



JUNE JULY 2025



NCSEA President Mark Couch presented the North Carolina Flag at the Grand Lodge Convention Opening Ceremonies



NCSEA President Mark Couch and wife Julie pictured with the North Carolina Flag



Message from State President Mark Couch

Fellow Elks,

It is an honor to represent North Carolina at the Grand Lodge Convention in Kansas City. Julie and I had a fantastic time seeing everyone there. Carrying the North Carolina flag was a momentous privilege. We were able to see our new Grand Exalted Ruler, Bryan Klatt and his wife, Sue, onstage as he was sworn in and we were proud spectators as your new District Deputies were sworn in. Congratulations to Robert “Shorty” Dennany, Chris Setzer, Jerry Peters, and Robert (Bobby) Arrington. Thank you to our President Elect, Dr. David King, and his wife Judy for a wonderful job hosting the North Carolina Suite.

As we move forward in this year of Elkdom, I want to personally thank John Boyd for his years of service to our organization, eighteen as Special Deputy alone. His guidance and mentoring is priceless, but I will always cherish his friendship the most. Congratulations to Michael Bryant for taking over the role of Special Deputy; it’s a huge task and I know you’re more than up to it.

This month, I want to recognize the incredible work our lodges do to support our communities and highlight one of the most important groups we serve—our veterans.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has a long and proud history of standing beside those who have served our country. Across North Carolina, our lodges contribute in many ways, including

- Providing Welcome Home Kits to help homeless veterans transition into stable housing.
- Volunteering at Stand Downs to assist veterans in need with food, clothing, medical services, and job opportunities.
- Honoring veterans with ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veterans Day to ensure their sacrifices are never forgotten.
- Recognizing veterans at all lodge functions and making them feel at home among their fellow Elks.

Continued on next page

Presidents Message Continued

As a proud Army veteran, I can personally say that being recognized for my service is always a humbling experience. It means so much to know that the sacrifices made by those in uniform are appreciated. The Elks provide a unique space where veterans can come together with like minded individuals to continue serving their communities—something that many of us miss after leaving military service.

If your lodge is looking for ways to expand your support for veterans, please reach out to your district's Veterans committee member. There are always opportunities to do more, give more, and serve more for those who have given so much to our country.

Additionally, I encourage every lodge to continue strengthening its foundation—keep your calendars updated, **COMMUNICATE** with your members, and work closely with your District Deputies and NCSEA Vice Presidents to ensure your lodge is thriving.

As summer continues, I hope you take some time to enjoy the season—whether it's a backyard BBQ, a beach trip, or just relaxing in the shade with a cold beverage (maybe at your lodge!). But don't forget—summertime is also a great time to bring in new members. Invite friends, family, and neighbors to your lodge's events, show them the great work we do, and let them see for themselves why being an Elk is something special. We must strive to turn NC's membership loss around!

If you ever have questions, concerns, or good news to share, I'd love to hear from you. And if you're holding a special event to honor our veterans, let me know—I would be honored to attend when possible.

Let's keep making a difference, supporting those who have served, and building stronger lodges together.

And, of course... **HOW 'BOUT THEM ELKS?!**

Fraternally,

Mark Couch

State President

North Carolina State Elks Association



Message from Grand Exalted Ruler Bryan Klatt

After nearly 40 years as an Elks Member and 17 years serving as Grand Secretary, I am honored to now represent our Order as Grand Exalted Ruler for 2025-26.

I first want to thank my wife, Susan. Her dedication and support make this journey possible. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our friends, family, and fellow Elks. We thank you all for everything.

My theme is “**Be The Difference.**” Keep it in mind all year—and beyond. **Be The Difference...** in a veteran’s life. Be it by helping them out of homelessness, providing Welcome Home Kits, visiting them in their home or retirement center, or mailing them a birthday or holiday card. **Be The Difference...** in a student’s life. Be it by organizing clothing and school supply drives, holding Hoop Shoot or Soccer Shoot contests, championing Drug Awareness, and promoting the many scholarships offered by the Grand Lodge programs and State Associations. **Be The Difference...** in your Lodge. Be it by volunteering, getting involved, and using the many available grants to help those who need it most.

In other words, we need you to Be The Difference for our Order to grow. Susan and I are embarking on a year of travel, promoting our many Elks programs administered by our Grand Lodge committees. All our Order’s endeavors strive to give back to and improve our communities. Furthering our commitment to charity will make our Lodges even stronger. It will deepen the camaraderie among the Members of our Lodges as we work toward a common goal. As we succeed, upstanding members of the public will see our impact and will be motivated to join us.

