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Government Relations

Both sides of Page 2 of the annual report are sent to the Government Relations Chair.

So why do we collect this data and what is it used for? Hopefully you will come to understand the report when we are done.

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects our rights to exist. This amendment that was reviewed by the Supreme Court in 1972 creates a zone of privacy which precludes government from interfering with private clubs and groups.

The Government Relations program helps protect our Order's right to exist as a private organization. Legislative bodies from the National to the 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 affect this, Elks need to be aware and need to establish a positive relationship with their legislators at all levels.

We are a 501c8 organization, under the Grand Lodge umbrella. Just like the Charter at each lodge is part of Grand Lodge, each lodge is chartered as a 501c8 tax exempt. Please do not mistake this as a 501c3 tax deductible organization.

Each Lodge does have the ability now to create a 501c3 tax deductible charity. If you choose to do this please check with your accountant/auditor and an attorney so you get it set up correctly.

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Subordinate Lodge Chair

The Government Relations program is carried out on all levels from the subordinate lodge to Grand Lodge. Your local Lodge Government Relations Chair should establish a relationship with the local city government and the Mayor. Invite them to events at your Lodge, such as Flag Day, Scholarship Dinners, youth and Drug Awareness activities. The data and statistics that are collected should be shared with your representatives in your area. The Government Relations chair must work closely with the Lodge Secretaries, Officers and Chairs that the committees are supplying the needed data from Volunteers, Youth and community service programs. This will all be compiled at the end of the year on Charity Report.

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District Chair

District Chairs serve as a direct link between the Local Lodge and State Chair. The District Chairs should also monitor legislative activity of their local governments, encourage active involvement in Lodges in their areas and follow the recommended monthly activities for their district. They should also assist the State Chair in the collection of data for completion of the State Charity Report.

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State Chair

The State Chair is at the front line in monitoring State legislation. They will share any information procured from various sources with their District and Lodge Chairs and with Grand Lodge.

The State Chair will assist the State Association Secretary and others with the completion of the data submission. State Chairs can access each Lodge's charity report online so I may review what is being submitted to Grand Lodge and follow up on quantity, quality and timeliness of data submitted. This information will be forwarded on to State and Federal Government Officials to ensure these key people understand what our organization is doing in their communities.

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Grand Lodge Committee Members

The Grand Lodge effort is carried out by the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee. This group is comprised of 8 members, one from each designated grand Lodge area throughout the country. Grand Lodge committee members work through the State Chairmen on every aspect of Government Relations Activities.

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Area 6 Committee Chair

We are part of Area 6 and our Grand Lodge Committee Member is William Hart, Chairman pictured on the left.

The Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee and its activities are overviewed and guided by one or more Grand Lodge Advisors. The State and Grand Lodge committee members attend an annual seminar and meetings in the fall. Then the advisory review and approve initiatives taken by the Grand Lodge Government Relations Committee.

During the Seminar speakers are invited to educate the State Government Relations Chairs. This past year we received information on the audits that will be done on all Lodges.

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Public Relations

Again, I ask the question why do we collect all that data. Government Relations works closely with the Public Relations Committee. Exalted Rulers and Public Relations committees talk about all the good work the Elks do, the Government Relations Committee provides the proof with the statistics.

Area 6 Public Relations Committee member is **Dennis E. Garrels.**
Our State Public Relations Chair is Deb Betz.

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Government Relations Manual Appendix 7 contains a monthly calendar of events the committee should follow.

The government Relations summary is now online. This needs to be forwarded to me when you submit it to Grand Lodge.

If you have any question you can call or e-mail me.

Don't forget I need a copy of both side of page 2 of the annual report if you are doing the manual process. This is the last year that you will able to file this manually, so tomorrow morning in the Secretaries part of this seminar find out how to do this online.

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This is a sample of the Charity Records report that is online on the Grand Lodge Website.

www.elks.org

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If you have any question you can contact me.

Don't forget I need a copy of both side of page 2 of the annual report if done manually.

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In Summary this committee monitors legislation that may be detrimental to the Elks Lodges.

A state wide smoking ban has cleared the Senate and is headed to the house. At this point Elks Lodges, Veterans and Casino's are exempted.

House Bill 21 deals with smoking in public places in Kansas. This will not replace any ordinances that your cities have currently in place. It does however exempt Class B liquor license holders.

The IRS is auditing Elks Lodges across the United States. Grand Lodge has said every lodge and Association will be audited at some time. Should you get a notice, please notify PGER McQuillan and the Grand Lodge Secretary's Office. There is some important paper work needed for the audit, held by Grand Lodge. We are a 501c8 organization and not a 501c10 organization. Answer only what is asked of you.

Every year topics that Grand Lodge stress that Lodges have trouble with:

- Music on hold is a no no.
- Maximum TV in a Lodge = 5
- Open door policy - The Gold rule – Thou shall not sell anything to a non-member.
- Do not try to enact a smoking policy in your Lodge, leave that up to the Government.
- Rentals and unrelated income.
- Do not add any solicitation to your bulletins, the postal inspector will want first class postage for the mailing and cancellation of your non-profit permit and possible a penalty.

Any questions?