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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION

JULY 2026

SECRETARIES and my Brothers all – Welcome to this month's edition of the Grand Secretary's Newsletter. This edition includes the following:

- Product of the Month – Masonic Belt Buckles
- Grand Secretary's Office – New Masonic Year Reminders
- Monthly Law Reading – The Annual Audit
- Statistics – Group Insurance Update – Zachary Haston, PM
- Lodge Spotlight – Pearland Lodge No. 1384: Celebrating the Milestones That Matter
- Cornerstone Leveling Ceremonies – July 2026
- Committee on Work Schedule – August 2026
- And more...

PLEASE COMMUNICATE THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR MEMBERS, AS APPROPRIATE. I recommend you print this communication and bring it to your stated meeting for discussion. This communication is automatically provided electronically to all lodges with the capability to use the GrandView system. Individual Master Masons of the Grand Lodge of Texas can sign up by contacting the Grand Secretary's Office at (254) 753-7395 or gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org, or by registering your membership through the Member Portal.

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



PLEASE READ

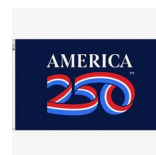
GRAND SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Welcome New Secretaries

Congratulations to all newly installed, or soon to be installed, officers! A special thank you to those of you who have accepted the responsibility to serve as Secretary. The schedule for Secretary Schools will be released in the August Newsletter. In the meantime, please review the important reminders below.

Happy 250th Independence Day

Happy Fourth of July, and congratulations to our nation on 250 years of independence! In observance of the holiday, the Grand Secretary's Office will be closed on Friday, July 3, 2026.



Grand Lodge Submissions

Statements of Availability are due July 15, 2026.

To simplify the submission process, dedicated online Drop Boxes have been created for the following:

1. Statements of Availability - [2027 Statements of Availability](#)
2. Resolutions of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas - [2027 Resolutions](#)
3. Vanguard Submissions - [Vanguard Submissions](#)

Important: To ensure proper tracking and processing, all submissions must be made through the appropriate Drop Box. Submissions sent by mail, email, social media, or any other method will not be accepted or considered.

Form 71 Audits

Please do not submit your Form 71 Audit until you have received this year's Endowment Unit Value and Multiplier. Those figures will be published in the August Newsletter. Forms submitted before the official values are released cannot be processed.

New Masonic Year: Important Deadlines

The beginning of each Masonic year includes several important filing deadlines:

- Annual Returns – Due August 15
- Form 71 Audits – Due September 15
- IRS Form 990 (for most Lodges) – Due November 15

A complete calendar of reporting deadlines is printed on the last page of each monthly newsletter. Please review it regularly to help ensure your Lodge remains in compliance throughout the year.

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Status

Lodge Secretaries, please check to be certain that:

1. You have received your annual county ad valorem tax notice.
2. The appraisal tax office notice shows you have your lodge's exemption.

If the answer to either of these questions is no, immediately contact your county appraisal district office and talk to the chief appraiser or the clerk of the exemption section to have this omission rectified at once. Please be aware there are mandatory deadlines involved, and missing them will impact your lodge.

The Grand Lodge is NOT responsible for confirming any lodge's tax exemption status or filing. THIS IS A LOCAL LODGE ISSUE. The Grand Lodge Civil Law Committee does NOT represent local lodges. It represents the Grand Lodge of Texas. Any law questions should be addressed to the local lodge's attorney.

READ PORTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LODGE

MONTHLY LAW READING – THE ANNUAL AUDIT

Once the Masonic year turns over on June 24, one of the first duties facing a new Worshipful Master is the annual audit. It is easy to set aside in a busy summer, but the Law fixes both the timing and the paperwork, and the deadline to deliver the result to the Grand Secretary arrives sooner than most Lodges expect.

Art. 284. Duty to Require Audits. – It shall be the duty of the Worshipful Master as soon after the 24th of June each year as convenient to appoint a committee of three qualified members, a certified public accountant, or a public accountant, whose duty it shall be to audit books and accounts of the Treasurer and Secretary and make prompt report thereof in writing to the Lodge, said report shall be read to the Lodge in open stated communication and be recorded in full in the minutes. The auditors' report shall fully show the total amounts of receipts and disbursements during the past year and any balance remaining on hand. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer and Secretary to make all their books and records available to the Committee or accountant appointed to audit same. A properly completed and signed copy of the Minimum Audit Form No. 71 shall be delivered to the Grand Secretary no later than September 15th each year. If the Lodge by resolution or by its bylaws requires a bond for any officer of the Lodge authorized to handle the funds of the Lodge, it shall be the duty of the Worshipful Master to have all officers of the Lodge authorized to handle the Lodge funds covered by such bond. (Revised 2011)

The article gives the Master two ways to satisfy the duty: appoint a committee of three qualified members, or engage a certified public accountant or public accountant. Either path produces the same end product, a written report read in open stated communication and recorded in full in the minutes. The audit is not complete when the numbers are checked. It is complete when the report is read to the Lodge and entered in the record.

