

# Arizona Elks News

The Arizona Elks News is an official publication of the Arizona Elks Association

April 2025



## *"Spreading the Joy"*

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[aeane newsletter@arizonaelks.org](mailto:aeane newsletter@arizonaelks.org)

AEA Newsletter  
Submission deadline:  
25 April 2025



Welcome new Exalted Rulers to the Arizona Elks Association. You are embarking on a wonderful adventure in Elksdom. If you prepared ahead of time, this year will be full of exciting events seeped in our Elk programs. Your first trip will be to your District Deputy's April Clinic. True you have already been to several DD Clinics while your Lodge's Esteemed Leading Knight, but you are now their leader. Listen well as the Vice Chairmen will be giving you lots of information about the many committee requirements. Take notes and enter all the dates in your calendar. That way you can check in with your committee chairs to find out if they are on track. Do not wait until the due date; communication is the most important part in an Exalted Ruler's year. Good luck and may the force be with you.



State Membership Chairman Giorgio Philips has been working with your District Vice Chairmen to keep you up-to-date regarding our membership numbers. Arizona is not doing as well as we did in the past. Our Lodges have many delinquents who are not able to pay their dues. I am saying "not able" rather than "will not" because I always think in a positive way. Our average age is over 67 - many on FIXED INCOMES. Here is an idea. What if you have a fundraiser to cover your delinquents' Grand Lodge Assessment amount? If you notify these members of the plan to cover this part of their dues, they may go ahead and pay what they owe. If not, explain to them about how it is better to take an absolute dimit after the assessment is paid, thus allowing them to return in the future. Dropping a member for non-payment is a BAD THING. Get these Elks back in within the next 30 days to help Arizona rise in the national ranks.

Oh yeah, don't forget about all those people waiting to be initiated. Start the new Elk year with a bang by initiating those people waiting to join us in Elksdom.

Continued on Page 2

**ARIZONA ELKS  
ASSOCIATION 2024-2025  
STATE OFFICERS**

***PRESIDENT:***

Sue Krausman

***FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:***

North: Larry Carver

***VICE PRESIDENTS***

South: Rocky Davis

East: Steve Like

West: Ron Wilson

***SECRETARY:***

David Dean

***TREASURER:***

Alane Asp

***BOARD OF TRUSTEES:***

South -1 Year:

Joseph H Riley, Jr. PSP

South - 2 Year:

Richard Botkin, PSP

East - 3 Year:

Michael Weishan, PSP

North -4 Year:

James R. Casacchia, PSP

West- 5 Year:

Al Kayal, PSP

***SERGEANT AT ARMS:***

Shawnee Carlile

***CHAPLAIN:***

Giorgio Phillips

***TILER:***

Kary Kerr

***INNER GUARD:***

Anna Mineer

***ASST. SECRETARY:***

Gary Parsons

***ASST TREASURER:***

Angela Buso

***ORGANIST:***

Ira Cohen

## *“Spreading the Joy”*

Continued from Page 1

I attended the Utah Elks Association convention in St George, UT. They only have ten Lodges doing the same work as our 43. The meeting was held at the St George Dixie Lodge and everyone was represented - quite different since we meet in a convention hall. One meeting I went to was about their State Major Project. I wondered where everyone was going to sit, as they kept coming into the room. Then I listened and realized every one of these Elks were there to help. No one, and I mean no one, was at the meeting just to listen. They all wanted to do something to help the children going to the camp. It was amazing to see so many Elks saying YES, rather than MAYBE or NO.

Jimm and I attended a 1st Gent Remember Emily fundraiser at Tucson East Lodge #2532 on March 22nd. The result was overwhelming. The South District Lodges donated \$5,660 that evening. This included over \$3,000 from our home Sierra Vista Lodge #2065. Your 1st Gentleman cannot express how much the Arizona Elks have stepped up to support his project. He started out with a dollar figure and that has come and gone. At other times and districts, he received checks from people with a personal investment; and from others who believe in the Steele Children's Research Center itself. I personally want to thank everyone opening your hearts and wallets, but I cannot. There are too many of you. You make me proud to be an Arizona Elk.

