



# THE TESA EXPRESS

*"Be the spark, fired up for Elkdom"*

**TEXAS ELKS STATE ASSOCIATION  
A FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION**

SPRING EDITION 2025-2026

## TESA STATE PRESIDENT 2025-2026

### MATT WILLIAMS

Good tidings Texas Elks!!!

Well, what a year so far. Rachelle and I are ramping up to finish our District clinics. We are looking forward to visiting the remaining Districts. We have loved visiting with you all, and making new friends along the way. Now I know why we are so Texas strong.

I can't believe the year is almost over. It seems like it has flown by. But just remember, what brought you to Elkdom and find that spark.

It has been such an honor to serve as your State President. We are do grateful to all of you. God Bless you all and God Bless the Texas Elks.

## TESA FIRST LADY

### RACHELLE WILLIAMS

Howdy Elks!

First, Happy Spring!

Hopefully, everyone is getting the chance to enjoy some nice weather. Matt and I still have a bit of traveling to do. We look forward to seeing y'all in the coming months.

We are still needing, and requesting, donations for the First Lady Project, and appreciate your help, and support.

As always, thank you for everything you do for Elkdom. Hope to see you soon! Happy Easter!

## TESA PRESIDENT ELECT

### BILL "BILLY" BRYAN

Howdy Texas Elks,

Pretty easy winter, especially with the weather, but your Texas officers and committees are back hard at it for the Spring. We had VP training in Ottine at the end of February, and it was such a success with all newly elected VPs on-site. Thanks to PSP's Mike Clark and Renae Oswalt for providing such quality training and information. With that, the current VPs are putting on their final district clinics and preparing to "retire." They have served us well and I thank each of you for your service and the hospitality received as I travelled in your districts.

Looking forward to finishing the year and seeing everyone at State in June for a final report as your president-elect. Thanks for allowing me to serve.





## **TESA STATE SECRETARY MIKE CLARK**

The Texas Elks Secretary has a new email address for the office of the Texas Elks Secretary for Texas Elks Secretary business.

The new email is [TexasElksSecretary@gmail.com](mailto:TexasElksSecretary@gmail.com)

Lodge Secretaries, keep an eye out in your mailbox and email inbox for the Texas Elks State Association (TESA) dues statements. They will be sent shortly after March 31st, when the fiscal year closes and the membership numbers for the coming year are set.

Dues must be received prior to the State Convention to ensure the Lodge votes are counted and any Lodge members who are TESA Officers or Committee members may serve.

TESA Chairs and Vice Presidents, be sure to voucher ALL authorized expenses by the end of the TESA Year. Vouchers can be presented at or (hopefully) shortly after the State Convention. The budget is there to be used. Some members want to "donate" their expense, and that is very much appreciated. But go ahead and take those expenses from TESA and buy a few more raffle tickets from your Lodge Sweetheart, or donate to the First Lady's Project, or buy a certificate from Texas Elks Endowment, Inc. or Elks National Foundation.

### **DIRECTORY UPDATES**

#### **CONTACT INFO CHANGE**

Larry Wilson, Vice President, North Central District  
[ldwilson386@gmail.com](mailto:ldwilson386@gmail.com)



## **TESA HOOPSHOOT KEITH STANLEY**

### **State Hoop Shoot and Beyond**

This year at the State Hoop Shoot we had 46 contestants from across Texas. Only 6 can advance to the Regional contest. These contestants were.

Charli Perry San Antonio

Micah Medcafe Denton

Kate Fulton Arlington

Roman Waynes Mesquite

Victoria Smith San Antonio

Cristian Cisneros Harlingen

At the Regional contest, there were some hard-fought baskets with 2 - 3rd place, 1 - 2nd place, and 1-1st place. The 1st place winner is Kate Fulton representing the Arlington Lodge, North Central District, Texas Elks and the Southwest Region 11 as a National Finalist in Chicago on April 18th. There is a link to give well wishes to Kate that will be printed in the book she will receive upon arrival to the hotel in Chicago. Best sWishes! Survey Let's have Kate's well wishes overflowing with our support!