Three Grand Master's Decisions sharpen how Art. 284 works in practice. In 2014 (No. 3), it was decided that the Master installed after June 24, or held over if not installed, appoints the audit committee at the first stated meeting at which he presides. In 1993 (No. 6), the Grand Master held that while the article does not expressly forbid it, having the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, or Junior Warden serve on the auditing committee is highly improper and contrary to the spirit and intent of Art. 284. The Brethren who handle and authorize the funds should not be the ones auditing them. And in 2004 (No. 11), a Lodge was permitted to publish its budget and finances in its own newsletter to members, provided degree fee income and refunds to rejected candidates are not listed by name.

For the Secretary, the duty runs both directions. Article 288 requires the Secretary to submit his books, records, and accounts for the annual audit under Art. 284, and Art. 284 in turn requires the Treasurer and Secretary to make every book and record available to the committee or accountant. Cooperation is not optional, and an organized set of records makes the audit faster for everyone.

Finally, mark the calendar. A properly completed and signed Minimum Audit Form No. 71 is due to the Grand Secretary no later than September 15. The form covers the year ended June 23 and must carry the signatures of the Auditing Committee. A Lodge that appoints its committee promptly in July has ample time to finish, read the report in open Lodge, and file Form No. 71 well ahead of the deadline.

– Jeremy R. Johnson, PM

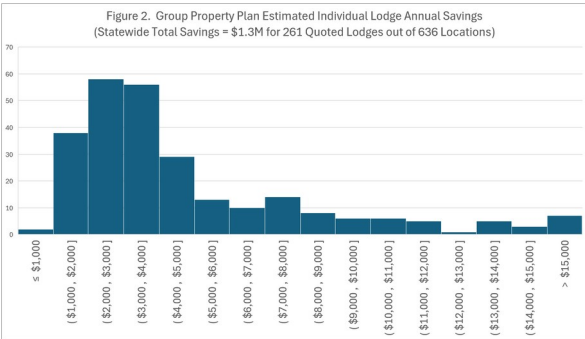
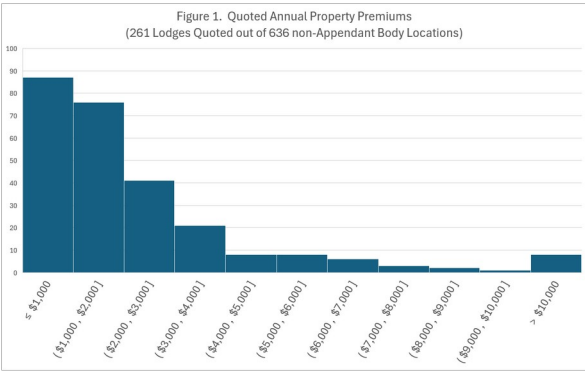
STATISTICS

Group Insurance Update

Brethren, at the half-way mark through the year, I thought an update on the Grand Lodge Insurance Program was in order. In about a month, we will begin the process of bidding this out for 2027. There will likely be some changes for next year with customer service, convenience, and clarity being a focus, while, of course, maintaining the best numbers we can get through bidding everyone out together. We'll provide details on 2027 later, but for now I will mention that the more lodges that we can get into the 2026 plan over the next month, the greater the savings will be for everyone. Spreading risk among even more lodges yields even lower premiums.

Regarding property insurance, Figure 1 shows the quoted annual premiums for the 261 lodges that have requested an official quote so far. You'll see a whole lot of Lodges getting property insurance for under \$2000/yr. Those are the lodges with buildings away from the coast which are insured for under \$700k, and we have a lot of those. Statewide, we have 636 non-Shrine, non-Scottish Rite, non-York Rite buildings that our Blue Lodges meet in in Texas, which means that 41% of our building-owning Lodges have requested an official property insurance quote so far. 158 Lodges (25% of the building-owners) have completed the process and are now bound under the plan with a few more still in the process. A Statewide total of \$150M of property has been quoted, and \$95M has been bound.

