



The Lakes & Prairies EXCHANGITE

lakesandprairiesdistrict.com

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Share your club's news!

Email Randy at

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EXCHANGE
THE NATIONAL EXCHANGE CLUB

Vision: A strong America, safe communities, and unified people.

Mission: Exchange, inspiring communities to become better places to live.

NATIONAL PROJECT
Prevention of child abuse

Family ★ Community ★ Country

NationalExchangeClub.org
NationalExchangeClub.org/Foundation

What's possible when communities dream bigger

By Trent Hunter,
2026-27 Lakes & Prairies District President



I wanted to take a moment to forward an article highlighting the Black Hawk County America 250 Field of Honor project taking place in Waterloo, Iowa this coming Fourth of July weekend.

What began as a conversation, in San Antonio, Texas during the National Convention, about displaying 250 flags quickly evolved into something much larger—a vision to place 1,776 American flags at Veterans Memorial Hall and Vietnam Memorial on Veterans Way in Waterloo to honor America's 250th birthday, as well as the veterans, first responders, and local heroes that made this piece of America, Black Hawk County.

The project now stretches across two bridges, 2 memorial spaces, as well as the roof of the parking ramp. This field has become one of the largest known Exchange Club-affiliated Field of Honor displays connected to the America 250 celebration effort.

More importantly, this project is proving what can happen when Exchange clubs think beyond “good enough”

and begin building community experiences that people will remember for generations.

This effort has brought together:

- Multiple Exchange clubs (Waterloo, Sunrise, and Cedar Falls)
- Veteran organizations (AFIL, VFW, American Legion, AMVETS)
- Community non-profits
- Downtown development groups
- First Responders
- Volunteers from across the area

The project honors veterans, active military, first responders, and community heroes while also creating an opportunity to educate younger generations about patriotism, sacrifice, service, and civic pride.

I share this not simply to celebrate what our team is accomplishing, but to encourage every club in our district to think boldly about what is possible in your own communities. Exchange has always been at its best when we create visible, meaningful projects that unite people and leave a lasting impact.

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The Lakes & Prairies District wishes to recognize the newest members who joined their respective Exchange club in the second half of June:

Faribault: John Scott, Lori Christensen; **Waterloo:** Gary Buck

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Sometimes the difference between a “nice project” and a transformational one is simply the willingness to dream a little bigger.

The momentum surrounding this event has been incredible, and we’re proud to represent the mission of Exchange on a large stage during our nation’s semiquincentennial celebration.

Thank you for all you do within your own communities, and I hope this serves as inspiration for future projects across the Lakes and Prairies District.

Below is the article with additional details about the event:

Waterloo to post 1,776 flags for America’s 250th

by Pat Kinney

“Some local service clubs are hoping the ‘Fourth time’ will be a real charmer for a massive flag display in downtown Waterloo.

“Because it’ll be on the Fourth — July 4, Independence Day, for the nation’s 250th birthday.

“Organizers hope the display will go over with a bang — since there will be a big fireworks display as well.

“The Exchange Club of Waterloo, along with the other Exchange Clubs in Black Hawk County — the Sunrise and Cedar Falls Exchange clubs — and the Americans for Independent Living veteran service organization, are planning a ‘Field of Honor’ of 1,776 U.S. flags in downtown Waterloo for the Fourth of July weekend — Friday, July 3 through Sunday, July 5. July 4 falls on a Saturday this year.

“I want kids that are six all the way up through high school age to go through this and remember it for years to come — so 50 years down the way when it’s the 300th anniversary, they’ll want to do this again,” said Trent Hunter of the Exchange Club of Waterloo, an Iowa Army and Air National Guard veteran, who is event chairman.

“It’ll be similar to the post-9/11 ‘Healing Field’ display the club erected at Soldiers and Sailors Park adjacent to Veterans Memorial Hall in 2004 and 2007, recognizing those who lost their lives following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Wash-

ington that led to U.S. conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“A similar ‘Field of Honor’ display was staged in 2020 honoring Iowa war dead from all eras.

