

INSIDE Annual Award Winners

3-4

Lodge Highlights

5

CCC Catchup

7-8



IEA PRESIDENT

Jeff Sterr

Remember the Past, Embrace the Future.

For 25 years, I have been proud to call this organization home. During that time, I have had the privilege of serving alongside a long line of strong presidents who kept this Association moving forward. With each administration, our presence in the community and our impact have continued to grow. As I reflect on the responsibility now entrusted to me, I understand what it means. I also know I cannot do it alone. I am counting on our officers, members, and lodges across the state to share that responsibility as we honor the standards set by those who came before us and build on them.

I will do everything I can to earn your confidence, and I ask for your support in the year ahead. The theme guiding us this year is Remember the Past, Embrace the Future.

That theme reflects where we are today. This year brings important new beginnings: a new State Sponsor, new lodge and district leaders—including many first-time officers—and a renewed effort to reverse more than 20 years of membership decline. Welcoming new members, strengthening our lodges, and showing our communities who we are - are all part of the future we must embrace.

Remembering the past is more than a slogan; it reminds us of who we are. The Elks who built these lodges, served their neighbors, and supported their communities set the example. When we carry forward that spirit of fellowship and service, we make better decisions today and lead with purpose tomorrow. As we remember the past and embrace the future, let us commit to welcoming new members, supporting one another, and serving in ways our communities can see and feel.

We want to remind all lodges that the President's ENF per-capita goal for 2026-27 is \$5.75. Lodges that meet or exceed that goal are eligible for a \$2,000 community grant from the Illinois Elks Association. Lodges that also post a membership gain will receive an additional \$500 bonus. To claim PSP Neel's grant for reaching his goal, please notify State Treasurer Jeff Rodier, State Secretary Joe Ray, and me of your intended use of the funds by December 31, 2026. In addition, the IEA is

Continued on Page 2

Thanks to the Elks for everything they do

Bryan Klatt, GER

Happy Independence Day, the Fourth of July. Happy America 250! We live in the greatest country on the face of the earth.

We as proud Elks uphold the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity in order to honor our great nation and organization.

Did the last twelve months fly by for you as they did for me and First Lady Sue? My, weren't we in Kansas City last week? The old adage "time flies when having fun" is fitting.

The easy part of staying enthused week after week was visiting each state and the Members thereof.

Sue and I want to thank each and every one of you for your assistance, hospitality, and support during our year as Grand Exalted Ruler and First Lady.

Each of you are the reason we are 800,000 Members strong with more than 1,780 Local Lodges who form the greatest charitable organization in the United States of America.

We are strong and mighty, and we are blessed to be citizens in our great country.

God bless each and every one of you. God bless the BPOE, and God bless the United States of America. Always remember my motto, "Be The Difference," as we are 158 years young!

2026-2027 Senior Officers



Congratulations to the 2026-2027 Illinois Elks Senior Officers. Best wishes on a fantastic year and we look forward to seeing what you accomplish during your tenure.

Pictured above (left to right), back row: Steve Albrecht, Tiler; Jeff Rodier, Treasurer; Joe Ray, Secretary; Gregg Collins, Sgt-at-Arms. Front row: Mike Hozian, 3rd VP; Scott Flota, 2nd VP; Jeff Sterr, President; Chris Ord, 1st VP; Kristi Burton, Chaplain.

A WORD FROM OUR OFFICERS...



IEA SECRETARY
Joe Ray

Members all,
Not much to say this time around.

IEA dues notices have been mailed and I have gotten a few back, if you have not received yours let me know.

When sending in requests for the President’s and Veterans Grants, please list who and what they will be using the money for. I have to input this information in the State’s Charity Book. Thank you!



IEA TREASURER
Jeff Rodien

Members all,
Wow! Summer is here already and the Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago, with our own Bryan Klatt, conducting the Convention as Grand Exalted Ruler is right around the corner! Congratulations to Bryan and First Lady, Sue, for the great job they did in leading our order for the past year.

The Treasurer’s Office is now ready to receive, and process, your requests for State Matching and Veterans Grants. Simply send a brief email to President Jeff and Secretary Joe specifying what the money is to be used for and we’ll get you your grant!

Also, don’t forget to get your District, State and Grand Lodge dues paid in a timely manner!