Fraternally,  
Sue Krausman, President Arizona Elks Association



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## *“Coolidge-Florence #2350 Donates to DAV”*

Jim Estey from the Coolidge Florence Elks Lodge #2350 dropped off donations to the Coolidge, AZ Disabled American Veterans of Pinal County (DAV Chapter 36) on behalf of the Veterans Committee. Included in the donations were various puzzles for adults and children, houseware, including various sets of dishes, glasses, silverware, and other household items. Also included were men's clothing such as t-shirts and socks. Accepting the donation on behalf of DAV Chapter 36 were, left to right: Carol Hall - DAV Auxiliary Commander, Alicia LaBeau - Commander, Jim Estey Elk Lodge 2350, Doug and Janet Stinson - DAV Junior Cice Commander. They were very appreciative for the generous donation.

*Submitted By; Debbie Knutson*



## *“Fountain Hills #2846 Delivers a Spring Donation”*

### EASTER GIVING

Fountain Hills Lodge #2846 delivered their Spring donation of \$700 to the Extended Hands Food Bank. Pictured Left to Right; Pastor David Iverson receiving the check from Elks Past Exalted Ruler, Judi Beischel.

*Submitted By; James Beischel*



## ***“Fountain Hills #2846 Recognizes Outstanding Volunteers”***

Fountain Hills Lodge #2846 recently honored two of its members for their tireless volunteer efforts. Ralph Christofferson, who was recognized by Exalted Ruler Greg Thomas as The Elk of the Year, for his leadership as Chairman of the Lodge Veterans Committee. John Engels, Lodge Leading Knight, honored by Exalted Ruler Greg Thomas as the Officer of the Year. Mr. Engels was recognized for his work on the Lodge Americanism and Children & Youth Committees.

*Submitted by; James Beischel*

Pictured Photo on Left; (Left to Right) Ralph Christofferson, Greg Thomas Exalted Ruler  
Pictured Photo on Right; (Left to Right) John Engels, Greg Thomas Exalted Ruler



## ***“Fountain Hills #2846 Celebrates Irishfest”***

On Saturday, March 15th, Elks Lodge #2846 celebrated Irishfest with the town of Fountain Hills at Fountain Park. Approximately thirty members volunteered to work the two beer tents. A portion of the proceeds from the sales went to fund the upkeep of the Veterans Memorial. It was a great day for Fountain Hills and a great day for the Irish!

*Submitted by; James Beischel*

Pictured Left to Right; Cindy Browning, Danny Boyce, Julie Moe, Patti Murphy, Troy Browning, Gail Walton, Cindy Backes and Bill Backes



## *“Prescott #330 Celebrates Americanism Essay Winners”*

Prescott Elks Lodge #330 awarded prizes to six 7th and 8th grade students for the Americanism Essay Contest. The winners were Ruby Murphy, Marianne Sammartano, Troy Dehaven, Aiden Razo, Joshua Gean, and Riley Bryden.

*Submitted by; Diana Ramsey*

Pictured Left to Right; Tamara Hilton, Lodge Esquire, Ruby Murphy, Marianne Sammartano, Joshua Gean, and Diana Ramsey, Lodge Americanism Chair.



## *“Prescott #330 Makes Duffle Bags for Kids”*

Prescott Lodge #330 holds a sewing day every few months to make duffle bags for foster kids' possessions when the kids are being relocated. In January, 46 bags were donated to Yavapai CASA for Kids Foundation.

*Submitted By; Diana Ramsey*

Pictured Left to Right; Julee Baeighkley of CASA and Diana Ramsey, Charity Chairman.



## *“Payson #2154 Honors Veterans with Quilts of Valor”*

On Saturday, March 22nd, 2025, four combat/military veterans were awarded Quilts of Valor by Rick Oliver, Marilyn Harness and the volunteers from Heart-to-Heart Quilts of Valor Chapter. Veterans honored during the ceremony were: Pictured Left to Right; MSG Don Carlos Pagan, Sgt's and brothers Dennis and Thomas McGowen, and SSG Scott Kissie.

*Submitted By; Lu Anne Frost*



## *“Bullhead City #2408 Promotes Drug Awareness”*

On March 1st, our Drug Awareness Chairman Sarah Valle set up her booth at the Bullhead City Police bike rodeo for the kids in the community. About 200 kids participated in the rodeo with 100 kids visiting Sarah's booth receiving coloring books and ribbons and stickers! It was an awesome turnout!