“This year, though, the park won’t be big enough to hold all the flags.

“‘The Exchange Club of Waterloo came together, a group of us that’s done this in the past, and we were just gonna do 250,’ Hunter said. ‘And we said “That’s not enough,” not for the nation’s 250th birthday.

“They decided to put up 1,776 flags, commemorating the year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

“‘We didn’t have enough space to do 1,776 flags in Soldiers and Sailors Park,’ Hunter said. Tree growth over the past six years also limited the amount which could be placed there from previous years.

“‘So we said “You know what? We’ll go down Fourth and Fifth Street with some flags and we’ll utilize the Vietnam memorial,” he said.

“Flags will line the Fourth and Fifth Street bridges, extending from either end of the park and Memorial Hall, across the Cedar River to the Black Hawk County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Paramount Park, across river from Memorial Hall.

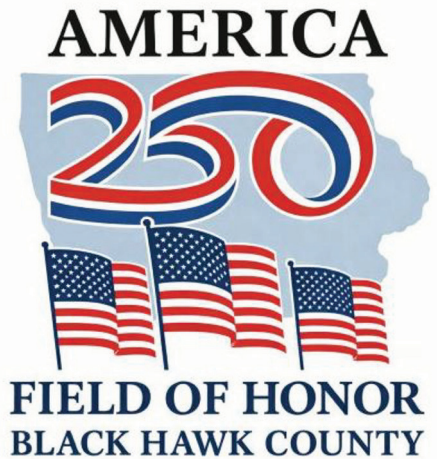
“They’ll also line the top of a city parking ramp adjacent to Soldiers and Sailors Park and organizers plan to drape large U.S. flags over the ramp walls.

“Additionally, the canopy of the Fourth Street Bridge pedestrian walkway is illuminated in red, white and blue every night at the top of every hour, as are lights along the Cedar River, the downtown RiverLoop Amphitheater and the superstructure of the Waterloo Convention Center at Sullivan Brothers Plaza, as part of the ‘Waterloo River Lights Experience’ initiated in June 2023.

“People can participate in the Field of Honor event by purchasing a flag for \$50 in the name of an individual they would like to honor.

“‘You can dedicate to anybody you’d like,’ Hunter said.

“The flag display will not only hon-



or military personnel and veterans, but first responders like firefighters and police officers as well as ‘community heroes’ who have made outstanding civilian contributions to the welfare and vitality of Waterloo and the greater Cedar Valley community over the years in any number of fields of endeavor — such as business, volunteerism, social activism, education, recreation, or the arts.

“‘There’s so many people that made an impact on this community that we should honor them in some way,’ Hunter said, ‘Those individuals will be appropriately listed and recognized in the Field of Honor.

“‘We sell the flags for \$50 apiece and you get to take them home afterwards,’ he said.

“The idea came from the flagmaking firm Colonial Flag of Sandy, Utah. ‘They are the ones that produce and have “Healing Field” and “Field of Honor” copyrighted,’ Hunter said. ‘They work in line with Exchange Clubs throughout the nation. Everything they do is all U.S. made.’

“Waterloo is one of three Exchange Clubs in the Iowa-Minnesota-Nebraska area which are doing flag displays, but others are comparatively smaller in scale.

“‘Realistically, we are one of the biggest if not the biggest this year,’ Hunter said, among the displays Colonial Flag is working with in conjunction with the nation’s 250th, or semiquincentennial, anniversary.

“‘We’ve got a great group of people, but we still didn’t have enough’ volun-

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teers, even with the combined efforts of the Exchange Clubs, Hunter said. So staff members at Americans for Independent Living were enlisted.

“As a board member of AFIL, I wanted to see AFIL recognized for what they do anyway,” Hunter said. “This was this was a way to have collaboration between organization’ with similar missions.

