



GRAND LODGE Convention News

SUNDAY JUNE 29, 2025



Lodges welcome Elks to Kansas City for convention

By Mike Chamernik

Convention News Reporter

Thousands of Elks will come to Kansas City this week for the 160th Grand Lodge Convention. While the annual conference is centered around business and legislative sessions and learning seminars, what makes the event special is the chance to mingle with fellow Elks at the convention center and hotels—and beyond.

Several Lodges in the Kansas City area are opening their doors and inviting convention goers to stop by.

Located 10 miles north of the convention center, Kansas City (Northland), MO Lodge No. 2376 has events each night through Thursday. Along with lunches and dinners (with plenty of barbecue), live entertainment will include music trivia on Monday, a female Elvis tribute vocalist on Tuesday, a blues-rock band on Wednesday, and an acoustic guitarist on Thursday. The American Veterans Traveling Tribute wall is being displayed (*Page 8*) for the week as well. The Lodge has the usual lounge activities including a juke box, darts, and a pool table.

Chris Cooper, the Public Relations Chair of the Lodge, has been promoting his Lodge's events through social media, particularly the *Finding the Herd at National Convention* Facebook page. He's also printed and distributed flyers to the various downtown hotels where Elks are staying. The Lodge usually gets 30 out-of-town visitors a year, but they're bracing for a bigger turnout this week. They have more than 50 volunteers helping with everything from kitchen duty to airport greeting to driving a shuttle that will take visitors to and from the convention center.

The Kansas City Northland Lodge is



The Kansas City Convention Center hosts this year's Elks National Convention.

excited to welcome guests. "It's not every day that convention is going to be 10 miles away from us," Cooper said.

Blue Springs, MO Lodge No. 2509 is a little further out, 23 miles east of the convention center, but it is worth the trip. The Lodge will have dinners Monday through Wednesday, and a magician will perform Wednesday. Visitors can also play a round at the public Adams Pointe Golf Club next door.

At 20,000 square feet, with two levels and a deck, the Lodge has room for company. Exalted Ruler Erik Grotenhuis said he expects around 50 guests a day during convention. He's eager to provide hospitality.

"We are proud of the city, we are proud of our Lodge," Grotenhuis said. "We love to open up our doors and share hospitality with people from around the country. We hope that we can showcase ourselves and the Elks to the best of our abilities."

Visitors to Kansas City, MO Lodge No. 26, located 11 miles south of downtown, will eat well. Meals include wings and sliders on Sunday night; barbecue on Monday night; pulled pork Tuesday afternoon; and

sausage and peppers Tuesday night. Live music is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, and Bingo is slated for Wednesday.

"We have meals, entertainment and extended hours to welcome visitors," said Lodge Secretary Barbara J. Gunn. "Please come and meet our friendly Members."

Mona Brown, from Louisiana, MO Lodge No. 791, will be driving across the state to Kansas City. She plans to stop by Lodges on her way to and from the convention—it will get her closer to her goal of eventually visiting all 71 Elks Lodges in Missouri. Brown said she enjoys seeing the history of the older Lodge buildings and likes to learn how other Lodges operate. And she enjoys how welcoming other Members can be.

"Whenever we visit a Lodge," Brown said, "knock on the door or ring the bell or whatever, somebody will let you in. The next thing you know, somebody is buying you a drink and wanting to show you around."

Lance Gustin from South Bend, IN Lodge No. 235 intends to visit Kansas

Please see **CONVENTION Page 7**

Florida State Elks Association Major Projects



**FLORIDA ELKS
YOUTH CAMP**

**7 Weeks of
AWESOME**




OUR MISSION



INSPIRE CONNECT EXPAND

LEARN MORE
www.feyc.org




Florida Elks
CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES

Changing lives one mile at a time.




**UNMASKING
AUTISM
GALA**

The Florida Elks "Unmasking Autism Gala" is the premier fundraising event for Florida Elks Children's Therapy Services.



**Florida Elks
for Autism**

**The Florida Elks
are proud to offer the pinnacle in
comprehensive and inclusive
autism evaluations.**

Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule™
Second Edition (ADOS®-2)



Florida Elks
CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES
Mobile Diagnostics Therapy Since 1999

www.ElksTherapy.com
1 (800) 523-1673

LEARN MORE
www.elkstherapy.com

For more information about our major projects and so much more, please visit us at www.FloridaElks.org

G/L GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

GOV. RELATIONS HOLDS SEMINAR

The Government Relations Committee held a training seminar on Saturday for State Chairs from across the nation.

