



Kansas Lions News

Statewide newsletter for MD 17 Kansas Lions | Summer 2025



MD 17 Council of Governors for 2025-2026 are, from left, Governor Lou Morgan, District K; Governor Irene Haws, District A; Council Chair Shari Neidhardt and Governor Clark Lindstrom, District N

Council Chair Comments

New year, new team ready to serve with Kansas Lions

Teamwork is the ability to work as a group toward a common vision, even if said vision becomes extremely blurry.

Welcome to a new Lions year. At the time of composing my first Council Chair news article, we have not seen Lions International President A. P. Singh's theme and priorities for 2025-2026. However, having had the opportunity over the last two years to hear and see him at the Board Meetings, I know that his direction will help guide our organization in a positive way.

Last year had challenges, but it also had many successes:

Chartering of a new Lions Club, new Leos Club and even a Cub Club.

Through your generous donations, more than \$150,000 was donated to Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF).

Our challenges revolved around dropping clubs, having status quo clubs, and retention (more losses than gains). Kansas Lions with

your help we can overcome these challenges. With determination and commitment, we will multiply our successes.

To help lead us towards a positive year, we have three energetic and committed new District Governors. Committed to working as a team, DG Lou Morgan, DG Irene Haws, and DG Clark Lindstrom have already held several Zoom meetings to discuss the "roadmap" for 2025-2026. I am genuinely excited to be working with them.

We also have great leaders in our Global Action Team (Leadership, Membership, Extension, and Service Teams). They too will play a major role in helping the District Governors have a successful year.

GLT Chair IPCC Pam Bilyeu: To continue our success, we should always be on the lookout for potential future leaders. Training and continued training builds confidence to take on roles that some may hesitate to do.

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Save the Date

First MD 17 Council Meeting

Wyngate by Wyndham

Wichita Airport

August 2

Registration & details on page 10-11

USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum

September 18-20

Atlantic City, NJ

Info at lionsforum.org

Fall Rally October 25

J.O. Sundstrom

Conference Center

Lindsborg

104th Kansas Lions State Convention

May 29-30, 2026

Hutchinson Community College



We Serve

Teamwork

Continued from previous page

GMT Chair PDG Tom Baumann: As part of Mission 1.5, adding new members provides many benefits to our clubs, districts and Multiple District. Keeping our Lions engaged and active will help us reduce our retention losses.



GET Chair PDG Rick Dodson: This has to be one of the most exciting teams, given the vast opportunity to grow new clubs in new areas and potentially bring back clubs in areas that once had active Lions Clubs.

GST Chair PDG Carleen Rjala: WE SERVE, yes we do. There are so many areas where Lions can provide service. From service projects that we have done many times, to brand new ones that we just haven't thought about yet. Let's show Lions International that Kan-

sas Lions are serving, by posting all of our service projects on the Portal.

As a council chair, I am looking forward forward to hearing from the various committees and foundations at our first Council meeting on August 2 in Wichita. Working together as one big team, we will

be successful. Until we have the opportunity to meet again, thank you for being a Lion.

I will close with quote by Phil Jackson, *"The strength of a team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."*

Respectfully,
Council Chair Shari Neidhardt



WE SERVE—Topeka Sunflower Lions recently refurbished the playground at the Topeka Ronald McDonald House. The decayed timbers were replaced with logs made from recycled tires and spread 1,000 pounds rubber mulch in the playground area.

Send photos of your club's service to newsletter17n@cox.net. We will try to feature a different service project in each issue of the newsletter.



MD 17 Leaders



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Shari Neidhardt

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District K
Lou Morgan

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244biglou@gmail.com



District A
Irene Haws

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District N
Clark Lindstrom

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Kansas Lions State Office

231 S Tyler Rd | Wichita, KS 67209 | 316-773-2100

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'Making our Mark' with a year of service

And... "just like that" it seems Kansas Lions, we have completed another year of serving our communities! You have met the needs of thousands here in our state through your hours of volunteering in our communities and beyond.

