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GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION

MAY 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 – Texas Past Master Jewel
- Grand Secretary's Office – Suspensions for NPD; Lamar Medals and Honesty & Integrity Awards
- Statistics – DDGM Demographics and Other Statistics – Zachary Haston
- Monthly Law Reading – Representations of the Grand Lodge – Jeremy R. Johnson, PM
- Lodge Spotlight – Lorenzo de Zavala Lodge No. 1397
- Cornerstone Leveling Ceremonies – May 2026
- Committee on Work Schedule – May & June 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

Texas Past Master Jewel



This striking Past Master Jewel was designed by Brother Michael Cote II and approved by the Trustees in 2025. Crafted to complement the Lone Star Apron and coordinate with the Lodge officer jewels, it creates a distinguished and unified Texas Masonic appearance.

The jewel is available through Masonic Supply at: [Texas Past Masters Jewel](#). A portion of every purchase is returned to the Grand Lodge as a fundraiser, making it both a meaningful keepsake and a way to support Texas Masonry.

Past Masters are encouraged to show their Texas pride by wearing this beautifully designed jewel. Additionally, if you know of a Master who has faithfully and worthily served this year, consider presenting him with this jewel personally or encouraging your Lodge to purchase one in recognition of his service.

PLEASE READ

GRAND SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Suspensions for Non-Payment of Dues

The window for suspension will begin May 1st to midnight June 23rd. Suspensions made after midnight June 23rd will not be accepted.

Lamar Medals and Honesty & Integrity Awards

Lamar Medals and Honesty & Integrity Awards are now back in stock. As this is the busiest season of the year for these awards, Lodges are strongly encouraged to place orders as far in advance as possible to help ensure timely processing and delivery.

READ PORTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LODGE

MONTHLY LAW READING – REPRESENTATIONS OF THE GRAND LODGE

There are times when the Grand Lodge needs to act publicly outside of the Annual Communication. Article 2a gives the Grand Master that vehicle. In practice, we see it used most often for two purposes: leveling cornerstones and conducting Grand Lodge funerals.

Art. 2a. Representations of the Grand Lodge. – Representations of the Grand Lodge may be opened at any time by the Grand Master, for the purpose of conducting Grand Lodge funerals, leveling cornerstones, consecrating or dedicating buildings, cemeteries or other appropriate places or objects, unveiling statues, and for such other occasions as may be deemed appropriate and desirable by the Grand Master. It shall not be necessary except where otherwise provided in these Statutes, but it is permissible, if deemed by the Grand Master desirable, to open a Lodge in connection with such representations. (Adopted 1962)

The two most common uses are each governed by their own articles. The leveling of cornerstones falls under Article 178, and that work is a Grand Lodge prerogative. A Constituent Lodge does not lay cornerstones on its own; it is the Grand Lodge, acting through a representation, that performs the ceremony. Grand Lodge funerals are addressed in Article 359a, which limits Grand Lodge funeral services to a specific group of Brethren: past or present elected Grand Lodge Officers, and appointed Grand Lodge Officers, District Deputy Grand Masters, and members of the Committee on Work who die while serving in office. All other Masonic funerals are conducted by the subordinate Lodge under the usual provisions of our Law.