More than 30 State Chairs attended, and they explored new methods and ideas to make charitable reporting more consistent, as well as learn other important functions of the committee. State Chairs in states that had 100% reporting were recognized with certificates.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON OPENING CEREMONY

04:00 Welcome T. Keith Mills, PGER

— Invocation Rev. Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain

Opening and Intro of PGERs T. Keith Mills, PGER

Parade of Flags Gwendolyn B. Parker, GLFC Chair

Presentation of US Flag and Pledge Gwendolyn B. Parker, GLFC Chair

Drug Awareness Commission Millard C. Pickering, PGER, Chair

Elks National Veterans Services Paul R. Ryan, PGER, Chair

Elks Charities At Work Michael F. Smith, PGER, Chair

Hoop Shoot Jim O'Kelley, Director

Grants & Scholarships Deborah Kahler Doles, Asst. Director

GER Introduction T. Keith Mills, PGER

GER Speech Douglas A. Schiefer, GER

Closing T. Keith Mills, PGER

Benediction Rev. Christopher J. Ford, Grand Chaplain

ERs: Kansas City Reports due in October!

Exalted Rulers (or alternate delegates) should be reminded that they are required to attend the Annual Session and submit a Report to their Lodge no later than the first regular meeting in October. [GLS §12.120]

A good suggestion would be to save each edition of the *Convention News*, along with a copy of the Resolutions. Also, record how you voted on each resolution and submit to the Lodge with a cover letter. That will complete the obligation of your report to your Lodge.

G/L AUDITING AND ACCOUNTING COMMITTEE

The Auditing and Accounting Committee will conduct two seminars on Monday and Tuesday to assist Lodges in their accounting tasks.

The *Introduction to Lodge Accounting for Officers seminar* will address the basics of using the recommended software to perform all the accounting tasks a Lodge needs. The session will be conducted using a live session of QuickBooks. It is recommended for all beginners and intermediate Lodge personnel who handle the bookkeeping at the Lodge level. The seminar is scheduled for 12:30-1:45 p.m. Monday and 2:15-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, both in Room 3501C in the Kansas City Convention Center.

The *Advanced Lodge Accounting Topics seminar* will address common areas where Lodges have issues with complying with Grand Lodge Statutes or federal and state information return requirements. Topics will include overhead allocation, an FRS overview, key submission points of Form 990, adjusting journal entries, depreciation expenses, and year-end closing of restricted funds. This session is scheduled for 2-3:15 p.m. Monday and 12:30-1:45 p.m. Tuesday, both in Room 3501C in the Kansas City Convention Center.

Each session will have a question and answer segment. Members are also able to stop by the committee's booth in the exhibits area for one-on-one meetings to address specific issues. The committee looks forward to seeing you.



Thank You All!

The Assistant Officers for the 2024-25 Kansas City Grand Lodge Convention have been announced as follows:

► Clerks of Election

Thomas P. Stroozas — Homer, AK #2127
 Jeremy Brandt — Grand Island, NE #604
 Daniel C. Ploof — St. Albans, VT #1566
 Jeffery A. Miller — Rice Lake, WI #1441
 Howard Proctor — Union, NJ #1583
 Ernest J. Patrick III — Oregon City, OR #1189
 Peter Plecinoga — Beverly-Peabody, MA #1309

► Assistant Clerks of Election

Brenda L. Ferri — Raton, NM #865
 Matt Williams — Beaumont, TX #311
 Elevinio E. Cruz — Leadville, CO #236
 Ken Chapman — Broadneck, MD #2608
 Peter J. O'Polka — Franklin, PA #110
 David Neel, Jr. — Dixon, IL #779

► Inspectors of Election

Kathy E. Clark — El Dorado, KS #1407
 William W. Dow, Jr. — Kearny-Belleville, NJ #1050
 John P. Lawless — Haverstraw, NY #877
 Jason L. Meisenheimer — Nevada, MO #564
 Mark L. Andrade — East Providence, RI #2337
 Phyllis Caldwell — Mena, AR #781
 Charleste Gondrella — New Orleans-West Bank, LA #2496

► Assistant Grand Esquires

Robert W. Colie — Lake Oconee, GA #2849
 Bruce Hayden — Valdosta, GA #728
 Mark Couch — Hickory, NC #1654
 Jason A. Gray — Plymouth, NH #2312
 Corey Dewitt — Sanford, ME #1470
 Phillip Stende, Sr. — Manchester, CT #1893
 Perry A. Helgeson — Cheyenne, WY #660

