

GRAND LODGE Convention News

TUESDAY ✨ JULY 7, 2026

GER-Elect Jaeger proclaims 'Ready Elks—Let's Go!'

By Tiffany Bakker

Convention News Reporter

The leadership of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks got down to business with the first business session of the 161st Grand Lodge Session and elected Timothy F. Jaeger, of Napa, CA Lodge No. 832, as Grand Exalted Ruler for the 2026–2027 year.

Jaeger has been an Elk since 1985, when he joined Sioux Falls, SD Lodge No. 262. After moving to the west coast, he joined Petaluma, CA Lodge No. 901 in 2003, where he was soon elected a Lodge Officer, eventually serving as Exalted Ruler in 2007–2008. He transferred to the Napa Lodge in 2017. He served the California-Hawaii Elks Association as a Vice President in 2010–2011, as CHEA Drug Awareness Chairman from 2011 to 2013, as CHEA Trustee from 2014 to 2017, as CHEA First Vice President in 2018–2019, and for a two-year term as CHEA President from 2019 to 2021. He has been a member of the California-Hawaii Elks Association Advisory Committee from 2020 to the present.

At the Grand Lodge level, Jaeger served as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 2013–2014 and as Assistant Director of the National Drug Awareness Program from 2014 to 2021. Most recently, he served on the Board of Grand Trustees from 2021 to 2025, the final year as Chairman of the Board.

The announcement of the election was followed by an exuberant celebration as supporters from Jaeger's Area 7 streamed into the hall. The festivities featured an appearance by Jaeger's special mascot for the year, the gorilla Gene Dale, as well as a special song written to pay tribute to the newly elected Grand Exalted Ruler's theme for the year: *Ready Elks — Let's Go!*



GER-Elect Timothy F. Jaeger and First Lady Sandy keep tradition with a kiss after the Nominations and Election of Grand Lodge Officers. Photo: Marcus Oania

Once the celebration subsided, Jaeger spoke about his vision for the Order and his inspiration for the theme, reminding those gathered that from the very beginning of the Order's history, whenever Members have seen people in need or received a request to help others, they have responded with a resounding "Let's Go."

"When I chose this theme, I thought about the Elks history," Jaeger said. "The benevolence began back in the Jolly Cork days, when one of the members died, and the Corks decided they should support the widow and children. The cry went out, *Ready Elks*—well, *Corks*—and the response was *Let's Go!*"

Prior to the election of the Grand Exalted Ruler, a number of reports were heard, and other officers were elected and appointed. The business of the session began with the report of Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt. With the approval of the assembled delegates, he appointed Alan H. Sunukjian of Cohoes-Waterford, NY Lodge No. 1317 as a Justice of the Grand Forum.

The Grand Exalted Ruler's report was followed by the report of Chairman of the Elks National Convention Commission PGER Millard C. Pickering, of Sapulpa, OK Lodge No. 1118. He announced that the 2027 convention will be held in Denver, Colorado. He also announced that Baltimore, Maryland, will be the site of the 2028 convention, with Columbus, Ohio, serving as a first-time host for the 2029 convention and Reno, Nevada, hosting the 2030 convention.

Next was the report of the National Memorial and Publications Commission, which was given by commission Chairman PGER Malcolm J. McPherson Jr. PGER McPherson of Lyndhurst, NJ Lodge No. 1505, who encouraged the assembled Elks to take advantage of the online edition of *The Elks Magazine* and to take that message back to their Lodges.

"Nearly 72% of new Members now choose to receive the magazine online," he said. "Currently, 187,924 Members read the magazine digitally, saving

Please see **JAEGER**, Page 13

Scenes from the 2026 Elks National Convention



Elks attend the second day of the legislative session at the 2026 National Convention. Photos: Marcus Oania



Purchase photos from the 2026 Elks National Convention at antlershots.smugmug.com

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

G/L AUDITING AND ACCOUNTING COMMITTEE

The Auditing and Accounting Committee will conduct two seminars Tuesday to assist Lodges with accounting tasks.

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 **12:30-1:45 p.m. in Room W181 in the McCormick Place – West Building.**

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

2:15-3:30 p.m. 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.

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How Many in Attendance?