Best Wishes need to be submitted by April 1st to be posted in her memory book.

I would like to give a big THANK YOU to everyone who supported our Texas contestants. The support started at the Lodge level and continued all the way to the Regional contest. There were countless hours worked getting here and we would not have had the successes we did without all your work and dedication. I received numerous compliments from parents about the help, professionalism and friendliness they got from all the Elks at the State contest. This is what happens when Elks work together for a common goal.



## TESA YOUTH ACTIVITIES BRENDA FULLER

Elks play a vital role with scholarships in shaping the future of students by opening doors to educational opportunities that might otherwise not be reached. You are invited to attend the Youth Activities Celebration Night on Friday, June 5th to root on our students as we give away over \$200,000 in scholarship money. With the rising cost of tuition, books, and living expenses, many students and families face significant financial challenges, BUT YOU, as an Elk, have stepped up in a mighty way to stand in the gap. Beyond financial support, scholarships also recognize hard work, leadership, community involvement and perseverance.

Elks make such a meaningful difference. Through their outreach efforts, Student of the Month programs, and partnerships with schools, the Elks have helped spread the word about available scholarships. Your commitment to supporting youth education not only increases access to funding but also inspires students to believe in their potential.

Also, please be reminded to submit your Best Youth Activities Lodge of the Year Award information to [TexasElks.Scholarships@gmail.com](mailto:TexasElks.Scholarships@gmail.com) and the judges are coming from outside of Texas Elks. The winning lodge information will be in a sealed envelope and announced LIVE at the Youth Activities Celebration Night.

Category	Description	Points Available	Scoring Criteria
1. Scholarship Entries for TESA, Legacy and MVS Scholarships	Number of student applications submitted for Elks scholarships	0-20 pts	1-5 entries = 5 pts 6-10 = 10 pts 11-20 = 15 pts 21+ = 20 pts
2. Social Media Promotion of Youth Activities and MVS	Evidence of youth activity or scholarship info posted on Lodge or community social media	0-15 pts	1 post = 5 pts 2-3 posts = 10 pts 4+ posts = 15 pts
3. Youth Activities	Photos, flyers, or reports of youth-focused events held at the Lodge	0-15 pts	1-2 events = 5 pts 3-4 = 10 pts 5+ = 15 pts
4. Student of the Month Program	Monthly recognition of students (can include certificates, social media, etc.)	0-10 pts	Partial year (1-5 months) = 5 pts Full year (6-12 months) = 10 pts
5. Scholarship or Student Dinner	Hosting a dinner or event to honor scholarship applicants or Student of the Month recipients	0-10 pts	Planned but not held = 5 pts Held = 10 pts
6. Outreach to Schools	Any Elks Scholarship info posted on local high school or educational social media (Local, State, National Scholarships)	0-10 pts	1 school = 5 pts 2+ schools = 10 pts
7. Extra Activity to Promote Scholarships	Any additional creative or impactful activity to promote student scholarships (e.g., school visits, community fairs,	0-20 pts in case of a tie, this category will be the tie breaker	Described activity with impact = up to 20 pts (judged qualitatively)

## RED PIG CHAIR KIM MCDERMOTT

### SWEETHEART RETREAT WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!

There were approximately 40 in attendance for the weekend including sweethearts, exalted rulers, Interlodge chairs and volunteers. Some came for the whole weekend and some came for the day. All in all, it was a good attendance. A brief rundown of counselor training was given so our sweethearts and those in attendance could get a good understanding of what counselors do for seven weeks a year. We also reviewed the sweetheart manual and discussed goals and fundraising ideas. We toured the camp facilities and hiked to Palmetto State Park and back. It was a good day for a hike. Thankfully not too hot. Thank you to all the volunteers and staff that helped. We couldn't do this weekend without their help!

## TEXAS ELKS CAMP ON TEXOMA (TECOT) KELLY MCDERMOTT

### A Bullseye from Plano

All 42 5<sup>th</sup> grade campuses located in Plano ISD passed through our camp during fall 2025 and winter 2026. While this exchange greatly benefited our camp, the influx of visitors caused above average wear and tear on our equipment, especially archery. Thanks to the kindness of Molly Pipak, a member of Plano ISD, we were given a full range of archery equipment from hybrid bows to new targets.