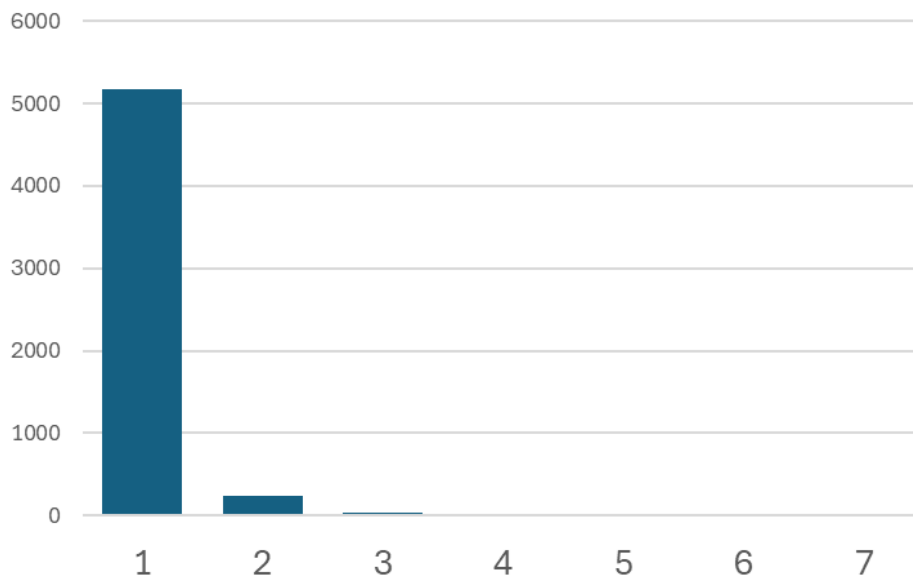
In short, a representation is the means by which the Grand Master opens the Grand Lodge for a specific purpose without convening a full Communication. Whether the occasion is the leveling of a cornerstone or the burial of a Brother eligible under Article 359a, the ceremony is opened, conducted, and closed under the authority of the Grand Master or his designated representative.

– Jeremy R. Johnson, PM

STATISTICS – DDGM DEMOGRAPHICS AND OTHER STATISTICS

Texas is too vast with too many lodges for the Grand Master to personally visit and oversee each one on all the details during his year, and so the Grand Master appoints deputies, working under his direction, to communicate, watch over, and deal with issues in each of the many Masonic Districts across the State. In practice, each District has from 3 to 10 lodges in it, averaging 5 these days but varying depending upon spacing, membership, and history. If any District drops below 3 lodges due to demises or consolidations, a redistricting plan must be submitted within a year, so that doesn't last long. On the larger side, we have several Districts with 9 lodges, and one with 10 lodges for their District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) to cover. Speaking as a former DDGM of a District of 8 lodges, that is a lot of work, 16 required Official Visits plus all the work in between, and we wouldn't want many more lodges than that for any one deputy to have to cover. Additionally, while we have not always had them, in recent history, the Grand Masters have been appointing a number of At Large DDGMs spread across the State, who can step in in the absence or conflict of interest for any of the District DDGMs.

Figure 1. Number of Times and Individual Has Served As DDGM (past 40 years)