Working hard, sharing a vision, and staying true to our principles will bolster the spirit of Elkdom. I am confident sustained membership growth will follow. The Elks National Foundation, the “Great Heart of Elkdom,” is a catalyst for the many things we do. The Community Investments Program, a series of grants that meet specific local needs, turns 20 years old in 2025-26. The grant allocation total has been boosted to \$17.6 million. It will allow the Elks to be a major difference in our communities. Members have repeatedly proven their commitment to meeting our annual per capita donation goal, which will be set at \$5.15 per Member in 2025-26. It will go a long way, so thank you for all your efforts.



District Deputies Sworn in at Grand Lodge Convention



**Pictured L-R; DDGER West Bobby Arrington; DDGER East Central
Chris Setzer; DDGER East Robert “Shorty” Dennany;
and DDGER West Central Jerry Peters.**

This years DD Clinics listed on page 7



Mark your calendar!!!

October 24th—26th 2025

The NCSEA Fall Conference

Will be held in Charlotte at the

Doubletree by Hilton

5624 Westpark Dr.

Further details will be forthcoming in the

NCSEA Newsletter and at ncelks.org



2025-2026 District Deputy Clinics

East—DDGER Robert “Shorty” Dennany

September 7, 2025 Wilmington #532

January 25, 2026 Calabash #2679

March 22, 2026 Oak Island #2769

East Central—DDGER Chris Setzer

August 17, 2025 Roxboro #2005

January 11, 2026 Fayetteville #1081

April 19, 2026 Sanford #1769

West Central—DDGER Jerry Peters

August 10, 2025 Salisbury #699

February 8, 2026 High Point #1155

April 12, 2026 Greensboro #602

West—DDGER Robert “Bobby” Arrington

August 24, 2025 Asheville #608

January 18, 2026 Hickory #1654

March 8, 2026 Morganton #1852

Note that although we attempt to hold DD Clinics in August, January, and April, due to scheduling conflicts, some DD Clinics may be held in the preceding month or the month after.

Members of the North Carolina State Elks Association

I have spoken with the Texas Elks State President, and he shared that many of our fellow Elks members have lost their homes due to recent disasters. Please see the message below to learn how you can help support those in need.

Mark Couch, President

North Carolina State Elks Association

Disaster Relief Update

KERRVILLE ELKS LODGE #2081
1901 Junction Hwy.
P.O. Box 294535
Kerrville, TX 78029-4535

Greetings TEXAS ELKS

Just wanted to take a moment to express the appreciation of Kerrville, Texas Lodge #2081 for the outpouring of thoughts, prayers and the offerings of assistance by our fellow Elks Lodges in Texas and from across the United States.

The catastrophic flooding in Kerr County, which occurred on the morning of July 4th, 2025, was truly devastating. The loss of life will forever leave a lasting and painful memory for years to come.

For the past several days, the response to this disaster, by the local Community, State and Nation has been overwhelming and impressive. It has been amazing how faith based organization, corporations, local businesses and the general public have come together to address the needs of those who have suffered material and personal losses. The response has been Amazing.

Within the next two (2) weeks, it is anticipated that the rescue efforts will conclude, the overwhelming number of volunteers and first responders will return to their respective communities, and the Relief effort will enter a new phase... Addressing clean-up efforts, property damage and the well-being of the residents of Kerr County, Texas, AND rest assured that the Benovolent and Protective Order of Elks will make every effort to ensure that the recovery of the Community is successful.

For those Elk Lodges, outside the jurisdiction of the Kerrville Elks Lodge, that would like to make monetary donations, it is suggested that donations be forwarded to the Texas Elks State Association (TESA) Disaster Relief Fund and when deemed necessary, the Kerrville Elks Lodge will draw from these resources.

Monetary donations can be forwarded to the following address:

TEXAS ELKS STATE ASSOCIATION
C/O MIKE CLARK
3537 PALADIN PL.
FORT WORTH, TX 76137

In the MEMO section of Checks, Please indicate: **DISASTER RELIEF FUND**

Thank You for your Support! ELKS CARE - ELKS SHARE

Jeff Bowman - Exalter Ruler, Kerrville Elks Lodge #2081

Craig Melms - President, Kerrville Elks Charities, Inc. (KECI)

PER ASSOCIATION FALL GOLF TOURNAMENT

For all you avid golfers out there the PER Association is holding a golf tournament during the Fall Conference in Charlotte to raise money for their PER Grants.