### Late Nights at Camp

There is no shortage of late nights, tumultuous weather, endless campfires filled with light hearted songs and smores, or game nights filled with laughter and dancing. The RV gifted to us by Mark Rollins allows our staff a safe place to rest away from visitors after a long night of educating and entertaining.



### Community Afloat

Think back to August 2025, when our boat dock was just a shell of what it is today. The community and our fellow Elks came together in order to make the dock a comfortable and safe place for campers and members. It's because of the generous donations of building materials, funding and installation work from Goins Building Material and Grapevine Lodge 2483, led by Bobby Bowen, made this possible.



### Fascia Lift on the Motels

With all of the people that we see passing through our campgrounds, they definitely need a comfortable place to rest after a long day of hiking and outdoor education. Following the donation and labor from Arlington Lodge 2114, led by Keith Stanley and Russell Scott from Dallas 71, the new fascia boards on our motels bring them back to life!



### 2026 - Our Busiest Year Yet!

In the past year, we've served a total of 9,165 participants in total! Our 2026 year is already packed with fun projected to be our busiest year to date. None of it would be possible without the help of our community, amazing staff, and fellow elks. We can't wait to see what the future has in store for us!



### Interested in giving back?



Visit our website to find out more!

[www.elkscampdexoma.com](http://www.elkscampdexoma.com)



418 Stanton Way Pottsboro, TX 75076

[www.elkscampdexoma.com](http://www.elkscampdexoma.com)



418 Stanton Way Pottsboro, TX 75076

## TESA STATE VETERAN CHAIR NIKKI GREEN

I hope everybody is geared up and ready for the new Elk year. There are a lot of things going on, and we're excited to get started.

Grant applications will open on April 1. This is a great opportunity for us to organize events and utilize the Freedom Grant, which is specifically intended to support veterans and military families in need. Let's come together and plan meaningful activities that will make a difference in our community.

We are now accepting applications for the upcoming May retreat at TECOT. This camp spans over 600 acres and offers a wonderful environment for fellowship and fun. So far, 32 veterans have confirmed their attendance, and we have an exciting lineup of activities planned. These include fishing, bingo, and the ever-popular cellophane ball game.

The barbecue cooking team, led by Corey, has been working diligently to provide a fantastic menu for the retreat. We are committed to accommodating all food allergies and dietary restrictions, ensuring everyone can enjoy the meals safely and comfortably.

If you have any questions about the Texas Elks Veterans Retreat, please feel free to reach out to one of the Veterans Retreat Committee members: Corey Basquez, Kendra Hart, Keith and Beth Stanley, Al "Dancing Bear" Olmos, Sheri McCord, Vickie Vaughan, or myself (Nikki Green).

Contact Nikki @ (806)435-1214



## **Everyone has a story, what's yours? Here is mine.. TESA President Elect Billy Bryan**

I became an Elk about 20 years ago, I had put off becoming an Elk because 1st of all, I did not understand the great goals and the mission of the elks. I was friends with then county judge John Garth while I was a commander there at the sheriff's office, and he was my county judge, and he kept saying, come join the elks. You know, I just fully didn't understand it, and I've had 2 kids and, you know, didn't have the time and you know, for all the right reasons, but I would visit. John Garth became ill with cancer. And almost on his deathbed. He said, please. He said, "You all need to be elks. And so, prior to his passing his son Travis, my son, Jared, my son, John and myself all become elks. And our membership numbers are almost numerical.

So, I became an elk out of my friendship and love and respect for John Garth. So, for the 1st year or 2, I was a bar elk. I suffered through what I wanted to correct, which is, oh, everybody went to Ottine and I'm like what is that? Well, at the time, it was a golf tournament, obviously the sweetheart, the homecoming, you know. But young elks don't know those things. So y'all are going to Ottine. I think, Okay That's kind of weird. But anyway, I'll stay here and drink. And so after a year or two, I was kind of asked and thrust into a trustee position. So, I started understanding the finances, and at that point, quite frankly, the grants. Elks National Foundation, what the sweetheart, and as I became aware of these events, it just gave me a calling. And I haven't for the last 16 years, I guess, haven't wanted to turn back. It is my church. It's my soul. I mean, it is just become so important of what we do.

