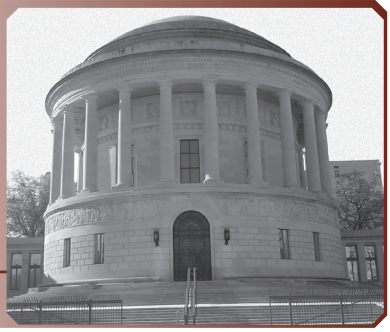
NOVEMBER 2026 elks.org Volume 62, No. 4

Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



Honor veterans this month, start thinking ahead



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

TIMOTHY F. JAEGER

November is Veterans Remembrance Month for Elks, and November 11 is Veterans Day, when we honor our veterans, past and present. Elks find many ways to thank our nation's veterans.

Hosting dinners in our Local Lodges, sending care packages, and participating in events at veterans administration hospitals are just a few ways Elks express gratitude.

The Elks annually reaffirm our mission: "*So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.*" The Elks National Veterans Service Commission takes that pledge one step further and promises to render aid to our nation's veterans and military members, with a special focus on those in need.

Look around your community for other groups honoring veterans. Sharing our programs and making more people aware through joint celebrations or remembrances is a positive way to get publicity for our respect and support of the veterans.

November is also a good time to begin thinking ahead.

• Start finalizing your selections for Elk, Officer, Student, and Citizen of the Year awards.

• Begin planning your Elks Memorial Service for the first Sunday in December.

• Start preparing for your Christmas events.

• Consider updating your All-American Lodge stats—keeping this up monthly is much easier than a blitz to complete it all at once.

Finally, Thanksgiving this year is on November 26. Is your Lodge planning a special dinner or event for those who have nowhere to go for the holiday?

We look forward to hearing about all the special events Lodges hold when we visit your area. Happy Thanksgiving. God bless our great Order, our troops, and the United States of America.

Remember, "***Elks Care—Elks Share.***"

Are you ***READY ELKS—LET'S GO!***

Important tax return changes announced

GRAND SECRETARY
Carl T. Seibert

November begins the season of gratitude, and I want to wish everyone a joyful and blessed Thanksgiving! May your days be filled with the warmth of family and friends, the comfort of good food, and the appreciation of all the blessings in your life. Let's take time to reflect on what we are thankful for and share kindness with those around us.

This past month, I have been helping Lodges upload the IRS 990 Tax Returns and supporting documents to elks.org. Many Lodges (just under 500) have had their CPA obtain an extension, which gives them until February 15, 2027, to file.

Grand Lodge requires Lodge Tax Returns to be uploaded to elks.org by August 1 and filed with the IRS by August 15.

A recently updated tax code affecting 501(c)(8) organizations that have Chapters/

Please see **SECRETARY,** Page 3

GRAND LODGE AUDITING & ACCOUNTING COMMITTEE

Now is the time to review your budget

By STEVEN D. WEATHERLY JR.
Committee Chairman

Because October signifies the beginning of the second half of the Lodge fiscal year, November is a good time to review your budget.

A budget is a tool. Like a ruler or a yardstick, a budget can measure and compare where you are to where you thought (or hoped) you might be.

And like using a tool, adjustments occasionally need to be made to ensure accurate results.

Imagine your Lodge hosts a beverage tent at the annual city Labor Day celebration, but the event is rained out.

The budget indicates that $25,000 was expected as profit for the event, and that amount was a significant portion of the budgeted income for the fiscal year.

If the event is not rescheduled, you should adjust your budget numbers and upload a new budget for the fiscal year to the Adaptive FRS.

If the event is rescheduled, you should still monitor the income from the beverage tent.

If $25,000 was budgeted and you only earn $10,000 because the weather was colder, you will (probably) need to adjust your budget.

The same rationale applies to expenses, which can be more difficult to predict than revenue. For example, it is hard to foresee how much of an increase (or how many increases) will be approved for a utility in any given year.

Remember, a budget is not like the Ten Commandments—it is not carved in stone.

If used correctly, a budget can assist you in achieving a profitable year for the Lodge. Remember that the FRS data is only as good as your submissions. Like IT people always say: "Garbage in, garbage out."

