

GRAND LODGE Convention News

MONDAY ✨ JULY 6, 2026

Elks were 'the difference' in 2025-26

By Ruth Kellar

Convention News Reporter

Thousands of Elks and guests from all 50 states attended the Opening Ceremonies of the 161st Grand Lodge Session, where they learned of the past year's successes by the Elks National Drug Awareness Commission, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission, and the Elks National Foundation. The evening's highlight was a presentation by Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt, who congratulated the assembled Elks for demonstrating during the past year how they can "Be The Difference."

To open the ceremonies, the assembled Elks were welcomed to Chicago by PGER Bruce A. Hidley, who urged them to take the opportunity to visit the Elks National Memorial Building in celebration of its 100th anniversary. Hidley then introduced the Chief Executive Officer and Grand Secretary Carl T. Seibert and his wife Theresa; the Past Grand Exalted Rulers and Past First Ladies; and, finally, First Lady Susan Klatt and GER Bryan R. Klatt. Hidley next introduced Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee Chairman Gwendolyn B. Parker, who oversaw the Presentation of Flags, which included the flags of the first responders; all 50 states, the District of Columbia and overseas possessions; the six branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and the U.S. Merchant Marines; the POW-MIA flag; and the flag of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. To close the parade, the members of the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee escorted the world's greatest symbol of freedom, the flag of the United States of America, to the front of the stage and paused as the assembled Elks recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the conclusion of the Presentation of Flags, PGER Hidley then introduced PGER Millard C. Pickering, who is the chairman of



PGER Bruce A. Hidley heads up the Opening Ceremony of the 161st Grand Lodge Session on Sunday. Hidley appeared dressed in historic Chicago costume, complete with fedora and diamond studded tie. Photo: Marcus Oania

the Elks National Drug Awareness Commission. Pickering reminded Elks that they have the unique privilege and duty to positively impact and guide the young people in their communities. He then introduced a video report given by Elroy the Elk, who discussed the continued success of the Drug Awareness Program over the past year: Nearly two million pieces of Drug Awareness material were distributed across the nation, approximately 47,500 students were reached, and about 130 drug awareness trailers were utilized. In addition, Elroy shared that the program's educational video podcast had received over one million views. To conclude, Elroy urged individual Lodges to keep supporting its initiatives and to keep reporting all their drug awareness program events so that the Order's impact could be seen and felt.

PGER Hidley then returned to the stage and introduced PGER Paul R. Ryan, Chairman of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission, who

proceeded to give the commission's annual report. He began by sharing that over 700 veterans in need each received an average of more than \$1,600 from the Elks Emergency Assistance Fund. He also noted that the Welcome Home Kit program continues the fight against veteran homelessness and provided basic household necessities to 5,468 veterans moving into new homes over the past year. Ryan shared that Lodges often included personalized gifts in these kits, such as welcome-home signs, the flag of the service branch to which the recipient veteran belonged, or an invitation to the lodge for a meal. He further noted that through the Voluntary Service Program, 772 Elks had provided in-person support and care to veterans by visiting them in transitional housing shelters, clinics, and VA facilities across the country. PGER Ryan then introduced a video illustrating the impact

Please see **OPENING** Page 12

See Page 10 for Proposed Resolutions

G/L AUDITING AND ACCOUNTING COMMITTEE

The Auditing and Accounting Committee will conduct two seminars on Monday and Tuesday to assist Lodges in their accounting tasks.

The *Introduction to Lodge Accounting for Officers seminar* will address the basics of using the recommended software to perform all the accounting tasks a Lodge needs. The session will be conducted using a live session of QuickBooks. It is recommended for all beginners and intermediate Lodge personnel who handle the bookkeeping at

the Lodge level. The seminar is scheduled for 12:30–1:45 p.m. Monday and 2:15–3:30 p.m. Tuesday, both in Room W181 in the McCormick Place – West Building.

The *Advanced Lodge Accounting Topics seminar* will address common areas where Lodges have issues with complying with Grand Lodge Statutes or federal and state information return requirements. Topics will include overhead allocation, an FRS overview, key submission points of Form 990,

adjusting journal entries, depreciation expenses, and year-end closing of restricted funds. This session is scheduled for 2–3:15 p.m. Monday and 12:30–1:45 p.m. Tuesday, both in Room W181 in the McCormick Place – West Building.