The attendance report for the Grand Lodge Session through Monday has been announced and is as follows:

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	231
Special Deputies	30
Representatives to Grand Lodge & Alternates	1,480
State Presidents	45
State Secretaries	33
Grand Lodge Members	1,845
Non-Voting Members	2,251
Guests	1,013
Vendors	33

Combined Totals: 7,081

2ND DAY LEGISLATIVE SESSION

08:00	Call to Order	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	— Invocation	Rev. Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain
	Pledge of Allegiance	Jeffrey A. Rodier
	G/L Resolutions Committee	Warren I. Grody, Chair Alan H. Sunukjian David W. Bute
	Registration (<i>final report</i>)	Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
	Board of Grand Trustees (<i>final report</i>)	Joseph C. Cooper, Chair
	Grand Forum / Pardon Commission	Thomas M. Zisa, Chief Justice
	Legislative Session (<i>voting</i>)	Daniel J. Nelson, Judiciary Chair
	Grand Secretary Report	Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
	Government Relations Committee Report	Robert E. Wambach, Chair
	Auditing & Accounting Committee Report	Harley R. Eckert, Jr., Chair
	GER-Elect Program Remarks	Timothy F. Jaeger, GER-Elect
10:00	(estimated) Non-Members Admitted	
	Announcements	Jeffrey A. Rodier, Grand Esquire
	Activities Committee Report	Terence P. Ford, Chair
	Fraternal Committee Report	Gwendolyn B. Parker, Chair
	Legislative Results	Daniel J. Nelson, Judiciary Chair
	Ritual Committee Report	Frank Maletesta, Chair
	Announcements	Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	Benediction	Rev. Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain
	Grand Lodge Session Recessed	Bryan R. Klatt, GER
	GER Elect Card signing	Timothy F. and Sandy Jaeger, GER-Elect

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SA MAJOR PROJECT BOOTH DISPLAY AWARDS

We are proud to recognize the following states for their excellent displays. Awards are presented to State Associations that exhibit their Major Projects in the exhibit area at the Grand Lodge Convention. State Associations can earn up to five stars for their displays.

Exhibits are judged on content, graphics, pictorial, overall appearance and special effects. *And the winners are:*

5 Star ★★★★★ Awards

Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, MD-DE-DC, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin

4 Star ★★★★★ Awards

Texas

3 Star ★★★ Awards

Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma

Scenes from the 2026 Elks National Convention

After announcement of the election of Timothy F. Jaeger as GER-Elect, the festivities began, featuring an appearance by Jaeger's special mascot for the year, the gorilla Gene Dale.

Photo: Marcus Oania



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Congratulations to 2025-26 Ritual Contest Winners



All American Officers — Eastern Division

From left to right: ER Lisa Manetta (Brick, NJ #2151); Leading Knight Stacey Hamilton-Davis (Kenton, OH #157); Loyal Knight Kristin Osborn-Grimshaw (Kenton, OH #157); Lecturing Knight Dylan Menard (Kenton, OH #157); Esquire Derryck Menard (Kenton, OH #157); Chaplain Sue Fox Buroker (Kenton, OH #157); Inner Guard Amanda Frazier (Kenton, OH #157); Candidate Kent Kelly (Kenton, OH #157); Coach D. Jack Buroker (Kenton, OH #157); Coach John R. Hines (Kenton, OH #157); Coach Ignatius Todd Daquino (Kenton, OH #157).



All American Officers — Western Division

From left to right: ER Dan Schoenborn (Yuma, AZ #476); Leading Knight Christine Higgins (Yuma, AZ #476); Loyal Knight Mark Lowe (Falls City, NE #963); Lecturing Knight Will Payne (Yuma, AZ #476); Esquire Jeanette Fisher (Santa Clarita, CA #2379); Andrew Mishaga (Houston, TX #151); Inner Guard Jason Gonzales (Littleton, CO #1650); Candidate Amy Jo Berg (Littleton, CO #1650); Coach Pat Riley (Yuma, AZ #476); Coach Robert L. Clark (Yuma, AZ #476).

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LOCAL LODGE ACTIVITY

During Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt's
Fraternal Year 2025-2026

CHARTERS GRANTED = NEW LODGES

- Wesley Chapel, FL Lodge No. 2893—
Instituted 02/28/2026.

CHARTERS SURRENDERED

- Seneca/Foothills, SC Lodge No. 2822
—(EO #25-111) Effective 01/20/2026.
- Danville, PA Lodge No. 754
—(EO #25-115) Effective 01/22/2026.

CHARTERS REVOKED

- St. Marys, PA Lodge No. 437
—(EO #25-006F) Effective 07/24/2025.
- Newton, IA Lodge No. 1270
—(EO #25-054) Effective 10/07/2025.
- Wayne, NJ Lodge No. 2181
—(EO #25-100F) Effective 01/16/2026.
- Deer Trail, CO Lodge No. 2307
—(EO #25-154F) Effective 03/24/2026.

- Kalamazoo, MI Lodge No. 50

—(EO #25-165F) Effective 04/22/2026.

LODGE MERGERS

- Seymour, IN Lodge No. 462 & Columbus, IN Lodge No. 521, to be known as: Columbus, IN Lodge No. 521. Effective 04/01/2026 by EO #25-191.
- Haverhill, MA Lodge No. 165 & Newburyport, MA Lodge No. 909, to be known as: Newburyport/Haverhill, MA Lodge No. 909. Effective 05/18/2026 by EO #25-224.