► Assistant Grand Inner Guards

Reeda K. Hall — Chattanooga, TN #91
 Gordon Serrine — Red Lodge 'Beartooth', MT #534
 Stephen J. Petrie — Lake Oconee, GA #2849
 Justin Baily — Cody, WY #1611
 Lyle D. Gessford — Nampa, ID #1389
 David Babcock — Broken Arrow, OK #2673
 Ronald Fortenbury — North Little Rock, AR #1004

► Assistant Grand Tilers

John W. Dabney — Tri-Cities, WA #2755
 Craig R. Johnson — Colville, WA #1753
 Craig J. Huch — Gulfport, MS #978
 Michael A. Smith — Charleston, SC #242
 Jeff Wheat — Shreveport, LA #122
 Ronald Elsheimer, Jr. — Cushing-Drumright, OK #2712
 Brian L. Baye — New Orleans, LA #30

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

The court reporter needs to know your **Name, Current Elks Title, and Lodge Name and Number.**

If you are recognized for making or seconding a motion, please come forward at the end of the Session to make sure the reporter gets your information for the permanent record, which will be included in the annual Grand Lodge Proceedings book.



CS SINCE 1957
C. SANDERS
 EMBLEMS

2025 CONVENTION PIN
 AVAILABLE AT BOOTH #433
 LIMITED EDITION

CSANDERS.NET
800-336-7467
 OFFICIAL LICENSED SUPPLIER FOR THE ELKS

ENVSC

ELKS VETERANS SERVICE SEMINAR & VOLUNTEER PANEL

Join us at a seminar about the Elks Voluntary Service program, which stations Elks in veterans facilities across the country.

Celebrate with us as we present the National Veteran Service Volunteer of the Year award to an outstanding Elks volunteer.

Then stay for the Elks Voluntary Service Seminar to learn how this longstanding program is making a crucial difference in the lives of veterans across the country. In State Veterans Homes, VA Medical Centers, housing facilities and more, the Elks Voluntary Service Program provides consistent, reliable support to veterans in need.

You'll hear program ideas, lessons learned, and inspiration from Elks who've been volunteering for years. This takes place **Sunday at 1 p.m. in 3501A at the Kansas City Convention Center.**



VISIT THE ENVSC BOOTH

Check out the new Elks National Veterans Service Commission booth, write your name on our Wall of Service, and pick up your "I'm a Veteran" ribbon.

While there, chat with ENVSC staff about Welcome Home Kits and learn about your state's Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award winners. Voluntary Service Representatives and Deputy Representatives are invited to stop by for a special gift!

Veterans Leather Program Chair Chuck Mudge and Vice-Chair Curtis Blystone will be sharing their expertise and selling gloves for \$25.

We look forward to seeing you!

GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

All American Lodge Contest down to 60 finalists

By **MICHAEL L. KENNEDY**
Committee Member

It is my pleasure to announce the finalists in each division for the Contest 'A' - All American Lodge Contest. This year we received submissions from 213 Lodges in 30 states. Here are the top ten finalists for each division listed alphabetically.

Division I (1-150 Members)

Anchorage, AK No. 2868; Augusta, GA No. 205; Bedford-Lynchburg, VA No. 321; Duarte, CA No. 1427; Holiday Island, AR No. 1042; Norfolk, VA No. 38; Pendleton, SC No. 2861; Plymouth, IN No. 2548; Virginia Beach, VA No. 2268; Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, PA No. 109.

Division II (151-225 Members)

Cedar Grove, NJ No. 2237; Elmwood Park-Paterson, NJ No. 60; Grand Island, NE No. 604; Kearny-Belleville, NJ No. 1050; Lakeport, CA No. 2704;

Livermore-Pleasanton, CA No. 2117; Norwalk, CA No. 2142; San Angelo, TX No. 1880; Tri-Cities, WA No. 2755; Waukesha, WI No. 400.

Division III (226-300 Members)

Arcadia, CA No. 2025; Clawson-Troy, MI No. 2169; Forks, WA No. 2524; Fountain Hills, AZ No. 2846; Gouverneur, NY No. 2035; Homer, AK No. 2127; Houston, TX No. 151; Mena, AR No. 781; Moreno Valley, CA No. 2697; Page, AZ No. 2498.

