



The Lakes & Prairies

EXCHANGITE

lakesandprairiesdistrict.com

May/June 2026

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Event Calendar

- Jun 14 Flag Day.
 - Jun 15 The Exchange Club Center for Family Unity Golf to Prevent Child Abuse at the Owatonna Country Club.
 - Jun 21 Father's Day.
 - Jun 24 Moonlighters Exchange Club of Owatonna chartered in 2013.
- Lakes & Prairies District Exchange board meeting, 6 p.m.

Reflections before moving forward to new Exchange year

By Dennis Keboe,
2025-26 Lakes & Prairies District President



As my year as district president winds down, I would like to thank everyone in the Lakes & Prairies District for making this a wonderful year. Your hard work is evidenced by all the good things that have happened this year.

Our Exchange year began in Louisville where we received the Outstanding District Award. Sharon Klein received the Distinguished District President Award, and Randy Sobrack was named the Outstanding Newsletter Editor. The Exchange Club of Waseca received the prestigious CARE Award in Louisville as well. Our clubs' names were called out many times at The National Exchange Club Convention for the achievements earned.

A few weeks later we chartered our first new club of the year in Medford, Minnesota. I know we will see great things from them this coming year.

All year long our district has been growing with the Albert Lea and Waterloo clubs having great campaigns to encourage growth. As I write this our district membership is up 3% for the year!

We recently held our district convention in Owatonna and it was a great success. The Exchange Club of Waverly received the Best Club Award and they were very deserving.

Our Youth of the Year, A.C.E. Award recipient, and our first-ever Legacy Award winner were all very impressive.

The convention's National representative, Region 11 Vice President Kara Wright, along with former National President Scot Warren, who was the One Nation Under God guest speaker, and our former Region 3 Vice President Dawn Portner, were all impressed with the work we have done in the past year leading up to The National Exchange Club Convention in Omaha, July 9-11.

I am strongly encouraging all members to make the drive to Omaha to experience this convention. The Lakes & Prairies District and the Exchange Club of Omaha have been working hard all year to make sure you have a great time at the convention, and while visiting Omaha. Go to The National Exchange Club website and make your reservation now.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of our members and specifically, Sharon Klein and Lynn Limberg, for making this a great year for me. Now

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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 and so far in June:

Cedar Falls: Vicki Jones; **Medford:** Phil Heim; **Omaha:** Trisha Eastman, Don Klesper; **Waterloo:** Glen Keith, MET Transit (Philip Golden); **Waverly:** Hector Mares.

Lakes & Prairies District Convention has 12 clubs attending in Owatonna

Sixty-four attendees made their way to Owatonna for the Lakes & Prairies District Convention, May 15-17.

Social activities dominated Friday, May 15, with tours of The Exchange Club Center for Family Unity office, a visit to the Veterans Memorial (led by the efforts of the Moonlighters Exchange Club of Owatonna), the Steele County History Center, and Freedom Shrine. A picnic and games were conducted at Mineral Springs Park before those wishing to socialize more in the Hospitality Room at the Double Tree Hotel.

Saturday of the district convention is a full day and started with the One Nation Under God breakfast. The program started with the parade of club banners. The Steele County Honor Guard conducted the Presentation of Colors, and Owatonna Mayor Matt Jessop welcomed attendees. Following a buffet breakfast, the keynote speaker was past National Exchange Club President Scot Warren.

Scot shared four personal stories of Americanism that for him signified the meaning of being One Nation Under God.

The National Exchange Club adopted the One Nation Under God program on July 30, 1964. It was designed to help remind all Americans of our religious freedoms and to heighten awareness of our rich religious heritage.

The breakfast program concluded with everyone in attendance singing "God Bless America."

The first business session was conducted with a quorum established and the announcement of officers and director positions that would need member delegate approval during the afternoon. The positions included district president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and directors for Division 2, 4, and 6. Parliamentarian Randy Sobrack announced the candidate for district president-elect wasn't eligible according to the district bylaws since she hadn't served as club president, but would be



Past National Exchange Club President Scot Warren was the keynote speaker for the One Nation Under God breakfast Saturday, May 16, in Owatonna.

doing so during the 2026-27 Exchange year. Region 3 Vice President Annette Duncan announced the situation was presented to The National Exchange Club CEO Tracey Edwards, and was given permission to be eligible.

