



# The Empire State Elk

Official Publication of the New York State Elks Association  
& The New York Elks Major Projects Corporation



**Phillip Holowacz**  
**State President's Message**

Happy New Year, one of the busiest times of our year is upon us. Lodges across this great state contemplate who will lead us into our next year, how to achieve a net gain in membership, and have per capita goals been met?

As nominations and elections take place, remember that strong, enthusiastic leadership and cooperation is vital to our Lodges success. An active PER Association can give valuable insight and encouragement to help ensure the future of our individual Lodges. The community within our Lodges is so important at this time of year. As new leaders emerge and current ERs make a big push to finish their year successfully, the support and encouragement of our membership is crucial. Our Order depends on each Lodge operating at its' maximum potential, with the best possible leaders.

Membership continues to be a challenge. As the Lodge year comes to a close, make a big push to make personal contact with all delinquent members. There was a time when these members had a reason to join the Elks, it's time to remind them what that was. I ask each and every one of you to contact your Lodge secretary or ER and offer to help reach out to these members. We need to initiate new members and reinstate old members. This is imperative.

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Our Major Projects per capita and our ENF per capita is \$8.00 and \$4.50 respectively. It is extremely important that each Lodge achieves this goal. Major Projects money supports our Major Projects Home Service Program, and our ENF donations support Drug Awareness, Hoop Shoot, Scholarship Program, Youth Activities, Veterans programs, Americanism, and various community activities. (Check out GER Dave Carr's placemats online to help define and show support for these programs) These programs define us as Elks. Support them with pride.

Finally, I want to publically thank all the Lodges throughout New York State who are doing amazing things to "Keep the Unity in Community". Sue and I have had the opportunity to meet and visit with many of you at your beautiful and unique Lodges. We've seen unbelievable events that are supported with so much hard work and passion. You are making an incredible difference in communities across NY. We have been so impressed with your benevolent activities and honored to represent you. We look forward to visiting with those of you we haven't met, and learning more about the inspirational programs going on across this great state.

Elks Keep the Unity in Community.  
God Bless the communities in which we live and work, God Bless our Troops and God Bless America.

Phil Holowacz  
State President



### State Visitation GER Address Brothers, Sisters and Friends:

During the past several years a primary focus of Grand Lodge and our local lodges has been on membership and membership retention. I call attention to the beginning of Elkdom in the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds. Elkdom spread in leaps and bounds during a time when there was no television and no Internet. In fact, there was very little news media of any kind. Those early Elks were very proud of what our Order stood for. Pride is contagious, and those members started an epidemic.

A few years ago during the Grand Lodge Convention, the young lady receiving her Grand Lodge scholarship began her acceptance speech by telling all present that she and her family had spent their entire lives in their community and every time they drove past that large

building with the letters B.P.O.E. followed by a number, they thought it was a radio station. It's comical on the surface, but it brings to light the fact that too many people know nothing about our Order until we actually touch their lives. I have developed a tri-fold flyer entitled, "Overview of Elkdom". I have also developed placemat samples for lodges to use whenever they hold a breakfast, lunch or dinner at the lodge. There are many people in our communities who know very little about our Order, and I believe these materials will help us "tell the Elks story". I have also provided a USB Flash Drive containing these materials for your State Website Chairperson.

The average age of our members today is in the mid to upper sixties. There are thousands of members who only leave their home to go to the doctor or drug store, or to church when they feel up to it. They once enjoyed the camaraderie at the lodge and enjoyed bowling and golfing in the Elks leagues. They can no longer bowl or golf, so they no longer pay bowling league or golf league fees. They can no longer frequent the lodge, so why should they continue paying Lodge dues?

The Lodge bulletin is the key link between the Lodge and its members. It is of the utmost importance for each and every Lodge to include something in the Lodge bulletin that will make those members who cannot frequent the Lodge because of age, health, or family and work commitments proud to be members. A photo of a child, veteran, victim of disaster, or someone with a disability being assisted by the Lodge will help to enhance that pride. I truly believe that proud members will be happy to continue paying their dues. Please remember these members when you prepare your Lodge bulletin.

The Elks National Foundation is truly the "Great Heart of Elkdom." ENF has helped to fund numerous Elks programs that have made a tremendous difference in hundreds of thousands of lives across America. The value of the Elks' charitable works since the Order started in 1868 is nearing \$5 billion. Many of our charitable programs are funded in part by the Elks National Foundation which annually disburses more than \$17 million in support of youth athletic programs, scholarships, Veterans service, drug awareness, Dictionary Project, state projects and other charitable programs.

Last year the Elks National Foundation per capita exceeded \$6.50 per member nationwide. My ENF per capita goal this year remains at \$4.50 per member. I congratulate each and every Lodge that met or exceeded last year's per capita goal and ask every Lodge to try extra hard to meet or exceed this year's goal. Those lodges meeting or exceeding the per capita goal are eligible for grants that can help ensure success of their programs.

I am a firm believer that Elkdom, like Patriotism, is in the hearts and souls of our members. This is why my theme is, "**Elks Give from the Heart**". Thank you for "Giving from the Heart" and demonstrating over and over that, "Elks Care ... Elks Share".

God bless you, God bless the men and women serving in our nation's military and their families, and **God Bless America!**

*Elks Care*  
*Elks Share*