Division IV (301-450 Members)

Coolidge-Florence, AZ No. 2350; East Stroudsburg, PA No. 319; Jackson, TN No. 192; Kansas City (Northland), MO No. 2376; Kearney, NE No. 984; Park Ridge, NJ No. 2234; Rutherford, NJ No. 547; Springfield/Hillside, NJ No. 2004; Thousand Oaks, CA No. 2477; Winston-Salem, NC No. 449.

Division V (451-700 Members)

Catalina Mountain, AZ No. 2815; Chandler, AZ No. 2429; Eagle River, AK No. 2682; Frackville, PA No. 1533; Hot Springs, AR No. 380; Lynnwood, WA No. 2171; Muskegon, MI No. 274; Roseville, CA No. 2248; Saratoga-Wilton, NY No. 161; West Covina, CA No. 1996.

Division VI (701+ Members)

Casa Grande Valley, AZ No. 1957; Fayetteville-Springdale, AR No. 1987; Festus-Crystal City, MO No. 1721; Merced, CA No. 1240; Orange, CA No. 1475; Port Huron, MI No. 343; St. Louis, MO No. 9; Santa Ana, CA No. 794; Santa Maria, CA No. 1538; Waterville, ME No. 905.

Congratulations to all Lodges that participated. First, second, and third place winners of each Division will be announced during the Business Session on Tuesday.

OREGON STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION

Oregon Major Project

Elks Youth Eye Service

- RESEARCH
- VISION SCREENING
- OREGON ELKS CHILDREN'S EYE CLINIC
- SATELLITE FACILITY IN BEND
- 75+ YEAR COMMITMENT

The Elks Youth Eye Service

The Elks Youth Eye Service, or EYES, is the major project of the Oregon State Elks Association.

To make an online donation visit: www.oregonelks.org/donate or scan the QR code below:



Thank You to our SPONSORS

WWW.BADGESBYJAN.COM
541-384-6854

- FAST PERSONAL SERVICE
- CUSTOM DESIGN
- NO MINIMUMS
- NO SETUP CHARGE



Customized Pins at Booth #513



Booth #511



C. SANDERS

EMBLEMS

1-800-336-7467

CSANDERS.NET

INFO@CSANDERS.NET

Booth #433



Booth #131

EMBLEMATICS, INC.
TRUSTED SINCE 1977
Toll Free (800) 421-6735
www.customemblems.com
elks@emblematics.com

Customized Pins at Booth #421

See you at the National Convention!

Check out what we can do to support you & your lodge!



Booth #331

CompleteSource
NEW Licensed Elks Vendor

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY PROJECTS CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

CONGRATULATIONS to all the Winners! Elks Lodges across the country continued to show that "Elks Care — Elks Share" by conducting Community Projects. These projects were showcased in the Grand Lodge Activities Committee's Community Projects Contest. *The winners for 2024-25 are as follows:*

Division I • (1 – 150 Members)

- 1st Place Islip, NY No. 2533
- 2nd Place Hackettstown, NJ No. 2331

Division II • (151 – 225 Members)

- 1st Place Waukesha, WI No. 400
- 2nd Place Webster-Fairport, NY No. 2396
- 3rd Place Southern Pines, NC No. 1692

Division III • (226 – 300 Members)

- 1st Place Massapequa, NY No. 2162

Division IV • (301 – 450 Members)

- 1st Place Goldsboro, NC No. 139
- 2nd Place Cynthiana, KY No. 438
- 3rd Place Bridgeport, CT No. 36

Division V • (451 – 700 Members)

- 1st Place Hickory, NC No. 1654
- 2nd Place Wethersfield-Rocky Hill, CT No. 2308
- 3rd Place Sanford, NC No. 1679

Division VI • (701+ Members)

- 1st Place Las Cruces, NM No. 1119
- 2nd Place Middleboro, MA No. 1274
- 3rd Place Westbrook, CT No. 1784

The points system for the contest factors in total volunteers, man-hours, event duration, attendance, and media coverage and promotion.

This contest is a great way to reward your Members and volunteers for their dedication and hard work. We appreciate each Lodge's participation in the program this year and look forward to seeing other Lodges showcase their programs next year.

G/L GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

INCOMING GOVERNMENT RELATIONS CHAIRMAN

W.J. "Billy" Bryan welcomes Robert E. Wambach to his new position of Chairman of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee. Bryan has served the Order on this Committee since 2019, with his last two years as Chairman. He was recently installed as President-Elect of the Texas Elks State Association.