The morning work session led by Duncan included ways to promote Exchange through your club's social media, website, and newsletters. District Newsletter Editor Randy Sobrack also included suggestions including making sure there are no spelling errors in your copy because if the spelling is wrong, how can readers trust the information is correct; and breaking up "gray space" in your articles with the use of a



Former Owatonna School Superintendent Jeff Elstad's theme for his Youth Awards Luncheon speech was "Kids these days," addressing the more complex world youth are living in.

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I am looking forward to what our incoming District President Trent Hunter will do. I know he will start the new Exchange year, July 1, with a bang!

photo or graphic.

The session concluded with district awards for the best Facebook page and club newsletter. The **Facebook award** recipient was the Exchange Club of Waverly. The **Best Newsletter award** went to the Exchange Club of Waseca. In addition, clubs were given certificates for growth and retention.

The Youth Awards Luncheon recognized the district's youth of the year, A.C.E. (Accepting the Challenge of Excellence) recipient, and the district's first Legacy recipient where eligible candidates were children or grandchildren of Exchange club members in the district.

The keynote speaker was former Owatonna School Superintendent Jeff Elstad. The theme of his message was "Kids these days." While he conceded the theme may not be viewed as positive, but the message conveyed young people are dealing with more today than ever before with the advances of technology. "Kids are searching for likes," said Elstad from social media, even if it is from people they don't know.

He noted how kids are obtaining the bad habits from adults regarding posts that are being made without thinking of its impact. "Our kids are watching that," said Elstad.

He remarked how youth are having to do drills to prepare for school violence. Adding, when he was superintendent hoping every day that it wouldn't be Owatonna having to deal with school violence.

Elstad is encouraged about today's youth and their opportunities, "Kids are doing things now we never dreamed," he said.

James Peng, sponsored by the Exchange Club of Cedar Falls, was recognized as the district's youth of the year. He completed his senior year at Cedar Falls High School. Over the years, James earned several accomplishments,

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including being selected as an American Legion Boys Nation Senator, placing first at the Heartland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, and winning both the State Science Bowl and Science Olympiad. He served as student body president, was involved in football, orchestra, speech, Volunteer Club, and Mentors in Violence Prevention. He served as co-chair of the Iowa Youth STEM Ambassador Group, a subgroup of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council.

"It's an honor to stand before you today," said James prior to reading the essay he completed for the Youth of the Year application. This fall, James is pursuing biochemistry and economics at the University of Pennsylvania. The district will be forwarding a \$1,000 scholarship to his college in his name.

Due to an unanticipated "family matter," the district's A.C.E. recipient, Anania Yesuf (pictured right), was unable to attend. He was sponsored by the Exchange Club of East Minneapolis.



He was a senior at St. Anthony Village High School. Anania and his family emigrated to the United States from Ethiopia in 2024. He was a member of the soccer, swim, and volleyball teams. Anania was a captain of the swim team, and while passionate about athletics, he valued even more the camaraderie with his teammates. His present plans are to attend Augsburg University, then pursue a degree in law. He will be a first-generation college student in the family. The district will be forwarding a \$1,000 scholarship to his postsecondary school in his name.

In addition to his studies and sports, he works in home health care and helps look after his two younger brothers. Anania's future plans include becoming an aircraft manager, deepening his faith, and giving back to community that has supported him.

The district's Legacy award recipient was Sophia Hiebert, the daughter



Lakes & Prairies District President Dennis Kehoe presented the district's Youth of the Year plaque Saturday afternoon, May 16, to James Peng (pictured left).

of Gary and Audra Hiebert, who are members of the Exchange Club of the Des Moines Area. She was sponsored by the Exchange Club of Waterloo, as her grandparents David and Diana Sash are members.

Sophia graduated this year from Prairie City Monroe High School where she dedicated hundreds of hours to volunteering in her community, supporting organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House, the Children's Cancer Center, the Wesley Park retirement community, the Des Moines Arts Center, and the Blank Park Zoo.

Sophia was a member of the National Honor Society and selected as one of just 30 members of the State of Iowa 4-H Council out of more than 250 applicants.



Lakes & Prairies District President Dennis Kehoe (pictured right) congratulates the district's first Legacy Award recipient, Sophia Hiebert (pictured left) as Awards Chairperson Sharon Klein holds the plaque being presented.

She is planning to pursue a career in veterinary medicine and continue to serve her community and animals she cares deeply about. The district will be forwarding a \$1,000 scholarship check to her postsecondary institution in her name.