The Council of Governors have made a few changes this year by adding this new Kansas Lions Newsletter so you can celebrate and be informed with other Lions around our state. Changes were also made from having the Mid-Winter Rally in January to having a Lions Fall Event in October. (More coming on that soon!)

The Council of Governors also voted to pay the Charter Fee and 20 new member fees for two new clubs in each district. There is one new Lions club in District N, Augusta Servant Lions Club, who received this incentive.

You served at the Kansas State Fair in the Kansas Lions booth doing vision screenings, blood pressure and blood sugar checks, which resulted in some receiving recommendations to seek further testing from their doctors. You have offered vision screenings to children and adults and provided those in need with glasses, and helped to fund cataract surgeries and celebrated Helen Keller's commission to the Lions 100 years ago. You have recycled THOUSANDS of eyeglasses too!



You have held STRIDE events to educate on diabetes and offer pre-diabetes testing. You have collected and distributed hundreds of tons of food at food pantries, mobile pantries distributions and community meal opportunities as well as packaged soups to be distributed in a depressed country to help combat hunger. You help bring some joy to those during the holidays through holiday food baskets and your Christmas gift drives.

You have helped families who are going through their child having cancer, brought joy to a child in hospitals with a Halloween card and treat and helped raise funds for a child to go to Diabetes Camp. You have even helped a child have their own warm bed to sleep in at night. You have volunteered at children's homes and adult centers, and provided children with school supplies, new clothes or a new bike!

You have provided transportation to those in need and served as a delivery service too. You have honored our Veterans with warm socks and cards of encouragement. You have cleaned highways, and river byways, planted trees and flowers and vegetable gardens. You have created new places for children and adults to enjoy and have sponsored band students to attend the Kansas Lions Band Camp. You have given scholarships to graduating high school seniors and have sponsored Leo Clubs, adding a new LEO Club in Lyndon and new this year a CUB club in Osage City Elementary School.

You helped support the cleanup after two tornadoes touched down in towns in our state. You donated to the Kansas Lions Foundation, Kansas Lions Band Foundation

and Kansas Lions Sight Foundation. You have donated to the Lions Clubs International Foundation where you helped to fund grants for special projects around our Global Causes and presented Melvin Jones Fellows to special people in your clubs.

You have supported your club by attending club meetings and helping with fundraiser events as well as your community outreach projects. You have invited others to join the Lions and helped them become to become a Lion through service.

You have served in leadership positions in your clubs, your district and your state and have attended ZOOM trainings and meetings in your District, State and International at the USA/Forum and International Convention.

You do ALL of THIS because YOU are a LION and a MEMBER of the World's Largest Service Organization. You do this to make a difference in your world around you and the world outside of your community. You have MADE YOUR MARK in your communities and BEYOND! And... you have done so by serving together with kindness and compassion. THANK YOU LIONS for your service and dedication to making our world a better place.

Congratulations to the incoming Council of Governors for 2025-2026. Council Chair Shari Neidhardt and District Governor Lou Morgan, District K; Irene Haws, District A, and Clark Lindstrom, District N and their teams.

It has been my honor to serve and work beside all of you amazing LIONS!

*In Lionism, Pam Bilyeu,
Council Chair MD 17 2024-2025*

Lions invited to 'Little Sweden' for new Fall Rally

FALL RALLY – what is that?

During the 2024-2025 Lions year, the state council decided it was time to pause and re-evaluate state meetings/events, to explore reasons that attendance has dropped, energy has waned and inspiration has lessened.

A special appointed committee was tasked to take input and make suggestions on ways to revamp state events. Factors of costs, location, agendas, event organization were considered and suggestions were forwarded to the Long-Range Planning Committee. Recommendations that the Committee made to the Council of Governors include:

Peace Poster Contest: 'Together As One'

For 2025–2026, Lions Clubs International has chosen the theme “Together As One.” Participants are invited to imagine a world where diverse people unite around a shared vision—reflecting unity, collaboration, and the power of coming together.

