



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Resolutions, goals: Make them now for your Lodge

Frohes Neues Jahr, Godt Nyttår, Feliz Año Nuevo, and Happy New Year!!!! No matter how you say it, 2021 can ONLY be a better year!

Do you still have resolutions? Or maybe they are goals. I had a few goals as your Grand Exalted Ruler for my year as your representative of this organization. My biggest thing is to make sure that the Order builds on what we already have. Create more ways to give back, add to the programs to help others, build on our benevolence. But, we can all say that—are you doing it? Knowing what I know about all of the Members that we have had the opportunity to meet, there is no doubt in my mind that we are doing a lot, but can we do more!

Because of our wonderful new program, the Financial Reporting System (FRS), normally at this time I



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler**

**PAUL R.
RYAN**

would be suggesting that it is time to get your Auditing and Accounting Committee on regular meetings to look at the budgets and prepare the financial documents to ship to CPAs. But because of the FRS, we only need to prepare, compare, and send for your 990s to be completed. Although our “Lodge year” is different, the IRS needs your information for a calendar year. Make sure to get them prepared.

This is also the time to start preparing

for your PER Night. Get your new officers ready to start their year. Help your future officers and prepare for the next regime. But, don’t stop your current **momentum**. This is what is going to take you into the new year. It will also teach your future leaders to **Create Momentum for the Future of Elkdom**.

I had the honor of participating and being a part of the 150th anniversary celebration of this great Order. I will never forget what an honor that was, and the fact that two of my children were also able to be a part of it. February is the birthday of our Order. Use this to have a celebration, a dinner, or an outing to help create funds for your Lodge, to help with the community, or to help another organization. No matter what

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Maintain balance with Transfer Dimits

Secretaries: Transfer Dimits must be processed in a timely manner. Currently there are more than 2,000 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.

**GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt**

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 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. on March 31.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Antlers points kids toward Elkdom

By **RICHARD E. BARD**
Committee Member

Creating Momentum for the Future of Elkdom—That is our Grand Exalted Ruler Paul Ryan’s message. What better way to create momentum for our future than to establish a new or support an existing Antlers Lodge in one of our own Lodges.

As it says about Antlers on the Elks’ website, “The newest program in Elkdom is an old one.” Organized in the late 1930s, the Antlers were a thriving and active arm of our Order. Interest waned in the 1960s and the Antlers program became dormant.

Well, the Antlers are back and the time is right to get behind this program. The program helps our Lodges and our communities on so many levels. By involving our young people and exposing them to the great works of our Order, we are laying the foundation for our future. This is a great tool to grow membership, as Antlers are our future Members. A successful Antlers program recruits young

people to participate in all of our youth programs, including Hoop Shoot, Soccer Shoot, Junior Golf, Scouting, and so much more.

Their parents and families are also potential Members. When they see what we do, who wouldn’t want to be a part of Elkdom?

Starting an Antlers Lodge requires a little effort, but it is easier than you may think. All of our Lodges have Members who are educators, administrators, or coaches. This is a great place to start. Young people today are looking for ways to serve their community. It looks good on a college application or a resume.

If you are thinking now might not be the best time to start an Antlers Lodge, hold on. While meeting in large groups might not be allowed in some of our areas, the need to help our neighbors has never been greater. This, along with the fact that many of our young people have

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GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

7 awards recognize those who do the heavy lifting

By **ROBERT R. HINKLE**
Committee Chairman

The final quarter of the Lodge Year is the time to say **thank you**. It's the time when Exalted Rulers review their Lodge's accomplishments and recognize those who make significant contributions to their Lodge and community.

The three most cherished tokens of recognition are the Elk, Officer, and Citizen of the Year Awards. Certificates are available upon request from the Grand Lodge Secretary. Applications must be postmarked or e-mailed by March 31. Forms may be downloaded at:

elks.org/clms2web/files/AwardRequestForm.pdf

• **Elk of the Year.** This award is for a Member who demonstrated devotion,

dedication, and loyalty to the Lodge. This award cannot go to an officer.