The luncheon concluded with a presentation from The Exchange Club Center of Family Unity Executive Director Beth Hortop regarding the Center in Owatonna, and the opening of a satellite office, June 1, in Rochester. The district presented a \$1,500 check for the Center to Hortop following her presentation.

In the afternoon business session, nominations were made for the following director and officer positions: Division 6, Jeff Magsamen; Division 4, Kaylin Hanson; Division 2, Sandra McConn Halla; Treasurer, Diana Sash; Secretary, Audra Hiebert, and President-Elect Lynn Limberg. Each nomination was approved by delegates representing a quorum of 11 clubs.

Club delegates also approved a \$2 increase to district dues starting in July 2026. Approval was not unanimous, but the district dues increase was approved. Minutes from last year's district convention and the financial report were also approved by club delegates in attendance.

Following the business meeting, afternoon sessions were conducted in member engagement and strengthening clubs, and the afternoon concluded with an open forum.

The Awards & Installation Banquet concluded Saturday's district convention. The program included a memorial remembrance service for Exchangites who died in the past year.

Following a buffet dinner, award presentations were made: **Rookie of the Year**, Audra Hiebert, Des Moines Area; **All-American Volunteer**, Jack Reuvers, Owatonna; **Exchangite of the Year**, Monica Severson, Waverly; **Lifetime Achievement Award**, Larry Bjortomt, Waterloo; and the **Outstanding Club of the Year**, Exchange Club of Waverly.

Remarks were shared by Region 3

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Vice President Annette Duncan, “I am so proud of Lakes and Prairies,” in appreciation of those who took the time to attend the district convention.

The National Exchange Club representative, Region 11 Vice President Kara Wright addressed banquet attendees regarding her 16 years with Exchange. “We’re all a part of Exchange,”

said Wright noting the importance of collaboration. She also stressed the importance of supporting youth. “Give our youth grace,” said Wright. “Keep showing up,” as young people are looking at the actions of adults.

Following the installation of officers, it was announced the silent auction raised \$845 for the district’s youth

scholarships.

The Lakes & Prairies board of directors met Sunday morning for final business to the district convention weekend. It was shared the 2027 Lakes & Prairies District Convention will be in Des Moines, Iowa. However, discussion is continuing regarding the dates.



The National Exchange Club representative, Region 11 Vice President Kara Wright (pictured right) installed Saturday evening, May 16, the 2026-27 officers and directors for the Lakes & Prairies District. They include (right to left): President Trent Hunter, President-Elect Lynn Limberg, Immediate Past President Dennis Kehoe, Treasurer Diana Sash, Secretary Audra Hiebert, Division 2 Director Sandra McConn Halla, District 4 Director Kaylin Hanson, District 3 Director Randy Sobrack, District 7 Director Tom Helligso, District 6 Director Jeff Magsamen, and Division 5 Director Michelle Temeyer.

Acknowledgements, reminders, and thanks

By Sharon Klein,
2025-26 Lakes &
Prairies Immediate
Past District President



Congratulations to all our award winners at the Lakes & Prairies District Convention. Each of you brought something to the table the judges felt was important.

I want to thank the five award judges that I had; I am not telling you who they were—that’s a secret.

I am not sure who your awards chairperson will be for next year, starting July 1, that will be up to our incoming president.

Recently, I sent out notices to clubs who needed to update their projects on The National Exchange Club website or enter their new officers. The response has been outstanding—thank you!

Now, if you are a newly elected club secretary, treasurer, president-elect, or president, please go to the National website prior to June 30 and complete

the appropriate classes. The ones I saw were: club president (coming soon), club secretary, and club treasurer. Also, there are so many others: Leadership Guide, What is an Exchange Leader. Have a great 2026-27 Exchange year.

With July 1 just around the corner, my three-year term in the Lakes & Prairies District comes to an end. It has been an experience I will never forget. The meetings I have attended, the Zoom that I have learned pretty well now, the people that I have met, the new and old friends.

Three years pretty much flew by, during those years, personally, I lived through the death of my husband, moving to a new home, two new great grandbabies, and much more. In Exchange, each year we were able to grow our numbers, we added two new clubs, earned the Distinguished District Award, and continued to focus on our Programs of Service in Americanism, Youth, and Community, and the National project—the Prevention of Child Abuse.

I have so many people that I must

thank. Annette Duncan and Katie Smith, who led me through my first unexpected convention and have continued to support me. My Exchange club, who has been beside and behind me all the way, my boards—oh my boards—what a blessing you have been. All the new friends and Exchange members that I have met within our district, region and all over the United States. What an experience, what a pleasure, what a reward.

