



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



New year begins, but Elks year ends soon

Happy 2025 to all our Elks family!

Julia and I want to wish you and your families a healthy and happy new year.

January is the beginning of the last quarter of the Lodge year. Be sure to have your membership retention and arrears program ready to work on having a +1 membership gain for 2025! Have your committee reach out to delinquent Members. This personal contact could very well bring these Members back into our folds.

While we have so many Members who are active and going beyond the call of duty, we unfortunately have those who are delinquent in membership. We need to look over the lapsation list. Our delinquent Members had a reason for joining and they are worth keeping as active Members. Find out what you can do to improve this. Think of the missed



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler**

**DOUGLAS A.
SCHIEFER**

opportunities that these delinquent Members could have had in making a legacy of service.

As we begin 2025, Lodges need to be focusing on several aspects: Our Members and membership, our Lodges and improvements, and our recognition to those who have given beyond the typical role of service.

There is no better way to recognize these people who have gone beyond the

call of duty in their service to Elkdom than to award them with "Elk of the Year," "Officer of the Year," and "Citizen of the Year." The awards form can be accessed in CLMS2Web. They need to be submitted prior to March 31 so that the certificates can be printed and sent back to the Lodges for Officer installations. As an Exalted Ruler, you have an opportunity to recognize those Members who are doing everything without even being asked.

Speaking of legacy, the Legacy Award scholarship is available until February 3, 2025. It provides \$4,000 scholarships to the children and grandchildren of Elks Members. Use the membership of Elkdom to pay it forward to help your children and grandchildren.

Please see GER, Page 2

Deadline nearing for Transfer Dimits

Secretaries: Transfer Dimits must be processed in a timely manner. Currently, there are nearly 1,000 incomplete Transfer Dimits.

The CLMS2Web program automatically transfers the Member's information from the outgoing Lodge computer to the incoming Lodge computer, with no typing required.

Keep in mind, a Transfer Dimit started during the current Lodge year must be approved by the accepting Lodge before March 31. If not, that Member

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

remains on your membership roll. Any variance from this procedure will

cause your membership total to become out of balance.

Reminder: Year-end membership information must be updated and completed in CLMS2Web by 11:59 p.m. Central time on March 31.

Donors get a win-win with QCDs

By PATRICK ROELOFS
ENF Communications Coordinator

Individuals donating to the Elks National Foundation have options. Some prefer the ease of monthly giving, while others prefer to honor a loved one with a tribute gift.

For those who are 70.5 years old and above, like Sharron Dearborn of Newport Harbor, CA Lodge No. 1767, the savvy way to give is through Qualified Charitable Distributions, which are tax-free gifts to charity.

Dearborn learned about the Elks in 1968 when her late husband became a Member. She has been heavily involved since, serving as District Scholarship Chair twice and volunteering with California's State Major Project and the Hoop Shoot.

"It's the kind of organization that has something for everyone," Dearborn said.

There is something for everyone when it comes to service, but also for giving. In fact, even frequent donors may not be aware of all the options available to them.

"I have always supported the ENF," Dearborn said. "When I read about QCDs in The Elks Magazine, I called the ENF office and loved what I was told."

By donating to the ENF through QCDs, Dearborn not only supports several worthy programs—she also supports herself.

Also known as IRA Charitable Rollovers, QCDs are distributions from your IRA made directly to a nonprofit organization so they don't count as taxable income. Because they go directly to charitable organizations, QCDs lower your adjusted gross income, effectively reducing income taxes.

"Check with your tax advisor to see how this gift not only helps the whole Lodge meet their per-Member giving goal, but to see how you also personally benefit," Dearborn said. "[Donating through QCDs to the] ENF is a win-win situation."

Discover all the ways to give and see if QCD giving is right for you at elks.org/ENF/supportENF.cfm.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Podcast, fact sheet provide useful drug awareness info

By WILLIAM J. BRYAN
National Director

Happy New Year to Elks everywhere! The holiday season always seems to have a letdown following two months of celebrations and festivities. Rest assured, although we love to celebrate, the Elks Drug Awareness Program is not letting down as we enter the new year.

We just concluded 2024 with our most rigorous and most viewed episodes of *Awkward Conversations*, season 4, a podcast effort with our partners at the Drug Enforcement Administration, which provides parents and grandparents with tips on how to have those difficult discussions with young people. As the new year begins, we are now working with the DEA to plan something new—stay tuned.

Speaking of our partners at the DEA, the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day figures for the year just ending saw that 649 tons of prescriptions were collected, with every state participating in just two days: one in April and one in October. If you are interested in participating in 2025, please visit dea.gov/take-backday. This is an easy way to enhance your Lodge's position in your community.

The CDC now offers a Fentanyl Fact Sheet that can easily be downloaded and should be displayed in every Lodge. For your copy, simply go to: cdc.gov/overdose-resources/files/fentanyl-fact-sheet.html. This one-page sheet contains a wealth of information. If you would like a supply of Elks DAP information cards on fentanyl and other substances, contact your State DAP Chair for a “no

cost to you” delivery. All our information has gone through a makeover reprint and can be shipped directly to your Lodge.