*Submitted by; Robin Ayers*

Pictured Left to Right; Karen Valle (Drug Awareness committee member), BHC Police Officer, Drug Awareness Chairman Sarah Valle and another Bullhead City Police Officer.



## *“Bullhead City #2408 Donates to Veterans”*

On February 19th, 2025 with a grant from the Elks National Foundation, the Bullhead City Elks #2408 was able to donate \$3,000 to Veterans In Motion. The funds will be used to maintain and insure vehicles used to transport local Veterans to their doctor appointments and of town hospital visits.

*Submitted by; Robin Ayers*

Pictured Left to Right; Administrator Nancy Horn, Treasurer Ken Goetz, Elks Exalted Ruler Walt Honse, Elks National Foundation Chairman Mike Swain, Board Member Dennis Rogers, Founder Bob Horn, President Harold Smith, Board Member Mike Carson and Elks National Foundation Co-Chairman Kathryn Cornelison



## *“Bullhead City #2408 Donates to Food Bank ”*

On February 20th, 2025 the Bullhead City Elks #2408, with their Beacon Grant from the Elks National Foundation donated \$6,000 to the Colorado River Food Bank. The Colorado River Food Bank provides food to people living in extreme hardship living in our surrounding area. *Submitted by; Robin Ayers*

Pictured Left to Right; Elk member and volunteer Vicky Hernandez, Trustee Margaret Lopez, Trustee and Elks National Foundation Chairman Mike Swain, Food bank lead Volunteer Pat Carter, Elk member and volunteer Chris Carmody, ER Walt Honse and Elk member and volunteer TJ Carmody.



## *“Tucson #385 Celebrates Hoop Shoot Regional Winner”*

On Saturday February 22nd, 2025, Tucson #385 Lodge had Rene Cortez (12-13-) at the Las Vegas Hoop Shoot Regional, where he won his category and is now off to Chicago for the Elks National Hoop Shoot contest. Pictured Left to Right; Rene's mother, ER Richard Bernard, Rene Cortez, Trustee/BOD/PER Wayne Burns, Rene's father and little sister. Let's wish Rene a "Happy Hoop Shooting" and good luck at the Chicago National contest. *Submitted By; John Aceves, Secretary*



## *“Tucson #385 Honors Officers and Members”*

Pictured Left to Right; ER Richard Bernard, Grand Lodge Special Citation, Making a difference-2024-2025 Betty Craven, Certificate of Recognition for years of service as Inner Guard Martha Megerle, Tucson Lodge #385 Officer of the Year 2024-2025 Wayne Burns, Grand Lodge Outstanding Service Commendation-2024-2025 Michael Lessely, Certificate of Recognition for years of service as Loyal Knight Trudi Sofias, Grand Lodge Outstanding Service Commendation-2024-2025 John Sofias, Lodge Elk of the Year 2024-2025

Back row:

Marisa Michaels, Grand Lodge Recognition for Membership Recruitment-2024-2025 Wayne Thompson: Distinguished Citizen Award 2024-2025

*Submitted by; John Aceves, Secretary*



## *“Tucson #385 Present Certificates of Appreciation”*

Mary Shaffer, Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans Coordinator, presents Certificate of Appreciations to John, Trudi Sofias and ER Richard Bernard/Tucson Lodge #385 for support in the recent TVSV 20th Veterans Stand Down.

*Submitted by; John Aceves, Secretary*

Pictured Left to Right; Richard Bernard, Exalted Ruler, John, Trudi Sofias, Mary Shaffer



## *“Douglas #955 Honors Special Olympians”*

Douglas Lodge #955 held an event on 3/12/25 at our lodge recognizing 12 special Olympians and provided them with a hamburger dinner donated by Susan Molina Douglas, an Elks Member . Exalted Ruler Buddy Williams presented a grant in the amount of \$2,500 dollars.

*Submitted by; Richard Ross PDDGER, South District Special Olympics Chair*

Pictured; Members of the Douglas Special Olympics with Ralph Curfman and Exalted Ruler Buddy Williams



## *“Ajo #1576 Hold AEMP Golf Tournament”*

Ajo Elks held its third annual AEMP golf tournament at the Ajo Community Golf Course on March 1st with 44 participants. The event was organized by PER Mike Seeley

*Submitted by; Marlene Hinman*

Pictured Left to Right;

Ajo Elks members Joe Gonzalez, Joey Gonzalez, Ray Valdez and Ajo Elk Spouse Brian Martinez.