Norine and I are looking forward to seeing those of you that registered up in Chicago next month!! I know President Jeff has a lot of things planned for us in the Illinois suite.

Take care and see you in Chicago!!

From the President, cont’d.

offering a \$1,000 Veterans Grant to each lodge, and districts may qualify for a \$1,000 Veterans Matching Grant by raising \$1,000 for veterans. Lodges also have several CIP grants available, so please take advantage of this “free money.”

Membership growth remains a priority. Many Lodges are struggling financially due to declining membership numbers. But membership is not just about collecting dues; it is about building a committed group of people who believe in our mission and actively support it. More than a financial tool, membership is a leadership strategy that provides stability, builds loyalty, and strengthens the community around our mission. A well-practiced strategy will also drive gains in membership as folks want to be part of that excitement of community spirit and camaraderie.

I hope many of you had the chance to attend the Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago. It is an impressive event, made even more memorable by Bryan’s leadership. Over his many years in Elkdom, he has set an outstanding example. I am grateful for all he has done for me, the IEA, and the Elks, and we should all strive to “Be the Difference.”

Julie and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Fall meeting and during our travels across the state. Thank you again for your support!

2026-2027 Officers
District Vice Presidents



Pictured above (left to right), back row: Tim Logemann, Tim Bowen, Tony Korzenwski. Front row: David Marqua, Heather Weyn, Melanie Combs, and Doug Sills. Not pictured Rich Grillion.

Senior Trustees



Pictured above (left to right), back row: John Tucker, Chris Vangel, Jason Shaw, Todd Doody. Front row: Judy Schmikus, Larry Nolen, Jackie Epley, and Lisa Fultz.

Junior Trustees



Pictured above (left to right), back row: John Tucker, Chris Vangel, Jason Shaw, Todd Doody. Front Row: Debra Bruno-Nevin, Sandy Bosca, Trucy Steers, and Christine Haarmen.

Calling all
IL Elks!

Send in your stuff!
Grand Lodge pics,
articles, fundraiser
recaps and more!

ilelksnewsette@gmail.com
Deadline for next Newsette is July 20, 2026

IL Elks Annual Awards

Veteran Volunteer Winners

Dianne Chamness & Wayne Hannam



ENF Lodge Winners



Belleville #481

Total Donations - 500 or Less Members

Robinson #1188

Per Capita - 501-900 Members



Champaign-Urbana #2947

Total Donations & Per Capita
501-900 Members

Springfield #158

Total Donations & Per Capita
901+ Members

American, Drug Awareness and Teen of the Year Winners



IL Elks Annual Awards

Family of the Year
Tim & Angie Bowen



Elk of the Year
Edward Forneris



Accepted by Joliet ER Debra Bruno-Nevin

More Award Winners



David Marqua
Secretary of the Year



Todd Doody
ER of the Year



Joliet #296



South District
District of the Year



Murphysboro #572
Lodge of the Year



Galesburg #894

Giving back to our Veterans



Brookfield #1510 recently donated \$1,000 worth of briefs and t-shirts to homeless veterans through the social service department of The Jesse Brown VA located in Chicago's Medical Center. Donation was made possible with the Freedom Grant.

Feeding those in need



Galesburg #894 recently donated 167.2 lbs. of food to the Ronald McDonald House. Elks trustee Steve Thomas and his wife, Jan, are pictured above.

A Tribute to Tex



A tribute to our beloved fraternal brother, friend, veteran and constant supporter, Thomas (Tex) Tracy.

Tex embodied the virtues of charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity. Through his many roles at Wheaton #2258, the offices at North District level and the current office of North District DDGER, Tex touched our lives in profound ways. He was kind, determined, generous and funny. He supported many causes and didn't let anything stop him from carrying on his goals.

As a veteran, he served our country with honor, exemplifying the true meaning of sacrifice and courage. Among his many service medals, he received 2 purple hearts. Tex was a constant supporter of other organizations, as well. His kindness and compassion were felt by all. His support and camaraderie at Elgin #737 was immeasurable. As we reflect on his legacy, we are reminded of how he enriched our lives, showing us the true meaning of Elkdom.

So we honor Tex Tracy and thank him for his brotherhood, friendship and determination.

Though we will all miss him, he will never be forgotten.

