



The Lakes & Prairies

EXCHANGITE

lakesandprairiesdistrict.com

May/June 2025

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Event Calendar

- Jun 14 Flag Day.
- Jun 15 Father's Day.
- Jun 16 The Exchange Club Center for Family Unity 33rd Annual Golf to Prevent Child Abuse Fundraiser at the Owatonna Country Club, registration at 11, includes silent auction and dinner for golfers and non-golfers starting at 5 p.m.
- Jun 17 Lakes & Prairies District Board meeting, 7 p.m., Zoom.
- Jun 20 First day of summer.
- Jun 24 Moonlighters Exchange Club of Owatonna chartered in 2013.
- Jun 30 End of 2024-25 Exchange year.

Counting down on the 2024-25 Exchange year

By Sharon Klein,
2024-25 Lakes & Prairies District President



Hey, the Exchange year is not over yet. Once the district convention comes and goes, it seems it's time to start the new year. But, NO, we still have through June. In a few weeks, we can still add new members, start new club building, work on projects or report your projects if you have yet to earn your National Service Award, and help your community.

If you are serving as a president, you may feel relieved that the end of the Exchange year is in site, or you may feel like you finally know what you are doing and are comfortable in the position. I know the feeling, which is the feeling I have now. I am kind of relieved, but on the other hand, darn, I wish I knew in July what I know now. I wish I had done this or that. But it's not the end. You will be starting on your third year of your term; you will be serving as immediate past president. You can still do the things that you have put off. However, the most important part of becoming immediate past president is sharing with your successor all that you have learned, what you feel that person needs to know to have a good year, maybe even a better year than you did.

Are you serving as president-elect? Are you excited for your year to begin on July 1? Have you taken the time

to visit The National Exchange Club website and watch the podcast on presidential duties, and how to be the best president you can? Find time in the next couple of weeks to carve out an hour to sit and watch. In this Exchangite newsletter there is a Zoom training schedule for all your board officers. Encourage each of them to take the courses. Have you set the date for your planning meeting and budget meeting? While you are on the National website, take a minute to look at awards. Check out the requirements for the Distinguished President Award as it can give you something to plan for.

It is an exciting time. Take the time to get together as a board, plan your year, get to know one another a little better, and create a truly awesome team.

Did you attend the district convention?

If you did, you got to watch me stumble through, but you also got to meet our National Exchange Club president. Mike Reichel has led our clubs this year with dedication, caring, and inspiration. He is one of the "good guys." We heard from three outstanding young people who will go far in their future. We learned about branding, about working together, and about enjoying Exchange. Many of us are looking forward to The National Exchange Club Convention in a few weeks in Louisville, Kentucky.

Next year the Lakes & Prairies District President continued on Page 5)

Share your club's news!
Email Randy at
rsobrack@yahoo.com

The Lakes & Prairies District wishes to recognize the newest members who joined their respective Exchange club in May:

Omaha: Cassidee Reeve, 5/21; Waseca: Amy Schmidt, 5/12;

Waterloo: Anthony Pappas, 5/20.

Fellowship, recognition, and learning opportunities experienced at district convention in Cedar Falls

Twelve clubs, 66 club members, and 15 guest attendees experienced all or part of the Lakes & Prairies District Convention at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls, May 16-18.

Following the district board meeting Friday afternoon, May 16, convention attendees had the opportunity learn and ask questions regarding The National Exchange Club website, nationalexchangeclub.org, in a session lead by Region 3 Vice President Annette Duncan. Afterwards attendees had an opportunity to enjoy a group or private dinner, with the hospitality room accessible for more social time.

The vast majority of the convention took place Saturday morning, May 17, with the traditional One Nation Under God Breakfast. Club representatives paraded in with their respective banner which was on display through the convention. The Waterloo East High JROTC conducted the Presentation of Colors (pictured below).

Cedar Falls Mayor Pro Tem Chris Latta welcomed attendees and guests.



District President Sharon Klein (far left) and The National Exchange Club President Mike Reichel are pictured, May 17, with the district's Youth of the Year Cora Hess (middle left) and the district's A.C.E. Recipient Anela Junuzovic (middle right). Both were recognized during the Youth Awards Luncheon during the Lakes & Prairies District Convention in Cedar Falls.