## *“Ajo #1576 Hold Annual PER Chicken Dinner”*

Colleen Seeley and Melissa Page donned chicken costumes to attract the public to the annual Elks PER chicken quarter dinner.

Photo courtesy of Kattie Allen

*Submitted by; Marlene Hinman*



## *“Ajo #1576 Hosts Paint Night”*

Paint Night at the Ajo Elks had 29 participants 8 of whom were guests. The group was led by Ajo Elk spouse Charlotte Argyle.

Photo by Amy Runge

*Submitted by; Marlene Hinman*



## *“Ajo #1576 Honors Citizen of the Year Part 1”*

I would like to introduce to the recipient of the 2025 Ajo Elks Lodge, Citizen of the Year Award, Mr. Ken Farmer.

Many of you already know Kenny as a longtime resident of Ajo but some of you may not, so with Kennys permission, let's take a stroll down memory lane. Kenny was born in Ajo at the Phelps-Dodge mine hospital, up on the hill, in 1948. He attended elementary school at the Curley Elementary School and graduated from Ajo High School in 1966.

After high school he attended and graduated from Northern Arizona University, in Flagstaff, with a degree in Elementary Education. He returned to his hometown here in Ajo and began his teaching career that would last for 38 years. During his career in the Ajo Public School system, Kenny coached Freshman, JV and Varsity football and Volleyball and as well as coach of Ajo High School Golf team. He was the Ajo High School Athletic Director for 6 years.

During his tenure as an educator Kenny not only taught his students reading, writing and arithmetic but the equally important things such as right from wrong, being a good person and being responsible and for your actions.

His students were mentored not only by a great educator but by a good man. There are hundreds of his students who went on to attend college and vocational schools and become wonderful mothers and fathers because of the good teachings and guidance of this man.

Aside from his school activities he has served in multiple capacities at the Ajo Country Club, and been an indispensable part of the annual Christmas celebration. I

know Kenny is still greeted by the familiar, “Hey Mr. Farmer, how are you” by thousands of students who have returned to Ajo every Christmas to spend the holidays.

Currently he serves as a board member of the Ajo Cemetery Association and I'd like to focus a little on his work there.

Continued on Page 12

## *“Ajo #1576 Honors Citizen of the Year Part 2”*

He has been a Board Member for approximately 5 years and has been instrumental in the revitalization efforts to maintain and care for the Ajo Cemetery. His unceasing dedication, long hours of physical labor and coordination with the community in providing a place of eternal rest for the members of the Ajo community speaks for itself.

Mr. Farmer, along with other Board Members were directly responsible for the transfer of the Ajo Vietnam Memorial from the VFW to the Ajo Cemetery and the establishment of that memorial as one of the center pieces in the memory of those veterans that made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. One of the key roles of Mr. Farmer at the cemetery, is the coordination with family members for the final resting place of their loved ones. Mr. Farmer, on very short notice many times, meets with grieving family members and accommodates their requests. His ability as a kind, caring and considerate person has not gone unnoticed by countless families over the years. The role he plays at the cemetery may seem simple; however, his many acts of kindness speak volumes about him as a person and community member. It is his work at the Ajo Cemetery that this award is specific to.

Over the years, Ajo has been fortunate to have citizens that step forward to accept the responsibilities that others have refused, stepped forward to sacrifice their time, their money and their precious family time and do the things that need to be done to make Ajo, Arizona a better place. Mr. Farmer has done this time and time again and the members of Ajo Elks Lodge recognize this. Ajo is very fortunate to have Mr. Farmer. He is a good man and he is my friend. Photo by

Marlene Hinman

*Submitted by; Joe Brigman*

Pictured Left to Right;

Joe Brigman, Daisy Farmer,  
Ken Farmer Ajo Elks Citizen  
of the Year, Mike McBurney  
Exalted Ruler



## *“Tucson East #2532 Raises Money for Special Olympics”*

Tucson East held 2 different fundraising dinners to raise funds for Special Olympics. Both nights were filled with delicious food and friendships. Thank you to all who came to either one or both of the dinners. A total of \$993.00 was raised.