Students who are 11, 12, or 13 years old by November 15, 2025, qualify to participate. Lions Clubs must

purchase the official Peace Poster Contest Kit (digital or physical) to participate. Kits are available, until October 1, 2025. Kits include rules, entry labels, certificates, and guidance for teachers and clubs.

Club level entries

will be judged at each District's Second Cabinet meeting:

District K- November 15

District A- November 1

District N-November 8

Each district's entries will need to be mailed to State Chairperson PDG Richard Caldwell by November 21, 2025.

More information will be available on how district winners will be recognized and awarded. For questions and more information, please contact State Peace Poster Coordinator PDG Richard Caldwell at teacher.caldwell@gmail.com.

- Re-schedule Mid-Winter Rally to late October
 - Consider local presenters or speakers rather than an International Director
 - Choose event locations that are centralized within the state
 - Consolidate event agendas/activities to one-day events
 - Utilize event venues other than hotel/banquet facilities
 - Provide a list of area hotels for lodging options to attendees
 - Consider virtual meetings (Zoom) as a cost/time management tool
 - Incorporate “fun” and entertainment
- So, Mid-Winter Rally is moving to October.

SAVE the date – October 25, 2025 and RALLY with Kansas Lions in Lindsborg, the “Little Sweden” of Kansas.

Watch for more details in a September newsletter.



Kansas Lions Band Foundation

Lion Quilt Raffle

Quilt Size: 78" by 98"

Note: The photo displays the actual quilt top, it does not show the additional brown and green border.

Raffle tickets can be purchased from DG Shari and/or Kansas Lions Band Foundation Executive Officers/Directors.

Raffle Tickets: \$10/each or 3/\$25

Drawing for the quilt will take place during the August Council Meeting. Proceeds will be used to support the Kansas Lions State/International Band programs.

Thank you for your support.

Lions Health Programs

Service challenge—a monthly focus on global causes

As your club starts its new Lions year think about the International Lions Global Causes and pick one each month to focus on, find a program, organize a service project, provide assistance to some community program related to that cause.

Some of the Global causes are Environment, Vision, Diabetes, Hunger, Humanitarian needs, Disaster etc. All of these are in your community and all of these need your help.

You can promote all of these causes by coming to the Kansas

State Fair and helping the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation KLSF operate it's Health Screening booth.

Here's volunteer slots available as of July 10:

Friday Sept. 5

9:30 a.m. 3 needed

1:30 p.m. 2 needed

Sun. Sept. 7

9:30 a.m. 1 needed

Thur. Sept 11

9:30 a.m. 4 volunteers needed

1:30 p.m. 6 volunteers needed

Fri. Sept 12

1:30 p.m. 1 volunteer needed

To volunteer just contact Lion Jackie O'Neal at glammother@yahoo.com or call her at 316-734-2176.

There is still a need for 18 to 20 volunteers to make the booth run efficiently. Remember you will get a Gate Pass to the Fair and only need to work one shift; the rest of the day you can visit the Fair as a KLSF guest.

For additional fair information contact Lion Vern Failor at vlfailor@gmail.com or call him at 785-231-3960.

Amplify your club's impact during Weeks of Service

From the Lions Clubs International website:

This initiative unites Lions and Leos worldwide to address the critical issues of mental health and well-being, hunger and the environment.

By participating, you'll be part of three impactful weeks dedicated to creating positive change and making a difference in communities around the globe — together.

So get involved and help drive collective action for a better future!

Need ideas for service? Use the resources available on the Lions Clubs International website on the Member Resource Page under Service: Weeks of Service.

“Celebrate Community” Initiative

September 14 - September 20, 2025

“Celebrate Community” is a week-long initiative that promotes joint service projects among the incredible members of Lions International, Kiwanis International, Optimist International and Rotary International.