Wambach is a 39-year Member and PER of Auburn, MA Lodge No. 2118. He has served as Chairman of the State Trustees and as State President in 2020-2021. On the state level he has chaired the Business Practices Committee and is currently the Chair of the Membership Committee. Wambach had the honor of serving as District Deputy in 2010-2011 and is currently serving his second term on the GL Government Relations



W.J. "Billy" Bryan (left) welcomes incoming Government Relations chairman Bob Wambach.

Committee. Wambach has worked for the United States Postal Service for 28 years. He has held management positions and currently is serving as a Postmaster.

CONVENTION from Page 1

City Northland—again. Gustin is the National Housing Coordinator for Indiana and made a visit to the Lodge during the winter with his spouse and the incoming Indiana state president and first lady.

“Everyone was so friendly and so welcoming,” Gustin said. “Actually, we had such a good time, we went back the very next night. They made us feel like we were part of their Lodge while we were there.”

Gustin said that he’s encouraging Indiana Elks to visit the Kansas City-area Lodges this week. Lodge visits can lead to learning opportunities, especially for fundraisers and State Major Projects.

But, even just enjoying the food, music, and companionship is good, too. Grotenhuis has popped in on Lodges from across the nation, from Seattle to Detroit, to Iowa and Kansas.

“It is easy to go someplace where

you know you already have a common connection with all the folks there,” Grotenhuis said. “You are all in some ways dealing with the same things. You start from a common spot and you really learn the different perspectives of the different regions. I’m always surprised at the commonality of the challenges we all face, and the ability to share ideas of what we’ve tried, and what has and hasn’t worked. It has all been a positive experience for me when I go to those places.

“And I also love swapping pins with people. That’s a good time.” ★



Blue Springs, MO Lodge No. 2509

Thank You to the ELKS STATE ASSOCIATIONS

FLORIDA Booth #125

OREGON Booth #105

DRUG AWARENESS COMMISSION

DRUG AWARENESS HOSTS TWO-DAY TRAINING SESSION

Prior to the opening of convention, State Drug Awareness Chairs attended a two-day training session in Kansas City. The training consisted of presentations regarding the many facets of the Elks drug awareness effort and included a presentation from Sean Fearn of the DEA regarding current trends and activities. He thanked all Elks for their work in educating the youth of America.

The Kent Gade Rookie of the Year Award was presented to Tiffany Budinger, Chair from Alaska. She was recognized for her exceptional participation during the past year. Budinger is the third recipient of the

award since it was renamed in honor of longtime National Director, Kent Gade, who retired from the program a few years ago.

The Chairman of the Year Award, named after PGER Frank O. Garland, was presented to Cristine Crum from Wisconsin. Crum recently completed her 21st YouTube show, ICAN, where she conducts interviews and provides individuals with information regarding drug use and abuse.

Drug Awareness will hold a workshop on Tuesday from 1:30-3 p.m. in Room 3501G in the Kansas City Convention Center. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet and talk with this year’s Enrique S. Camarena National Winner, Cpl. Jason Blair. All are welcome.

G/L FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

STATE ASSOCIATION WEBSITE CONTEST WINNERS

FIVE ★★★★★ Awards

- Colorado coloradoelksassociation.org/
- Florida floridaelks.org/
- Kentucky kentuckyelks.org/
- Maine maineelks.org/
- Massachusetts maelks.org/
- Mississippi mselks.com/
- New Jersey njelks.org/
- New York nyselks.org/
- Oregon oregonelks.org/
- Pennsylvania paelks.org/
- Texas texaselks.org/

FOUR ★★★★★ Awards

- Connecticut ctelks.org/
- Georgia gaelks.org/
- Kansas kselks.org/
- MD-DC-DE mddedcelks.org/
- New Mexico nmelks.com/
- Oklahoma okelks.org/

CARD LOCK COMPANY
 “PROVIDING ALL YOUR ACCESS CONTROL NEEDS”

Celebrating our 77th anniversary, Cardlock company has been dedicated to providing the security and support you need.

info@cardlock.com
 Post Office Box 680550 · Prattville Alabama 36068-0550
 Toll Free: US 800-633-1464 / Canada 800-633-1466 / Fax 334-365-9788

Custom Elk Pins

Officially Licensed by the Grand Lodge

Since 1977, hundreds of Elk lodges have chosen Emblematics, Inc as their preferred source for custom ER, officer and lodge pins.

If you purchased pins from another company, you paid too much!

- FREE DIES -

Check out our special low pricing exclusively for the Elks (includes Elks royalty fee + FREE DIES).