The 1st children's grant that I got, a prosthetic grant from TECSI was, I don't know, probably 12 years ago. But this little 7-year-old girl couldn't go on field trips. She'd never been anywhere because all she had was Medicare or Medicaid, whatever it is. She had a big old long green canister of oxygen, had to ride a special bus and everything. We got her an oxygen generator. And they sent pictures from the heart of Texas fair in Waco, and that it was the 1st time at 7 years old that she had ridden the Ferris wheel. And she could then go on school trips, and she didn't have to sit at the emergency exit of the bus and stuff. That grant was \$3000 that year. But it changed the child's life. And so after that I went to camp graduation and Homecoming. I don't want to leave the veterans out. Look at what is going on at TECOT for our Veterans. Being a 1st responder for decades and serving on many boards on different nonprofits like on the capital area food banks in Austin, that was a common question, do you give to help people? No, you give for yourself. It's that warm feeling that you get. You could write a check anywhere. That's not the point. This is giving that is from the heart and you're changing people's lives and yourselves.



### **WHAT I GET FOR MY DUES**

I am fortunate to belong to the greatest Fraternal Order in the world.

I have the privilege of associating with exceptional American men and women.

I enjoy the comforts of my Lodge and Club, both socially and fraternally.

I have the chance to participate in all the charitable work undertaken by my Lodge.

I can actively engage in all the programs sponsored by my Lodge.

I have the opportunity to elect the officers who lead my Lodge through a democratic process.

I get to visit other Elks Lodges and experience their warm hospitality.

I have the pride of wearing my Elk insignia, proudly displaying my membership as an Elk.

## EAST DISTRICT #8520

### CROCKETT #1729



Crockett elks had a “fund raiser” for a long-time member Glenda Smoldas, who was having a lot of medical problems. We had a “shrimp boil” to raise money to help her. Auction items and everything was donated by member elks. Elks raised a lot of money, and the community joined in and it was a great success. Her husband, Joe attended the presentation and he was presented a donation of over fourteen thousand dollars. We are praying for Glenda and thank all who helped with our project. Elks care, elks share!!!

### BREHAM #979

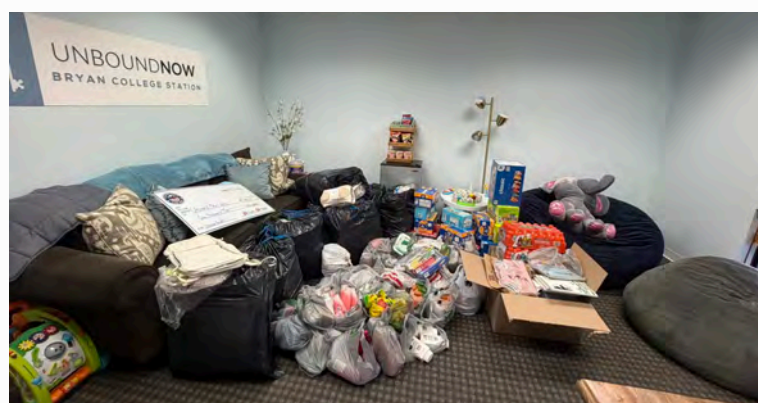


Brenham Elks Sweetheart donated leftover food to Washington County EMS



Brenham Elks held an Appreciation Dinner for Veterans & their significant others on March 6, 2026

### NAVASOTA #2888



Navasota Elks had the honor of helping Unbound Now with the Beacon Grant worth \$4000!!! This organization helps Human Trafficking Survivors heal and get back on their feet. Since January 1st of this year they have already served 150 people in the Brazos Valley.