Mark your calendars

Mental health and well-being

October 4-12, 2025

Hunger

January 3-11, 2026

Environment

April 18-26, 2026



We Serve

Lion leaders attend Membership Summit

The Global Membership Teams, the Global Extension Teams, District Governors and other Lions leadership attended the 1.5 Million Membership Summit in Las Vegas in June.

We learned how districts and clubs can increase membership. Of course, it was mentioned that if there is a decline in membership, districts, clubs, states and Lions International will not be effective in providing trademark service.

Some of the ideas that came from the summit pertained to individual Lions Clubs and its members. One idea was that every club member invite a non-member to a club meeting and/or participate in a service project. Hopefully, every member in the club should attempt to recruit a potential member. Clubs need to also consider membership retention plans for new and current members.

During the summit, we were encouraged to establish new clubs. This responsibly falls with the Global Extension Team (GET), and a chairperson coordinator. Clubs can provide help to the GET or be mentors in helping to grow new clubs.

*PDG Richard Caldwell
District 17N GMT*

Convention brings moments of inspiration, laughter



PIP Douglas X. Alexander delivered the keynote address at the Saturday banquet.



Julie Dombo, quad amputee, delivered an inspirational message at Friday's luncheon.



The 187 students in **Kansas Lions Band** performed on Saturday morning at Friends University.



Left: DGE Irene Haws leads a portion of the LCIF Speed Learning Session.



Right: PDG Tom Smarsh and **Linda Falley** sort eyeglasses.



PIP Douglas Alexander was a good sport and kissed a fish for an LCIF fundraiser.



We Serve—convention attendees pitched in to package soup mix for The Outreach Project.

Lions recognized for leadership, service

PIP Douglas X. Alexander and ID Hans Neidhardt, along with the District Governors presented several recognitions during the Saturday night banquet. Each District Governor nominated Lions from their district for the recognitions.

Several of the awards were presented after the convention, but are included here.

Leadership Awards

District K—PDG Tom Baumann of Hays was recipient of the Leadership Award for District K. In the nomination, DG Diana Baumann noted “PDG Tom is one of those Lions that is always available. He helps whenever and wherever needed.

He has sponsored members but has also helped other Lions bring in new members. He is always promoting Lions and has helped maintain and raise membership in the two clubs he has been a part of—which are now the two largest clubs in our District.

He is constantly doing something to help those in need or the community in general. He is there for club members and leads the way for others to do the same.”



Leadership Award honoree PDG Tom Baumann and District Governor Diana Baumann.

District A—PDG Neal Nichols of Overland Park, received the Leadership Award for District A. District Governor Margy Sundstrom writes:

“PDG Neal Nichols joined Lions Clubs International over 60 years ago and has not slowed down in his dedication to Lionism.

PDG Neal is the epitome of what a Lion is. He is faithful in his contributions to LCIF and believes in what our Foundation does. He has sponsored nine new Lions. PDG has served in many offices in his club, district, and state. PDG Neal and his wife, PCC Beverly Nichols, attended all functions for Lions.

PDG Neal is an outstanding Lion and continues to ‘serve’ in any way he can.”



PDG Neal Nichols and DG Margy Sundstrom at a recent Overland Park Host Club meeting.

District N—PDG Chris Bauer of Humboldt is the recipient of a Presidential Award.

PDG Chris wears a lot of hats for Lions. He’s the go-to for questions on the Lions constitution and by-laws, election protocol and anything else related. He’s also a resource for Lions across the district and state on using the Lions Portal and reporting.

Need IT for a meeting? PDG Chris is the guy, setting up Zoom meetings, managing voting and breakout rooms as needed.

PDG Chris also has a passion to Lions history, collecting state, district and club pins from the past and present. He served on the Historical Committee to collect and preserve the history of Lions in Kansas.



Leadership Award honoree Chris Bauer and District Governor Shari Neidhardt.