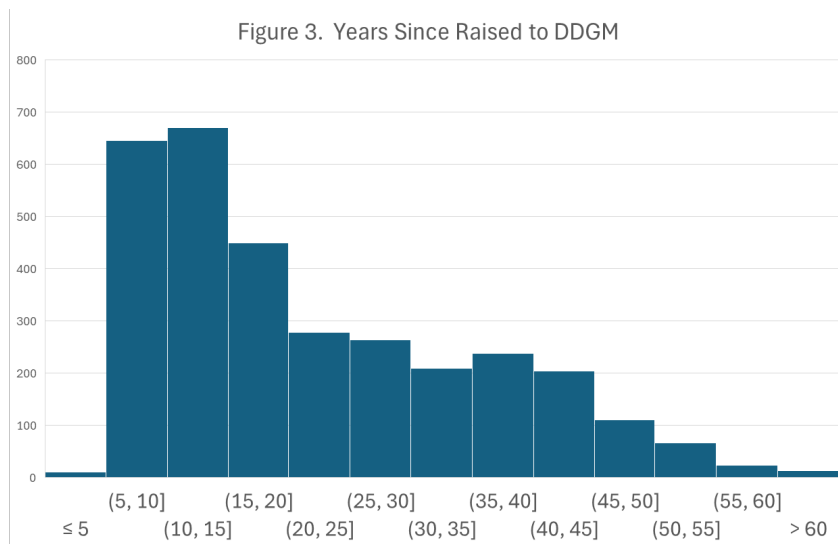
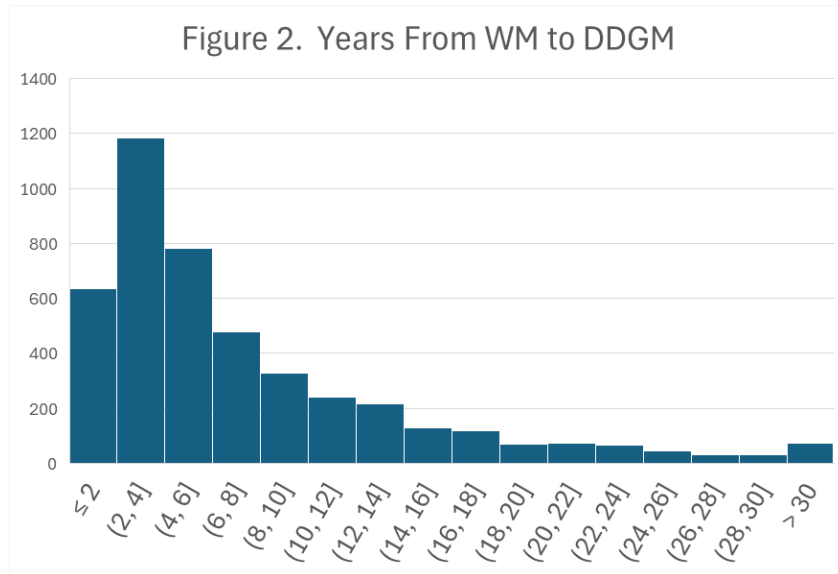
Being a DDGM is a real honor. You have been chosen by the Grand Master to be his representative, and you carry some authority and responsibilities. These warrant a “Right Worshipful” title along with an apron and recognition. Most people only get to be a DDGM once in their lives (Figure 1). The At Large DDGMs are usually more experienced Masons and were almost always previous District DDGMs (there have been only 24 individuals in the past 40 years who have skipped the District DDGM stage before being appointed an At Large DDGM).

Please note that there is no such thing as a “Past DDGM.” You were previously a DDGM or perhaps a “former” DDGM, but there is no title for someone who used to be a DDGM, and all authority, as well as the Right Worshipful title, leave with the office.

Masonry has a way of advancing Brethren, both virtuously with more degrees and directions, and, for those entrusted to it, administratively as well. It speaks volumes for your Lodge to advance you through the chairs and eventually hand you the gavel. It speaks even more for the Grand Master to select you to represent him during his year. He only gets one for your District. And, well, after that there are important committees, tasks, and who knows, maybe even a Grand Office for some (96% of our Grand Junior Wardens over the past 60 years had previously served as a DDGM). Grand Masters put

considerable thought into this appointment, starting from the year they are elected Grand Junior Warden.

As seen in Figures 2 and 3, most people receive their DDGM appointment soon after their term as WM in their lodge. They have been highly thought of during their rise to and through WM of their Lodge and have caught the eye of those currently looking. Grand Junior and Senior Wardens are definitely looking. Still though, in addition to Masons on the rise, you'll see that there are quite a few well-established Masons with decades of Masonic service before getting their appointment (deaths factor into the trail off after 40yrs).



DDGMs must be Past Masters and have a membership in a Lodge in the District they are being appointed to. Technically, you do not have to be a PM of a lodge in that District. You could, for instance, have served as WM in Houston and be appointed DDGM in Dallas if you have moved up there or even just have a plural membership there, but the majority get their DDGM appointment for the District covering their home Lodge.