*Submitted by; Richard Ross, PDDGER, South District Special Olympics Chair*

Pictured Left to Right;

Megin Goetz, PER  
Rich Botkin, PSP  
Richard Ross PDDGER



## *“Phoenix #335 To Host Youth Awards Ceremony During National Youth Week”*

In celebration of National Youth Week, the Phoenix Elks Lodge #335 is proud to host its annual Youth Awards Ceremony on Friday, May 2, 2025, at 6 PM. This special event will honor outstanding young individuals in our community who have demonstrated leadership, service, and dedication to making a positive impact. We are thrilled to welcome Miss Arizona, K. Johnson, as our Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Attendees will enjoy a fun-filled night of recognition, celebration, and a pizza and ice cream party, making it a memorable event for all.

Join us at Phoenix Elks Lodge #335 as we shine a spotlight on the incredible youth in our community and their achievements. Let's come together to celebrate their bright futures!

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Jeff Beasley . Don't miss this inspiring evening!

*Submitted by: Jeff Beasley*

Pictured;  
K. Johnson Miss Arizona



## *“Phoenix #335 Hold Saint Paddy’s Day Bash”*

Phoenix Lodge #335 enjoyed a fantastic night celebrating St. Patrick's Day while supporting the Elks National Foundation! The organizers Randy Doescher, Diane Bodwell, Larry Bodwell, and all the amazing staff, kitchen volunteers, and everyone who joined in put on an amazing event!

All proceeds from the evening went to Elks National Foundation to help strengthen our communities!

*Submitted by: Jeff Beasley*

Pictured Left to Right  
Larry Bodwell, PDDGER  
Diane Bodwell, PER



## *“Phoenix #335 Participates in Veterans Stand Down”*

On March 13 and 14, thirteen Phoenix Lodge #335 Veterans Committee members staffed the refreshment table at the AZ Veterans Stand Down, an event providing resources such as medical and employment assistance and personal hygiene items for our local heroes. The volunteers served 54 pots of coffee along with other refreshments and snacks. Lodge #335 contributed over \$2,000 to support this important event including hygiene supplies

*Submitted by: Linda Thompson*

Pictured Left to Right; Lecturing Knight Becky Simons, Kathleen Rose, Darlene Shephard, Dawn Quinn (back), Kathy Allasia, Leading Knight Karen Seaman, Cheri Christopher



## *“Phoenix #335 Holds Charity Ball”*

The Phoenix Lodge #335 Charity Ball on February 15th was a roaring success, raising approximately \$21,000 for our Scholarship Fund. The 250 attendees enjoyed an ‘Evening in Paris’ including can-can dancers, mimes and a fifteen piece orchestra. Everyone raved about this fabulous event made possible by hundreds of hours worked by 30 exceptional volunteers.

*Submitted by: Linda Thompson*

Pictured;  
Leading Knight  
Karen Seaman joins the  
fun learning to can-can  
dance.



## *“Yuma #476 Donates to Special Olympian”*

William Hoskin stopped by to thank Yuma Lodge #476 for our support in donating \$500 to assist with transportation and lodging which allowed him to compete in the Special Olympics National Bowling Tournament in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. William came home taking two Gold Medals.

*Submitted by: Jim Thompson*

Pictured Left to Right; Jim Thompson Exalted Ruler, William Hoskin, Joan Cendejas PDDGER



## *“Lake Havasu City #2399 Donate to Lodge Scholarship Fund”*

The Fishing Club with the Elks Lodge #2399 in Lake Havasu City donated \$400 to the Lodge Scholarship fund.

In the photo on right is Fishing Club President Jerry Boyce with the Scholarship Committee, Center is Chairperson Cheryl Beach.

*Submitted by: Eva Fox*



## *“Lake Havasu City #2399 Elkettes Donate to Search and Rescue”*

With sales from February Pie sales during the dinner hour the Elkettes with the Elks lodge #2399 in Lake Havasu City donated \$500 to Mohave County Search and Rescue.

*Submitted by; Eva Fox*

Pictured Left to Right; Elkettes Scott Pierstorff, Pie Chairperson Lisa Nutt along with some of the Search and Rescue crew accepting the check.