G/L FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Americanism Essay Contest info out now

By VICTORIA WATSON
Committee Member

This year's contest asks kids to "Explain a Constitutional right or privilege and how it affects you and your family."

We are all touched by the Constitution, and this prompt encourages students to reflect on their personal experiences, explore how constitutional rights and privileges affect their families, or even begin meaningful conversations with older family members who remember a different time in our nation's history. We look forward to reading students' thoughtful and insightful submissions!

Important Dates

1. Students send essays to Local Lodges by December 15, 2026.
2. Local Lodges send essays to the District Chairperson by January 21, 2027.
3. District Chairperson sends essays to the State Chairperson by February 28, 2027.
4. State Chairperson sends essays to the Contest Administrator by March 31, 2027.

Lodges should make sure all information submitted is legible and complete, including the correct phone number, email address, and home mailing address.

We also ask the Lodge to send the total number of essays judged to the District or State Chairperson to have a record of participation. The contest is open to students in grades 5 through 8.

Essays must be no more than 300 words typed or printed (by the student), submitted to the Local Lodge, and have the entrant's name, grade, school, and the sponsoring Elks Lodge on the essay itself. The cover page provided on our website must be attached.

We ask those judging the essays to scan for possible use of AI enhancements and, if found, disqualify the essay.

This is a snapshot of points when judging:
Originality: 30 points
Development of theme: 40 points
Mechanics & neatness: 30 points

There will be a winner in each grade level. Winners will receive a plaque and a monetary prize for first, second, and third place.

National winners of each division will be announced in the spring newsletter, and awards can be picked up at the Fraternal Committee Booth at the Elks National Convention in Denver in 2027.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Elks announce new Junior Golf contest

By WILLIAM C. BOHNETT
Committee Member

For many years, the Grand Lodge Activities Committee has promoted youth golf with the understanding that the benefits of team building, competition, and physical fitness exemplify the mission of the Grand Lodge Activities Committee.

Now we've taken Junior Golf to the next level. The Grand Lodge Junior Golf Contest is a new, sanctioned contest for Local Lodges to use when conducting an Elks golf event.

In the great tradition of the Hoop Shoot and the Soccer Shoot, the Junior Golf Contest teaches valuable life lessons and develops important traits and characteristics through a fun format that gets kids out of the house! Contact me at wbohnett@hotmail.com to request a program packet that will guide you through running a contest from beginning to end.

Visit elks.org/Programs/golf.cfm for more information.

G/L GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Protect the BPOE's right to exist as a charity

By JOHNNY L. JONES
Committee Chairman

It's November and that means election time! The mission of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is to protect and preserve our right to exist as a private, nonprofit, charitable organization.

Five primary activities support this mission. We are all most familiar with charitable reporting. The other four are:

1. Monitor legislation and laws: Be vigilant about proposed legislation that may affect the Order.
2. Advocate for or against legislation where necessary: Push for legislation that will benefit the Order and against any policies that would be detrimental to our Lodges.
3. Promote programs for positive interaction between Lodges and their elected officials: Advocate for close ties between Lodges and local, state, and federal officials and agencies.
4. Educate Members on public accommodation and other laws: Provide assistance in understanding existing laws.

As Members, we must be aware of legislation being proposed that will affect us. This could include laws related to unrelated business income; discrimination and harassment; postal regulations and rates; sales tax and exemptions; alcoholic beverage control rules and regulations; bingo raffle and games of chance rules (gaming); and property tax exemptions. Changes could have implications for our Lodges and State Associations. As Members, we must advocate for legislation that will enhance the work of our Order and against laws that would be detrimental.

Contact your elected officials about your Lodge's charitable work—or invite them to attend—to show them the positive impact of the Order.

The charge of the Government Relations Committee is to work with legislators to ensure laws and rules allow us to serve our communities, no matter their political affiliation. As Lodges and State Associations, we do not campaign or allow campaigning in our Lodges. As Elks, we do not endorse candidates. The obligation doesn't prohibit us from working to further the Order's interests.

AWARENESS From Page 4

are doing in the area of Drug Awareness. We know we are saving lives through education and with our program. The Elks Drug Awareness Program is making communities stronger and safer. Happy Thanksgiving to each and every one of you.