The tournament will be held on Saturday October 24, 2025 at 8:00 am
at the Harry L. Jones Golf Course in Charlotte.

The registration fee is \$100 per player.

Registration and more information will be available online
at the Conference registration site at ncelks.org



You can also support the PER Association Grant program by sponsoring a hole.
They are accepting Hole Sponsors from Members, Lodges, and Businesses.

Cost to sponsor a hole is \$50 and is payable by check to

NCSEA PER Association
C/O Derrick Simms
2409 Flat Woods Road
Timberlake, NC 27583

BRUNSWICK COUNTY SHERIFF DEPUTY PRESENTED WITH THE ENRIQUE CAMARENA AWARD

Each year, the BPO Elks present the Enrique S. Camarena Award to a member of law enforcement who best exemplifies the qualities and principles for which Agent Camarena gave his life. Nominees should be involved in their communities in efforts to make them drug-free. Nominees should have the support of their agency and respect of their community. This year, Brunswick County Sheriff Deputy Steve Lanier was presented the North Carolina award for his dedication to drug prevention.

Enrique Camarena was a DEA Agent who was kidnapped, tortured and murdered by Mexican Cartels.



Pictured L-R; Brunswick County Sheriff Brian Chism; Shorty Denanny; Joe Clancy; Deputy Steve Lanier; Drug Awareness Chair Bob Miller.



WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION®

Walk with Team Sanford Elks Lodge #1679 *Elks* Care — *Elks* Share

Walk to End Alzheimer's - Moore County
Saturday, September 13, 2025
Sandhills Community College, Pinehurst

PROMISE GARDEN FLOWER GUIDE



Blue - I am living with Alzheimer's or another dementia



Purple - I have lost someone to Alzheimer's or another dementia



Yellow - I am supporting or caring for someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia



Orange - I support the Association's vision of a world without Alzheimer's & all other dementia



White - Our symbol of hope for the First Survivor of Alzheimer's & all other dementia

SCAN ME



**REGISTER OR
DONATE
TODAY!**

NEWS FROM THE EAST DISTRICT

OAK ISLAND LODGE DONATES FLAG POLE TO TOWN AND HOLDS FLAG DAY CEREMONY

The Oak Island lodge donated more than \$3,500 to purchase a new flagpole and bronze dedication plaque for the Town's Middleton Park. An annual Flag Day ceremony was held for the public in accordance with the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Flag Day protocols, and to formally dedicate the flagpole for Town use. The service preceded the Oak Island concert in the park and included an invocation prayer, patriotic music, a history of the flag, a pledge of allegiance, a patriotic address, and a benediction prayer. A highlight of the event was a welcoming address by Oak Island Mayor Elizabeth White. The Lodge Veteran's Committee was tasked to present the six service flags and the POW/MIA flag.



OAK ISLAND ELKS DONATE TO VETERANS EXPERIENCE ACTION CENTER

Oak Island Lodge members donated \$3,000 (they used a \$1,000 ENF grant and \$1,000 donations from both the Lodge and the Veterans Committee) to support the 8th annual Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC) event held at the National Guard Armory in Wilmington, NC. The event was held in May and was open to Veterans from everywhere. The VEAC is a partnership between the American Legion Department of North Carolina, the NC National Guard, and the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). The VEAC event brings together representatives from the VA, the State of North Carolina, local Veteran Service Officers, Veterans, their families, care givers and survivors from across the country for both virtual and in-person opportunities to file or check VA claims, sign up for VA healthcare, obtain a toxic exposure screen (PACT Act), learn about mental health and survivor benefits, and much more. This year's event was a huge success and aided over 1,000 Veterans with compensation claims from the VA.

THE GOLDSBORO ELKS LODGE PARTNERS WITH UNITED WAY OF WAYNE COUNTY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO VETERANS.