Following breakfast, Past Region 3 Vice President Dawn Portner, who is also a volunteer field representative for the Lincolnland District, delivered the keynote address entitled, "Discovering Our Roots," reflecting on historical references in being one nation under God. The program concluded with those in attendance singing, "God Bless America."

The convention's opening session was conducted to establish a quorum for business and determine eligible delegates for voting.

In the morning's breakout session, Duncan presented details regarding branding with The National Exchange Club from logos, to colors and fonts and the importance of adhering to the National's branding standards. Information may be obtained from nationalexchangeclub.org. Volunteer Field Representative Katie Smith also presented a session entitled, "Exchange 102," highlighting videos promoting

Exchange on YouTube, The National Exchange Club Foundation, growth through networking and being mindful of the importance of club retention, obtaining feedback from members of your community on the projects you are doing or if there are more impactful project opportunities.

The Youth Awards Luncheon recognized the district's A.C.E. (Accepting the Challenge of Excellence) and Youth of the Year recipients.

The keynote speaker Waterloo West High School Senior Bailey Kestel, an entrepreneur in the coffee industry starting a satellite location of the Savvy Bean within the Waterloo Career Center. Her coffee cart served students, staff, and occasional community members. It opened up opportunities for students to learn business aspects.

"Starting business as a teenager is very hard," said Bailey. She found the effort brought students together from

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other schools. Bailey reflected on how teachers would assist in getting supplies delivered. "It's a great way to build community," added Bailey.

She admitted getting "stretched too thin," and having to prioritize what was important in taking care of herself, her studies, and her business.

Bailey reflected on connecting with a seventh grader and finding a role for her.

With hopes of starting a coffee shop of her own after high school, Bailey said she has found a student to continue with the coffee cart after her graduation.

The district's A.C.E. recipient was Anela Junuzovic, sponsored by the Sunrise Exchange Club of Waterloo. Reading from the essay she submitted, Anela stated, "I have been doing virtual online schooling for about four years now due to physical and mental challenges I have faced. When I was 14-years-old my family and I found out that I had Papillary Thyroid Cancer. I had a puck-sized cyst in my neck (3") that was crushing my trachea to the right, causing me to barely be able to eat, drink, swallow, cough, sneeze or laugh."

Reflecting on her well being, "My battle with cancer was intense, marked

by numerous treatments, hospital visits, and the constant struggle to maintain my physical and mental health," read Anela. "My mental health began to suffer, as the isolation and the constant battle against the disease took a significant emotional toll. February of 2024 I had hit my lowest point, my medicine was making me gain an unhealthy amount of weight and it had been really bringing me down. However, my friends, family, and teachers all played a crucial role in encouraging me to push through. They understood my struggles and provided the support I needed to keep going, whether it was through a kind word, a helping hand, or just being there to listen."

In looking ahead, "I have big plans for my future," said Anela. "I aim to pursue a doctorate in veterinary medicine because of my deep love for animals and nature. This passion drives me to want to help and care for animals in the best way possible. Additionally, I plan to obtain a marketing degree, which will allow me to travel the world. It's my dream to experience different cultures, taste diverse foods, and see various aspects of the world."

The district's Youth of the Year recipient was Cora Hess, sponsored by the Exchange Club of Owatonna. Reading from the essay she submitted, "One of

my earliest memories of contributing to society began when I was only 10 years old. Ever since I was young I have had a drive for helping those in need however I can," read Cora. "My sister, best friend, and I created this event allowing our friends and family to play fun and exciting handmade games, all to benefit charity. We charge a penny per ticket, and a ticket per game."

Adding, "We created concessions, which consisted of food and homemade crafts and trinkets any little girl could make. We have done this one day a year for the past seven summers and I wouldn't trade it for the world."

"Our community of participants has been growing significantly as word has spread around our town about what we want to do to help and how we were doing it. We started this carnival from only receiving \$20 for both The Elephant Sanctuary and Community Pathways, to, this last summer, making over \$500 to split between the two."