We want your stories for the next BPOE time capsule!

To celebrate 100 years of the Elks National Memorial, we are creating a time capsule to be opened in 2126 for the Memorial's 200th anniversary.

Follow the QR code to tell us: **What's one of your best or favorite memories with the Elks?**

SECRETARY From Page 1

Lodges, requires us to monitor and review the filing of Lodge tax returns, especially verifying that the balance sheet on the tax return mirrors that of the Lodge's accounting system balance sheet for the period. Your area Member of the Grand Lodge Auditing and Accounting Committee is required to review the submissions and then mark the file from pending to final.

Next year, EVERY LODGE MUST communicate to your CPA or qualified tax preparer that you MUST have in hand your finished tax return by August 1, 2027. This will be the 2026 return that will be uploaded in 2027 for the year ended March 31, 2027. This is a must. Failure to have your tax return filed with the IRS, and uploaded on elks.org, opens you up to fines from Grand Lodge of $100 per month that the return is late, up to $500. Now who wants that?

You will get tired of the reminders I will be sending out next year during tax time (April 1, 2027, to August 1, 2027). PLEASE communicate now with your CPA and let them know that an extension will NOT be permissible for an Elks Lodge return. Tell them you MUST have your return by August 1.

Finally, a Lodge requesting an In Good Standing Letter from the Grand Lodge will not be considered in good standing if their tax return has not been filed with the IRS by August 15. The Lodge will not be in good standing until it is filed, and abuse of this by Lodges could cause the Grand Lodge to lose its 501(c)(8) status, which would be the end of the BPOE. Good Standing Letters are often required by states and counties for bingo license and liquor license renewals.

This is an easy deadline to meet if your Lodge stays on top of accounting and record keeping throughout the year. Your Board of Directors and your Lodge Auditing & Accounting Committee should take the lead on ensuring this process is completed on time. The committee's job is not done until the tax return has been filed and accepted by the IRS. §13.040(g) *The Members of the Committee shall continue with their duties until the FRS for the month of March and the applicable Federal and State Information, and Tax Returns are completed, reported to the Lodge and filed with the Grand Lodge for the fiscal year in which it is appointed as herein directed.*

There are several more compliance guidelines that we will discuss in future issues, but the tax return essential to ensuring the continuation of our Order.

I hope you will continue to keep up the good fight with membership recruitment and retention. One of Rick Gathen's many guiding remarks is that new Members come from new Members. Once a Member joins, challenge them to bring a friend or two into the Order. New Members are our best recruiters, and engaging them early is the key to making them part of the Elks family.

I have added to my email signature the motto ***Striving for the Gold Standard in Lodge & Member Support.*** Our goal at HQ is best-in-class service to our Lodges and Members. If we give you speedy and accurate responses to your questions, that is more time for you to focus on what really matters and that is membership recruitment and retention! As Grand Exalted Ruler Tim Jaeger likes to say: ***Ready Elks—Let's Go!***

VETERANS From Page 4

services for veterans.

The ENVSC partners with VA social workers to provide veterans with emergency financial assistance. The majority of these funds go to help prevent homelessness, making this a unique resource that offers veterans stability in a time of crisis. Last year, Elks assisted 702 veterans with rent, security deposits, and utilities so they could be safely housed. The average amount of assistance granted was $1,601, proving a small amount of funds at the right time can give veterans the hand they need to succeed.

Elks support veterans, military members, and their families. We award millions of dollars in grants. These projects range from back-to-school events to running veterans food pantries to hosting adaptive sports events for veterans.

This November, invite your community to join in your Lodge's work to serve veterans. While many people are remembering veterans, your Lodge can turn that thought into action.

A small donation or a few hours of their time could help your Lodge make a difference for a veteran in need. Visit elks.org/vets/donate/cfm for more information.

Assisting veterans through CIP grants

By PATRICK ROELOFS
Communications Associate

With Community Investments Program grants, Elks Lodges ensure that veterans are never forgotten.

Since 2017, Asheville, NC Lodge No. 608 has partnered with the Veterans Restoration Quarters, a housing facility for local veterans run by the Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry. The Asheville Lodge has used nearly all its CIP grants to support the VRQ over those years by providing meals and essential supplies. However, in 2024, disaster struck.