Each session will have a question and answer segment. Members are also able to stop by the committee's booth in the exhibits area for one-on-one meetings to address specific issues. The committee looks forward to seeing you.

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

Join the ENVSC for panels, more

By Mary K. Morgan

Director, ENVSC

Mondays are for Veterans Service! Hang out with the ENVSC today.

Starting at 1 p.m., celebrate with us as we present the National Veteran Service Volunteer of the Year award to Larry Nelson of Lakewood-Bellflower, CA Lodge No. 888, in recognition of his outstanding service to veterans.

Then stay for the Elks Voluntary Service Volunteer Panel to learn how this longstanding program adapts to all the communities where Elks serve veterans. Did you know that these Elks volunteers host lobster fishing trips, go to monster truck events, and rescue birds? From bingo and baby supplies to emergency housing and mentoring veterans through the court system, the Voluntary Service program ensures that veterans have the support they need, no matter their location.

You'll hear program ideas, lessons learned, and inspiration from Elks who've been volunteering for years.

At 2:30 p.m., join us to learn all about the Elks Veterans Leather Program! Learn how you can start this program at your Lodge and in your state. Program Chairs will share their expertise, review program requirements, and offer instructions on how to participate.

All three events take place today, Monday, July 6, in room W179 (McCormick Place West Building).

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Elks National Foundation is hosting two seminars on Monday to highlight its work and give tips to volunteers—you won't want to miss them! Admission is on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors open 30 minutes before seminars begin, and rooms are subject to change.

Elks Hoop Shoot: Unleashing Gritty Kids

Catch the tip-off for the upcoming Elks Hoop Shoot season and learn how you can help unleash gritty kids.

Monday, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in McCormick Place - West Building, Room W475.

ENF Fundraising Chairs:

Back to Basics—Fundraising 101

This session will break down the art and science of fundraising and provide best practices to apply in your Lodge. Though the content for this seminar is designed for ENF Fundraising Chairs, all are welcome to attend. *Monday, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in McCormick Place - West Building, Room W184.*

Special Recognition Award Best Grand Lodge Area

The generous donations in 2025-26 by the B.P.O. Elks of



Manila, PI Lodge No. 761

are gratefully acknowledged by the
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Elks National Foundation

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How Many Conventioneers?

The Credentials Committee has announced that the Registration figures from Saturday and Sunday were completed just in time for Opening Ceremony:

Grand Exalted Ruler	1
Past Grand Exalted Rulers	19
Grand Lodge Officers	8
Grand Trustees	8
Grand Forum	5
Grand Lodge Committeemen	79
District Deputies-Designate	230
Special Deputies	30
Representatives to Grand Lodge & Alternates	1,378
State Presidents	45
State Secretaries	33
Grand Lodge Members	1,783
Non-Voting Members	2,161
Guests	978
Vendors	33

Combined Totals: 6,791

1ST DAY BUSINESS SESSION

08:00	Opening Ceremony	Grand Lodge Officers
	Procession of Grand Lodge Officers	Jeffrey A. Rodier, Grand Esquire
	Call to Order	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	— Invocation	Rev. Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain
	Recognition of Delegates.	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	• From Distant Lodges • From New Lodges	
	Reading of Minutes from Previous Session — Motion to Dispense	
	Appointments	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Annual Report of the Grand Exalted Ruler	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Nat'l. Convention Commission Report.	Millard C. Pickering PGER, Chair
	Nat'l. Memorial & Publication Comm. Report	Malcolm J. McPherson, Jr., PGER, Chair
	Veterans Memorial Restoration Trust Report	Malcolm J. McPherson, Jr., PGER, Chair
	Board of Grand Trustees (<i>preliminary report</i>)	Joseph C. Cooper, Chair
	Committee on Judiciary.	Daniel J. Nelson, Chair
	Legislative Session discussion (<i>2 min/resolution</i>)	Daniel J. Nelson, Chair
09:30	(<i>estimated</i>) Non-Members Admitted	
	Ritual Committee (<i>preliminary report</i>)	Frank Malatesta, Chairman
	Announcements	Jeffrey A. Rodier, Grand Esquire
	Nominations and Election of 2026-2027 Officers	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Designating Escorts for Procession of GER-Elect.	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Presentation of Grand Lodge Officers-Elect	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Celebration/Demonstration	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Acceptance Speech.	Timothy F. Jaeger, GER-Elect
	Announcements	Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
	Announcements	Jeffrey A. Rodier, Grand Esquire
	Announcements	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Benediction	Rev. Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain
	Grand Lodge Session Recessed	Bryan R. Klatt, GER