Fraternally yours,
Diana Ankenbrandt, Elgin #737



I hope you're all having a great summer! Thanks again for supporting the Newsette and sending over your articles, pictures, and more! If you have Grand Lodge photos, unique feature ideas, fundraising ideas or more, I'd love to see it!
You can always email items to ilelksnewsette@gmail.com and I'll do my best to highlight your lodge, members, and events. Enjoy the warm days and sunny skies!

Happy Reading,
Liz



NEED HELP WITH YOUR Lodge MARKETING EFFORTS?

VISIT
virtualmanuals.elks.org

today for marketing tips, tricks, shareable
social media and print graphics and more!

Opportunities arise for Elks over summer

Summer is often associated with vacations, but the needs of our communities remain constant. For Elks Lodges, it also presents an excellent opportunity to engage the community and host events that attract new Members. Now is an ideal time to strengthen your volunteer teams with fresh perspectives and renewed energy.

State Secretaries: Please submit your State Committee Chairs & Association Information for the Directory by July 31.

District Deputies will be installed at the Grand Lodge Convention and will begin their duties immediately. July is an ideal time to prepare your Lodge for their visitation and inspection.

Their first clinic, expected in August or September, will outline expectations for the year, including a focus on membership growth, financial stability, and effective planning.

For those who will attend the Chicago convention, I hope you take the opportunity to visit our magnificent Memorial Building and celebrate its 100th anniversary.

Those of us who work there each day are continually inspired by its beauty. We all share a responsibility to help preserve this landmark and ensure it remains a part of our legacy for the next century.

Please remember the impression it left on you and the importance of sustaining it for future generations.

Positive interaction with elected officials

The Government Relations Manual states, "Another important function of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is to assist Lodges and State Associations in promoting positive interaction and ties with federal, state and local officials and agencies."

Why is it important? How do we go about this?

Legislation, whether it is federal, state or local, can affect our Lodges and State Associations and our ability to carry out the vital community charity work that we do so well.

There could be times when we need to ask our elected leaders to support or not support legislation. Before we do that, it is best if these officials know exactly what the Elks do and the effect that is made with all of our programs.

Local Lodges should invite their elected officials to events such as Flag Day, award ceremonies, youth and veterans' events, and other community service activities. Let them see firsthand all of the wonderful work that Elks do. Give them an opportunity to speak to Members.

State Associations are also encouraged to invite elected officials to their conventions and events. Show them what each State Major Project is contributing to their constituencies.

We constantly talk about and encourage charitable reporting. Consider sharing your local, state, and national year-end charity statistics with your elected officials.

This will show the tremendous amount of work we do, with the numbers to back it up. Seeing the actual cash value of the work Elks do in their jurisdictions can be astounding.

Do not just contact elected officials when you need something. Make sure to thank your legislators for working on behalf of the Order, regardless whether they are successful.



NOTICE TO CANDIDATES

A candidate for any IEA state office may submit at no charge one proclamation or endorsement from the candidate's Lodge (or district), or a letter of intent. Copy with or without photograph shall not exceed 11 printed column inches (about 35 words per column inch). A candidate may also submit a photograph and biography, not to exceed 100 words, for publication in the spring issue of the Newsette at no charge. All other copy and photographs shall be considered paid advertising and shall be charged at the same rates as regular advertisements.

ADVERTISE YOUR SPECIAL Lodge EVENT!

Golf Outing • Poker Run • Fundraisers
\$75 per insertion of business-card size ad
or **\$65 per insertion** on four-issue contract!
Call or e-mail us!

SECRETARIES!

WE WANT YOUR ADDRESS CORRECTIONS!

Send to: Children's Care Corp.,
1201 N. Main St. • Chatham, IL 62629
Fax: (217) 483-2131
E-Mail: helpkids@elksare.org

Note: Address corrections go to the Children's Care Corp. because that's who maintains the mailing list.

WE WANT YOUR NEWS!

Send to: Newsette Editor
1937 N. Walnut Rd., Rochester, IL 62563

E-Mail:
ilelksnewsette@gmail.com
For information, call Editor Liz Conaway
at (217) 827-3799

Newsette Deadlines

Fall - July 20 - **NEXT ISSUE!**
Mid-Winter - Nov. 21
Spring - March 22
Summer - June 15

Belleville #481 turns member giving into community impact

Thanks to the generosity of its members through the Elks National Foundation (ENF), Belleville Lodge was able to invest \$11,000 back into the local community during the past lodge year. The lodge received \$10,000 in ENF grant funding, along with a \$1,000 Community Grant from the Illinois Elks Association.

