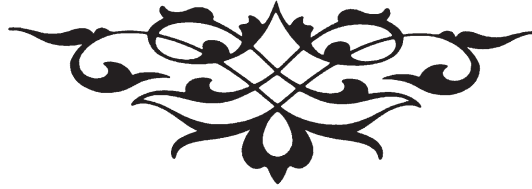




# **Government Relations Manual**



**The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks  
United States of America**

*A Fraternal Organization*





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>First Amendment To The United States Constitution</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose Of Elks Government Relations Program</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Elks Government Relations Program</b>	
<b>— Structure And Responsibilities —</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Subordinate Lodge Chairpersons .....	2
District Chairpersons .....	2
State Chairpersons .....	2
Grand Lodge Committee Members .....	3
Grand Lodge Advisory Committee .....	3
<b>Mission Statement For Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Mission Statement .....	4
Role Of The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee .....	4
<b>Elks Government Relations Program</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Know Your Legislators .....	5
Getting Your Legislators To Know About The Elks .....	5
Be Aware Of Legislation Early On .....	5
Areas Of Most Concern .....	6
Ask For Support And Action When Appropriate .....	6
Commend And Thank Legislators .....	6
Watch Committee Actions Between Legislative Sessions .....	7
Working With Other Organizations .....	7
<b>Appendix</b>	
<b>Using The Internet To Find Your Legislators</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 1</b>
<b>Monitoring Legislative Action Via The Internet</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 1</b>
<b>Tips On Writing A Legislator</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 2</b>
<b>Sample Letter To Legislator</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 3</b>
<b>Tips On Meeting A Legislator</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 4</b>
<b>Annual Report (Page 2) Guidelines</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 5</b>
<b>Annual Report – Page Two</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 6</b>
<b>Monthly Reminders for Government Relations Chairs</b> .....	<b>Appendix Page 7</b>



## **FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION**

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States establishes our right to exist as a private organization: It states: *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”*

This has been interpreted [US Supreme Court Justice Douglas, 1972], as “... the First Amendment and the related guarantees of the Bill of Rights ... create a zone of privacy which precludes government from interfering with private clubs or groups.”

## **PURPOSE OF ELKS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Elks Government Relations Program is to help protect our Order’s right to exist as a private organization. Legislative bodies at the National, State, and local level often consider legislation which would negatively impact our exercise of this freedom. Additionally, there are areas where fair and appropriate legislation would enhance our community and charitable work. To effect this, Elks need to be aware and need to establish positive relationships with their legislators — local, state, and national.

*“The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.”*

## **ELKS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROGRAM — STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES —**

The Elks Government Relations Program is carried out at the Grand Lodge, State, District and Subordinate Lodge levels. All Committee Members at every level must recognize that their activities are very important and essential elements of this effort. Our effectiveness depends on all facets of the organization being as active as possible and interfacing with each other. The following guidelines outline the suggested roles and responsibilities of the Chairpersons and their Committees at the various levels of the program.

### **SUBORDINATE LODGE CHAIRPERSONS**

The key to an effective Elks Government Relations Program starts with the Subordinate Lodge Chairpersons. They must establish contact with Legislators who represent their areas, provide them with pertinent information and charitable data and statistics concerning various Elks activities, invite them to attend and participate at Lodge events such as Flag Day, Scholarship Dinners, Youth and Drug Awareness activities, Veterans Events, and other appropriate functions. Lodge Chairpersons should also encourage all Elks Members to contact their Legislators on various issues as necessary on a case-by-case basis. They must work with their Lodge Secretaries, Lodge Officers and all Committee Chairpersons to ensure all data for the Survey of Volunteer, Youth, Charitable and Community Service Programs is compiled and entered on Page 2 of the Annual Report. Lodge Chairs must keep their District and State Chairs informed as to what is happening in their Lodges and areas of jurisdiction in regards to Government Relations Activities, including legislation which could have an effect on our organization. Lodge Chairs should use Appendix 7 of this manual as a guide to help plan their monthly activities.