LODGE REDISTRICTING

NEVADA STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION

EO #25-192 (Effective 04/01/2026)

- Ely, NV Lodge No. 1469—South District No. 5320 to North District No. 5280

G/L RITUAL COMMITTEE

RAYMOND BENJAMIN AWARD

The Raymond Benjamin Award is given to the winning ritual team for the Elks National Contest. It is named after Raymond Benjamin, a charter Member of Napa, CA Lodge No. 832. Brother Raymond served as the Grand Exalted Ruler from 1914-1915, then served as Vice Chairman of the Elks National Foundation from 1929 until his passing in 1952.

Ritual was a major interest of his. He made great contributions to updating the beautiful ritual in order to remind the existing Members and impress new Members of the importance of our affiliation as Elks.

In 1953, during the dedication of the Elks new national headquarters building in Chicago, his widow unveiled a plaque in honor of his contributions to

the rituals of our Order. A duplicate of that plaque was presented to the Napa Elks Lodge.

Since that time Napa, CA Lodge No. 832 annually presents a replica plaque to the winning National Ritual Team.

JOHN D. FRAKES AWARD

The John D. Frakes Award is given to the winning coaches for the Elks National Contest. It is named after John D. Frakes, Lodge Secretary and ritual coach of Tucson Lodge No. 385 for over 35 years. He served on the Grand Lodge for the National Ritual Committee as a member and chairman. Frakes coached the Tucson Ritual Team to 45 National Ritual Contests. During his time with the Tucson teams, they competed 22 years in a row. His 1968-69 team won it all. He remains a legend of the Tucson Lodge and of the Grand Lodge.

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GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Local Lodge website winners announced

The goal of this contest is to recognize Local Lodges who 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 Lodge may earn 3- to 5-star awards. The Lodge website is a vital part of keeping our Members informed of what is going on at the Lodge.

This year 20 State Associations participated, and the results are:

5-Star Awards

Arizona: Chandler Lodge No. 2429
 Minnesota: Brainerd Lodge No. 615
 Nevada: Carson City Lodge No. 2177
 Oregon: Hillsboro Lodge No. 1862

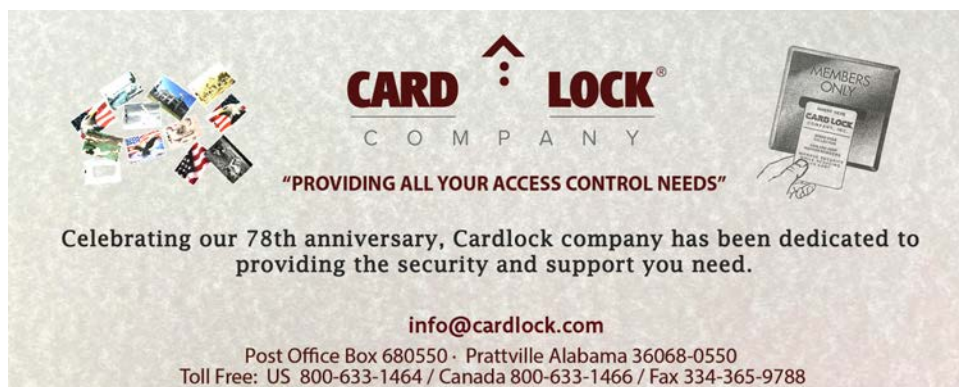
4-Star Awards

MD-DE-DC: Calvert Lodge No. 2620
 New Jersey: Highstown Lodge No. 1955
 North Carolina: Sanford Lodge No. 1679
 Ohio: Lebanon Lodge No. 422
 Oklahoma: Broken Arrow Lodge No. 2673
 Washington: Vancouver Lodge No. 823

3-Star Awards

California-Hawaii: Redwood City Lodge No. 1991
 Florida: Jupiter Lodge No. 2469
 Indiana: Logansport Lodge No. 66
 Kentucky: Elizabethtown Lodge No. 2891
 Louisiana: Houma Lodge No. 1193
 Michigan: Ferndale Lodge No. 1588
 New York: Saratoga-Wilton Lodge No. 161
 Pennsylvania: West Shore-Harrisburg Lodge No. 2257
 Utah: Tooele Lodge No. 1673
 West Virginia: Mannington Lodge No. 388

Lodge representatives should pick up their award at the Fraternal Booth after Tuesday's business session.



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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.