• **Officer of the Year.** For an outstanding current officer who exhibited extraordinary leadership and voluntary service to the Lodge.

• **Citizen of the Year.** This award is not limited to Elks. It presents an opportunity for Lodges to recognize an individual for significant community effort. It is a useful tool for community outreach and membership recruitment.

The following four awards are available by request directly from the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee. Applications are submitted to your Area Member of the Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee by March 31. Online fillable PDF forms which facilitate processing/reduce error are available online:

elks.org/grandlodge/ger/files/GERAwardCertificationForms.pdf.

• **The GER Special Citation Award.** Exalted Rulers may issue citations to two Members who displayed extraordinary effort during the Lodge year.

• **Making a Difference – Exalted Ruler.** This Special Citation recognizes Exalted Rulers who participated in at least six of the nine listed programs and contests during the Lodge year.

• **Making a Difference – Lodge.** This Special Citation is for Lodges that participated in at least six of the eleven listed programs.

Stay connected with your Fraternal Committee. Do not hesitate to ask questions and forward suggestions! Together, we are making a difference in all we do as *"Elks Care – Elks Share!"*

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Charity continues no matter what

By **ROBERT L. BOHNSACK**
Committee Member

This past year has truly been unbelievable. A year most of us would like to forget. It presented extraordinary and challenging times for all of us, especially as Elks.

Our new Lodge year began in quarantine. Who would have thought that would ever happen, not to mention the cancelling of conferences and conventions? Even Grand Lodge was not exempt from the effects of the virus. And yet the new officers in our Lodges have risen to the occasion and shown their resilience and their ability to think outside the box. They carried on with charitable projects in spite of quarantines and government lockdowns. Now with Lodges reopening in whatever manner permissible in their respective states, it becomes imperative to continue charitable giving.

We have just celebrated the seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas, two of the most charitable times of the year. Many Lodges celebrated by helping the less fortunate in their communities through their clothing drives, Adopt a Family, Christmas basket, and food pantry programs. As Elks, the daily gifts we bestow increase our own riches. The help we extend to those in need is added to our own strength. The real benefactors of mankind count their store in what is given, not in what is saved.

In addition, meaningful Memorial Services were held following CDC

guidelines. This is an important part of our service to Members and their families.

"Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken."

Even in these challenging times we have been increasing our volunteer hours—not only in actuality, also in our reporting. We continue to work closely with our Lodges and State Associations to ensure accurate reporting. We continue to monitor the agendas of state and federal governments to collect information important to the Order. Our mission as the Government Relations Committee is to guide the Grand Lodge, State Associations, and Lodges in preserving the right to exist as a private, non-profit, charitable organization. Reporting charitable hours is greatly important in assisting Grand Lodge with maintaining our federal tax status. Far too often we forget about all the activities with which we are involved on a community level. Not to mention the hosting of events as mentioned previously.

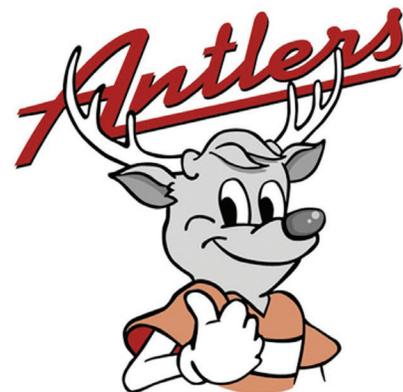
Report these hours to your Lodge Secretary to enable him/her to complete the reporting in CLMS. This information is passed on to the federal government, making them aware of our charitable works across the nation. All this helps to improve our non-profit status.

One last important item: Please take the time to individually thank all the volunteers in your Lodge who participate in charity events. This simple act will make them feel appreciated and will remind them that they are part of a great organization.

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been isolated or unable to attend school, makes it a great time. Working together on a project to improve the quality of life in our cities and towns is just what is needed in times like this.