Hurricane Helene ravaged the southeastern United States, causing more than $59 billion of damage and destroying more than 70,000 homes in North Carolina alone.

The storm flooded the VRQ, forcing all 250 veterans and staff members to be evacuated by the National Guard and moved to a motel across the street. This temporary solution became permanent when the Ministry purchased the building, with the hopes of turning it into a new veteran housing facility.

The Asheville Lodge received a Spotlight Grant from the CIP to help make these plans a reality.

Determined to reoutfit the former motel, the Asheville Elks quickly got to work. They were very hands-on in the process—several Lodge Members with experience as carpenters and building contractors volunteered their time to get the job done.

The Asheville Lodge's inspiring project was featured in a video during the Opening Ceremony of the 2026 Elks National Convention. Visit enf.elks.org/YouTube and watch the video titled, "It's What Elks Do."

If your Lodge wants to uphold the Elks' solemn pledge to veterans with CIP grants, don't wait! Apply for a Beacon, Gratitude, or Spotlight Grant to make it a reality. Applications close January 20, 2027.

The Elks National Foundation appropriated $18.8 million to fund the Community Investments Program in 2026-27. To learn more about the CIP, visit elks.org/CIP.

Take action during Veterans Remembrance Month

By MARY MORGAN
ENVSC Director

For more than 100 years, Americans have celebrated Veterans Day on November 11 as a way to honor all those who've served in the U.S. military. For Elks, one day isn't enough, and so we declare the entirety of November to be Veterans Remembrance Month. For Elks Members, remembrance means action in the form of programs, events, and outreach that make a positive difference on the lives of today's veterans.

Last year, the total value of Elks support of veterans, including their time, energy, and financial resources, was valued at more than $56 million. Elks make an impact for veterans across the nation, in November and throughout the year.

Elks are there for veterans seeking medical care and treatment, acting as advocates and friends. We station 727 Elks in more than 400 VA Medical Centers, State Veterans Homes, clinics, and housing facilities across the country, providing ongoing support, training, and funds to meet veterans' needs. Elks visit with these veterans an average of 2.4 times a month to host barbecues, run bingo games, provide art classes, and donate needed supplies. Elks served more than 740,000 veterans through this program last year.

Elks are committed to ending veteran homelessness, and ensuring that every veteran has the safe, stable home they deserve. One way we do this is by providing home supplies to newly housed veterans. Elks provided 4,252 Welcome Home Kits to veterans moving into new homes last year alone. Kits include things like beds, dishes, small furniture, microwaves, and food. Elks partner with social workers to provide kits and streamline

Please see **VETERANS,** Page 3

Carl T. Seibert, Grand Secretary
Benevolent and Protective
ORDER OF ELKS
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60614-1889

November 2026

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
CHICAGO, IL
Permit No. 5244

DRUG AWARENESS COMMISSION

November is a time for Thanksgiving, hope

By FRANK J. BURR
Drug Awareness Commission Director

November is a significant month for drug awareness, featuring various observances aimed at educating the public about substance use and its impacts.

As part of a nationwide effort, November 30 has been declared National Methamphetamine Awareness Day. The day aims to educate the American public about the effects of methamphetamine abuse in families and communities.

As part of the initiative, we hope to decrease the demand for this highly addictive drug.

In 2019, the Center for Disease Control reported that one out of six adults has used illicit drugs in the past month. Brain scientists now know why just one use of crystal meth can make a person feel hooked.

This awareness day is an effort to send a prevention message to potential meth users. It also gets the message out about available programs to current users.

But as Elks, our mission is to educate before use.

Ask your Lodge or State Drug Awareness Chairman about the availability of the DAP 400 pamphlet, which contains a wealth of information regarding methamphetamines.

Part of the reason meth is so addictive is it increases the amount of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine occurs naturally in our brains, as it affects our body's reward centers as well as our movement, motivation, and reinforcements. It's the impact on our brains that makes meth so addictive.

Finally, as we approach the holiday season, we at the DAP and the DAC are thankful for the never ending work Lodges

Please see **AWARENESS,** Page 2