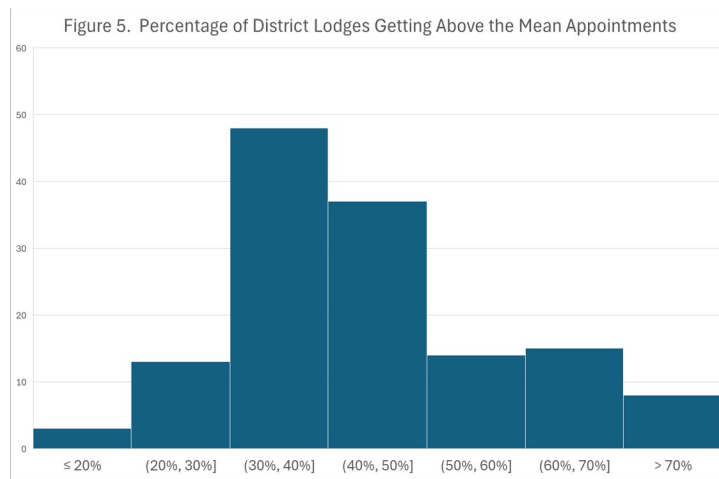


Figure 4. Number of Times a Lodge has had a Past WM Appointed DDGM (1986 - 2026 Appointments, 40yrs)

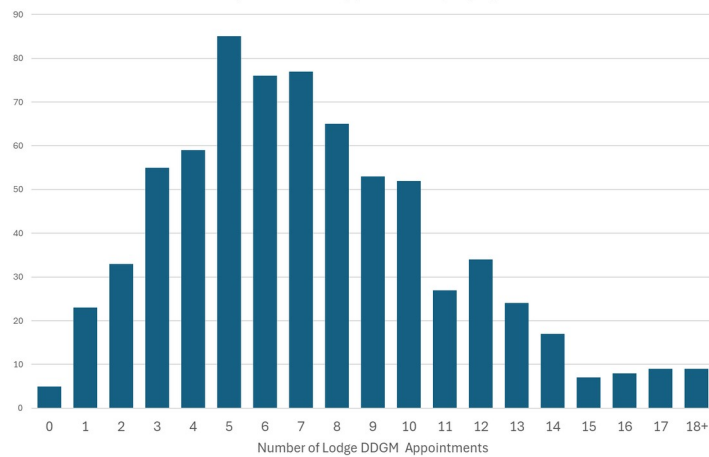


Figure 4 shows how many times Lodges have had one of their PMs appointed DDGM over the past 40 years. Most have received 5 to 7 appointments during that time, about 1 every 6 to 8 years, but some have received notably more, and some much less. Figure 5 shows this on a District scale. If DDGM appointments were more evenly spread, half the lodges in the District would receive half of the appointments, but in practice, Districts have closer to 33% of their Lodges receiving the majority. That means that, for example, in a District of 6 Lodges, 2 of them get the majority of the appointments with the other 4 together receiving less than those 2. In a few instances it's even more lopsided than that with 1 Lodge in a District of 4 getting over half the appointments, or in a few cases even 1 Lodge in a District of 5 getting most of the appointments.

It would be natural for upcoming Grand Masters to want to spread it out some and not keep giving DDGM appointments to the same Lodge, but at the same time, they are looking for a good representative, and it's hard to stand out while in charge of Lodge that is struggling or not really doing anything, or at least not as much as the others in your District. I couldn't find that correlation though. "Winning" Lodges did not necessarily have more members or be doing more degrees. I'm not going to even show you those scatter plots as there was just nothing there.

Quality is sometimes hard to quantify. I will tell you that our current DDGMs have way more esoteric certificates than the PM population, so there is some correlation there, and they are at more conferences and, of course, more likely to have been at Grand Lodge in January. Perhaps it's just that our DDGM are just more "all in." They're seen everywhere, constantly doing stuff, before being selected. Some Lodges have that "all in," quality expectation from their line, and one thing Masonry takes note of is quality.

– Zachary Haston

LODGE SPOTLIGHT

A Fond Farewell to Brother Marcus Lee-Steere, Lorenzo de Zavala Lodge No. 1397

Brethren,

One of the greatest blessings of our Fraternity is the lasting friendships we build within our Lodges. Recently, we were reminded of just how meaningful those bonds truly are as we gathered to celebrate a special milestone in the life of one of our Brothers.