These grants are made possible by members’ contributions to the ENF. With member donations totaling \$6,966, Belleville Lodge received an impressive return of \$1.44 in grant funding for every dollar donated.

Grant recipients included:

- Belleville Downtown YMCA received \$4,000 to provide swimming lessons for underprivileged youth through its youth swimming program.
- Community Interfaith Food Pantry received \$3,000 to purchase essential food items not typically donated by the community.
- St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry received \$3,000 to help stock shelves with needed grocery items.
- Teen Court received \$500 to assist with operating expenses.
- Women’s Crisis Center received \$500 to support services for individuals and families in need.



Belleville Downtown YMCA receiving their donation.

This is a great example of how every ENF donation made by Elks members comes full circle, creating meaningful improvements in the communities we serve. With continued member support, Belleville Lodge looks forward to making an even greater impact during the 2026-2027 lodge year.

Join in the conversation.

Elks Children’s Care 2026 Clinics

July 2026
No Clinics

August 2026
Flora Clinic August 12th @ Clay County Flora Medical Clinic 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM
NW District - Rockford Clinic August 19th @ Orthollinois: 2:00 to 4:00 PM
NW District - Morrison Clinic August 20th @ Morrison Community Hospital: 8:00 AM
South District - DuQuoin August 21st @ Marshall Browning Hospital: 2:00 to 4:00 PM

September 2026
Bloomington Clinic September 4th @ Cortese Foot & Ankle Clinic: 12:00 to 1:00 PM
Robinson Clinic September 9th @ CMH Bone & Joint Center: 9:00 to 11:00 AM
Mt. Vernon Clinic September 10th @ Neuromuscular Orthopedic Institute: 2:00 to 4:00 PM
Mt. Carmel Clinic September 14th @ Wabash General Hospital: 11:30 to 1:00 PM
Effingham Clinic September 17th @ Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Orthopedic Clinic: 8:00 AM
Champaign/Urbana Clinic September 23rd @ OSF Healthcare Heart of Mary Medical Center: 8:30 to 10:30 AM

October 2026
Lincoln Clinic October 6th @ Lincoln Memorial Hospital: 1:00 to 3:00 PM
Elgin Clinic October 20th @ Orthollinois: 2:00 to 4:00 PM
Dixon Clinic October 22nd @ Morrison Podiatry: 8:00 AM

November 2026
Flora Clinic November 4th @ Clay County Flora Medical Clinic 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM
South District - DuQuoin November 20th @ Marshall Browning Hospital: 2:00 to 4:00 PM

December 2026
Mt. Vernon Clinic December 3rd @ Neuromuscular Orthopedic Institute: 2:00 to 4:00 PM
Bloomington Clinic December 4th @ Cortese Foot & Ankle Clinic: 12:00 to 1:00 PM
Champaign/Urbana Clinic December 9th @ OSF Healthcare Heart of Mary Medical Center: 8:30 to 10:30 AM
Effingham Clinic December 10th @ Sarah Bush Lincoln Bonutti Orthopedic Clinic: 8:00 AM
Mt. Carmel Clinic December 14th @ Wabash General Hospital: 11:30 to 1:00 PM
Robinson Clinic December 16th @ CMH Bone & Joint Center: 9:00 to 11:00 AM

ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

CALENDAR WINNERS

APRIL

Randi Kelsheimer, Robinson; Eddy Hunter, Streator; Peggy Amason, Deborah Glisson, Elgin; Brayden Martin, Beardstown; Peter Steward, Springfield; Matt Inverso, Charleston; Billie Ruth Reller, Beardstown; Jean Terry, Quincy; Curtis Thornton, Murphysboro*; Carolyn Vitalo, Brookfield; Mike Schimanski, DuQuoin; Charles Krezwick, Chicago South; Gloria Konczal, Oak Lawn; Adrian Wright, Charleston; Tom Jamison, Jacksonville; James Rushing, Springfield; Brad Christiansen, Des Plaines; Nicolai Mikos, Chicago South; Erin Grumley, Belleville; Alice Lauer, Mendota.