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ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Carrying on an ENF legacy with awards

By Patrick Roelofs

ENF Communications Coordinator

Every April, hundreds of high school seniors receive Legacy Awards from the Elks National Foundation. Available to the children and grandchildren of Elks, Legacy Awards are so much more than just a check—they're an opportunity to continue one's Elks family legacy.

This year, the ENF took its commitment to the next generation even further. They increased the number of Legacy Awards (from 350 to 400) and the amount they are worth (from \$4,000 to \$6,000). With these exciting changes, Legacy scholars will make differences like never before.

"Beyond the financial assistance, this scholarship is a powerful source of encouragement," said Liv Steinmetz, a 2026 Legacy scholar sponsored by Summit, NJ Lodge No. 1246. "It reminds me that others believe in my potential and motivates me to work hard, give back to my community, and uphold the values represent-

ed by the ENF."

Legacy scholars experience the positive impact of the Elks firsthand, as they are required to perform three instances of service with a Lodge over the four years they receive the scholarship. This empowers them to go out in their communities, connect with neighbors, and pave their own path with the Elks.

"My parents and family members have been proud Elks Members for as long as I can remember, and being raised in an Elks family has shaped my character and sense of service," said Crystian Zelinsky, a 2026 Legacy scholar sponsored by Ellenville, NY Lodge No. 1971. "I look forward to carrying our family's involvement into the next generation."

As the next generation of leaders continues to receive these \$6,000 scholarships, they can also become the next generation of Elks. Does your Lodge have a Legacy Awards winner? Visit enf.elks.org/leg to find out!

G/L ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Lodge Activities Committee will be hosting Seminars on **Monday from 2:30 - 4 p.m. at McCormick Place - West Building, Room W470,** and **Tuesday from 12:30 - 2 p.m. at McCormick Place - West Building, Room W470.**

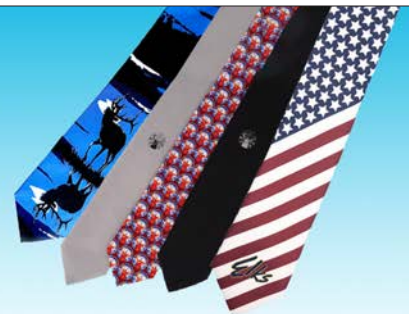
The seminar will provide a brief overview of all the related committee programs: Public Service Awards, Jr. Golf Program, Scouting, JROTC & Student/Teenager of the Month Awards, the Antlers Program, the Dictionary Project, Soccer Shoot, and the Community Project Award contest. There will be time before the end for questions and answers.

If one cannot attend one of the seminars, please stop by the Activities Booth. We will be happy to speak with you.



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ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Shining a Spotlight on CIP grants

By Patrick Roelofs

ENF Communications Coordinator

When the Community Investments Program began in 2005 with a budget of \$350,000, nobody could have guessed how rapidly it would grow. In the 2025-26 grant year, the CIP granted more than \$14.8 million in Beacon, Gratitude and Spotlight Grants to Elks Lodges.

These funds did not go to waste — last year, 88% of Lodges received at least one grant, with an average of 2.7 grants approved for each participating Lodge.

Considering that these projects are Elks-led and volunteer based, the numbers add up to thousands of Elks helping even more of their neighbors.

The CIP has grown exponentially since its inception, and it only continues to expand. This year, in celebration of America 250, the Spotlight Grant has increased to \$2,500

from \$2,000. With this increase, Lodges are now eligible for up to \$11,500 in CIP grants to help build stronger communities.

Spotlight Grants are a way for Lodges to shine a light on three key issues affecting American communities: youth literacy, veteran homelessness, and hunger and essential needs assistance.