### **DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS**

District Chairs serve as the direct link between Subordinate Lodge and State Chairpersons. They should monitor the Legislative Activity of their local governments, encourage active involvement of the Lodges in their Districts and should establish contact with Legislators in their Districts, providing them with pertinent Elks information and data as necessary to ensure they understand what the Elks do in the respective communities. District Chairs should use Appendix 7 of this manual as a guide to help plan their monthly activities.

### **STATE CHAIRPERSONS**

State Chairs are the front line in monitoring State Legislation. They should be sharing any information procured from various sources with their District/Lodge Chairs and with their Grand Lodge Area Members.

The State Chairpersons should assist their State Association Secretaries and others with the completion of the data submission for the Survey of Volunteer, Youth, Charitable and Community Service Programs for activities of the State Associations. State Chairs will receive a copy of the Page 2 data of the Annual Report from every Lodge in their state and from their State Association Secretary so they may review what is being submitted to the Grand Lodge. This will enable them to follow up with Lodges on the quantity, quality and timeliness of data submitted. State Chairs also need to provide information and pertinent data about Elks activities to their U.S. Senators/Representatives, Governor, and State Government Officials on a continuous basis to ensure these key people understand what our goals are and what our organization is doing for their communities and municipalities. State Chairs should use Appendix 7 of this manual as a guide to help plan their monthly activities.

## **GRAND LODGE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Grand Lodge effort is carried out by the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee. This group is composed of eight members, one for each of the designated Grand Lodge Areas throughout the country. Each year, a Member is selected by the Committee's Grand Lodge Advisor to serve as Chairman. A Vice-Chairman may be designated also. The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee Members work through and with the State Association Government Relations Chairmen on every aspect of Government Relations Activities.

## **GRAND LODGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee and its activities are overviewed and guided by one or more Grand Lodge Advisors selected by the Advisory Board. These individuals attend the various seminars and meetings conducted by this group. They also review and approve various initiatives and actions taken by the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee.

## **MISSION STATEMENT FOR GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee leads the Elks' effort in establishing positive relations with Legislators, monitoring legislation, and helping to marshal efforts to support or oppose legislation when necessary. The Mission Statement and Role for the Committee is as follows:

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

*The mission of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee is to assist the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, its State Associations and its Subordinate Lodges, in protecting and preserving the right to exist as a private organization.*

*In this mission, the Government Relations Committee serves as a resource for, and provides leadership, to the State Associations and through them the Subordinate Lodges.*

### ***ROLE OF THE GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE***

*The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee's basic role is to:*

*Gather information concerning pending State, Local and National legislation that would have a positive or an adverse effect on our Order and share it with:*

- The Grand Lodge Advisory Committee*
- State Associations so they can be aware and alert for similar legislation.*

*Encourage and aid the State Associations to form CONPOR-type organizations.*

*Encourage State Associations to impress upon the Subordinate Lodges the importance of accurately and completely reporting all volunteer and charitable activities.*

*Encourage State Associations to monitor proposed legislation that would be beneficial or detrimental to our activities and then to get individual members to take appropriate action.*

*— Mission Statement and Role adopted 7/5/97*

## **ELKS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROGRAM**

The Elks Government Relations Program has a number of elements. These include:

### **KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS**

Each member should know who his or her representatives are — local, State, and National. There are many ways to obtain their names and addresses including the Internet. *(See Appendix for further help.)*

Learn as much as you can about each of them: personal, schools, interests, other organizations, etc. This information is shown in campaign literature and often on their pages on the Internet.

Each member should monitor his or her Legislator, what kind of bills the Legislator supports or opposes, and so on.

### **GETTING YOUR LEGISLATORS TO KNOW ABOUT THE ELKS**

It is far more effective to have your Legislator know about the Elks, what we stand for and the good that we do, before you need his/her support regarding a particular piece of legislation. There are many ways to do this. One is to invite your Legislators to the Lodge when things like Youth Banquets are taking place; when scholarships are awarded; at Flag Day Ceremonies; when Christmas baskets are being distributed; or when parties are given for veterans.

State Associations are encouraged to host open houses in Lodges located in capitol cities. All State Legislators should be invited for light refreshments or possibly dinner. Displays featuring State Association and local Lodge programs and activities should be prominently displayed. A select group of qualified Elks should be on hand to answer questions, provide explanations and speak with regard to our programs and our needs as a private organization.