Cloisonne Hard Enamel

Size	Qty	250-499	500	1000
1"		\$1.94	\$1.58	\$1.42
1-1/4"		\$2.19	\$1.96	\$1.83
		Free Die	Free Die	Free Die

Prices INCLUDE Elks Grand Lodge royalty fee.

Officially Licensed by the Elks Grand Lodge



E EMBLEMATICS, INC.
TRUSTED SINCE 1977

Toll Free (800) 421-6735
www.customemblems.com
elks@emblematics.com

See you at the National Convention!

Check out what we can do to support you & your lodge!



Booth #331



- Pins
- Challenge Coins
- Apparel
- Tents & Tables
- Keychains
- Bar Accessories & More!

elks@ashworthawards.com
www.elkspins.com | 1.800.325.1917

Traveling Vietnam Memorial wall comes to KC

By Mike Chamernik
Convention News Reporter

In addition to live music and barbecue, Kansas City (Northland), MO No. 2376 is also featuring an impactful tribute to our nation's veterans.

The Lodge secured an appearance by the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) wall, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington, DC. Every name on the Vietnam wall is on the traveling wall, and the exhibit also has panels that commemorate veterans of other wars such as World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and Desert Storm.

Chris Cooper, the Public Relations Chair of the Lodge, said it is important to remember that a key part of Elkdom is to never forget our nation's veterans. Cooper said he was impressed by other veterans memorial traveling walls that he has seen.

"When I heard the timing of the wall and that they were going to be able to



get it at convention, I was ecstatic," Cooper said. "The more people who can see it, the better."

Cooper said that his Lodge has 15 Members who are tasked with assembling and disassembling the traveling wall, which consists of 6-foot panels that stretch out to 89 feet long.

Mona Brown of Louisiana, MO Lodge No. 791 will be stopping at Kansas City Northland to see the wall this week. Military service is a big part of her family: Her dad served in the Army; her grandfather served in World War II along side his brother, who was killed in battle; and several

members of her husband's family are Air Force veterans. Brown said her Lodge holds numerous charitable efforts for veterans, including annual hog roast fundraisers, Christmas parties for veterans, and donations to Hiring Heroes, a group that helps returning veterans get jobs and gain professional skills.

"Anything with veterans we are really involved with," Brown said.

Missouri State President Jason Meisenheimer is also serious about veterans service, as one of his motto's for his year is "Elks Never Forget, Thank A Vet."

"I'm very thankful that Kansas City Northland is bringing the wall up there so that people who haven't had the opportunity to go up to Washington DC and view it first-hand can experience it," Meisenheimer said. "[Visitors] can really understand the impact of what these heroes did for us, and the sacrifices they gave to ensure the freedoms that we have.

"We're the Show Me State. If you don't see it, you don't know." ★

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Top of the Class: 2025 MVS Leadership Weekend

By Patrick Roelofs
ENF Communications Coordinator

In May, the Top 20 Most Valuable Student scholars visited Chicago for the Most Valuable Student Leadership Weekend. Dedicated to service and leadership, these high school seniors were selected out of 21,500 applications to receive \$30,000 scholarships. Four hundred and eighty-two runners-up received \$4,000 awards.

The scholars started the weekend by serving at Cradles to Crayons, a nonprofit dedicated to helping end youth clothing insecurity. Sorting clothes by size, ensuring quality standards, and bundling items into packages was the perfect way for scholars to bond.

“Everyone here has the same values of wanting to better themselves and help the people around them,” said Sahand Khavari, sponsored by Plano, TX Lodge No. 2485. “Nothing’s a chore. Even doing physical labor feels fun because we’re around family.”

To learn more about the Elks, the Top 20 visited the Elks National Memorial and Headquarters. After an architecture boat tour on the Chicago River, the scholars returned to the hotel to participate in Tell My Story, which gave them a chance to connect on a deeper level.

“Coming here and listening to your stories and getting



The Top 20 Most Valuable Student scholars traveled to Chicago and visited the Elks National Memorial building in May.

to share my story, it made me feel comfortable being myself,” said Hunter Kirk, sponsored by Fairfield, IL Lodge No. 1631, during the weekend’s final reflection.

Following a final day of workshops and panel discussions about maximizing college success, the scholars visited the Willis Tower.

“It was an unforgettable weekend, and it’ll be a memory for the rest of my life,” said Ricky Lazaro, a 2025 Top 20 MVS scholar sponsored by San Antonio, TX Lodge No. 216. “To all the Elks—thank you.”