To ensure that Lodges can make an immediate impact without hours of brainstorming, the Spotlight Grant offers Lodges a choice — merge with a Beacon Grant or select one of seven pre-approved projects: Warm Welcome to the Library, Suds and Stories, Community Baby Shower, Welcome Home, Stand Down, Adopt-a-Haven, and Hunger and Essential Needs Assistance.

Last year, Stuart Jensen, FL Lodge No. 1870, used a Spotlight Grant to host a Community Baby Shower.

At the event, Elks distributed essential baby supplies, while early childhood health experts from the Florida State Elks Children's Therapy program and a local author (and new Lodge Member!) led readings and discussions about the importance of introducing literature to children at an early age.

Though the CIP has grown so much since its inception, it is showing no signs of slowing down. Whether your Lodge wants to host a community baby shower like the Stuart Jensen Lodge, reduce veteran homelessness, address basic health needs, or more, the new increase to the Spotlight Grant will allow Elks to build stronger communities like never before.

DRUG AWARENESS COMMISSION

Stop by the Elks National Drug Awareness Commission booth (#525) in the Exhibit Hall and check out DEA's 2017 Dodge Charger — "Fentanyl Free America". While there, get a free photo with Elroy the Elk. Don't forget to pick up your Red Ribbon to show your support for the DAP.



Grand Lodge Budget proposed for 2026-2027

REVENUE

Per Capita Assessments . . .	5,421,842
Interest/Dividend Income . .	1,050,000
Merchandise Sales	21,237
Convention Revenue	434,000
Management Fees	52,800
Royalties	180,000
Other Income	46,000
Transfer From Reserves . . .	2,347,936
	\$9,553,815

EXPENSES

Grand Trustees	30,000
District Deputies	605,000
Special Deputies	23,000
Special Representatives	75,645
Rose Parade	100,000
Grand Lodge Session	2,517,361
Grand Lodge Conference	172,000
PGER Office and Travel	600,000
Legal Fees	111,637
Audit Fees	55,000
Bank Fees	35,000
General Insurance	86,000
Investment Manager Fees	215,000
Disaster Relief Donation	25,000
Contingency	150,000
Other Grand Lodge	324,787
Grand Exalted Ruler	414,637
Grand Secretary Expenses . . .	2,995,181
Committees & Other	1,018,567
	\$9,553,815



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GRAND LODGE RITUAL COMMITTEE

RUSH LAMOTTE HOLLAND AWARD

This award, given to the highest scoring Leading Knight in the Ritual Contest, will be presented Monday on behalf of Colorado Springs, CO Lodge No. 309 PER Association, Colorado State Sponsor PGER John Amen, and the Colorado Elks Association.

Rush LaMotte Holland was the Exalted Ruler of Colorado Springs, CO Lodge No. 309 in 1902-1903. Holland was a highly respected attorney, and during the Grand Lodge Convention in Baltimore, MD, in 1903, Holland was appointed to the Committee on Laws by GER Joseph T. Fanning.

In 1905, Holland was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Work and Ritual by Grand Exalted Ruler Robert Brown. GER Brown instructed the committee to prepare and submit an entirely new Ritual, for approval at Grand Lodge in Denver, CO, in 1906.

Brother Holland wrote the lecture of The Esteemed Leading Knight. This lecture was "written like no other and has stood the test of time and has resisted changes."

On July 14, 1908, Rush L. Holland was nominated and elected Grand Exalted Ruler at the National Convention, held in Dallas, TX.

It is no doubt that PGER Rush L. Holland exemplified the virtues of Elksdom. Colorado Springs Lodge No. 309 is truly proud of his accomplishments to both our country and our Order.

WILLIAM A. KING AWARD

It is our honor to present this award on Monday in memory of William A. King. This award is given each year by the Union City, GA Lodge 1617 to the Officer in the Eastern Division and the Western Division who achieves the highest overall scores of all Officers competing in the ritual contest.

Bill King was an Elk for over 50 years and a Life Member of Union City, GA Lodge 1617. He was active as an Officer, ritual coach, and judge. He was an All American Lecturing Knight and served as a Grand Lodge ritual judge.