# GREAT WORK

# NORTH #8680

## DESOTO #2552

### Halloween Event

For Halloween, our members organized a safe and welcoming environment where children could simply be kids and enjoy themselves. We prepared and distributed 100 treat bags, each filled with candy along with drug awareness pamphlets to educate and encourage youth to make positive, healthy choices.



### Veterans Event

For our Veterans Day dinner, our members proudly honored veterans from all branches of service by inviting them to join us for a special meal in their honor. This event provided a warm and welcoming environment where veterans could gather, share fellowship, and feel appreciated for their service and sacrifices.

By hosting this dinner, our lodge aimed to show veterans that they are valued and remembered—not only by the Elks, but by the entire community and the United States as a whole. The evening served as a heartfelt expression of gratitude, reminding our veterans that their dedication and commitment to our country truly matter.

### Thanksgiving potluck

For Thanksgiving, our members gave back to the community by hosting a potluck meal for individuals and families affected by the government shutdown. In addition to providing a warm meal and fellowship, our lodge also donated funds to several families to help them prepare their own Thanksgiving dinners. This effort helped support families in need and ensured they could still enjoy the holiday with their loved ones.

### Teddy Bear Drive

For our Teddy Bear Drive, our members and the supportive community who patronize our lodge came together to collect over 200 teddy bears. As a lodge, we proudly donated these bears to a children's hospital in Dallas, Texas, to help bring comfort and smiles to young patients during their time of need.

### Angel tree event

For our Angel Tree event, our lodge members—along with a little help from Santa—came together to provide Christmas gifts for 85 children. We were able to personally deliver gifts to those who might otherwise have gone without, bringing joy and holiday cheer to children in need.

### Black history month Event

For our Black History Month celebration, our members came together in fellowship and unity. Through games and meaningful conversation, we honored and remembered the contributions of African Americans who have helped shape the history and culture of our nation.



# GULF COAST #8560

## GALVESTON #126



Galveston Elks DAP committee joined the Out If The Darkness walk by AFSP for suicide prevention. We are happy to partner with great community organizations.



Galveston Elk member Ronnie Trail received a 60-year pin from Past ER Jim May and ER Rachel Sanderson.

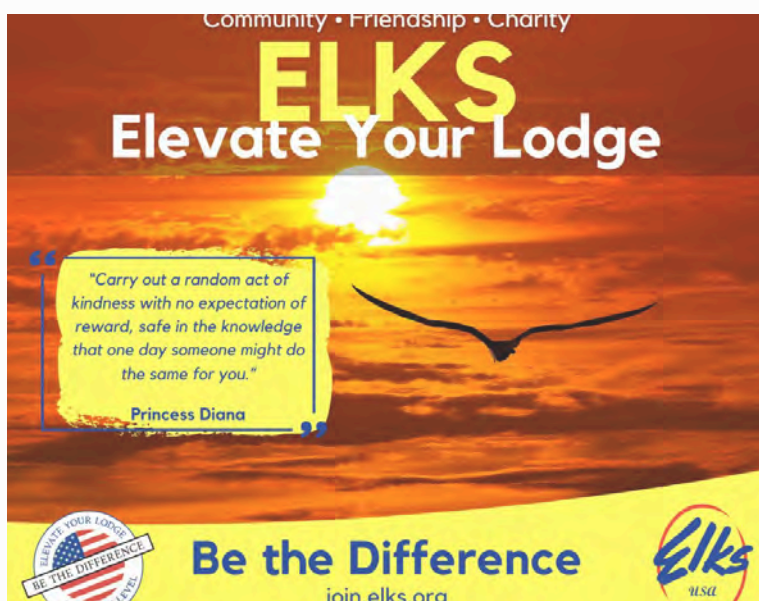


## PANWEST #8720

### AMARILLO #923



Amarillo Lodge 923 used the Gratitude Grant to help support Veterans with supplemental Welcome Home Kit supplies including hygiene items and home goods.



