



PAUL D. HELSEL
Past Grand Exalted Ruler

A Fraternal Organization
March 19, 2020

Elk Lodges and Elk Member of Pennsylvania:

As a result of the world wide Pandemic related to the spread of the Coronavirus the lodges of our Association have been required to shut down their individual bar/lounge/club and food service operations. In addition they have had to cancel events that required beverage and food service and/or involved large groups of people. While the effect of this will probably vary from lodge to lodge, it will certainly be a financial blow to almost all lodges. Hopefully this situation will change in a few weeks and our lodges will be able to get back to "business as usual" rather quickly.

This couldn't come at a worse time, in the last few weeks of the lodge year when lodges are pushing to get their final candidates initiated, are in the process of changing lodge officers, and are finalizing and closing out their 2019/2020 financial year. Luckily, with the exception of the beverage and food service operations, our lodge can still continue to function in all other aspects as long as they don't exceed gathering in numbers larger than dictated by the state of emergency now in place.

These are unprecedented times and require unusual or extraordinary measures to keep our lodges functioning, as well as to minimize the effects of this unexpected shutdown.

Many lodges had initiations scheduled this week and next but have now canceled them. It is most important for lodges to get their candidates in waiting on the lodge roles!! Lodges need those candidates on the roles to hopefully make their membership goals for the year and during this difficult time the revenue (fees and dues) that each new member will bring to the lodge. To that end and as a onetime opportunity, I suggest each lodge contact their candidates in waiting who have received a favorable vote of the lodge to become members, collect the appropriate fees and dues for 2020/2021 and simply put them on your roles by midnight March 31, 2020. Sometime between the time the fees and dues are collected and May 31, 2020 they must be officially initiated and receive their official membership card. If they are not officially initiated by that date they must be dropped from the roles and their fees and dues returned.

All lodges must complete the installation of officers between now and April 15th. Some lodges have already done so, but many have not. Even under the circumstances of today's restrictions, etc I see no reason why all lodges can't make this happen. Officer Installations do not have to be the full blown ceremonies and celebrations that many lodges do, it can simply be one on one or one on a few at a time with the Installing Officer (a PER, DDGER, PDDGER) giving them the obligation and the charge for their individual office. It is extremely important that the 2020/2021 officers are officially in place for each and every lodge by the April 15th deadline, if desired parties and celebrations can come any time after the current restrictions are lifted.

Finalizing and closing out the lodge fiscal year is extremely important and particularly this year with the new Financial Reporting System (FRS) coming on line. The shutdown now in place and the

curtailment of club and social activities probably makes the tasks related to closing out the year perhaps a bit easier – less activity to account for and far less distractions. Secretaries, Treasurers, Bookkeepers, etc should be able to give their undivided attention to getting their lodge 2019/2020 financial year closed out and at the same time up and reporting on the new FRS.

As I stated earlier, these are unprecedented times that require usual and/or extraordinary measures. Our Elk members are dedicated and resourceful and I am sure each and every lodge will do what is necessary to weather the storm and I fully expect we will emerge on the other side of this with stronger lodges, a stronger Association and a stronger Order. Keep in mind that the goal of each lodge should be to protect the wellbeing and safety of their members and the community they serve, follow the rules (laws, orders, etc) of the Nation, State and local governments – be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

Good luck and best wishes with your actions and activities over the next month or so. If you have questions and/or if I can help your efforts in any way – give me call or email me.

Sincerely and fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Helsel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

Paul D. Helsel, PGER & Sponsor