In 1991, 1992, and 1994, Bill coached his home Lodge, Union City, GA No. 1617, to three National Ritual Contest Championships. His teams have been Eastern Division Champions five times and have produced 26 All-American Officers.

Bill King's dedication to the Ritual and his contributions to the members of his teams as a coach, mentor, and friend makes this award special.

Bill has passed beyond "The Eleventh Hour" for his Promised Reward, but his love for the Ritual continues in us as it is inscribed on this award given today:

"There is no activity throughout Elksdom that more consistently and continually furthers the fundamental principles of our order than a dignified, impressive rendition of the ritual."

ROBERT GRAFTON AWARD

This award, given to the highest scoring Esquire in the Ritual Contest, will be presented on behalf of Florida State's co-sponsor PGER Michael F. Smith and the 55,000+ Elks of the great Sunshine State. It is named in honor of Robert "Bob" Grafton, the senior member of the Grand Lodge Advisory Board. He has served this Order with honor and distinction for more than 75 years.

He was initiated into Elksdom in July, 1948 in West Palm Beach, FL Lodge No. 1352. He progressed through the chairs, serving as Exalted Ruler in 1957 and became a certified Ritual Judge in 1958. In 1962, Bob became Exalted Ruler of the Riviera Beach Lodge No. 2069. Bob served the Florida State Elks Association as Southeast District Vice President in 1964-65 and District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 1965-66. He served the Florida State Elks Association as a member of its Judiciary Committee from 1958 to 1977, serving as chairman from 1968-77. His hard work and dedication were further recognized when he was elected State President in 1971-72. He received Elksdom's highest honor when he was elected Grand Exalted Ruler and held our highest office in 1979-80.

Bob has had a long and distinguished career within the Grand Lodge, serving as State Sponsor of Florida, as well as Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Puerto Rico, and Panama. He has served on the Grand Lodge Judiciary, Grand Lodge Board of Trustees, as its chairman in 1976. He served on the Grand Forum, Grand Lodge Advisory Board, serving as chairman in 1991, Elks National Service Commission, Grand Lodge National Foundation Trustees and Grand Lodge Elks National Convention Committee.

2026 RITUAL CONTEST PRELIMINARY SCORES**EASTERN DIVISION**

STATE	LODGE & NO.	SCORE
NEW YORK	Carthage, NY No. 1762	95.9440
GEORGIA	Dalton, GA No. 1267	94.7233
SOUTH CAROLINA	Charleston, SC No. 242	93.4929
PENNSYLVANIA	Bridgeport, PA No. 714	95.4823
MAINE	Sanford, ME No. 1470	94.5859
MICHIGAN	Traverse City, MI No. 323	92.8681
OHIO	Kenton, OH No. 157	97.8909
NEW JERSEY	Brick, NJ No. 2151	95.9696

WESTERN DIVISION

STATE	LODGE & NO.	SCORE
NEBRASKA	Falls City, NE NO. 963	93.2449
NEVADA	Reno, NV NO. 597	92.9511
ARIZONA	Yuma, AZ NO. 476	94.6634
OREGON	Gateway-Gresham, OR NO. 1805	89.2714
MISSOURI	Festus-Crystal City, MO NO. 1721	93.4069
CALIFORNIA	Santa Clarita, CA NO. 2379	94.6390
NEW MEXICO	Carlsbad, NM NO. 1558	91.6193
COLORADO	Littleton, CO NO. 1650	93.2377
OKLAHOMA	Shawnee, OK NO. 657	88.5386
TEXAS	Houston, TX NO. 151	89.6570

2026 GRAND LODGE RITUAL CONTEST**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS****FINALS – MONDAY JULY 6, 2026 – SCHEDULE TBA**

Brick, NJ No. 2151
 Kenton, OH No. 157
 Santa Clarita, CA No. 2379
 Yuma, AZ No. 476

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GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Elks announce Virtual National Soccer Shoot champions

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee is pleased to announce the winners of the 2025-26 Elks Virtual National Soccer Shoot. This year, the Elks Virtual National Soccer Shoot had nearly 28,000 children participate from 30 states. The National Soccer Shoot Champions are as follows:

U-8 Boys	CODY CRUNK, sponsored by Jackson, CA Lodge No. 2426
U-8 Girls	AUBREY DOYEN, sponsored by Waterville, ME Lodge No. 905
U-10 Boys	ADRIAN FIGUERA, sponsored by Lake Elsinore/Wildomar, CA Lodge No. 2591
U-10 Girls	HANNAHLISE PACHECO, sponsored by Bristol County, RI Lodge No. 1860
U-12 Boys	CAIUS STEELY, sponsored by Tri-County, KY Lodge No. 2826
U-12 Girls	MILANA VESELY, sponsored by Scotia-Glenville, NY No. 2759
U-14 Boys	AUSTIN MAUK, sponsored by Bellefonte, PA Lodge No. 1094
U-14 Girls	AILEEN CAPLES, sponsored by Sanford, ME Lodge No. 1470
U-16 Boys	CHASE GOMBOCZ, sponsored by Sayre, PA Lodge No. 1148
U-16 Girls	JAIDEN DOBSON, sponsored by Calhoun, GA Lodge No. 1883



CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

The court reporter needs to know your Name, Current Elks Title, Lodge Name and Number.

If you are recognized for making or seconding a motion, please come forward at the end of the Session to make sure the reporter gets your information for the permanent record, which will be included in the annual Grand Lodge Proceedings book.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS for 2025-2026

By Mark E. Eaton

Committee Member

We are proud to recognize the outstanding achievements of our Americanism Essay Contest winners. The theme for the contest in 2025-26 was *What does service to your country mean to you?*

I'd like to congratulate this year's winners:

EIGHTH GRADE

1st Place: **Chloe Booth**. Sponsored by Nashville-Franklin, TN Lodge No. 72.

2nd Place: **Kia Dino**. Sponsored by Phoenix, AZ Lodge No. 335.

3rd Place: **Irsia Ball**. Sponsored by Clawson-Troy, MI Lodge No. 2169.

SEVENTH GRADE

1st Place: **Blessing Harvier**. Sponsored by Coolidge-Florence, AZ Lodge No. 2350.

2nd Place: **Davin Notarianni**. Sponsored by Tri-City, RI Lodge No. 14.

3rd Place: **Bransyn Harper**. Sponsored by John Day, OR Lodge No. 1824.

SIXTH GRADE

1st Place: **Theo Dursih**. Sponsored by South Kingstown, RI Lodge No. 1899.

2nd Place: **Ava Pulaski**. Sponsored by Old Bridge, NJ Lodge No. 2229.

3rd Place: **Jude Waked**. Sponsored by Ocean City, MD Lodge No. 2645.

FIFTH GRADE

1st Place: **Maico Swartz**. Sponsored by Cambridge, OH Lodge No. 448.

2nd Place: **Ramprapann Gupta**. Sponsored by Clawson-Troy, MI Lodge No. 2169.

3rd Place: **Lena Senneville**. Sponsored by Leominster-Fitchburg, MA Lodge No. 1237.

Thank you to all the Lodges and states for their participation in this program.

The winners' plaques will be displayed at the Fraternal Committee booth during the convention and can be picked up after the session on Tuesday. The winning essays can be read in a later issue of Elks Magazine.

The theme for the 2026-27 American Essay Contest is: *Explain a Constitutional Right or Privilege and How It Affects You and Your Family.*

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? YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ?

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? How do I submit to the FRS? ?

? What is the FRS? ?

? How do I use QuickBooks? ?

? What's a Restricted Fund? ?

? How do I handle it? ?

? How do I use QuickBooks Desktop? ?

? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

? WE HAVE ANSWERS ?

? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

? Chat with the experts from the Grand Lodge ?

? Auditing and Accounting Committee ?

? and the FRS Applications Specialist ?

? Stop by our booth in the exhibits area during exhibit hours. ?



Summary of Proposed Resolutions

Resolution 2026-01: To clarify that members of the Elks National Drug Awareness Commission are to be appointed in the same or similar manner as other national foundation boards and commissions.

Resolution 2026-02: To clarify the Grand Forum does not have jurisdiction over a matter if the Appellant does not timely appeal and pay the required fees.

Resolution 2026-03: To allow appeals of decisions of the Lodge's supervising or managing body to also be heard at a special meeting of the Lodge.