## TESA LODGE BULLETIN CONTEST LIZ SAMPLE



Good afternoon TEXAS ELKS! It's time to start thinking about the lodge bulletin contest. Our criteria changed last year to require bulletins from July, November and 1 month of your choosing. The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2026, but PLEASE do not wait until the last minute to turn those in! You can access the contest rules at <https://texaselks.org/bulletin-contest> but I am including the most important points below:

Please send your completed entries to me as soon as you are able.

Liz Sample  
State Bulletin Contest Chair  
lizsample69@gmail.com  
281-804-8425

### TESA BULLETIN CONTEST RULES

Please closely observe the following rules when submitting an entry for your lodge, because submissions that do not adhere to these rules will be rejected.

- Submit bulletins which were published from April 2025 through March 2026.
- Submit three bulletins consisting of the months of **July, November and 1 month of your choice.** This criteria has changed from past years to more closely match events we judge on.

Your entry must be accompanied by a letter from your Lodge Secretary with your lodge seal on it, stating what your total **Lodge membership was on April 1, 2025.** This must be submitted in PDF format, also. We need your membership totals to place your entry in the correct category. If we do not have this information, we are unable to place your entry in the correct category and would, therefore, reject your entry.

– APRIL – Exalted Ruler 1. Installation of Officers (Section 12.010) 2. Exalted Ruler, Leading Knight, Secretary and Chairperson of Trustees required attendance at District Deputy Clinic (Sections 12.020, 12.040, 12.050 and 12.070) 3. Drug Awareness all-year Program 4. Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Recognition all-year Program Secretary 1. File electronically by April 1 the portion of the Annual Report showing Lodge membership as of March 31. (Section 16.010) 2. Secretary's semi-annual report to Lodge at 1st regular Lodge meeting (Section 12.050) 3. Attend District Deputy Clinic (Section 12.050) 4. Notify the Members of all Committees of their appointments, together with the subject given into their charge (Section 12.050) Trustees 1. Board elects its Officers (Section 12.070) 2. Regular monthly meeting and keep minutes (Section 12.070) Review profit and loss statement 3. Monthly written report to the Lodge at 1st meeting (Section 12.070) 4. Trustees present budget to Lodge by final meeting in April (Section 12.070) 5. Perform safety inspection of Lodge (EXHIBIT I) Club Management Body 1. Regular monthly meeting and keep minutes (Section 16.040) Review profit and loss statement 2. Club Management Body present budget to Lodge by final meeting in April (Section 16.040) Lapsation Committee Report at 1st regular Lodge meeting (Section 13.090)



Report By March 31  
[join.elks.org](http://join.elks.org)



★ ELKS NATIONAL ★  
**HOOP SHOOT FINALS!**

*Cheer on Texas' Own!*  
**Kate Fulton**  
 is heading to Chicago to compete in the  
**ELKS HOOP SHOOT NATIONAL FINALS!**

*Representing the Entire State of Texas*  
**OUR ONLY NATIONAL FINALIST THIS YEAR!**

*Show Your Support!*  
 Send Kate your well wishes before she takes the national  
 Messages will be collected into a special book  
 Presented to Kate at the Chicago Hilton

*Deadline to Submit Messages:*  
**April 1st**

*Send Your Well Wishes Here:*  
**Best sWishes! Survey**

Let's Show Kate the Strength of Texas Elkdom!  
 Good luck, Kate—we're all cheering for you!



Community • Friendship • Charity  
**ELKS**  
 Elks Day at Wrigley Field

St. Louis @ Chicago  
 July 4, 2026

**National Memorial**  
 elks.org/elksday

**TESA EXPRESS EDITOR  
 SHERI McCORD**



Thank you to everyone submitting items for the TESA Newsletter. Brag about your Lodge with the whole state. Send me a couple of pics and an article. Also, include Lodge name and number. "BE THE SPARK, FIRED UP FOR ELKDOM!" Deadline for articles to be submitted for the winter newsletter will be **June 20, 2026**. Email articles to [sherimc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sherimc@sbcglobal.net). If you do not see your pics in the newsletter then they were not emailed to me. When submitting a item for the newsletter please tell me what lodge and a brief write up and a few pics. Items to submit..... Your lodge involved in youth activities, veterans activities, drug awareness, & community activities.