On the evening of Thursday, February 19th, Brethren met at Cedar Creek Bar & Grill in Houston in warm fellowship to honor our beloved Brother Marcus Lee-Steere, as he prepared to depart for his native homeland of Australia.

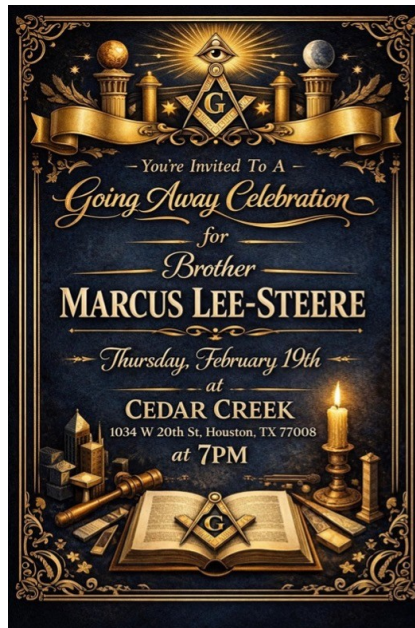
The evening was filled with laughter, good company, and heartfelt well-wishes. While Brother Marcus' presence at the Lodge will certainly be missed, there was a shared sense of pride and excitement for the new chapter he and his family are now beginning. It was a fitting send-off — one that reflected the deep respect and affection held for him by his Masonic family.

Gatherings such as this beautifully demonstrate the strength of our Brotherhood. Masonry extends far beyond the walls of the Lodge room. The friendships formed within our Fraternity endure across cities, states, and even continents. Though miles may now separate us, the bonds of Brotherly Love remain unbroken.

Moments like these serve as a great reminder to all of us—our Fraternity is not only about meetings and degrees, but about truly walking alongside our Brothers through the important milestones of life. Whether it be a new beginning, a well-earned achievement, or even a heartfelt farewell, these are opportunities for Lodges everywhere to come together, strengthen their bonds, and create lasting memories.

If your Lodge has not yet embraced gatherings like this, consider doing so. Celebrating the lives and journeys of our Brethren—both inside and outside the Lodge—adds a deeper meaning to our work and reinforces the ties that make Masonry what it is.

Submitted by – Mike Mistry, P.M.



TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Ready to move to TMRC? Live with friends! Enjoy activities!

Ready to move this spring? We're ready to welcome you to Texas Masonic Retirement Community! Your friends are standing by to greet you at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, to enjoy games and events, and to be with you in good times and on not so good days. ZERO MOVE-IN fees! Give us a call today at 817-275-2893 to schedule a personal visit or check out our photo gallery and pricing at YourTMRC.org or <https://yourtmrc.org/our-community/apartments-duplexes/>

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

May & June 2026

Committeeman	Date	Lodge	City	District	Forum	Exam
Cody Stewart						
	Sat, May 2 2026	Athens	165	Athens	17	8:00 AM After
	Sat, May 16 2026	Mantua	209	Van Alstyne	4-A	8:00 AM After
	Sat, June 6 2026	Boston	69	New Boston	1-A	8:00 AM After
	Sat, June 13 2026	East Fork	650	Wylie	9-B	8:00 AM After
John Peters						
	Sat, May 9 2026	Aransas	1018	Aransas Pass	37-B	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
	Sat, May 16 2026	Valley	175	Burnet	49	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
	Sat, June 6 2026	Laredo	547	Laredo	41	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
	Sat, June 13 2026	Cibolo	151	San Antonio	39-B	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Cody Cockroft						
	Sat, May 2 2026	Milam	2	Nacogdoches	20	8:00 AM N/A
	Sat, May 9 2026	LaFayette	34	LaGrange	33	8:00 AM After Lunch
	Sat, May 16 2026	Tarkington Prairie	498	Cleveland	27	8:00 AM After Lunch
	Sat, May 23 2026	Park Place	1172	Houston	30-G	9:00 AM N/A
	Sat, May 30 2026	Northwest	1434	Spring	30-D	8:00 AM After Lunch
	Sat, June 6 2026	Rosenberg	881	Rosenberg	108	8:00 AM After Lunch
	Sat, June 13 2026	Dickinson	1324	Dickinson	31-B	8:00 AM After Lunch
Kevin Moss						
	Sat, May 2 2026	John Sayles	1408	Abilene	75	9:00 AM To Follow
	Sat, May 9 2026	Webb	1454	Arlington	64-D	10:00 AM N/A
	Sat, May 16 2026	Nolands River	453	Rio Vista	63	9:00 AM To Follow
Steve Pepper						
	Sat, May 16 2026	Faith	1158	Wichita Falls	88	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
	Sat, June 13 2026	Bowie	578	Bowie	86	9:00 AM 1:00 PM