## *“Lake Havasu City #2399 Elkettes Donate to Pia’s Paws”*

The Elkettes with the Elks Lodge #2399 in Lake Havasu City donated \$500 to Pia's Paws from their Pie sales in March during the dinner hours.

Pia's Paws is a foster based small dog rescue in Lake Havasu City, AZ.

*Submitted by; Eva Fox*

Pictured Left to Right; Elkettes Pie Chair Lisa Nutt, Elkettes Crissie Russo and Pia Frahm, founder of Pia's Paws.



## *“Lake Havasu City #2399 Elkettes Hold Fashion Show”*

The Elkettes fashion show raised \$3000. \$1500 stayed with the Elkettes for future donations. \$750 was donated to the Elks Scholarship fund and \$750 was donated to ENF. Tickets were sold, lunch, entertainment and raffle baskets were all a hit. It was a great day all for charity. Elkettes Eva Fox and Sheri Sanderson chaired the event with help from Vanessa Brewster, the Elkette President.

*Submitted by; Eva Fox*

## *“Sun City #2559 Holds Flag Retirement Ceremony”*

On March 11th, Sun City Elks #2559 officers completed the Flag Retirement Ceremony for members and guests. *Submitted by; Bill Matthews Exalted Ruler*

Pictured Left to Right; Mark Bolson PDDGER, Josh Morehart Esteemed Leading Knight, Venita Brazier PER, Bill Matthews PDDGER, Joan McConnell Chaplain, Rosemary LaSalle Esteemed Loyal Knight.



## *“Sun City #2559 Present ENF Charity Plaque”*

Congratulations to Mr. John Buza for receiving the Elks National Foundation Fellowship 2024-2025 Charity Plaque, during the lodge meeting. The Plaque was presented by Past Exalted Rulers: Bill Matthews PDDGPER, Vicki Way PER, Jose Cordero-Torres PER.

*Submitted by; Bill Matthews*

Pictured Left to Right; John Buza, Bill Matthews Exalted Ruler, Vicki Way Secretary, Jose Cordero-Torres

A graphic for Elks Happy Easter! featuring a white wicker basket filled with colorful Easter eggs on a green grassy field. The text "ELKS" is in large green letters, and "Happy Easter!" is in pink cursive. Below the basket, the words "HAPPY EASTER" are written in large, colorful, 3D block letters. The background is a bright blue sky.

ELKS  
*Happy Easter!*

HAPPY  
EASTER

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The Elks logo, featuring the word "Elks" in a stylized font with "USCE" below it, all enclosed in a circular border.

## ***“Government Relations”***

### **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Reporting is easier with a Coordinator

By Myron T. Shannon, Jr.

Committee Member

With the Elks year over, we need to be on top of our charitable reporting. We might never reach that 100% level, but we can do better than we have done in the past.

One way of capturing the charitable works that our Members achieve is to appoint a Government Relations Lodge Coordinator. The Secretary will give this person access to CLMS for recording charitable giving. They will only have access to charitable giving and will not be able to access any other part of CLMS. By doing this we will have two people capturing and reporting our giving.

You should have the Government Relations Manual at your Lodge. This book will give all the information you need. On page 19 you will find Appendix 8, which is the form you need for reporting. Make copies and make them available for Members so they can fill them out and return them to the Government Relations Coordinator of your Lodge or the Secretary.

Let's make sure we keep the Lodge Government Relations Coordinator very busy so that we can surpass last year's totals.

As an example, the Hoop Shoot has thousands of hours and miles for capturing and reporting, when counting Lodge, district, state, regional, and the National Finals in Chicago.

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# ELKS

Serving our communities to build a stronger America

★ ★ ★ ★

**Charity Rating**  
**The Elks National Foundation, Inc.** is a  
four-star rated charity by  
**Charity Navigator.**

 **ELKDOM'S**  
HEART FOR AMERICA

**UNITED IN SERVICE SINCE 1868**

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## *“Veterans News”*



### Information and Veterans News

Mary I Shaffer - Elks National Veterans Service

ED Chair - Tracy Cabell.....714 587-1070

ND Chair - John Roush.....719 313-0565

SD Chair - Linda Seggie.....520 401-3990

WD Chair- Jim Thompson.....929 782-3519

### VA/News

#### VA processes one million disability claims faster than ever before

For immediate release

February 25, 2025 10:55 am

Department claims-processing productivity is at record levels

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it has processed more than a million disability claims in Fiscal Year 2025, reaching the milestone nearly two weeks faster than it did in FY24.