“Ideally, Hunter said, he’d like to incorporate, as part of the July 4 weekend display, military re-enactors in period dress to interpret and explain the American experience in different periods of history. Those details and other aspects of the program are being worked out.

“Field of Honor organizers are also coordinating with the Main Street Waterloo downtown promotion and development group which does the ‘Red, White, and ‘Loo’ fireworks display.

“We’re going to be celebrating not only our nation, but the Reservists and National Guard’ returning from recent deployments to the Middle East, said Hunter, who served on such a deployment several years ago.”

More information on the Black Hawk County Field of Honor is available on the “America 250 Black Hawk County Field of Honor” Facebook page.

“Hunter hopes the event resonates with people and is as memorable as the nation’s bicentennial celebration was in 1976 and will give everyone, especially young people ‘a little pride and remembrance.”

Congratulations to the following Lakes & Prairies Exchange clubs for earning their National Service Award during the 2025-26 Exchange year: Albert Lea, Cedar Falls, Des Moines Area, East Minneapolis, Mason City, Medford, Omaha, Owatonna, Steele County, Waseca, Waterloo, Waverly, Excel Club of Waverly-Shell Rock High School, Moonlighters, Sunrise Club of Waterloo



National Summary Report June 30, 2026

District	# of Clubs	Active as of Jul 1, 2025	Active as of May 31, 2026	Jun 2026 Adds	Jun 2026 Drops	Active as of Jun 30, 2026	MTD Change	YTD Change	YTD % Growth	YTD % Retention
Alabama District	19	583	616	5	4	617	1	34	5.8%	88.3%
California-Nevada District	26	538	601	12	13	600	-1	62	11.5%	88.1%
Connecticut District	32	759	756	4	10	750	-6	-9	-1.2%	77.5%
Dakota Territory District	6	265	251	2	2	251	0	-14	-5.3%	87.9%
Florida District	24	628	607	1	20	588	-19	-40	-6.4%	74.2%
Four Corners District	18	299	274	1	24	251	-23	-48	-16.1%	70.6%
Georgia District	32	1516	1518	4	8	1514	-4	-2	-0.1%	87.9%
Indiana District	19	467	469	3	7	465	-4	-2	-0.4%	82.9%
Lakes and Prairies District	19	430	443	6	3	446	3	16	3.7%	86.3%
Lincolnland District	23	450	417	7	3	421	4	-29	-6.4%	87.3%
Michigan District	21	476	463	6	10	459	-4	-17	-3.6%	82.8%
Mid-America District	8	268	249	3	8	244	-5	-24	-9.0%	76.1%
Mid-Atlantic District	20	510	472	3	24	451	-21	-59	-11.6%	82.7%
Mississippi District	19	471	437	3	9	431	-6	-40	-8.5%	73.7%
New England District	12	431	433	3	11	425	-8	-6	-1.4%	88.6%
North Carolina District	26	631	606	5	177	434	-172	-197	-31.2%	38.0%
Northern California District	10	187	174	8	2	180	6	-7	-3.7%	81.8%
Northwest District	12	265	261	17	0	278	17	13	4.9%	84.2%
Ohio-West Virginia District	25	517	515	6	16	505	-10	-12	-2.3%	86.8%
Puerto Rico District	7	111	99	0	0	99	0	-12	-10.8%	74.8%
South Carolina District	20	1030	975	13	23	965	-10	-65	-6.3%	78.3%
Tennessee District	25	644	633	8	38	603	-30	-41	-6.4%	77.8%
Texas District	20	798	742	9	36	715	-27	-83	-10.4%	77.3%
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast District	17	985	841	2	8	835	-6	-150	-15.2%	56.6%
Virginia District	15	326	309	1	3	307	-2	-19	-5.8%	81.9%
Yellowstone District	14	503	478	9	12	475	-3	-28	-5.6%	78.9%
Total	489	14088	13639	141	471	13309	-330	-779	-5.5%	