Figure 2 shows the annual property insurance cost savings that Lodges are enjoying under this plan compared to what they could get on their own individually with a USLI replacement value policy (which was the biggest insurer for our lodges last year). You'll see a lot of Lodges have been offered \$2,000-\$4,000/yr lower premiums under the Grand Lodge Master Policy Plan, and some Lodges are saving substantially more than that. The largest savings I've heard of thus far is \$17k less under our Master Plan. Statewide, if everyone accepted the offers, the Lodges would together be saving \$1.3M and counting, although only \$823k of that has been realized thus far. All this is being offered as option to the Lodges, at your full discretion, and even with substantial savings, some Lodges still cannot, or don't want to, afford the property insurance coverage offered.



Regarding property, we set up things as an agreed value policy so that Lodges could agree to a lower insured value for their property if they just couldn't afford a full replacement value or wanted to build back smaller. One concern I have is that we have a LOT of Lodges (40% of the quotes) insuring their building for \$100/sq ft or less. With today's construction costs, that won't even cover a warehouse level of building replacement should yours burn to the ground, and many of these lodges can't reasonably build much smaller. Most of our buildings are old, and the current market value to sell is going to be notably less than what it would cost to rebuild. Before the 2027 renewal comes, please take a good look at how much you're insuring your building for. We left it completely your choice, so choose wisely.

Moving on to General Liability insurance, we currently have 130 Lodges bound with Chubb through Higginbotham plus another 23 in process. The savings for liability insurance are generally in the area of hundreds of dollars per year instead of thousands, but it is still a decent price and,

importantly, is being offered to every Lodge that wants it. If your Lodge has hundreds of thousands of dollars of investments, or more, I HIGHLY encourage you to get liability insurance. If just one older woman trips coming into your lodge, or has an old railing give on her, or anything else, she(or he) could take you for all you have. We have a lot of old buildings. Things happen. Don't lose hundreds of thousands because you didn't want to spend hundreds on insurance.

We've already had a sizeable hail storm event hit a couple of our lodges. One had insurance under our plan at a cost of \$835/yr, and will likely be getting a new roof or at least roof repairs. The nearby lodge didn't have insurance, saving that \$835, but not getting a new roof. Another lodge lost their roof and got poured upon. Things happen. Thankfully, we don't know of any liability issues this year, but we sure know about the shooting last year. Things happen with liability as well. That's what insurance is for.

As we prepare to set things up and bid out for next year, we crave feedback on these plans, especially from those who chose not to go with it. What needs to be changed? Email me at zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org. I welcome all suggestions/thoughts.

– Zachary Haston

LODGE SPOTLIGHT

Pearland Lodge No. 1384: Celebrating the Milestones That Matter

One of the greatest strengths of our Fraternity is found not only within the walls of the Lodge room, but in the relationships, we build throughout a lifetime of Brotherhood. While we often gather for degrees, stated meetings, and official business, some of the most meaningful moments occur when we come together simply to celebrate one another.

Recently, Pearland Masonic Lodge No. 1384 provided a wonderful example of what that can look like.

In a heartfelt social media post, Brother John E. Williams shared the celebration of Brother Dorman Davidson's 90th birthday. Brother Davidson's life is one marked by service, as an Army veteran, retired Brazoria County Deputy Sheriff, devoted Mason, and fellow board member serving the Rainbow Girls. Brother Williams reflected not only on the stories and wisdom Brother Davidson has shared over the years, but also on the example he continues to set through his kindness, integrity, and unwavering commitment to others.

What makes this story so special isn't simply that a brother reached the remarkable milestone of ninety years of age. It's that his Lodge family chose to pause and recognize a life well lived.

That simple act serves as a reminder that Masonry is about far more than meetings and ritual. It is about celebrating the men who have invested decades in our Craft, encouraging one another through life's milestones, and ensuring that no brother's contributions go unnoticed.

As we continue working to strengthen our Lodges across Texas, perhaps this story can inspire each of us to look for opportunities to do the same. Whether it's a milestone birthday, a wedding anniversary, retirement, military promotion, the birth of a grandchild, recovery from illness, or another significant life event, these occasions provide meaningful opportunities to demonstrate Brotherly Love in a tangible way.

A simple gathering, a shared meal, a handwritten card, or a few moments of recognition during a stated meeting can leave a lasting impression, not only on the brother being honored, but on everyone who witnesses it.

Thank you to Brother John E. Williams for sharing this wonderful story and to the brethren of Pearland Masonic Lodge No. 1384 for reminding us that some of Masonry's most meaningful work happens

outside the Lodge room. By celebrating the lives of our brethren, we strengthen the bonds that unite us and demonstrate that our Fraternity truly is a lifelong Brotherhood.

Perhaps your Lodge's next memorable event won't begin with a gavel, it may begin by simply celebrating one of your own.

Submitted by – Mike Mistry, P.M.



TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Heatin' Up! Texas Masonic BBQ Cookoff

Think it's hot now? The competition really heats up at the statewide Masonic Barbecue Cookoff on Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026! Held during Family Day, the largest gathering of Texas Masons and their families, BBQ Cookoff participants compete for bragging rights, trophies, and many other awards. Entry forms and rules at <https://yourtmrc.org/family-day/>

TEXAS FREEMASON MAGAZINE

The most recent edition of the magazine: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/texas-freemason-magazine>.

The Texas Freemason Magazine is published four times a year and is available in PDF format on the Grand Lodge website under the "MEDIA/MAGAZINE" tab. In addition to the digital format, the Winter and Spring issues are printed and mailed before and following the Grand Annual Communication. If you are not receiving the magazine in the mail, it is likely your address is not correct in the Grand Lodge database. You can correct this by visiting the Grand Lodge website and logging into the member portal where you can edit your profile as needed.

GRAND MASTER'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS

In order to provide the most up to date information and prevent duplication, the Grand Master's Calendar can now be found in the Grand Lodge Gazette, emailed weekly by the Grand Lodge Committee on Communications. For full details, please visit the Grand Master's calendar page here:

[GRAND MASTER'S PAGE](#)

COMMITTEE ON WORK SCHEDULE

August 2026

Committeeman	Date	Lodge	City	District	Forum	Exam
Cody Stewart	Sat, Aug 1, 2026	Duck Creek No. 1419	Garland	14-C	Apr 25, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Aug 15, 2026	Cooke-Peavy No. 1162	Fort Worth	64-B	Apr 25, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Aug 22, 2026	Metropolitan No. 1182	Dallas	14-E	Jun 25, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Aug 29, 2026	James A. Smith No. 395	Farmers Branch	14-F	Jun 25, 8:00 AM	After
John Peters	Sat, Aug 1, 2026	Davy Crockett No. 1225	San Antonio	39-B	N/A	Jun 25, 9:00 AM
	Sat, Aug 8, 2026	Onion Creek No. 220	Austin	50	Apr 25, 9:00 AM	Apr 25, 1:00 PM
	Sat, Aug 15, 2026	Llano Grande No. 1173	Weslaco	40-B	Jun 25, 9:00 AM	Jun 25, 1:00 PM
	Sat, Aug 29, 2026	San Saba No. 612	San Saba	70	Jun 25, 9:00 AM	Jun 25, 1:00 PM
Cody Cockroft	Sat, Aug 1, 2026	Anson Jones No. 1416	Friendswood	31-A	Apr 25, 8:00 AM	After Lunch
	Sat, Aug 15, 2026	Nathan Corley No. 294	Kirbyville	25-B	Apr 25, 8:00 AM	After Lunch
	Sat, Aug 22, 2026	Wells No. 915	Wells	21-A	Jun 25, 8:00 AM	After Lunch
	Sat, Aug 29, 2026	Conroe No. 748	Conroe	28	Jun 25, 8:00 AM	After Lunch
Steve Pepper	Sat, Aug 15, 2026	Quanah No. 689	Quanah	90	Apr 25, 9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Kevin Moss	Sat, Aug 8, 2026	El Paso No. 130	El Paso	60	Jun 25, 9:00 AM	To Follow
	Sat, Aug 22, 2026	San Angelo No. 570	San Angelo	77	Jun 25, 9:00 AM	To Follow
	Sat, Aug 29, 2026	Frontier No. 766	Alpine	81	Jun 25, 9:00 AM	To Follow

For more information go to: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/committee-on-work>

CORNERSTONE LEVELING CEREMONIES 2026

Effective 7/1/2026

For Information Contact:

Kevin T. Binder, State Cornerstone Coordinator

832-489-7778 | kevinbinder30@gmail.com

Date	Time	Lodge	Location	Grand Lodge Representative
Wednesday 7/15/2026	Lunch or refreshments at Noon Open Decatur Lodge at 1:00pm Open Grand Lodge at 1:20pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Decatur #447 202 W. Walnut, Suite B Decatur, TX 76234	New Decatur Fire Department	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Saturday 7/25/2026	Lunch or refreshments at Noon Open Sulphur Springs Lodge at 1:00pm Open Grand Lodge at 1:20pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Sulphur Springs #221 105 Oak Ave. Sulphur Springs, TX 75482	Sulphur Springs Elementary School	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Saturday 8/1/2026	Lunch or refreshments at Noon Open Salado Lodge at 1:00pm Open Grand Lodge at 1:15pm Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Salado #296 95 S Church St. Salado, TX 76571	High School & Football Stadium	Justin B. Duty Deputy Grand Master
Saturday 8/15/2026	Coffee & Donuts at 9:00am Open Brookshire Lodge at 10:00am Open Grand Lodge at 10:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at 11:00am	Brookshire #1066 819 Purdy St. Brookshire, TX 77423	Jordan Ranch Fire Station 3102 Jordan Ranch Blvd. Brookshire, TX 77423	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden

GRAND SECRETARY OFFICE STAFF DIRECTORY

Hours of Operation: 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday

Phone: 254-753-7395 | Fax: 254-753-2944

Physical Address: 715 Columbus Ave, Waco, TX 76701

Mailing Address: PO Box 446, Waco, TX 76703

Brad S. Billings – Grand Secretary gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org

Office Staff – the list below is intended to help you reach the person in the office responsible for what you are requesting. It is, however, recommended that you copy the GS@GrandSecretaryofTX.org email on ALL correspondence.

Name	Email	Responsibilities
Dave McHam	dave@grandsecretaryoftx.org	In-State Affiliations; Specialized Reporting; GL & Lodge Procedures; Vanguard Application Collection
Cindy Huerta	cindy@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Annual Returns; Lodge By-Law Revisions; Relief Assistance Request; Endowed Memberships
Jimmie Shannon	jshannon@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Honesty & Integrity Awards; Lamar Medals; Forms and Lodge Supply Orders; Grand Lodge Service Awards; Golden Trowel Awards; Community Builder Awards; Masonic Disciplinary Violations
Jeff Frayser	fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Out-of-State Correspondence; Dispensations
Zachary Haston	zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Membership; Lodge Officer Maintenance; Esoteric Record Maintenance; Form 71 Collection; IRS Form 990s Collection
Jeremy Johnson	Jjohnson@grandsecretaryoftx.org	Lodge Secretary Training; GS Newsletter

SECRETARY INSTRUCTIONS

The following information is intended primarily for the Secretary but may be meaningful to many of your members.

Lodge Suspense System:

Suspense Dates – Lodge Secretaries should create a suspense system (a reminder system) to alert the Lodge that certain documents are due. This list is offered as a “starter kit” for your consideration:

- a. January – The Worshipful Master should appoint a Committee on Members in Arrears (Article 319a).
- b. May 31 – W. B. and Brandon Carrell Award nominations may be submitted to the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Education for evaluation and recommendation to the Grand Lodge Trustees (Article 14b).
- c. Mid-June – Look for the Annual Returns Format from GL. (Downloaded from the Grand View System after June 24th. Notify the GS staff if you need the returns mailed as a printout).
- d. June 23 – Lodge elections must be completed at the last stated meeting prior to midnight of June 23 (Art. 292). Notify us of the new Lodge Officers immediately so they can be printed in the Directory of Constituent Lodges (do not wait for installation). Submission will be available on the Grand View System from May 24 through midnight June 23.
- e. June 23 – Endowed Membership checks must be in the Office of the Grand Secretary by June 23 to start earning interest in order to receive returns by the next year (Art. 318a). Changes to the amount of endowments must be voted on at the same meeting as the Lodge elections, and notification to the Grand Lodge must be before June 24th. Endowed Membership applications received at the Grand Lodge on or after June 24 must be for the amount that the Lodge reported.
- f. July 15 – Statements of Availability due GS Office. (6a).
- g. July 31 – Lodge installations must be performed from June 24 to prior to midnight July 31 (Art. 298).
- h. August 15 – Annual Returns Report due to Grand Lodge (Art. 493).
- i. August 15 – Resolutions due in GS Office (Art. 172).
- j. August 30 – Vanguard Applications are due to the DDGM electronically no later than August 30 and to the Committee on Masonic Education electronically via cme@grandlodgeoftx.org (refer to Vanguard Application Instructions).
- k. September 15 – Lodge Minimum Audit Report 71 is due to the GS Office NLT September 15 (Art. 284).
- l. October 1 – Lodge By-Laws that must be reviewed by the GL Committee on By-Laws due the GS Office NLT October 1 (Art. 219).
- m. Nov 15 – Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-Postcard), must be filed with the IRS by Lodges that have gross receipts of \$50,000 or less or do not meet the requirements for filing the IRS 990 or IRS 990EZ. (Lodges must file the appropriate Form 990 no later than the 15th day of the fifth month following the close of the organization’s fiscal year.)
- n. Dec. 28 – Proxy Certificates are due the GS Office NLT December 28 (Art. 4). You should always appoint a Proxy (in case of an emergency) but he would not vote if any of the top three officers were available. Remember, each brother can have no more than four votes. Therefore, a sitting Worshipful Master or Warden cannot be a proxy for another Lodge.