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Resolution Honoring Retiring BOGT Vice-Chairman Wayne D. Cotterly

Proposed by BOGT Approving Member Michael T. Ohren

Whereas: Wayne D. Cotterly of Augusta, ME Lodge No. 964 is retiring from the Board of Grand Trustees after four years of distinguished service and upon his retirement, the Members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America wish to acknowledge this achievement and express their sincere appreciation for his leadership and service; *and*



**Wayne D.
Cotterly**

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly was initiated into Lewiston, ME Lodge #371 in March 1998 and was elected Exalted Ruler for the 2001-2002 fraternal year. He chaired or served on numerous lodge committees and served as a Trustee 2002-2004 and the Lodge's Secretary 2006-2013. He received the GER's Outstanding Member Service Commendation in 2005-2006 and was the Lodge's Officer of the Year in 2013. In 2014, he transferred to the Augusta, ME Lodge #964 where he has served on the Lodge's State Convention committee in 2017 and 2024. He currently serves as the Chairman for the Ritualistic and Auditing & Accounting Committees. *And;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly served the Maine Elks Association (MEA) as Chairman of the Public Relations Committee from 2003-2011, Co-Chairman of the MEA's "Youthfest" Committee from 2002-2007, Chairman of the Inter-Lodge Relations/Lodge Activities from 2004-2009, Elks Training Chairman 2009-2010, Business Practices Committee Chairman 2010-2011, and State Trustee 2005-2007. In addition, he served on the state's Major Project Committee 2003-2012, State Convention Committee 2006-2022, and served as President of the MEA's Past Exalted Ruler's Association. He was elected to the position of 2nd Vice-President of the association in 2008, advancing to become State President 2011-2012. *And;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly served the Grand Lodge with distinction as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 2006-2007, and 2014-2015 for the Maine Central District. He also served as a Special Representative in 2015-2018 and 2019-2022 for two Lodges in Maine. From 2018-2022 he served as the Soccer Shoot Coordinator of the Grand Lodge Activities Committee, and served as the committee's chairman 2020-2022. *And;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly served the Maine Elks Association as a certified Floor, Word, and Computer ritualistic judge from 2003 to present. He also received numerous individual ritualistic competition awards in the Area 1 Interstate Relations Committee's PER and Roulette Contests 2002-2019. He was also recognized by the Maine Elks Association as the Elk of the Year for 2003-2004, the Maine Children's Cancer Program's "Tall Elk" Award in 2003-2004, Committeeman of the Year Award 2010-2011,

Public Relations Chairman of the Year 2001-2002, Exalted Ruler of the Year-Maine Central District 2001-2002, Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award 2004-2005, and Ritual Coach of the Year in 2005. He also received recognition from the Grand Lodge for his public relations work, receiving a Grand Exalted Ruler's Special Citation in 2003-2004, first place in the GL Public Relation's Committee's "Best Image of Elkdom Contest," and the "Golden Mike" Award in 2008, 2009, and 2011, *and;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly has faithfully served the Board of Grand Trustees as Building Applications – East Member, Home Member, Secretary and Vice-Chairman of the Board; *and;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly graduated from Daniel Webster College in 1983 with a degree in Aviation Management and served as an airline pilot for Bar Harbor Airlines, Eastern Express, and Continental Express. He also served his community as a volunteer firefighter, emergency medical technician, emergency management director, and on the town's Board of Selectmen. *And;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly's ability and leadership, demonstrated by his passion for Elkdom has earned the respect of all Elks, especially the members of the Board of Grand Trustees, *and;*

Whereas, Wayne D. Cotterly accomplished all the foregoing with the help, love and support of his wife of 39 years Kathleen, who is a life member of the Augusta Lodge No. 964, and a Past District Deputy of the Central District of Maine 2017-2018, State Trustee for the Maine Elks Association (2013-2014, 2025-Present), and State Convention Director from 2013-2023.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that in grateful recognition of his valued service to Elkdom and in tribute to his dedication to our Order, the Board of Grand Trustees is hereby authorized and directed by the Grand Lodge in Session to procure and present to **Wayne D. Cotterly**, a suitable testimonial for his service, together with an embossed copy of this Resolution, thus expressing the gratitude and respect in which he is held by his fellow Members of the Board of Grand Trustees and the entire Membership of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

ERs: Chicago Convention Reports due in October!

Exalted Rulers (or alternate delegates) should be reminded that they are required to attend the Annual Session and submit a Report to their Lodge no later than the first regular meeting in October. [GLS §12.120]

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

National Veterans Service Volunteer of the Year award presented

By Mary K. Morgan

Director, ENVSC

As the Elks Voluntary Service Representative at the Long Beach VA, Larry Nelson ensures that veterans have the support they need. For his service in combat in Vietnam, Nelson received a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Silver Star, and Combat Infantry Badge. He walked away from the experience with a newfound passion for serving fellow veterans.

From the everyday moments that make life more colorful to special events and holidays, Nelson, a Member of of Lakewood-Bellflower, CA Lodge No. 888, is always planning something for his fellow veterans. He hosts monthly cookouts at the Blind Rehabilitation Center at the VA. He serves turkey dinners. He hosts a monthly Bingo game at the Community Living Center and always brings doughnuts.