"I have spent countless hours dedicating my time to volunteering through clubs like student council where I hold the treasurer position," said Cora. "NHS which is focused on community service, and SHOC which helps inspire younger generations to stay drug free. I volunteer for the Music Boosters of Owatonna, pancake breakfasts, benefit concerts, solo and ensemble concessions, and give speeches at concerts to bring an awareness to the community about how they can help through MBO."

"With the clubs I mentioned before, I give presentations to fifth graders to stay alcohol and drug free, I help SHOC events that focus around that motto, and volunteer at Toys for Tots. I play in the bell choir at St. John Lutheran Church, was a member of the Church Executive Board, and I help at middle school activity nights and themed nights for the community."

"Looking ahead, I see myself continuing my work in community service, but on an even larger scale," said Cora. "I want to pursue a career in Japanese Studies and English which I'm hoping will lead me to assisting people in translation and creating that bond between

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The installation of district officers and directors conducted by The National Exchange Club President Mike Reichel (standing on stage) had a light moment with 2025-26 District President-Elect Trent Hunter (sixth from left) and District President Sharon Klein. The 2025-26 Lakes & Prairies District Board members include (left to right): Lynn Limberg, secretary; Diana Sash, treasurer; Tom Helligso, Division 7 director; Makell Magley, Division 5 director; Sandra McConn Halla, Division 4 director; Trent Hunter, District President-Elect; Sharon Klein, Immediate Past President; Dennis Kehoe, District President; Randy Sobrack, Division 3 director; Mikhail Rostislavovich, Division 1 Director; and Jeff Magsamen, Division 6 director. Not pictured is Division 2 Director Robert Orr.

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people of the two countries. I want to travel in my future and be of any service I can to those around me as I'm doing it. A dream of mine would be to teach English in Japan and with that would come building relationships within the Japanese community."

Each recipient is receiving a \$1,000 scholarship to their postsecondary school, and will be advancing for consideration in their respective award for consideration with The National Exchange Club.

Presentations of \$1,500 were awarded to representatives of The Exchange Club Center for Family Unity in Owatonna, and the Allen Child Protection Center in Waterloo.

In addition, some of the district awards were presented. The Best Club Bulletin was awarded to the Exchange Club of Owatonna's Sharon Klein; Best Club Facebook Page awarded to Exchange Club of Waverly's Heidi Solheim; All-American Volunteer awarded to Liane Peterson with the Moonlighters Exchange Club of Owatonna. Club achievement recognition certificates for growth and retention were awarded to the following Exchange clubs: Waverly, Albert Lea, Cedar Falls, Mason City, Sunrise Waterloo, Little Falls, and Waseca.

The election of district officers and directors was conducted during the afternoon business meeting once a quorum was established. With no competition for the following officers and directors, approval was made with a voice vote: District President, Trent Hunter, Waterloo; District Secretary, Lynn Limberg, Moonlighters; District Treasurer, Diana Sash, Waterloo; Division 1 Director, Mikhail Rostislavovich, Waseca; Division 3 Director, Randy Sobrack, Steele County; Division 5 Director, Makell Magley, Sunrise Waterloo; Division 7 Director, Tom Helligso, Omaha.

In addition, the district secretary's report and the district treasurer's report were presented and approved. The session concluded with remarks from The National Exchange Club President Mike Reichel on a variety of topics including growth and retention.

The afternoon breakout session included the topics of various fundraisers and a proposal to have club award's banner available through digital means instead of purchasing a banner and needing to adhere programs of service patches or stars to them. It would allow clubs to promote banner accomplishments through their website or social media.

The Awards & Installation Banquet Saturday evening, May 17, included a social hour and following dinner, a Memorial Remembrance Service to recognized Exchangites in the district who have died in the past year. The banquet included a convention address by Reichel and the installation of officers for the 2025-26 Exchange year starting July 1.

"We're building new clubs—we're growing," said 2025-26 District President Dennis Kehoe. "I've a great group to work with."

The following award presentations were made: Rookie of the Year, Kaylin Hanson, Moonlighters; Exchangite of the Year, Mikhail Rostislavovich, Waseca; Outstanding Exchange



The Exchange Club of Waseca for the second consecutive year was recognized as the Club of the Year in the Lakes & Prairies District. The National Exchange Club President Mike Reichel (left) and Division 1 Director Katie Smith stand in between the Club's President Mikhail Rostislavovich, who also for the second consecutive year was recognized as the district's Exchangite of the Year.