Several States host legislative coffees in the Capitol rotunda or equivalent, invite the Legislators to stop by, and have displays of State Major Projects, local Lodge activities, and so forth.

State and national statistics on volunteer, youth, charitable, and community service programs are provided either at the open houses and coffees or by mail.

### **BE AWARE OF LEGISLATION EARLY ON**

To be successful in supporting or opposing legislation, it is far more effective to start your efforts as soon as the legislation is being considered. The best time is while the legislation is in committee. Often it is possible to testify before the committee and have major impact on the legislation. This requires that you know what is being drafted and proposed as soon as possible.

The best means is to have someone monitor the Legislative Session on a daily basis, both locally and in the Capitol city. Careful review of newspapers is also useful but unless the paper is very thorough, complete coverage is usually not available.

With the advent of the Internet, it is possible to monitor legislative activity, almost on a real-time basis, in most states. Further information for using the Internet to do this is given in the Appendix.

## **AREAS OF MOST CONCERN**

Legislation in the following areas historically has had the most significant effect on our Lodges and should be monitored closely. *(These words can often be used to search proposed legislation reported on legislative home pages on the Internet.)*

Public accommodation — defining what constitutes public accommodation and establishing what requirements must be met in such facilities.

Private organizations — defining what a private organization must or can do in order to be so classified.

Non-profit and fraternal — similar to above.

Alcoholic beverage laws and regulations — defining conditions for granting of permits and licenses, third-party liability.

Gambling as relates to bingo, pull-tabs and similar.

Property tax exemption — establishing requirements for seeking exemption from local property taxes, defining what facilities may be exempt, and so on.

## **ASK FOR SUPPORT AND ACTION WHEN APPROPRIATE**

When appropriate, individual members should be encouraged to contact their Legislators and ask for their support and action. Members should be coached on how to write letters, make phone calls, etc. *(See Appendix.)* All contacts should be factual, calm, and considered. Even if the Legislator does not agree with the member, there will be issues in the future. The Legislator may be asked for help again. We must not forego tomorrow's cooperation because of frustration over an issue today.

Guidelines for meeting and discussing issues face-to-face are given in the Appendix.

## **COMMEND AND THANK LEGISLATORS**

Be sure and thank the Legislator when he/she supports our interests, even if overall it was not successful. We have a tendency to contact our Legislators only when we want something. We need to thank them when they try.

## **WATCH COMMITTEE ACTIONS BETWEEN LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS**

Much of the work of legislative bodies is done in Committee Meetings and public hearings between Legislative Sessions. Often there are opportunities to speak before the Committee and provide input they might not otherwise have. Watch newspapers and the Internet for scheduled meetings and hearings in areas of interest to the Elks and then try to contribute whenever possible.

## **WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

A number of years ago the Elks were leaders in establishing a cooperative group of organizations, both at the National and State levels, dedicated to improving government relations activities for their organizations. The groups were called CONPOR [Conference of Private Organizations] or carry some similar designation.

Today many States have CONPOR or CONPOR-like organizations involving the Elks, the Loyal Order of Moose, veterans organizations, and various other private organizations. The purpose of these groups is to monitor and evaluate proposed legislation and to share information. Some have budgets for printing, postage and part-time office help. They can be very effective in mobilizing members of their organizations in initiating, supporting, or opposing legislation. It is therefore appropriate for Elks State Associations to consider financially supporting CONPOR-type organizations whenever possible.

The Elks Government Relations Program includes encouraging each State Association to seek to start a CONPOR organization if none exists and to work to make it an effective part of the overall Elks program.

Any State Association that wishes to initiate a CONPOR-type organization should contact their Area Member of the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee. (*Area Members are listed in the Grand Lodge and State Associations Directory issued each year by the Grand Secretary's Office*).



# **APPENDIX**

- Using the Internet to Find Your Legislators
- Monitoring Legislative Action via the Internet
- Writing Your Legislator
  - Sample letter
- Meeting with Your Legislator
- Annual Report (Page 2) Guidelines for Charitable Records Data
- Annual Report (Page 2 – Double Sided)
- Monthly Reminders for All Government Relations Committee Members to take action on



## USING THE INTERNET TO FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS

By entering your zip code, you can find the names and addresses of State and National Legislators via the Internet site <http://www.vote-smart.org>. Besides identifying the Legislators, there is frequently a short biography, a list of committees on which the Legislator serves, his/her e-mail address, and website URL.