For 2025-26, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$3 million to fund the Most Valuable Student scholarship program. For more info about the MVS scholarship program, including eligibility and deadlines, visit elks.org/scholars.



Name Badges by Jan












Custom Elks Badges, Plaques, Awards, Portfolios Tumblers & Gifts

541-384-6854 www.badgesbyjan.com
badgesbyjan@hotmail.com

SCAN HERE
TO ORDER
NOW!





On the track and in communities DiscoverElks is building future leaders.

- Increasing awareness of the Elks around community race tracks.
- Advertising DiscoverElks during live streaming of races.
- Empowering youth ambassadors to share the Elks' story and showcase our impact on communities.
- Supporting STEM education for youth drivers

To learn more visit: discoverelks.org

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

ENF Chairs' Challenge Contest Winners

April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025

STATE WINNERS	Members	Score
Wisconsin	6,832	634.474
Maryland, Delaware & District of Columbia	20,777	583.195
Rhode Island	7,924	557.150
Connecticut	23,877	528.092
Washington	18,863	516.051

LODGE WINNERS

Division I — 150 Members or fewer

	Members	Score
1. Tri-Cities, TX No. 2877	102	929.000
2. Berea, OH No. 1815	129	920.000
3. Gulfport, MS No. 978	74	781.000

Division II — 151 to 225 Members

1. Portage, WI No. 675	191	913.000
2. San Angelo, TX No. 1880	158	900.000
3. Anderson, SC No. 1206	165	875.000

Division III — 226 to 300 Members

1. Kerrville, TX No. 2081	295	980.000
2. Henderson, KY No. 206	259	896.000
3. Arcadia, CA No. 2025	238	872.000

Division IV — 301 to 450 Members

1. Severna Park, MD No. 2482	419	1,000.000
2. Glen Burnie, MD No. 2266	380	1,000.000
3. Oak Harbor, WA No. 2362	353	1,000.000

Division V — 451 to 700 Members

1. Sheboygan, WI No. 299	525	1,000.000
2. Cranford, NJ No. 2006	500	1,000.000
3. New Castle, IN No. 484	657	964.000

Division VI — More than 700 Members

1. Waterville, ME No. 905	1,046	1,000.000
2. Greater Cape May, NJ No. 2839	2,064	1,000.000
3. Bristol County, RI No. 1860	2,369	1,000.000

In the event of a scoring tie, place was determined by categories listed in the Chair Challenge Guidelines. For information, visit elks.org/ENF/ChallengeRules.cfm.

ENF Per Member Contest Winners

April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025

STATE WINNERS	Mem.	Donations	Per Mem.
Utah	3,627	\$102,716.14	\$28.320
Mississippi	2,735	\$71,111.40	\$26.001
Texas	14,037	\$347,381.55	\$24.748
Nevada	6,879	\$136,475.33	\$19.839
Wisconsin	6,832	\$129,061.03	\$18.891

LODGE WINNERS

Division I — 150 Members or fewer

1. Pendleton, SC No. 2861	55	\$32,517.00	\$591.218
2. Kaukauna, WI No. 962	36	\$8,240.00	\$228.889
3. Greeley, CO No. 809	146	\$18,583.50	\$127.284

Division II — 151 to 225 Members

1. San Angelo, TX No. 1880	158	\$20,873.32	\$132.110
2. Crestview, FL No. 2624	156	\$20,507.00	\$131.455
3. Manila, PI No. 761	166	\$15,360.00	\$92.530

Division III — 226 to 300 Members

1. Cuyahoga Falls-Akron-Barberton, OH No. 1923	295	\$24,972.70	\$84.653
2. Lakewood-Bellflower, CA No. 888	300	\$17,742.00	\$59.140
3. Arcadia, CA No. 2025	238	\$13,852.00	\$58.202

Division IV — 301 to 450 Members

1. Cadillac, MI No. 680	313	\$103,887.00	\$331.907
2. Soldotna, AK No. 2706	349	\$18,581.00	\$53.241
3. Las Vegas, NV No. 1468	302	\$15,910.03	\$52.682

Division V — 451 to 700 Members

1. Roswell, NM No. 969	611	\$38,407.01	\$62.859
2. Louisville, KY No. 8	477	\$25,982.00	\$54.470
3. Sheboygan, WI No. 299	525	\$24,016.00	\$45.745

Division VI — More than 700 Members

1. Gallipolis, OH No. 107	874	\$74,231.00	\$84.933
2. Redondo Beach, CA No. 1378	902	\$42,614.00	\$47.244
3. St. George 'Dixie', UT No. 1743	1,341	\$53,148.00	\$39.633

CompleteSource

NEW Licensed Elks Vendor

CUSTOM Lodge Specific ONLINE STORE

We're excited to offer Elks USA lodges a hassle-free way to showcase their pride and unity with a custom online store—designed just for your lodge! Setting up your store is completely free, and you can customize it with lodge-specific apparel and other branded items.