For all of these reasons, and so many more, now is the perfect time to start an Antlers program in your Lodge. Feel free to contact me if you need any assistance. Create some Momentum.



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you do, make the birthday of the Elks an event in your Lodge.

For ERs, Secretaries, and PERs, this is the time also to choose your Elk of the Year, Officer of the Year, and Citizen of the Year. As always, take time to deliberate and choose thoughtfully.

Lapsation should also be a focus of your Membership Committee. My Lodge has reported that we are nearing 2% in lapsation. Although for me that is a small number, for many it is huge. Let's make this another year of growth.

GRAND LODGE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING

Lodges that accept card? Priceless

By **RICK GATHEN**

PR and Membership Marketing Manager

It's very easy to accept the status quo. Many Lodges operate under the old "that's the way it's always been done, so there is no reason to change it" attitude. That method of thinking is never going to grow your membership—or profits. Make it easy for Members to pay dues, make donations, rent your hall, and purchase food and beverages.

There are times I don't purchase something because the process is too awkward or complicated. I suspect many of you would agree with me. Some airlines, for example, only accept credit cards on board, whereas others only accept cash. When I don't have the specific payment method they demand, they lose me as a customer. These policies are for their own benefit, without thought for the customer.

Does your Lodge only accept cash when Members only have a credit card? Do you

only do business in person, via postal mail, or over the phone, even though it's clear that some Members may prefer to pay online? It may be time to analyze your business so your Lodge can make more money. When credit cards were first invented, they had a big impact because there was no longer a need to remember to carry a lot of cash. Plus, plastic is mentally disconnected from real money, so people tend to spend more.

Not for one moment am I suggesting you discourage cash. My point is to make it easy for Members to pay you and they will spend more at your Lodge. We all want happy Members who keep coming back. Every new Member starts as a guest. It's important we do what we do so well that our Members will want to come back often to the Lodge and bring friends. Growing membership and revenues can benefit every Lodge. Make sure your payment policies are for the Members' benefit.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Re-thinking recreational pot use

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**

Assistant National Director

Please don't think we're picking on Colorado, but the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (RMHIDTA) Program has published annual reports to track the impact of legalizing recreational use of marijuana in Colorado. They do this so that citizens can make informed decisions on the issue of marijuana legalization. To view the full report, go to RMHIDTA.org. This report will open your eyes.

The Elks DAP shifted away from opposing legalization primarily due to the inability to fight the well-funded legalization movement. Instead, we decided to simply warn children and parents about the dangers of marijuana and spend our efforts educating youngsters to make good and well-informed decisions when it comes to pot.

Here's some information RMHIDTA discovered which reinforces our need to continue to warn about the dangers in recreational use:

- Since recreational use was legalized in 2013, traffic deaths in which the driver tested positive for marijuana increased 135% while all Colorado traffic deaths rose 24%.

- Traffic deaths where the driver tested positive for marijuana more than doubled

from 55 in 2013 to 129 in 2019.

- The percentage of all Colorado traffic deaths that were marijuana related increased from 15% in 2013 to 25% in 2019.

- The percentage of suicide incidents in which toxicology results were positive for marijuana increased from 14% in 2013 to 23% in 2019.

- Marijuana tax revenue represents approximately 0.85% of Colorado's FY2019 budget.

- 67% of local jurisdictions in Colorado have banned medical and recreational marijuana businesses.

Again, we're not picking on our brothers and sisters in Colorado. We just want folks to think twice when the legalization issue is discussed, especially for recreational use. Colorado is not getting rich on sales and the cost of recreational use still outweighs positive benefits.

In other news, the new DAP/DEA video, launched during Red Ribbon Month last October, is playing very well on YouTube. If you've not had a chance, check it out. "TRY" is reaching youth all over the nation and contains an inspirational message.

Jack Ponzio, State DAP Chair from Arizona, helped with this article.

Elks grants aid Navajo Nation

Some communities have been hit harder by the pandemic than others—like the Navajo Nation, which occupies the corners of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. In May, at the height of the pandemic, one in every 43 Navajo people had contracted COVID-19.