Now in my final few weeks, we (Lakes & Prairies) are so excited to host The National Exchange Club Convention in Omaha. The committee I have been a major part of has worked behind the scenes for the past two years, planning on how to make this event a memorable and fun one for all attending.

As I look the future of the Lakes & Prairies District, I see great strengths, great upcoming leadership, and real responsibilities.

Thank you all and God Bless.



Exchange Club of Albert Lea President Emily Honsey (pictured right) presented the Club's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award, May 4, to School Resource Officer David Huse at a program conducted at Albert Lea's Fire and Rescue office.



On Thursday, May 21, 11-year law enforcement veteran Patrol Officer Alan Callahan of the Owatonna Police Department was recognized by the Moonlighters Exchange Club of Owatonna as their Officer of the Year during a program at the local VFW. (Courtesy: Tim Messenger, APG Media of Southern Minnesota)

Monthly Club Tip



June Club Tip: Build a Plan

June is the perfect time to refocus and set your club up for a successful season ahead. A strong plan helps keep everyone aligned and moving forward with purpose.

This month, focus on:

- Being organized so your efforts stay on track
- Working effectively and efficiently to make the most of your time and resources
- Staying purposeful in everything your club takes on
- Evaluating your club's goals to ensure you're meeting the needs of your community

A little planning now can make a big difference in the impact your club makes in the months ahead.



GET YOUR TICKETS!

Join us for the **2026 Golf to Prevent Child Abuse** on **June 15, 2026!** This community event supports the **Exchange Club Center for Family Unity** in our mission to build stronger families and prevent child abuse. Enjoy a great day on the course for an even better cause.


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 EXCHANGE THE NATIONAL EXCHANGE CLUB <i>America's Service Club</i>		National Summary Report May 31, 2026										
District	# of Clubs	Active as of Jul 1, 2025	Active as of Apr 30, 2026	May 2026 Adds	May 2026 Drops	Active as of May 31, 2026	MTD Change	YTD Change	YTD % Growth	YTD % Retention		
Alabama District	19	583	615	3	2	616	1	33	5.7%	89.0%		
California-Nevada District	26	538	596	8	3	601	5	63	11.7%	90.5%		
Connecticut District	32	759	754	2	0	756	2	-3	-0.4%	78.8%		
Dakota Territory District	6	265	248	5	2	251	3	-14	-5.3%	88.7%		
Florida District	24	628	614	0	7	607	-7	-21	-3.3%	77.4%		
Four Corners District	19	299	276	0	2	274	-2	-25	-8.4%	78.6%		
Georgia District	32	1516	1512	15	9	1518	6	2	0.1%	88.4%		
Indiana District	19	467	462	7	0	469	7	2	0.4%	84.4%		
Lakes and Prairies District	19	430	442	7	6	443	1	13	3.0%	87.0%		
Lincolnland District	23	450	416	3	2	417	1	-33	-7.3%	88.0%		
Michigan District	21	476	467	6	10	463	-4	-13	-2.7%	84.9%		
Mid-America District	8	268	248	1	0	249	1	-19	-7.1%	79.1%		
Mid-Atlantic District	21	510	472	1	1	472	0	-38	-7.5%	87.5%		
Mississippi District	19	471	443	0	6	437	-6	-34	-7.2%	75.6%		
New England District	13	431	433	1	1	433	0	2	0.5%	91.2%		
North Carolina District	26	631	609	0	3	606	-3	-25	-4.0%	66.1%		
Northern California District	10	187	172	2	0	174	2	-13	-7.0%	82.9%		
Northwest District	11	265	260	4	3	261	1	-4	-1.5%	84.2%		
Ohio-West Virginia District	25	517	514	2	1	515	1	-2	-0.4%	89.9%		
Puerto Rico District	7	111	99	0	0	99	0	-12	-10.8%	74.8%		
South Carolina District	20	1030	963	18	6	975	12	-55	-5.3%	80.6%		
Tennessee District	25	644	658	3	28	633	-25	-11	-1.7%	83.7%		
Texas District	21	798	739	4	1	742	3	-56	-7.0%	81.8%		
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast District	18	985	839	2	0	841	2	-144	-14.6%	57.5%		
Virginia District	15	326	307	2	0	309	2	-17	-5.2%	82.8%		
Yellowstone District	15	503	480	0	2	478	-2	-25	-5.0%	81.3%		
Total	494	14088	13638	96	95	13639	1	-449	-3.2%			