Resolution 2026-04: To allow a hearing on a request for a pardon or commutation to also be heard at a special meeting of the Lodge.

Great Communication Retains Members

- Answer your phone and return phone calls
- Use your bulletin to keep members engaged and informed
- Send emails to your members
- Use your social media channels and websites to keep members informed

When members feel informed and appreciated they stay engaged!



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of these volunteers by showing Elks visiting veterans at the Wilmington VA Community Living Center in Delaware.

He concluded his report with a reminder that Elks are always there for veterans in their hour of need.

PGER Hidley next introduced PGER Malcolm J. McPherson, who gave a presentation on the 100th anniversary celebration of the Elks National Memorial Building. After introducing a video highlighting the history of the Memorial, McPherson urged Elks to take every opportunity to tour the building, which boasts updated exhibits, and to purchase mementos during their visit, as all proceeds go to support the Elks National Memorial Restoration Trust. McPherson noted that work will continue on the Memorial, including the creation of a victory garden and updates to the exhibits on the building's lower level, which highlight the programs and history of the Elks. He concluded his presentation by reminding Elks that the Memorial Building "stands as a beacon of what Elkdom represents: honor, charity, patriotism, and...[an] unwavering commitment to veterans..."

PGER Hidley next introduced PGER James L. Nicholson, Vice Chairman of the Elks National Foundation's Board of Trustees, who commenced the reports of the Elks National Foundation. Smith reminded Elks of the ENF's illustrious history and congratulated them on their outstanding donations, which has ensured that the Order will have nearly \$49.6 million to spend on charity. He also announced that, in honor of the Elks National Memorial Building's centennial, the Elks National Foundation has donated a \$10 million grant, to be issued over the course of five years, to the Elks National Memorial Restoration Trust. Nicholson noted that the first \$2 million installment was presented in February of this year.

Next to the podium was ENF Youth Programs Associate Nathan Springberg who gave a report on the 54th annual National Hoop Shoot Finals competition. The event was held at Wintrust Arena in Chicago and delivered a breathtaking contest filled with courage, dedication, and grit. Springberg introduced the two winners of the Getty Powell Award for the highest scoring boy and girl overall at the finals. The champion of the boys' competition was Duncan Walker, who

competed in the Boys 12-13 Division and was sponsored by Henderson/Green, NV Lodge No. 2802. After finishing with a perfect score of 25 shots along with one other competitor in his age-group, Walker won six tiebreaker rounds with a perfect 30 out of 30 extra shots. The female winner, who sank 24 out of 25 shots in regulation, was Logyn Parkinson, who was sponsored by Grand Rapids, MI Lodge No. 48 and competed in the Girls 10-11 Division. Springberg noted that Duncan and Logyn will be sent to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA, where they will attend the Class of 2026 Enshrinement Weekend and see their names displayed in the Elks Hoop Shoot digital exhibit.

Next up to the podium was ENF Assistant Director Debbie Kahler Doles, who reported that the Community Investments Program would be able to issue a total of \$18.8 million in grant funds to Lodges for the coming year. She also announced that in honor of the 250th birthday of the U.S., the program had increased the value of the Spotlight Grant to \$2,500. Doles concluded by noting that the foundation had awarded scholarships to 900 high school seniors this past spring, and invited one of the scholarship recipients, Elijah Borjon, sponsored by Petaluma, CA Lodge No. 901, to the stage to share his story and thank the membership.

Next, PGER James L. Nicholson returned to the podium to remind the Membership that "Elks Make a Difference" by being "volunteers,"

"good neighbors," and "dreamers." Declaring that "giving is fundamentally human," he urged Elks Members to support Elks National Foundation programs by making a one-time gift or by joining the ENF Fidelity Club, which involves making monthly donations to the foundation.