He's an advocate for Veterans Social

Connection program, issuing invitations and joining in the meetings himself. He mentors veterans with PTSD.

On holidays, he volunteers to help with barbecues and meals, and hands out gifts to veterans in the spinal ward every Christmas, alongside his wife and daughter. Hearing this list gives you an idea of how he's amassed more than 15,800 hours of volunteer time at the VA.

His more than 40 years of service to fellow veterans has also made him an extremely useful resource. He knows how to connect with nurses and doctors to find out what veterans need, whether it's a special item or a regular visit from a friend. Nelson is often that friend, spending hours listening to and talking with veterans at the VA.

He goes out of his way to visit veterans without family nearby. He's even recruited his daughter and her friends along to help with events and building connections.

With a resume like that, you'd think he'd relax. But Nelson's life is a lesson in persistence, commitment, and passion. There's no time to relax when there are veterans who need him. And so day after day, Nelson reports to the Long Beach VA to be a friend and guide to all.

That kind of lifelong commitment to being a dependable person that others can count on isn't always a flashy story. But it's one of the most important kinds of stories, of a person who gives so much of their time to solve problems, to brighten people's days, and to make clear that our veterans aren't forgotten.

For the everyday and the holidays, for the first year of volunteering, and the decades of commitment since, we honor Larry Nelson with the Elks National Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award. May his example be a beacon for us all.

Nelson was presented with his award at the Elks National Convention on Monday.

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2026

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Resolution Honoring Retiring BOGT Chairman Joseph C. Cooper

Proposed by BOGT Secretary John S. Gross

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper, of Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota, Florida Lodge No. 2855, is retiring from the Board of Grand Trustees after four years of distinguished service; and upon his retirement, the Members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America desire to acknowledge this achievement and to express their sincere appreciation for his leadership and service; *and*



Joseph C. Cooper

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper was introduced to the Elks through his father, a member of Gainesville Lodge No. 990, and was initiated into the Elks as a charter member of Lakewood Ranch, Florida Lodge No. 2855 in 2008; thereafter serving as the Lodge's first Loyal Knight, progressing through the chairs, being installed as Exalted Ruler of Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota, Florida Lodge No. 2855 in April 2011, and continuing his service on numerous Lodge and District committees; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper has been an active and devoted member of the Mighty Southwest District of the Florida State Elks Association, and has served with distinction as District Chair for Elks National Foundation Fundraising in 2013-2014 and again in 2017-2018, as District Chair for Hoop Shoot in 2012-2013, as District Chair for Interlodge Visitation in 2015-2016, and as District Esquire to the District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 2016-2017; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper has rendered distinguished service to the Florida State Elks Association (FSEA) as State Vice Chair in 2013-2014 and, thereafter, as Chair of the Elks National Foundation Fundraising Committee in 2014-2015; as District Vice President for the Mighty Southwest District in 2018-2019; as Director of the FSEA Properties Board in 2020-2021; as Director of the FSEA Board and FSEA State Chaplain in 2021-2022; as FSEA Vice President-at-Large in 2022-2023; as FSEA State President in 2023-2024; and as Director of the FSEA Harry-Anna Investment Fund since 2025; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper has served the BPOE Grand Lodge with distinction as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler from 2019 to 2020, as Treasurer for the Grand Lodge Convention Local Support Committee in 2021, and is presently serving as Special Representative to Panama Elks since 2025; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper graduated from Florida State University in 1990 with a degree in Political Science and entered the field of information technology in the property and casualty insurance industry, where, over a career spanning more than 35 years, he has served as CIO and CTO for several software technology firms, including one which he founded and later sold; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper has made his home in Sarasota, Florida, since 1994, where he met Allie Stillwell, whom he married in April 2000, and with whom he built a home, raised their children, and devoted their time to their church and the Elks; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper's dedication to country, community, and fraternity is equaled only by his abiding devotion to his beloved wife, Allie, and to their children, Alexandra and Bo; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper has faithfully served on the Board of Grand Trustees from 2022 through 2026 as Building Applications-West Member, Pension Member, Vice Chairman of the Board, and, finally, as Chairman of the Board for the year 2025-2026; *and*

Whereas, Joseph C. Cooper's abilities and leadership, so nobly demonstrated by his devotion to Elksdom, have earned for him the admiration, esteem, and respect of all Elks, and especially of the members of the Board of Grand Trustees; *and*

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that in grateful recognition of his valued service to Elksdom, and in tribute to his steadfast dedication to our Order, the Board of Grand Trustees is hereby authorized and directed by the Grand Lodge in Session to procure and present to **Joseph C. "Joe" Cooper** a suitable testimonial of his service, together with an embossed copy of this Resolution, thereby expressing the gratitude, admiration, and respect in which he is held by his fellow Members of the Board of Grand Trustees and by the entire Membership of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

Elks Lodges celebrate 100-Year Anniversaries

The following Elks Lodges have stood the test of time as they celebrate their 100-Year Anniversary this 2026-2027 fraternal year during GER Timothy F. Jaeger's term. Here's to 100 more years in service to humanity, community, our nation and our Order's noble principles.