There are only 13 grocery stores in the entire 27,000-plus square mile Navajo reservation. That is one store per 13,359 people, which makes equitable access to healthy food and clean water incredibly difficult.

Three Arizona Lodges understood that the pandemic exacerbated the needs of their Navajo neighbors, and they applied to use Community Investments Program Grants to facilitate greater access to food and clean drinking water.

Page, AZ Lodge No. 2498, which borders the Navajo reservation, merged its Spotlight, Gratitude, and Beacon Grants together for a total of \$7,500 to fund the creation and distribution of food baskets.

Holbrook, AZ Lodge No. 2450, which also neighbors the Navajo Nation, decided to use its first-ever Beacon Grant to donate funds to the First Step Workshop and Catholic Charities. First Step Workshop offers training, employment, and job supervision to adults with disabilities in Navajo County. Catholic Charities works to bring food, shelter, and other support to individuals in the Navajo Nation during this time of hardship.

Sun City, AZ Lodge No. 2559 merged its Spotlight and Beacon Grants to donate water tanks to the Navajo Nation to improve access to clean drinking water.

"Inequitable access to drinking water and water for hygiene contributes to the high COVID case rate in the Navajo Nation, and we hope our efforts will have a positive impact," said Bob Jeschke, grants coordinator for the Sun City Lodge.

The Elks National Foundation allocated \$14.6 million this year to fund the Community Investments Program. To learn more about the Community Investments Program and this year's flexible grant guidelines, please visit elks.org/CIP.



**Elks
National
Foundation, Inc.**

National Salute gives extra love to veterans

By **RONALD L. HICKS, PGER**
ENVSC Vice Chairman

There are approximately 18.8 million veterans in the United States. More than 98,000 veterans are served every day, and over 9 million veterans are served annually, by the Department of Veterans Affairs in hospitals, medical centers, clinics, nursing homes and other VA facilities, receiving the care they have earned. Volunteers play a significant role in this service and the Department of Veterans Affairs greatly appreciates and values the contributions of every volunteer.

The National Salute to Veteran Patients Week, also known as National Salute to

Hospitalized Veterans Week, provides a special opportunity to honor both inpatient and outpatient veterans and encourages everyone to find a way to volunteer at their local VA medical facilities. This year the Salute, which always takes place during the week of Valentine's Day, will be observed from Sunday, February 14 through Saturday, February 20, 2021. It is a great time to get to know your VA facilities and the veterans who receive care from the VA.

In keeping with the Elks' pledge to our veterans and ensuring that our heroes

will never be forgotten, this special week offers yet another opportunity for Elks to join with other VA volunteers to increase community awareness and involvement, and to join forces to give thanks and show appreciation for the sacrifices of our men and women veterans.

During the National Salute, the VA typically invites participation in a variety of activities at the VA medical centers. While in-person activities may be limited this year, the VA will still be excited



Continued below

BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
Benevolent and Protective
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January 2021

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to welcome the involvement of our volunteers in many different ways. Going forward, as the pandemic eases, this involvement can be expanded to sustain and grow more personal relationships, viable strategic partnerships, and other meaningful volunteer engagements with our veterans.

There are many hospitalized veterans with special needs and challenges who are often separated from their homes, family, and friends. Our involvement can do so much to lift their spirits and help make a positive difference. These heroes must not be left to feel alone, and with the continued help and support of the

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and a grateful nation, they never will be.

America cares deeply for its veterans. I encourage all readers to take the time during this year's National Salute to honor our veterans by volunteering for a visit, sending Valentine's cards or letters of thanks, and/or holding a veteran's event at your Lodge.

If you or your Lodge wishes to begin or expand its program to honor the sacrifice and service of America's veterans during the National Salute (and throughout the year) please visit your nearest VA medical facility or contact Voluntary Service online at www.volunteer.va.gov.



Elks share their thoughts

Want to discuss the Elks? Check out the Membership Forum (elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm). Members use the message board to share constructive information every day.