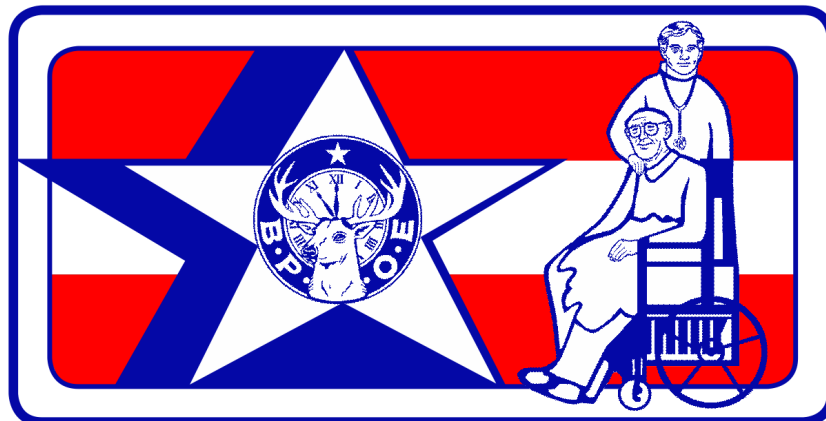
United Way of Wayne County is proud to partner with the Goldsboro Elks Lodge to provide Welcome Home Kits for Veterans through the Recovery Voucher Program. This collaboration will provide essential household items to clients who have served in the military and are transitioning into stable housing. The Welcome Home Kits, made possible through the generous support of the Goldsboro Elks Lodge, will include vital items such as bedding, kitchenware, hygiene products, and other home necessities. The kits are designed to help veterans begin their new chapters with dignity and stability.

"We are deeply grateful to the Goldsboro Elks Lodge for their commitment to our veterans," said Sherry Archibald, Executive Director of United Way of Wayne County. "This partnership allows us to increase our capacity to support those who have served our country by ensuring they have the basic tools to succeed in their transition from homelessness or housing insecurity."

Our Recovery Voucher program is a response to clients experiencing a personal crisis with needs to be connected to household items as they transition to a stable environment. By adding the Welcome Home Kits to its services, we are better equipped to meet the unique needs of veterans in Wayne County.

This partnership exemplifies the power of community collaboration and the shared mission of honoring and supporting those who have given so much through their military service.

Elks National Veterans Service Commission



"Serving Our Nation's Veterans"



SHALLOTTE ELKS AND AMERICAN LEGION HOLD FLAG DAY CEREMONY

The Shallotte Elks held their annual Flag Day ceremony on Friday June 13 at the Lodge. Assisting with the ceremony were members of the Kenneth Gore American Legion Post 550 and their Auxiliary.

In addition, the Legion set up a missing man table and held a flag retirement ceremony.

Used and worn flags were submitted for proper disposal. Worn flags can be left in a box located at the Shallotte Walmart in Customer Service.



OAK ISLAND LODGE PRESENTED EAGLE SCOUT CERTIFICATES OF MERIT

The Oak Island Lodge recently participated in a Boy Scouts award ceremony honoring Scouts from three Troops in the local Brunswick County, NC area. Veterans Committee members presented sixteen Eagle Scout Certificates of Merit and congratulatory letters signed by Grand Exalted Ruler Douglas A. Schiefer at the event.

Pictured in their Elks Veterans Committee shirts are Veterans Committee members from left (back row) Stuart Goodall, Edward Drzewiecki, Kevin Swenie, Carl Schnepf, and (middle row) Mary Jo Schnepf.



NEWS FROM THE EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

RALEIGH BINGO COMMITTEE DONATES TO MS

The Raleigh Elks Bingo Committee presented a \$1000 donation to Multiple Sclerosis. The donation was received by MS representative Patrick Jordan.

Pictured L-R; PER Brian Madigan, Jody Kush, Cheryl Howard, PER Chairman Gary Bush, and MS Rep. Patrick Jordan



RALEIGH LODGE HOLDS SIP AND PAINT DAY FOR ENF



Raleigh Lodge held another successful Sip and Paint day which was attended by 25 members and guests. All supplies were included for \$30.00 and the proceeds were split between our Does and our ENF donation!

SANFORD ELKS LODGE SUPPORTS BACKPACK PALS

The Sanford Elks Lodge is proud to support **Backpack Pals**, a vital program that helps fight childhood hunger in our community by providing meals to students in need.

We recently hosted a food drive to benefit the program and continue to collect plastic grocery bags, which are used to pack lunches for the children. In addition to the donated food, we were honored to present a **\$4,000 check** to **Christians United Outreach Center (CUOC) of Lee County** in support of Backpack Pals.

This donation was made possible through a **grant from the Elks National Foundation**, thanks to the generous contributions of our Lodge members.

Pictured left to right: Joe Clancy, Past State President / Lodge Treasurer; Duncan Riddle, Lodge Esquire; Nancy Johnson, CUOC of Lee County; Tom Liddy, Exalted Ruler; Steve Johnson, Past District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler / Lodge Secretary.