<u>LODGE NAME & NO.</u>	<u>INSTITUTED</u>
Sebring, FL Lodge No. 1529	October 20, 1926
Elmhurst, IL Lodge No. 1531	April 29, 1927
Cocoa, FL Lodge No. 1532	June 9, 1927
Frackville, PA Lodge No. 1533	May 17, 1927
Union City, IN Lodge No. 1534	May 22, 1927
Barre, VT Lodge No. 1535	June 1, 1927
Santa Maria, CA No. 1538	June 25, 1927

Resolution of Appreciation

Now, Whereas, the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will conclude this 161st Grand Lodge Session in Chicago, Illinois on the 8th day of July, 2026; and

Whereas, it is appropriate that due note be made, and appreciation expressed, to the many individuals who have contributed their time and effort to the success of this Grand Lodge Session;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Delegates here assembled extend their sincere gratitude and appreciation as follows:

To all Elks, Spouses and Families of the State of Illinois, for their wonderful hospitality and for giving so unselfishly of their time and talents;

To the Grand Exalted Ruler, Bryan R. Klatt, for the excellent and timely manner in which he conducted the Business Sessions, and for his untiring efforts on behalf of our Order during his term as our Leader.

To our First Lady Susan, for the elegant grace with which she endeared herself to all during her tour as First Lady with our Grand Exalted Ruler throughout Elksdom;

To the Aide to the Grand Exalted Ruler, Terry Harrington, for the efficiency with which he handled the many support functions required of that position;

To the Elks National Convention Commission, Chairman, Past Grand Exalted Ruler Millard C. Pickering, Past Grand Exalted Ruler Malcolm J. McPherson, Jr., Past Grand Exalter Ruler F. Louis Sulsberger, Past Grand Exalted Ruler T. Keith Mills, and Past Grand Exalted Ruler Robert Duitsman, for their planning and efforts that began many months prior to this Convention and for their attention and supervision during this Session, ensuring its success;

To the Local Support Committee Honorary Chairman, Past Grand Exalted Ruler F. Louis Sulsberger, for his guidance in the planning and execution of this Convention;

To the 2026 Local Support Committee, General Chairperson Anthony Dardano, and the many Elks of the State of Illinois, who worked tirelessly on the various committees and subcommittees to make this Convention truly outstanding;

To Grand Secretary Carl T. Seibert and his capable Headquarters staff, for their cooperation and knowledge without which no Grand Lodge Convention would be successful;

To Tina M. Haran, Convention and Meetings Director, and her Associate, Jessica M. Ruiz, Meetings Coordinator, for their efforts and dedication in carrying out their many responsibilities and logistical functions at this Convention;

To the Exhibits & Sessions Coordinators, Scott Kirstein, Michael Clark, Scott Flota, Marcus Kirstein, and Mel Oliveira, who provide and prepare the exhibits, the sound and visual equipment, the timing, the lighting, and other Convention requirements;

To Rick Flores, Chairman of Registration, Spencer Moore, Director of the National Information Services Department, and their team of skilled credentials personnel, for the efficient and pleasant manner with which they welcomed and registered, for another successful year, the thousands of Elks and Guests attending our Convention;

To Mike Chamernik, Publications Manager, and his Associate, Ivy Hettinger, Publications Coordinator, for their efforts and dedication in producing the Convention Daily Newsletter.

To Chairman Harley Rick Eckert, Jr. of the Grand Lodge Auditing and Accounting Committee, and Rudolph Brinson, Grand Lodge Controller, for their prompt and capable handling of the financial commitments of this Session;

To Past Grand Exalted Ruler Bruce A. Hidley, for serving as Master of Ceremonies at the Opening Session of this Convention;

To Reverend Father Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain, for his spiritual guidance and prayers for Elks and Elksdom during the past year, for invoking the Divine Blessing of Almighty God on these proceedings, and for sending us forth from this Session to do the good works of Elksdom with his Benediction;

To Ragan Sullivan, for her wonderful and stirring vocal performances during the Opening Ceremony, Memorial Service, and our Daily sessions;

To the Oak Lawn Honor Guard, from Oak Lawn, IL Lodge No. 2254, for their dignified and impressive presentation of the Colors on Sunday;

To Past Grand Exalted Paul R. Ryan, Grand Lodge Memorial Service Coordinator, for his meticulous planning of our moving Memorial Service, and rendered General Eulogy;

To the National Champion, Callicott 11 O'Clock Toast or Ritual Committee member, for the commitment to render a beautiful Eleven O'Clock Toast at our Memorial Service;

To the Getty Powell Award winners for the highest scoring girl and boy in the 2026 Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals: Logyn Parkinson, sponsored by Grand Rapids, MI Lodge No. 48, and Duncan Walker, sponsored by Henderson/Green Valley, NV Lodge No. 2802, who stood fast and displayed unbelievable grit under the pressure of intense national competition and emerged victorious.