Club of the Year, Waseca; Special Recognition Award to the new Des Moines club; Outstanding Mentor Award presented to Annette Duncan. She would also present an Above & Beyond Award to her husband, Bryan.

Announced results of the silent auction conducted during the convention raised \$645 for the district's youth awards scholarships.

"I have gained so much from the experience," said District President Sharon Klein. "I feel I'm leaving the district in the very best hands."

The district's convention concluded with a district board meeting Sunday morning, May 18. The district convention is being scheduled for Owatonna in 2026.

2025 Region 3 Training Schedule**Registration Required****Club Board of Directors Training:**

Trainers: Annette Duncan

Date: 6/19/2025 at 4:30pm CST

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/qZcsquFARKaAjuE1v32huw>**Mentoring New Leaders and Growing Exchange**

Trainers: Scot Warren and Dawn Portner

Date: 6/19/2025 at 6pm CST

https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/dVcWh7i8Sne_BrHnw7fftg**District Director**

Trainers: Katie Smith

Date: 6/26/2025 at 6pm CST

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/syUA5bW6Q1ulcbNhSB2s2w>**President/President Elect**

Trainers: Dawn Portner and Katie Smith

Date: 6/28/2025 at 12:00pm CST

https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/xqXcD_8zRnSKR8fG8SOVpQ**Treasurer**

Trainers: Lou Molitor and George Bode

Date: 6/28/2025 at 9am CST

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/oh2CiOYCO-uG8v0i3MRQqw>**Secretary**

Trainers: Pam Oster and Sharon Droste

Date: 6/28/2025 at 10:30am CST

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/PjDV7a6tQAG30Wz2ejkRFw>

OPEN – Will be scheduled as we have trainers available.

- 1) Committees and Retention
- 2) VFR Recruitment (Dakota Territory)

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trict Convention will be held in Owatonna; in fact, I will be chairing the convention along with a tremendous district convention committee. But what is even more exciting is The National Exchange Club Convention in 2026 will be in our district, in Omaha. Our district will be the host district which yes, does involve some work, but also for those that have never attended a National convention, it is a great opportunity.

As I conclude my final month as your district president, I was able to have the opportunity to visit the Exchange Club of Albert Lea, previously the only club I had yet to visit. I will have my last board meeting, my last National Zoom meeting, and a lot of lasts, but I will also be starting new projects, working with Dennis Kehoe, the new district president as of July 1, and planning on how I will spend the next year helping the district, helping my club, and getting to know even more people.

THE FINAL WEEKS OF JUNE WILL GO FAST. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THEM?

*Officer of the Year*

Owatonna Police Department Detective John Van Alstine (left) was recognized by the Moonlighters Exchange Club as their 2025 Police Officer of the Year during a banquet held May 15. Club President Annette Duncan presented the award to Van Alstine, who joined the department in 2019.

(Photo courtesy of Owatonna People's Press)

Please be sure your club's information is always up-to-date on The National Exchange Club's website. A current list of officers, contact information, and correct meeting dates, times and locations ensures the club receives important materials from National headquarters and also populates accurate information for the public and prospective new Exchange Club members.

The National Exchange Club

2025 Dues Increase



Delegates at the 2025 National Convention will be asked to approve a minimal 10% quarterly dues increase, proposed by the National Board of Directors, as follows:

Active, Active honorary, At large, Active family, Business, and Collegiate Members:
\$19.50 to \$21.50

Excel: \$12.00 to \$13.50

Honorary: \$8.00 to \$9.00

Additional family member: \$10.00 to \$11.00

Since the 50 cent dues increase approved in 2019, The National Exchange Club has cut costs and reduced staffing. Rising costs now necessitate a dues increase.

As a member focused non-profit, costs have dramatically increased as they have for everyone, both at home and in business. We have all seen costs rise at the grocery store, with memberships and activities, and other areas of life.

We appreciate the careful consideration of members to approve this necessary increase.