CC Pam Bilyeu has provided outstanding leadership over the past four years, serving as Vice District Governor, District Governor, and Council Chair.

Always ready to lend a helping hand, PCC Pam has also been involved in Leadership training, Extension efforts, and helped establish the Lyndon Leo

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Lions recognized

Continued from previous page

Club, now serving as a co-advisor. CC Pam takes pride in being and representing Lions wherever she goes. International President Fabricio challenged the Lions to Make Your Mark. Without any doubt, CC Pam exceeded the challenge.



Leadership Award honoree Council Chair Pam Bilyeu.

Presidential Awards

District K— Jim Huenergarde of Hays received the Presidential Award. In the nomination, DG Diana Baumann writes:

“Lion Jim has changed the face of the Hays Lions. They are involved in the community, and he makes sure the local newspaper has pictures and information on club activities.

Lion Jim is also the Vice-President of the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation. He attends all district and state meetings and encourages his club members to do the same. They are becoming more involved and are enjoying what they are doing, helping to retain them as members for many years to come.

He lives, eats and sleeps Lions and is very deserving of this award.”



Presidential Award Honoree Jim Huenergarde and District Governor Diana Baumann

District A— Lion Vern Failor of Topeka is the recipient of a Presidential Award.

Lion Vern Failor has no “Lion title” except that of a hard working Lion. Need something completed....ask Lion Vern.

He organized the first three of my cabinet meetings this year, along with his club members from Topeka Sunflower Lions Club.

Lion Vern found his niche in the Health Programs for Kansas State Lions and for our District. He gives his all to vision screening, diabetes camp, Kansas State Fair preparation and so much more.

Where there is a need, there is a Lion and his name is Lion Vern Failor.

District N— PDG Don Cunningham of Parsons is the recipient of the Presidential Award for District N.

PDG Don has served many roles in the district and in the 2024-2025 year took on the role of Diabetes Awareness. His club has hosted a Strides Walk and other activities to raise awareness of the disease.

He championed a drive to raise funds to send kids to diabetes camp, netting more than \$5,000.



PDG Don Cunningham, third from left, with PID Ed McCormick, DG Shari Neidhardt and ID Hans Neidhardt, was recognized at the District N Cabinet meeting

Jackie O'Neal: Jackie O'Neal received a Presidential Award. Lion Jackie, from the Bel Aire Lions Club never hesitates to volunteer to serve. Serving as the District 17 N Convention Chair, her dedication and attention to detail was instrumental in making the event a huge success. Her direct involvement in every aspect made sure that even the smallest detail was reviewed. The success of her actions made her the ideal candidate to be the first ever Fall Rally Chair. Without hesitation, of course she accepted the new challenge. Lion Jackie has also played a vital role in the annual KLSF Lions health screenings at the

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Recognitions

Continued from previous page

Kansas State Fair, ensuring that sufficient numbers of Lion volunteers are there during the ten day event. Lions motto is We Serve, Lion Jackie takes this to heart.



Presidential Award honoree Jackie O'Neal



PDG Terry Weldin was presented with a Claude DeVorss Fellowship from the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation, with KLSF President Deb Weaverling.

PDG Terry Weldin receives Claude DeVorss Fellowship

PDG Terry Weldin might be known as "Mr Sight Screener." When he lived in District 17N, he coordinated the Kidsight program and vision screenings across the eastern portion of the district. Changing districts didn't dim his enthusiasm and he continues to take a screener to schools and events in District A.

The Claude DeVorss Fellowship was established so that individuals or groups may be recognized for significant service to the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation. A contribution of \$1,000 to the KLSF allows someone to be named as a Claude DeVorss Fellow.

Each Claude DeVorss Fellow receives a lapel pin and plaque.