To Past Grand Exalted Ruler Malcolm J. McPherson, Jr., for his leadership in presiding over the historic 100th Anniversary Commemoration of the Elks National Memorial Building, for delivering the Opening Remarks and for leading the Pledge of Allegiance, inspiring all present with his dedication to the principles and traditions of our Order;

To Chairman Daniel J. Nelson of the Grand Lodge Committee on Judiciary, for his presentation of the National Anthem and for his contribution to the dignity and patriotism of the commemorative ceremony;

To Lyle D. Gessford, PDDGER; Don L. Baye, PDDGER; John T. Tuttle III; Brandon Biddle; Darryl G. Greeno; Brian Roberts; Daniel M. Baccelliere, PDDGER; and Jack Stein, PDDGER, for their impressive and dignified Posting of the Colors and Flag Presentation, honoring our nation's flag and enhancing the solemnity of the historic occasion;

To Rev. Father Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain, for invoking the Divine Blessing of Almighty God upon the Commemoration and for offering the Benediction, reminding all present of the spiritual foundation upon which our Order stands;

Resolution of Appreciation

To The Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, for his commemorative message recognizing the significance of the Elks National Memorial Building and its century-long role in honoring patriotism, service, and devotion to country;

To Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan R. Klatt, for presenting the Address commemorating the rich history, purpose, and enduring legacy of the Elks National Memorial Building and its importance to our Order and our nation;

To Grand Esteemed Leading Knight Anthony N. Gilberti, Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight Frederick S. Thompson, and Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight Robert C. Ricker, for their moving and meaningful Ritual Tribute, exemplifying the principles of Brotherly Love, Justice, Charity, and Fidelity that define Elkdom;

To Grand Secretary Carl T. Seibert, for the ceremonial Unveiling of the Commemorative Plaque, marking this significant milestone in the history of the

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks;

To Raymond N. Summers, Area 5 Member of the Grand Lodge Ritual Committee, for rendering the Eleven O'clock Toast in a manner that honored the traditions of our Order and paid tribute to absent Brothers and Sisters throughout Elkdom;

To Linda Gathen, PDDGER, for her heartfelt and respectful rendition of Taps, honoring the memory of departed Elks and adding dignity and reverence to the historic observance;

To Past Grand Exalted Ruler Millard C. Pickering, for leading the singing of Auld Lang Syne, uniting those assembled in reflection, fellowship, and appreciation for a century of service represented by the Elks National Memorial Building;

To all officers, volunteers, staff members, participants, and attendees whose efforts, dedication, and commitment made the 100th Anniversary Com-

memoration a memorable and fitting tribute to one of the most treasured landmarks of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Finally, our deepest appreciation to all the Members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, who, with their spouses and families, have pledged allegiance under God to the Flag of the United States, the Emblem of our Order and this great country and the symbol of freedom and liberty throughout the world.

Respectfully submitted by the Grand Lodge Resolutions Committee:

Chair, Warren I. Grody,
Columbus-Grove City, Ohio Lodge
No. 37

Alan Sunukjian, Cohoes-Waterford,
New York Lodge No. 1317

David W. Bute, Fort Morgan,
Colorado Lodge No. 1143

JAEGER from Page 1

\$1 million in printing, postage, and freight costs."

Also serving as Chairman of the Elks National Veterans Memorial Trust, PGER McPherson next gave the report of the Elks National Veterans Memorial Building and the activities of the Restoration Trust, noting that substantial updates were made to the Elks National Memorial and Headquarters in preparation for this week's celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Elks National Memorial Building, including revamped exhibits, as well as a Walk of Remembrance to honor veterans. McPherson also informed conventiongoers that additional changes are planned for the Memorial Building, including new exhibits in the lower level and construction of a victory garden. He encouraged Elks to support the trust fund, in the form of donations, in order to help maintain the Memorial Building now and into the future.

McPherson's reports were succeeded by the report of Chairman of the Board

of Grand Trustees Joseph C. Cooper of Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota, FL Lodge No. 2855, who presented the proposed preliminary budget for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2026, and ending May 31, 2027. Cooper then noted that the Income and Expense items are balanced for the year, reflecting an overall increase in total budget from the previous Grand Lodge year of approximately \$780,000 from the previous Grand Lodge Year.