MAY

Pat Durkin, Chicago South; Joseph Schneider, Oak Lawn; Lucus Cupp, Robinson; Jarrod Rice, Sycamore; Aaron Bass, Dixon; Bill Pierce, Peoria; Ange Heming, Quincy; Christine Jamruszka, Des Plaines; Tracy Egerman, Sycamore; Kathy Price, Canton; Karen Reid, Olney; Dalton Smith, Charleston; Patricia McAdams, DeKalb; Mary Jo Hock, Belleville*; Jenifer Rongey, Marion; Tony Doudera, Salem; Blaire Sullivan, Dixon; Rob Catton, Des Plaines; Ronnie Oglesby, Chicago South; Tristan Tolley, Beardstown; Shirley Summers, Murphysboro.

JUNE

David Marqua, Robinson; Kay Fink, Champaign-Urbana; Bill Cowden Jr., Springfield; James Ferguson, Murphysboro; Susan Dunn, Carlinville; Gale Randall, Peoria; Penny Young, Galesburg.

*\$100 **\$1,000 ***\$5,000



Illinois Elks
Children's Care
Corporation

1201 N. Main • Chatham, IL 62629
(217) 483-3020 • Helpline 1-800-272-0075
Fax (217) 483-2131 • E-mail helpkids@elkscares.org

CCC Year End Report

By Bill Block, CCC Admin

In 2025-2026 the Illinois Elks Lodges raised a total of \$134,903.10 for the KIDS. In direct donations from members \$25,313.91, and Memorials from our Past Members \$10,274.75 for a total of \$35,588.66. Through our three annual fundraisers the CCC raised the following; Annual Appeal (HoDo) \$23,456.00, Statewide Drawing \$21,600.00, the Benefit Calendar \$47,245.00, Coin Boxes \$1,280.35 for a total of \$93,581.35, for a combined Grand total of \$264,073.11 minus other investments.

Expenses – Patient Assist \$226,728.35, Clinics \$31,791.54, all Scholarships \$46,400.00, Totaling \$304,919.89.

The 2026-2027 Elected Board Officers - Chairman, Tawn Williams of Elmhurst #1531, Vice Chairman, Jim Goldsborough of Jacksonville #682, Treasurer, Chad Mitsdarffer of McLeansboro #1882, Secretary, and Kristi Burton of Pontiac #1019.

The CCC only works because of you; without your support we could not provide for the abundance of children we help each and every year. The IEA places no Per-Capita on this project, we exist only through our Lodges and the planned functions provided for the CCC, and through our three annual mailings throughout the year: The Annual Appeal/HoDo Pin, the Statewide Drawing, and Benefit Calendar. For nearly 99 years the CCC has been helping Kids. Making this State Project one of the oldest and continuous State Major Projects in all of Elkdom. The Illinois Elks Children's Care Corporation gives us a purpose and a cause; thank you for your support and all you do for the Kids.



Want to show what your
Lodge has been up to?

Send it to the Newsette!
ilelksnewsette@gmail.com

Just a couple of our HAPPY recipients! A communication device and a new bike!



A tradition that keeps on dancing

For the 43rd year the Elks of Oglesby #2360 have once again sponsored The Eighth Grade Ball. May 1, 2026 was a night that brought together 174 graduating students from nine smaller grade schools for a dress-up evening of music, dancing, refreshments, and fellowship. Students from The Academy of St. Carlo Acutis, Oglesby Washington, Ottawa Marquette, Tonica, Lostant, Deer Park, Waltham, Dimmick, and Grand Ridge enjoyed dancing to the music offered by the DJ under their school flags hung from the ceiling of the hall.

The evening is designed to foster connection and familiarity among students before they enter high school. It is one of the many community-focused events that the Oglesby Elks sponsor throughout the year “committed to youth and civic engagement”. The event is funded by the Lodge’s Children’s Care Fund set up to serve youths under 21. The event was organized by Kelli, Morgan, and Dusty Shan with help from Sarah and Junior Metcalf.

Elks Care and Elks Share.



Elroy goes GREEN

Thank you to members Nick Kedzior and Jim Pink for bringing Elroy the Elk, the Elks Drug Awareness Program Mascot, to be with member and Fire Chief Tom Wendt and his duty crew of the Merrionette Park Fire Department which led the Chicago Southside Irish Parade.