Following the conclusion of the reports, the opening ceremonies' keynote presentation was given by Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt, who spoke about his successful year leading the Order. He recalled his year of travel with First Lady Susan, during which he urged Elks across the country to "Be The Difference" by volunteering with veterans, supporting the Soccer Shoot and Hoop Shoot programs, and making use of Community Investment Program grants. He recounted the variety of places that he and First Lady Susan had visited, from Elks youth camps, to veterans monuments, to the charitable centers supported by Elks state associations, and many more. Klatt praised the Membership for making a profound impact in their communities and said that he truly believed that every day, somewhere, "an Elk is helping." He also thanked the many staff members and Elks officials who had supported his leadership and told the Elks that he had "thoroughly enjoyed... making new friends, and hearing about the great deeds" they do. In closing, Klatt exhorted the Elks to remember that they "are here representing the greatest Organization around" and thanked them for the honor of serving as their Grand Exalted Ruler. ★

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE ELKS NATIONAL MEMORIAL AND HEADQUARTERS!

Free to the public, the Memorial will be open during convention, Monday to Wednesday from 12-6 p.m.

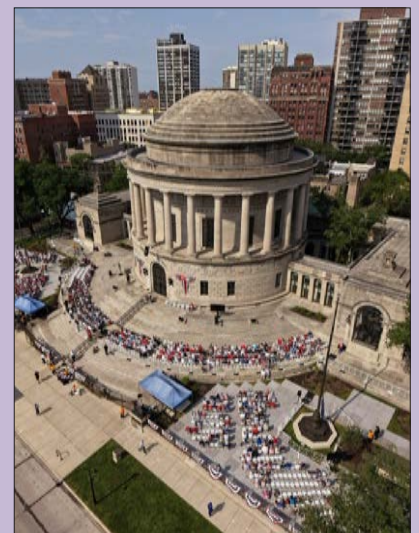
Complimentary shuttle service is provided between the Elks Memorial Building and following hotels:

Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Chicago, boarding on Martin Luther King Drive, main entrance

Marriott Marquis Chicago, boarding on Prairie, main entrance

Hilton Chicago, boarding at 8th Street entrance

The Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel, boarding at Wabash entrance

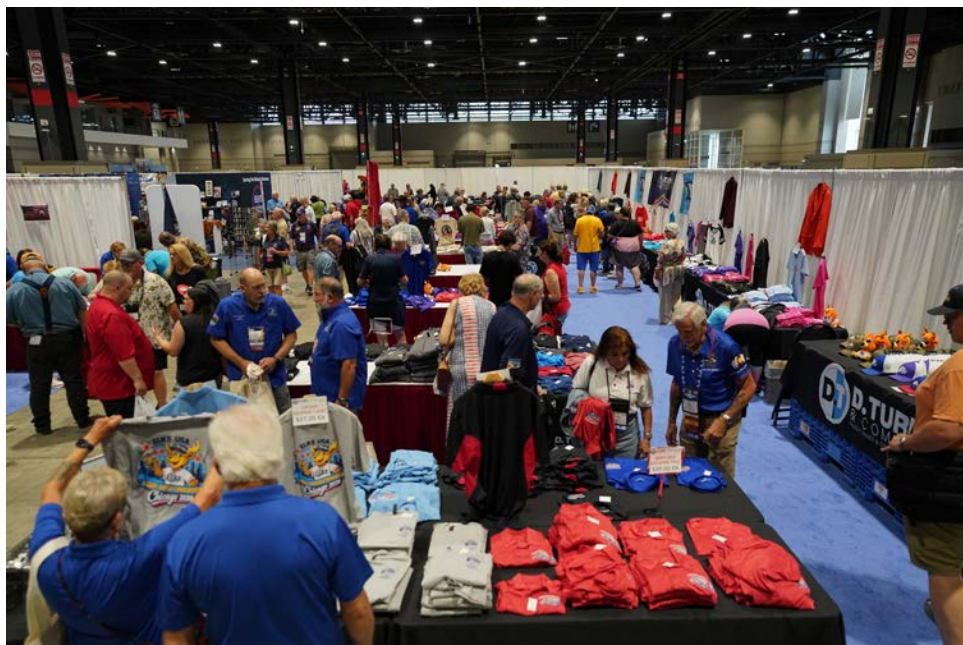


Hello, Bill!

Scenes from the 2026 Elks National Convention

McCormick Place — West Building was bustling on Sunday as Elks came to attend the Opening Ceremony, examine exhibit hall displays, attend seminars and learning opportunities, and to simply enjoy the company of their fellow Elks.

Photos: Marcus Oania and Laz Suarez



Purchase photos from the 2026 Elks National Convention
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