## MONITORING LEGISLATIVE ACTION VIA THE INTERNET

Most States now have Internet Sites. These pages link to legislative sites that list bills currently in the legislative process and frequently will provide summaries and in many cases, the complete text of the bills.

Often a search using key words is possible so that all bills relating to a specific topic of interest can be reviewed online and downloaded/printed if desired.

One way to get to State Home Pages is via this site: <http://www.statelocalgov.net>.

Other informational websites you may want to visit:

<http://www.fedworld.gov> — This is a great link that leads to many government websites.

<http://www.thomas.loc.gov> — The “Thomas” website – a great tool to research information on congressional legislation and its current status. In addition, all the background material is included on bills, votes taken, sub-committee actions, etc.

## TIPS ON WRITING A LEGISLATOR

Legislators pay close attention to their mail. Responding to mail is crucial to reelection and a legislator knows your vote can be won or lost by his/her response. The most effective letter is a personal one, not a form letter. It should be concise, informed, polite, and as short as possible. Some specific tips are:

1. Identify yourself as a constituent and a member of an interested organization.
2. It is important to make every effort to identify the bill number and author if possible.
3. Try to stay to one typewritten page, two pages at most. Don't write on the back of a page. If writing longhand, take care to write legibly. Use a reference header (Ref) at the beginning of your letter to quickly identify the legislation of interest.
4. Limit your letter to one subject.
5. Give reasons for your position in your own words.
6. Avoid sending a form letter. Convert such letters to your own words.
7. Raise questions. By doing so, you can expect a reply.
8. Be polite and persuasive. No name-calling or threats.
9. Be sure your name and address are legible.
10. If your Legislator does something that pleases you, write and compliment him/her.
11. Suggested address style:

The Honorable John/Joan Doe  
United States Senate/House of Representatives/State Senate/House of  
Representatives or Assembly  
State Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510/Capitol City

Dear Senator/Representative or Assemblyman/woman

## SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATOR

Your Name  
Address  
City, State, ZIP  
Phone/FAX Numbers

Date

The Honorable Peggy Hamric  
Texas House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768-2910  
Fax 512/463-5896  
REF: SB 432

Dear Representative Hamric:

I am writing to encourage you to work to defeat or substantially modify SB 432. As a resident of your district and a member of XXX Elks Lodge that conducts charity bingo, I oppose SB 432 because it would significantly handicap small games like ours and instead further increase the advantage of large commercial halls.

Our Lodge uses bingo proceeds to support our charities including aid to handicapped children, baskets of food and gifts at Christmas for the needy and scholarships for deserving young people. Our hall is small and we cannot compete with the commercial halls that seat hundreds. We only offer friendly, caring volunteer workers. If the commercial halls are given added advantages as SB 432 would do, we will probably be forced out of bingo.

Besides organizations like ours, SB 432 would adversely affect numerous churches, various volunteer groups, and I feel the community in general. I urge you to work to either significantly amend SB 432 (Representative Dan Kubiak has drafted sound amendments) or to defeat it. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by letter, fax, or phone.

Very truly yours,

*Signature*

Typewritten Name

## **TIPS ON MEETING A LEGISLATOR**

A personal visit with a Legislator is an effective way to emphasize your interest in an issue or a bill. Some tips for meeting a Legislator to urge support or opposition to legislation are:

1. Make an appointment, state the subject to be discussed, the time needed, and identify persons who will attend. If doing so by telephone, it is important when calling the Legislator's office to give your full name and address. It is also a good idea to ask the name of the person with whom you are speaking.
2. Identify whether or not you are a resident of the Legislator's district. Make every effort to have one of his/her constituents make the contact.
3. Select a spokesperson if others are going with you and agree on your presentation. Again, a member of the Legislator's district should attend.
4. Know the facts; both legislatively and related to your position. If a bill, know the number and title.
5. Present the facts in an orderly, concise, positive manner.
6. Relate the positive impact of legislation you support and problems it corrects.
7. Relate the negative impact of legislation you oppose and suggest, where appropriate, a different approach.
8. Leave fact sheets if possible.
9. Ask for favorable consideration, thank the Legislator for his/her time and courtesy, and leave promptly.