Despite receiving 15.6% more claims than last year, the department completed its one millionth FY25 claim Feb. 20 — faster than at any point in the department’s history.

In fact, the 10 highest claims processing days in VA’s history occurred within the last month, and the department’s highest claims processing day ever was Feb. 12, when VA processed more than 12,000 claims.

Of the more than one million claims VA has processed in FY25, over 60% were granted.

Through January, VA has provided \$62 billion in compensation and pension benefit payments to 6.9 million Veterans and survivors. VA’s claims accuracy rate has risen to more than 92%. To date, VA has completed 375,961 PACT claims in FY25.

“Under the leadership of President Trump, we are strengthening the department so it works better for Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors,” said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. “VA’s claims processing productivity is the highest it has ever been, and we look forward to continuing to provide record levels of service to Veterans and VA beneficiaries.”

“Throughout this Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, and every March 29 thereafter, we will honor all those who answered our Nation’s call to duty. We vow to never again confuse personal disapproval of war with prejudice against those who honorably wear the uniform of our Armed Forces. With conviction, our Nation pledges our enduring respect, our continuing care, and our everlasting commitment to all Vietnam veterans.” - President Donald Trump

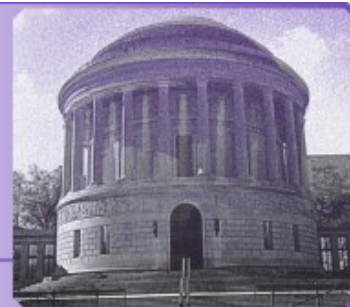


## "Grand Lodge News"



# Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

*Elks Care — Elks Share*



## Incoming leaders start year with proactive mindset

April is here and spring has finally arrived. It always feels like a new beginning in April, especially if you live in the colder regions of our country.

A new fraternal Lodge year begins. I want to congratulate all the newly installed Exalted Rulers and Lodge Officers. It is a proud moment to be installed and take on the challenge of providing leadership within your Lodge. Be sure to review and implement the programs of the 2024-2025 Grand Lodge Program booklet so you can continue showing "Elkdom's Heart For America." Make sure that you have all your committees prepared and that committee members know their responsibilities. Communication is the key.

Financially, it is the Trustees and Officers who need to submit a budget to the Lodge for adoption no later than



### Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

**DOUGLAS A.  
SCHIEFER**

the last regular meeting in April or the following regular meeting. Your Lodge should be ready to present a sound budget to your Members. The annual report for the previous year is also due May 1 so make sure that your FRS financial reporting system is up to date.

On a housekeeping note, you should review any by-laws or house rules and regulations that need to be updated. It's for the good of the Lodge to make

everything orderly and that you always prioritize the integrity and safety of the Lodge.

On a festive note, it's time to make a calendar of social events for your Lodge. Create reasonable, achievable monthly events that will excite and attract your membership. Outside of your Lodge you are encouraged to establish a community project that emphasizes charitable work. Your Lodge life should always have a balance of what you do inside your Lodge and outside in the community you serve. Don't forget to set aside May 1-7 as Elks National Youth Week. All Lodges are urged to sponsor programs dedicated to the youth of our country.

Julia and I wish you a blessed Easter season. It is a celebratory time for our family. God bless you and God bless America!

### G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

## Leave your doubt at the door

By RICK GATHEN

Membership Marketing Manager

Every year, when it is time to renew your Elks membership, a thought may creep in: Does my membership really matter?

Maybe you've felt that moment of hesitation. But let us tell you this, loud and clear: Leave your doubt at the door.

Because when you walk through that

Lodge door, you stand in a place where heroes are honored, children are lifted, communities are strengthened, and kindness wins. You are part of something that stretches across generations, across towns and cities, across this entire nation.

You are an Elk. And that matters more than you may ever know. So, Leave your doubt at the door.

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# ELKS

Leave your doubt at the door

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

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