Don't forget that our annual poster, essay, and video contest submissions must be received by us in April. All submissions must be forwarded through your State Chairs, who can provide criteria details and deadlines. They are eagerly sitting by their phones waiting for you to call!

Once again, Happy New Year to you all. Thank you for all that you have done this past year to keep your community safe and our children educated on the dangers and effects of illicit drugs and substance abuse. We wish you all a very healthy and prosperous new year. If there is anything we can do to help or if you have questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

JROTC Awards boost self esteem, leadership, patriotism

By RICHARD W. THREADGILL
Committee Member

It's a new year. A point in time where many of us let the year behind us settle in its place and set eyes for what the future will bring. Well, our future is our youth, and they need our help.

One of the most powerful impacts Elks can make in our communities is to leverage our programs to recognize our youth for the work they do every day. The power of acknowledgment is something that should never be underestimated, especially since the young people of today face increasing isolation and social disconnect.

Recognition of anyone is powerful, but it's extremely important for youth. It boosts self-esteem and motivates them to continue down a positive path, fostering a strong sense of community and self-belonging.

The Grand Lodge Activities Committee has developed a range of programs aimed to help Lodges approach and recognize kids of all ages, skill levels, and interests. Soccer Shoot, Junior Golf, Antlers Program, Dictionary Project, Student/Teenager of the Month/Year and the JROTC awards are just some of the amazing programs your Lodge can use to positively impact young people in your community.

One of these recognition programs is the JROTC Award Program. The Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps

(JROTC) is one of the world's largest character development and citizenship programs for youth. The program teaches self-reliance, improved communication skills, team building, and encourages a deep respect for the United States and our armed forces.

To recognize cadets for their outstanding leadership, patriotism, and community service, the GL Activities Committee offers a special medal, ribbon, and certificate that can be awarded to a cadet that exemplifies these character traits.

Lodges should contact the Senior Instructor of each JROTC unit in the surrounding area and ask if they would be willing to participate in the program. With more than 3,275 units across the country from each branch of the military, chances are a unit is near your Lodge.

If the Senior Instructor agrees to participate in the program, request they select a cadet who has involved themselves in community service projects while also maintaining the highest standards of performance in all fields of endeavor. Once a cadet is selected, be sure to download the fillable certificate from the GL Activities area of Elks.org in addition to ordering the JROTC medal and ribbon from the Grand Lodge Shipping and Supplies Department through your Lodge Secretary via CLMS2 (code #575300). Cost of the medal/ribbon is just \$10 plus shipping and handling with no minimum order requirements.

Be sure to arrange for a time to present the award to the cadet with the Senior Instructor at the school or at the Lodge. A cadet receiving this award in front of their peers and their community will have a lasting effect. Lastly, don't forget to promote this award in the media, as local news outlets are eager to share positive stories about young people doing great things.

Let's resolve this year to recognize our youth for they are our future, and they are *Elkdom's Heart for America*.

GER From Page 1

The end of year will be here before you know it. With the FRS system, your Lodge just needs to ensure all entries are current. The nice thing about the FRS system is your Lodge no longer needs to have the annual audit completed. However, you still must submit your 990 and 990T for each corporation in your Lodge. Have them completed by a qualified individual (e.g., CPA) and filed with the IRS and uploaded on Elks.org.

Elkdom's Heart for America means looking for ways to recognize the value of our Members, membership, and the value of looking forward to the future. Keep up the good work you are doing in your Lodge and community. I want you to know how much I appreciate all that you are doing for Elkdom. God bless you and God bless America.

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Top Lodge Members deserve kudos for all their efforts

By BRIAN RAWDING

Committee Member

With only three months left in the Lodge year, Exalted Rulers are looking at their successes and the team who helped them. Rewarding those Members who make a difference builds on the established framework and ensures continued support to our communities, our veterans, and our youth.

Exalted Rulers have many opportunities at the Grand Lodge level to achieve this. The most common are the Elk, Officer, and Citizen of the Year. Requests for these certificates must be sent to the Grand Secretary's office prior to March 31.

Grand Exalted Ruler Schiefer has laid out 2024-25 programs and objectives for our Lodges and Members. In order to recognize those Lodges and Exalted

Rulers who have achieved these goals, Grand Lodge has "Making A Difference" Special Citations. These may be awarded to Exalted Rulers who participate in six of the nine required programs during the year and to each Local Lodge participating in six of 11 required programs during the year. The required programs are outlined in the Grand Lodge Program booklet on pages 38 and 39.

These awards are available through your area Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee member. Entry forms are listed in the Fraternal Committee area on elks.org. Go to Members Only/Officers and Committees/Fraternal Committee/Forms and Contests and find the link for "Outstanding Members—Certification Request for GER Special Commendation Award."

The forms are also available to each ER on the thumb drive distributed during the Grand Lodge Session. All awards can be submitted for approval starting January 1 and must be postmarked by March 31.

Other certificates are available to each Exalted Ruler. The "Grand Exalted Ruler's Outstanding Service Commendation" certificates are used to recognize two persons performing good works for their Lodge. These team members are always on hand and make the ER's job easier.