This was followed by the preliminary report of the Committee on Judiciary Daniel J. Nelson, of Philipsburg, PA Lodge No. 1173, during which committee members reviewed the four proposed amendments to the laws and constitution of the Order that will be considered during Tuesday's Grand Lodge session. Next, Chairman of the Ritualistic Committee Frank Malatesta of Lakewood Ranch-Sarasota, FL Lodge No. 2855 took the floor, announcing the All-American teams and individual awards, the top four teams in the Ritual Contest, and the four finalists for each of the Eleven O'Clock Toast and Flag

Charge contests.

The day's reports having concluded, the assembled Elks turned to the election of their leadership for the following year. In addition to GER-elect Jaeger, the slate of officers that were nominated and unanimously elected included Grand Esteemed Leading Knight Dennis M. Daley, Watertown-Beaver Dam, WI Lodge No. 666; Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight Arthur H. Echternacht, Santa Ana, CA Lodge No. 794; Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight John D. Oswalt, Marshall, TX Lodge No. 683; Grand Secretary Carl T. Seibert, Eustis, FL Lodge No. 1578; Grand Inner Guard John W. Sauer, Jeffersonville, IN Lodge No. 362; and Grand Trustees Joe Evans, Lawrenceburg, TN Lodge No. 2206 and Robert E. Wambach, Auburn, MA Lodge, No. 2118. The appointed officers for 2026-2027 are Grand Tiler Dennis W. Kanouff, Oakmont, PA Lodge No. 1668; Grand Esquire Frank Sommers, Littleton, CO Lodge No. 1650; and Grand Chaplain, Reverend Father Michael Martine, New York, NY Lodge No. 1. ★

Resolution Honoring Retiring Chief Justice of the Grand Forum Thomas M. Zisa

Proposed by Grand Forum Senior Justice Paul E. Robinson

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa is a well-respected attorney in the State of New Jersey since being admitted to practice in 1983. He is also licensed to appear before the Federal District Court for the District of New Jersey, and the Supreme Court of the United States; *and,*

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa is completing his five (5) year term on the Grand Forum of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, having served as Chief Justice of the Grand Forum this past year; *and,*

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa served on the Grand Lodge Committee on Judiciary for the period of 2000 through 2003, and again for the period of 2015 through 2021, with the last 2 years of his 2nd term serving as Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary; *and,*

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa has served on the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee for the period of 2012 through 2014, and served as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler for the 2003-2004 fraternal year; *and,*

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa has served the New Jersey State Elks Association in numerous capacities including, Laws Committee Advisor & Chairperson, Training Committee Advisor & Chairperson, Advisor to the State Drug Awareness committee, Advisor to the NJ Elks Peer Leadership Conference and State President of New Jersey in the year 2009-2010; *and,*



Thomas M. Zisa

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa was initiated into Hackensack Elks Lodge No. 658 by his father Carmen G. Zisa, PER in 1987 and has served in virtually every office and committee of the Lodge including Exalted Ruler for the fraternal year 1992-1993; *and,*

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa has rendered dedicated and meritorious service to the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in many capacities over the last 26 years; *and,*

Whereas, Thomas M. Zisa could not have accomplished all of the foregoing without the help, love and support of his loving wife of 38 years Patricia and their daughter Angela & son Stephen.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, at this 161st Session of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, duly convened this 5th day of July, 2026, does hereby congratulate and commend **Thomas M. Zisa** for his exemplary dedication to the Order; and directs that he be presented with an appropriate honorarium in keeping with one retiring after many years of laudable and commendable service to the Order, along with a commemorative copy of this Resolution, and the admiration, respect, and esteem of his fellow Justices, colleagues, and the entire membership of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Adopted at the 161st Session of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America this 7th day of July 2026, at Chicago, Illinois.

G/L FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

CONTEST "I" WINNERS

Judging for Contest "I" — State Bulletin Contest was conducted across four key areas: Content, Layout & Typography, Pictorial, and General. These categories reflect the balance of substance and presentation that makes a bulletin both informative and engaging.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all participating State Associations — and especially to the editors — whose time, talent, and passion keep this tradition thriving.

Contest awards can be picked up at the Fraternal Committee Booth after Tuesday's business session.

5 Star Awards

State

Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Kansas
MD-DE-DC
Michigan
Missouri
New Jersey
New York
Pennsylvania
Washington

Editor

Rachael King
Linda Lewis
Elizabeth Conaway
Carl E. Lindsey, Jr.
Jane L. Swigert
Jean Chapdelaine
Joy Clarkson
Richard Poole
Timothy R. Welpé
Jason L. Cook
Jennifer Steele

4 Star Awards

State

Arizona
Colorado
Connecticut
Louisiana
North Carolina
Utah

Editor

Megin L. Goetz
Sandy Bassett
Donna Borzillo
Brian L. Baye
Ashley Buckwell
Steffanee Wanlass

3 Star Awards

State

Oregon

Editor

C. Blake Whitson