NO SET UP FEES
Your store is free to launch

BOOST ELKS PRIDE
Strengthen your lodges brand and visibility!

FULLY CUSTOMIZABLE
Add the apparel that fits your lodges needs with your lodge number and/or location!

EASY ORDERING
Members can shop anytime, anywhere

Create your store today!

by contacting
Maddy Stephens
stephens@completesource.com
800-868-7018

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

Going for Gold: 2025 Getty Powell Award winners

By Patrick Roelofs

ENF Communications Coordinator

Stepping up to the line at the Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals takes courage. With all eyes on them in a silent 10,000-seat arena, competitors must dig deep.

Carrigan Price and Cooper Thompson proved their grit at the 2025 National Finals in Chicago in April. They are this year's Getty Powell Award winners for the highest-scoring girl and boy.

In the Girls 8-9 division, both Eila Gress, sponsored by Madison, WI Lodge No. 410, and Price, sponsored by Columbia/Middletown, PA Lodge No. 1074, started with a perfect 10/10. Gress put immense pressure on Price, making 14 out of 15 to finish with a total score of 24/25.

After Gress's turn, Price sank her first four shots before missing her fifth. In a tremendous display of grit, Price drained her final 10 shots to force a shoot-off. After a five-round extra session, Price claimed her title as Frank Hise National Champion.



Carrigan Price (left) and Cooper Thompson won Getty Powell Awards at the 2025 Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals in Chicago in April.

Two competitors in the Boys 12-13 division, Brazen Smith, sponsored by Wheeling, WV Lodge No. 28, and Thompson, sponsored by Claremore, OK Lodge No. 1230, couldn't miss. They both scored 25/25 in regulation to earn a shoot-off. After Smith missed his final two shots of the shoot-off, Thompson drilled all five for the victory. It was his first gold medal in four trips to the National Finals. He joins his older brother Caden, 2020 National Champion, in the

Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

Price, Thompson, and their parents are guests of the Elks this weekend and will be introduced at the Opening Ceremony.

The Elks have been unleashing gritty kids through the Hoop Shoot program for more than 50 years. For 2025-26, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$1.5 million to fund the program. For videos, news, and more info about the Hoop Shoot, visit elks.org/hoopshoot.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

\$44.4 million allocated for ENF programs in 2025-26

By Patrick Roelofs

ENF Communications Coordinator

The mission of the Elks National Foundation is to help build stronger communities by investing in the places where Elks live and work.

In the 2025-26 fiscal year, the ENF is allocating \$44.4 million to programs that improve the quality of life in Elks communities, help the State Associations accomplish their charitable objectives, serve the needs of today's veterans, and provide our youth with lifelong skills.

The largest of these programs is the Community Investments Program. Established 20 years ago, the CIP has grown from a budget of \$350,000 to nearly \$18 million, allowing each Lodge the opportunity to receive up to \$11,000 in grants.

CIP grants require Elks to identify

the needs of their communities, form a plan, and conduct an Elks-led, volunteer-based project. Similarly, State Associations address the needs of the community through charitable programs. The ENF will contribute \$11.5 million to state grants this year.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission provides aid and comfort to veterans in need. The ENF allocation to the ENVSC will increase by 12.7% this year to \$6.4 million, the largest increase for any ENF appropriation this fiscal year. The allocation includes \$3.8 million for the Welcome Home initiative to end veteran homelessness.

The ENF builds relationships with the leaders of tomorrow through scholarships. Nearly \$5 million will

be awarded to bright young minds as they pursue their academic goals and connect with Elks in their communities.

With the Hoop Shoot, the ENF is unleashing gritty kids who understand the importance of hard work. Nearly \$1.5 million will be allocated to this national free throw program this year. The

ENF also allocated more than \$1 million for the Drug Awareness Program, a 12.2% increase over last year.

To see the full breakdown of grants and appropriations, visit secure.elks.org/appropriations.

A 501(c)(3) public charity, the Elks National Foundation helps Elks support youth, serve veterans, and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. For more information, visit elks.org/enf.