Every Lodge that shouts out GER Schiefer's motto "*Elkdom's Heart for America*" should have more than enough Members to appreciate. Your Area Fraternal Committee member is ready to assist and make it simple to pat them on the back and recognize their efforts.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Momentum builds for continued membership growth

By RICK GATHEN

Membership Marketing Manager

Last year, we achieved an impressive net gain of 14,676 Members, marking three consecutive years of growth. This success fuels our challenge to "*Soar with Four in 2024-2025*," as we strive for even greater heights.

As we enter the final stretch of the Lodge year, with official numbers to be recorded on May 31, our projections show an addition of 90,000 new Members to the rolls this fraternal year. However, sustainable growth hinges on one critical

factor: membership retention.

Every new and retained Member contributes to Elkdom's story of resilience and purpose. Our actions today will shape the future of 2024-2025. Let's seize this moment, initiate new Members with urgency, and create a future we're all proud of—together.

This year presents unique challenges, including the devastating impact of two hurricanes on the southeastern United States. Yet, our collective resilience and the support of the Membership and Marketing Department provide the tools

to rise above these obstacles. Resources like the join.elks.org website continue to inspire prospective Members, offering guidance on how to join and showcasing the many rewards of being an Elk.

To ensure success, remember to initiate all candidates by **March 31, 2025**. Together, we can turn this momentum into another remarkable year for the Elks.

As the writer Charles Caleb Colton said, "Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm." Let's harness that spirit to grow Elkdom like never before.

All Gas. No Brakes!

MAKE GIVING EASY & JOIN THE CLUB!

Sign up for our monthly, sustaining giving program—the ENF Fidelity Club!

- Give automatic, regularly scheduled donations each month from your credit card or bank account.
- Receive special membership benefits and recognition pieces.
- Update, adjust or modify your gift any time online or by calling us.
- Sign up by scanning the QR code and make a sustaining difference in Elks communities today!

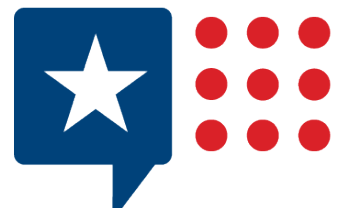


Use the QR code to sign up today.



Elks
National
Foundation, Inc.

Veterans Crisis Line



DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1

Nominate an outstanding Elk for Volunteer of the Year

By **HANNAH GRABER**
ENVSC Programs Associate

Kick off your new year by celebrating outstanding volunteers at your Lodge! It's time to nominate an Elks Member for the state Veteran Volunteer of the Year award.

Across the country, thousands of Elks support and offer services to veterans, from recreational activities and friendship to emergency assistance and survival supplies for veterans experiencing homelessness.

Whether it is through the Welcome Home Kit program, Lodge grant projects, or the Elks Voluntary Service program,

ENVSC could not operate without the hard work of all our volunteers. To show appreciation of their time and effort, every year we select two volunteers from each state for the ENVSC's Veteran Volunteer of the Year.

Awards are presented at State Conventions, and winners are recognized at the Grand Lodge Convention.

Tracie Wells, a 2023-24 Tennessee Volunteer of the Year, shared her experience volunteering at the Memphis VA. After creating food packages and care bags to distribute to veterans at Christmas time last year, she

explained, "So many of the veterans that received the food packages were moved to tears and so grateful for our love and support. These activities always help to remind me that not every veteran has a family, and it is our job to make them feel like they do."

Anyone can submit a nomination to their State Veterans Chair. Nominations for Veteran Volunteer of the Year are due by January 31. To learn more, view the past winners of this award, and access the nomination form, please visit elks.org/vets/volunteerawards.cfm.



BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
**Benevolent and Protective
 ORDER OF ELKS**
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January 2025

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GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

To-do list: Outreach, activities, promotion, recording

By **STEVEN L. JOHNSON**
Committee Member

With elections behind us, it's time to get in touch with your government leaders in the senate and legislators to let them know what your Lodge and the Order do for our communities. Invite them to attend an event at your Lodge or in their district.

Consider introducing new or forgotten programs or events. Ideas include Hoop Shoot, scholarship presentations and other youth activities, veterans programs, yard work service for senior citizens, Red Ribbon Week, and more! Review your Lodge's calendar of events monthly to

assist in tracking these activities.

Sponsor a sports team with your Lodge logo on their uniforms. Proudly wear your Elks shirts, vests, or jackets. Display signs to promote the Elks in your city or district. Use social media to announce events and show your community support.

It's never too soon to remind event chairs and participants to record all of the volunteer miles, hours, and monetary donations for these events and activities at our respective Lodges and in our communities. Please don't forget meetings and committee work should be recorded, as well as pre- and post-event hours and

miles. All of these add up quickly. Help the Elks maintain our tax-exempt status.

For the 2023-2024 Elks year, Elks in the United States reported over \$504 million of charitable contributions including miles, hours, and monetary donations. We are still missing some important activities and events and we hope to surpass that number this year. Help your Lodges and states with their charity reporting so we don't leave anything on the table! Assistance in reporting can be found on the Grand Lodge Website at elks.org/grandlodge/charity/faq.cfm, including what can and cannot be reported.