, the bylaws will be submitted to Grand Lodge. Updates include language allowing Lodge meetings to be held at either authorized location: Downtown or Lakesite.

Proposed for Membership

Veronica Ashley Harper
Jeffrey Wayne Ashley
Dennis Keith Wade
Robert Weis
Kellye Keitz
Michael Sanford
Lou Ann Obrero
Stephen Montgomery
Lacie George
Dennis Dougherty
Quinn Zachary Knight

Welcome New Membership

Brian Lee Gatewood
Shawna Kay Lively
Wayne DeGroat
Dawn Wilha
William Wilha

Lodge of Sorrow

Nothing to report at this time.

01 David Barkley
01 Sandi Skidmore
02 Charles Lamb
03 Sonia White
04 Mark Foltermann
05 Marion Farmer
05 Robert Fedor
05 James Kirkpatrick
05 Kenneth Mizer
06 Timothy Lindsey
06 Aaron West
08 Karen Benderman

Birthdays

09 James Miller
11 Michael Cone
11 Jason Coyle
11 Gary Winters
12 Kenneth Sidebottom
13 Michael Griffith
13 Roberta Harris
13 Richard Noyes
14 Elizabeth Greenwood-Williams
15 Terry Harris
15 Carol McCunniff

16 Jared Brown
17 Jared Howell
17 Terry Van Hooser
20 Nicholas Pellman
20 Buford Rivers
21 Amanda Risner
25 Jeff Havener
25 Theodore Lindgren
26 Dequita Engelke
29 Danny Burks
30 Staci Salmon
31 Rachel Nelson

Lakesite Social Quarters

January 2026

(903) 786-2487

Hours: Sun-Wed 4p-10p | Thur 4p-11p | Fri 4p-12a | Sat 4p-1a

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Darts 7pm	2 LRC Game 7pm	3
4	5 Investigations Lakesite 6pm	6	7 Game Night	8 Darts 7pm	9 LRC Game 7pm	10
11	12 House Meeting Social Quarters Lakesite 6pm	13 BOD Meeting Green Trailer Lakesite 6pm	14 CLOSED Lodge Meeting Downtown 7:00pm	15 Darts 7pm	16 LRC Game 7pm	17
18	19 Martin Luther King Day	20	21 Game Night	22 Darts 7pm	23 LRC Game 7pm	24 Sweetheart Dinner 6pm
25	26	27	28 CLOSED Lodge Meeting Downtown 7:00pm	29 Darts 7pm	30 LRC Game 7pm	31

HOW TO REACH US

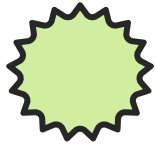
DON'T HESITATE TO ASK US ANYTHING!



FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING LOT LEASES OR ELK PROPERTY
DENSION238LOTLEASE@GMAIL.COM



FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING CAMPGROUND, DOCK OR BEACH
DENISON238CAMPGROUND@GMAIL.COM



FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING SOCIAL QUARTERS / HOUSE COMMITTEE
DENSION238SOCIALQUARTERS@GMAIL.COM



FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING ELSE
DENSION.LODGE238@GMAIL.COM



MORE INFO: 

VISIT OUR WEBSITE ELKS.ORG/238 