**STATE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS CHAIR GUIDELINES FOR:  
PAGE 2 OF THE ANNUAL REPORT**

Government Relations State Chairpersons will receive a copy of Page 2 of the Annual Report in the April-May time frame each year from every Lodge Secretary and the State Association Secretary in their State.

Through the various communications networks used in the State Associations, State Government Relations Chairs should follow up on Lodges and State Associations that do not provide copies of these sheets to them. Annual Reports are required to be postmarked to the Grand Lodge by May 1st of each year.

In addition, State Government Relations Chairpersons should review these copies for quality, quantity and level of completion and follow up with Lodges and/or their State Association on reports that have apparent discrepancies or appear incomplete. State Chairs should provide assistance to Lodge Chairs/Secretaries and State Secretaries who need assistance with the Page 2 portion of the Annual Report.

On an annual basis, the Grand Lodge will provide summary data of all charitable activities submitted on the Page 2 Reports. This will be distributed to State Government Relations Chairs through the Area Members of the Grand Lodge Committee and cognizant members of the Grand Lodge as soon as practicable after it is compiled by the Grand Secretary's Office.

ORIGINAL TO GRAND SECRETARY • COPIES TO: PGER SPONSOR(S); STATE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS CHAIRMAN

# ANNUAL REPORT (Page Two - Side One)

To the Grand Lodge, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America

FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2005

(Compile from statistics maintained in  
Lodge Copy of Charity Records Booklet)

<b>SURVEY OF VOLUNTEER, YOUTH, CHARITABLE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS</b>									
<b>YOUTH PROGRAMS</b>		HEAD COUNT OF PARTICIPANTS (B)	<b>— INVOLVEMENT —</b>					<b>CONTRIBUTIONS (DOLLARS ONLY)</b>	
			# ELKS (C)	#HELPERS (D)	ELKS HOURS (E)	HELPERS HOURS (F)	ELKS MILES (G)	HELPERS MILES (H)	NON-CASH (EST. VALUE) (I)
Hoop Shoot®	1001								
Youth Scholarship	1002								
Boy/Girl of Month or Year	1003								
Boy Scouts (see EAGLE below)	1004								
Eagle Scouts	1005								
Girl Scouts	1006								
National Youth Week	1007								
Boys/Girls State	1008								
Boys/Girls Clubs of America	1009								
Drug-Free Events	1012								
After-School Programs	1013								
Mentoring Programs	1014								
Youth Community Service	1015								
Antlers	1016								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1099</b>								
<b>ATHLETIC PROGRAMS</b>									
Baseball/Softball	1101								
Football	1102								
Basketball	1103								
Bowling	1104								
Golf	1105								
Swimming	1106								
Youth Olympics	1107								
Soccer Shoot®	1108								
Summer Camps	1109								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1199</b>								
<b>PROGRAMS FOR NEEDY OR HANDICAPPED</b>									
Crippled Children	1201								
Eye Bank	1202								
Hospital	1203								
Blood Bank	1204								
Eye Glasses	1205								
Hearing Aids	1206								
Aid to Blind	1207								
Prosthetic Device	1208								
Wheelchair	1209								
Spec. Equipment Purch/Loan	1210								
State Major Project	1211								
Lodge Major Project	1212								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1299</b>								

(CONTINUE ON REVERSE SIDE)