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

CORNERSTONE LEVELING CEREMONIES 2026

Effective 5/1/2026

For Information Contact:

Kevin T. Binder, State Cornerstone Coordinator

832-489-7778 | kevinbinder30@gmail.com

Date	Time	Lodge	Location	Grand Lodge Representative
Tuesday 5/5/2026	Refreshments or lunch at 11:00am; Open Texas City Lodge at Noon; Open Grand Lodge at 12:15pm; Cornerstone Ceremony at 1:00pm	Texas City #1118 702 14th St. N. Texas City, TX 77590	Texas City ISD Ag Barn	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Wednesday 5/6/2026	Lunch or refreshments at 11:30am; Open Deer Park Lodge at 12:30pm; Open Grand Lodge at 12:45pm; Cornerstone Ceremony at 1:30pm	Deer Park #1362 2809 Center St. Deer Park, TX 77536	Jimmy Burke Activity Center	Justin B. Duty Deputy Grand Master
Saturday 5/9/2026	Lunch or refreshments at Noon; Open Lee Lodge at 1:00pm; Open Grand Lodge at 1:20pm; Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Lee #435 101 S. Church Prosper, TX 75078	Prosper Fire Station #4	John M. Wilkerson Grand Jr. Warden
Monday 5/18/2026	Coffee & Donuts at 9:00am; Open Allen Lodge at 10:00am; Open Grand Lodge at 10:15am; Cornerstone Ceremony at 11:00am	Allen #1435 101 N. Allen Dr. Allen, TX 75013	New Police Headquarters	John M. Wilkerson Grand Jr. Warden
Friday 5/29/2026	Lunch or refreshments at 11:00am; Open Archives Lodge at Noon; Open Grand Lodge at 12:15pm; Cornerstone Ceremony at 1:00pm	Archives #1399 2918 San Augustine Pasadena, TX 77503	New Police Station	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Saturday 5/30/2026	Lunch or refreshments at Noon; Open Midland Centennial Lodge at 1:00pm; Open Grand Lodge at 1:15pm; Cornerstone Ceremony at 2:00pm	Midland Centennial #1448 1600 West Wall St. Midland, TX 79701	Midland County Detention Center	Justin B. Duty Deputy Grand Master
Saturday 6/6/2026	Coffee & Donuts at 8:00am; Open Brooklyn Lodge at 9:00am; Open Grand Lodge at 9:15am; Cornerstone Ceremony at 10:00am	Brooklyn #386 103 E. Hwy. 80 & 740 Rd. Forney, TX 75126	Jim & Linda Jacobs Elementary School	Wendell P. Miller Past Grand Master
Saturday 6/13/2026	Refreshments at 4:00pm; Open Whitt Lodge at 5:00pm; Open Grand Lodge at 5:15pm; Cornerstone Ceremony & Lodge Building Dedication at 5:30pm; Dinner at 6:30pm; Stated Meeting & OV of Grand Master Rumsey at 7:30	Whitt #624 101 Main St. Whitt, TX 76490	Whitt Lodge building	Jim Rumsey 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.