Melvin Jones Fellowships



Faith McDaniel, Valley Center Lions Club



Brian Jansen, Valley Center Lions Club



Christine Hockett, Wichita Northwest Lions Club



Steve Fisher, Wichita Northwest Lions Club



Pam Bilyeu, Lyndon Lions Club

Special note to all Kansas Lions

I am excited to share that several committees have been diligently reviewing meeting schedules for the year with the goal of enhancing your experience and manage costs associated with attending state events.

I am particularly looking forward to our upcoming council meeting on August 2, 2025, at the Wingate by Wyndham Wichita Airport, where we will kick off the new season of collaboration and connection. Most

meetings will begin at 8:30 am and wrap up by 4:30 or 5:00 pm on Saturday, allowing us to maximize our time together.

Together, let's continue to empower our leaders and strengthen the bonds within our community! Looking forward to your attendance.

Dan Funke, State Secretary

CABINET MEETING SERVICE PROJECT: ALERT TRAILER RESTOCK

After responding to tornadoes this spring, both trailers need travel size personal care products, diapers & baby wipes and disinfecting wipes. Please bring donations to the meeting.

KANSAS LIONS STATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS AUGUST 2, 2025

****FOR THE LIONS WHO HOLD MULTIPLE COMMITTEE POSITIONS, WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO ALLOW YOU TO ATTEND AT LEAST A PORTION OF THE COMMITTEES YOU SIT ON.**

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>ROOM</u>
ALERT TEAM	7:45 -8:30 am	A
K-I	8:00-8:30 am	C
KANSAS LIONS SIGHT FOUNDATION	8:30-9:30 am	A
LCIF	8:30-9:15 am	B
CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS	8:30-9:15 am	C
BUDGET & FINANCE	9:30-10:15 am	A
AUDIT	9:15-10:15 am	B
GLOBAL ACTION TEAM (ALL)	9:15-10:15 am	C
KANSAS BAND FOUNDATION	10:30-11:30 am	A
LONG RANGE PLANNING	10:30-11:30 am	B
PUBLIC RELATIONS	10:30- 11:00 am	C
LUNCH	11:30 am-12:30 pm	
Speaker – Holly Lofton, Director, Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau		
ENVIRONMENTAL	12:45-1:30 pm	A
HEALTH AND DIABETES	12:45-1:30 pm	B
KANSAS LIONS FOUNDATION	12:45-1:45 pm	C
INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY	1:30-2:15 pm	A
BUDGET & FINANCE	1:30-2:15 pm	B
HISTORICAL	2:15-3:00 pm	B
GOVERNOR'S REVIEW (If Needed)	2:30-2:45 pm	C
*STATE COUNCIL MEETING	3:00-4:00 pm	A and B



1st State Council Meeting Registration August 2, 2025



Wingate by Wyndham Wichita Airport | 5500 West Kellogg, Wichita, KS 67209

Lions and Guests: _____

District: _____ Club: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Number of People for Lunch _____ X \$20.00

Total Cost _____

_____ I have enclosed a check for the above amount. Make check payable to Kansas State Lions and mail to Lions State Office, 231 S. Tyler Road, Wichita, KS 67209.

_____ I will pay at the event either by check or credit card.

You can also make reservations online and pay by credit card by using Zeffy:

<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/1st-council-meeting>

ALL FOOD RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY JULY 28, 2025

NOTICE – If you make reservations and do not attend you are still responsible for payment

Email or mail this form to the state office by July 28, 2025

kansaslionsoffice@gmail.com | 231 S. Tyler Rd, Wichita KS 67209

**Headquarters hotel is the
Wingate by Wyndham Wichita Airport
5500 West Kellogg, Wichita, KS 67209**

Rates: \$92.00 for King – \$102.00 for Double Queen

Reservations due July 23, 2025

Online:

www.wyndhamhotels.com/hotels/17899?checkIn-Date=08/01/2025&checkOutDate=08/02/2025&group-Code=081525LIO

By Phone: 316-448-1617

Make sure to use code 081525LIO

Price includes breakfast