# 2005 ANNUAL REPORT (Page Two - Side Two)

PATRIOTIC PROGRAMS	HEAD COUNT OF PARTICIPANTS (B)	— I N V O L V E M E N T —						CONTRIBUTIONS (DOLLARS ONLY)	
		# ELKS (C)	# HELPERS (D)	ELKS HOURS (E)	HELPERS HOURS (F)	ELKS MILES (G)	HELPERS MILES (H)	NON-CASH (EST. VALUE) (I)	— CASH — (J)
Flag Day	1301								
Memorial Day	1302								
Constitutional Awareness	1303								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1399</b>								
<b>VETERANS PROGRAMS</b>									
Picnics	1401								
Outings	1402								
Athletic Events	1403								
Special Equipment	1404								
Student/Veteran Volunteers	1405								
Army of Hope	1406								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1499</b>								
<b>COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS</b>									
Donations	1501								
Purch/Loan of Comm. Equip.	1502								
Health Fair	1503								
Lodge Facilities Donated	1504								
Supv.—Pool, Park or Zoo	1505								
Senior Citizens	1506								
Food Baskets	1507								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1599</b>								
<b>COMMUNITY RECOGNITION PROJECTS</b>									
Law Night	1601								
Know Your Gov't Program	1602								
Citizen of Month or Year	1603								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1699</b>								
<b>ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION: *The figures for these shaded areas will be obtained from National Office computer records.</b>									
Donations by Individuals	1701	*							*
Donations by Lodge/Association	1702								*
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1799</b>								*
<b>DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAMS</b>									
Programs involving grades 4-9	1801								
Other programs involving children	1802								
<b>Other Programs</b>	<b>1899</b>								
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>									
<b>ASSOCIATED AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS</b>									
DAISY CHAIN	1901								
DOES	1902								
EMBLEM CLUB	1903								
LADIES OF THE ELKS	1904								
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>1999</b>								
<b>NOT COVERED PREVIOUSLY:</b>									
	9999								

\*\*COMPLETE BOTH SIDES\*\*

<b>DON'T DELAY! \$100 LODGE FINE IF THE GRAND SECRETARY DOES NOT RECEIVE THIS REPORT POSTMARKED MAY 1 OR BEFORE!</b>
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**MONTHLY REMINDERS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO TAKE ACTION ON**

**APRIL**

- 1. Develop a plan for the government relations effort for the Lodge fraternal year.
- 2. Invite a Legislator or a Community Official to speak at Flag Day in June.

**MAY**

- 1. Invite a Legislator or Community Official to speak at a 4th of July event.
- 2. Follow up with Lodges who have not provided Annual Report Page 2 summaries.

**JUNE**

- 1. Send summary of Volunteer, Youth, Charitable and Community Service Programs to Legislators and local Government Officials and your local newspaper for local publicity.

**JULY**

- 1. Make sure that your local Lodge is represented at the Elks National Convention. Try to obtain local publicity about the National Convention and who is attending.

**AUGUST**

- 1. Invite Legislators or local Government Officials to speak at September Lodge events.

**SEPTEMBER**

- 1. Plan your Veterans Remembrance Programs for November. Invite a Legislator or a local Government Official to speak at your Veterans Day Ceremony or Veterans Programs in November. Inform the local news media of your plans.

**OCTOBER**

- 1. Check to see if your Lodge can be of assistance in helping the elderly and handicapped get to the polls to vote.

**NOVEMBER**

- 1. Send congratulatory letters to newly-elected and reelected Legislators and local Officials; enclose charitable records survey data and other informational material about the Elks.
- 2. State and local Lodge Chairpersons make master list of addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses of Legislators in their respective Areas.

**DECEMBER**

- 1. Invite Legislators and local Officials to be present when holiday food baskets are distributed.

**JANUARY**

- 1. Send summary of Survey of Volunteer, Youth, Charitable and Community Service Programs to Legislators/ local Officials and the news media.

**FEBRUARY**

- 1. Lodges in capitol cities hold a coffee or an open house at the capitol city Lodge for Legislators and community leaders.

**MARCH**

- 1. Invite Legislators or local Community Officials to Youth Week activities in May.
- 2. Help Lodge and State Association Secretaries complete Page 2 information compilation for the Survey of Volunteer, Youth, Charitable and Community Service Programs of the Annual Report for submission to the Grand Secretary's Office.

**BE ALERT! (Year Round)** . . . . . for legislation/procedures/issues/information that could affect the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the USA.

**STATE CHAIRS** . . . . . should attend DDGER Clinics, New Officer Clinics, State, Regional Meetings and Seminars to inform those present why the Government Relations Committee is important to all Lodges and why they should be alert to issues that could affect our Order.