NEWS FROM THE WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

WINSTON SALEM HOLDS FLAG DAY CEREMONY

The Winston Salem Lodge hosted the annual Flag Day Ceremony on Friday, June 13th in the Lodge's Atrium building. The American Legion Post #522 and our Lodge Veterans Committee performed Flag Carrier duties, in line with the Grand Lodge Flag Ritual ceremony. Great turnout with 50 attendees.

Pictured L-R: American Legion, Harry Patterson and Norm Shea; Veterans Committee, Sally Steele, Pam Shannonhouse, Carl Blackburn and ER, Pat Russell; Flag Day Chair, Randy Zigmund; Veterans Committee Chair, Kent Plankey.



WINSTON SALEM ELKS USE FREEDOM GRANT TO AID HOMELESS VETERANS

The Winston Salem Elks Lodge was a recent recipient of the Elks Grand Lodge, "Freedom Grant". The grant money (\$1,000) helped with the purchase of camping tents, blankets, sleeping bags and propane stove cylinders for Habit Missions Ministry (Watchmen of the Streets) to furnish the unsheltered local homeless veterans in Forsyth County.

Shopping for camping goods: L-R: Al Burchett, President of Habit Missions Ministry] and Randy Zigmund, Grants Co-Ordinator for the Winston Salem Elks Lodge.



WINSTON SALEM LODGE PURCHASES FURNITURE FOR VETERANS HELPING VETERANS HEAL



Delivery of furniture to Veterans Helping Veterans Heal.

Veterans Helping Veterans Heal (VHVH) is a non-profit focused on transforming the lives of homeless veterans and helping them build a secure future. Since our founding in 2012, our holistic approach has helped nearly 300 veterans move from homelessness and despair to permanent housing and a better quality of life.



Pictured L-R; Ryan Layne director of VHVH; crew from Bowen Town &Country Furniture including Scott Bowen,owner; Connie Baker, WS Lodge Grants Comm; Penny Wilkes, membership Chm; Pat Russell, Exalted Ruler, PSP; and Joe Knight. PER, Trustee.

NEWS FROM THE WEST DISTRICT

HICKORY LODGE DONATES SNACKS TO VA CLINIC



Hickory Elks Veterans Committee member, Lisa Watts provided a new basket with Elks signage and snacks for the VA Clinic in Hickory.

HICKORY ELKS EXPAND ADOPT A VETERAN PROGRAM

The Hickory Elks Veterans Committee started a new program with the Veteran residence of the Green's Nursing Home of Viewmont. Our first event was May 20th. The veterans in this home are reclusive, and we joined with the activities director to draw them out to talk about and share their family and military history. Both veterans and residences who had Veteran family members came to share. It was a very good event. We hope to continue every month and adopt these veterans with the "adopt a veteran program" through the Hickory Elks Lodge.

Pictured below is a resident of The Green's and ELKS members, Tim, Herndon, and Cary Bowman.



HICKORY ELKS FEAST VETERANS AT BLACK MOUNTAIN HOME

The Hickory Elks Lodge was proud to serve the Veterans on July 4, 2025 at the North Carolina State Veterans Home in Black Mountain. With the help of our house committee we served 75 meals to Veterans and staff. The meal consisted of BBQ, baked beans, slaw, pickles, buns, and berry trifle dessert. Joe Elko, our West NC State Veterans Home Committee Chair, played music for the event on guitar and sang.

The Veterans Committee, including Joe Elko, Lisa and Blake Watts, Veterans Committee Chair Samatha Bowman, Charlie Self, Bill and Linda Zacharenko, Kevin and Chris McCutcheon, Michael Bryant, our Gov Relations & Risk Mgmt. Chair and Mark Couch President Elect NCSEA, Kirsten Hollis, Beth Bolick, and Cary Bowman. Pictured with Loretta Faircloth, Black Mountain veterans Home activities coordinator.



In other news, the Hickory Elks Veterans Committee did two new Welcome Home Kits in the month of May and six in the month of April. The stories of these veterans vary. Some were homeless after hurricane Helene. Another family was homeless after the father was going through cancer treatments, and the son quit his job to take care of him. The Elks were able to step in and provide household goods to help start their new journey.

This publication is produced for and by the North Carolina State Elks Association.

The NCSEA Communication Committee encourages all member Lodges and Committee Chairmen to submit articles to be included in future issues.

All submissions may be forwarded to Ashley Buckwell, Editor at ashbuc@atmc.net