



## **Elks lead the way ... and take action**

MICHAEL F. ZELLEN  
Grand Exalted Ruler

I offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the faith and the confidence that so many have placed in me to serve as your Grand Exalted Ruler. Donna and I wish to thank and acknowledge the many Elks for their encouragement and support leading up to this tremendous honor.

We pledge that we will fulfill your expectations to the best of our ability. We look forward to meeting you during our travels and to witness first-hand the many ways that Elks are serving their respective communities throughout our great nation.

*"Elks – Leading the Way"* is my theme for the year. Since our humble beginnings as an Order, Elks have demonstrated over and over that our Members truly care about their fellow man. No other organization has given more in the name of benevolence and charity than our beloved Order.

Our concern and support for those who have served in the military and defended our freedoms has never wavered. We are second to none in providing our support to deserving students with scholarship assistance, promoting our local and national youth programs, and continuing our support of local community service programs.

In 2016-2017, the Elks National Foundation will distribute \$27.3 million to help Elks build stronger communities by investing \$9.8 million in Community Investment Program grants for Elks Lodges to invest directly in their local communities. The ENF will allocate \$9.1 million to help State Associations accomplish their charitable objectives.

The ENF will continue to further the education of our country's future leaders by allocating \$4.2 million in scholarship assistance. The ENF designated \$729,330 to fund Drug Awareness and \$952,760 to run the Elks National Hoop Shoot Free Throw Program, encouraging youth to lead healthy and active lives. In addition, the Elks National Foundation designated \$1.464 million to fund the Order's Veterans Service Program.

In order to continue funding these great programs, the Elks National Foundation needs our support. We must all support the ENF by donating and volunteering with ENF programs. The goal we have established for 2016-17 is \$4.65 per Member. This is not much when you consider the outstanding achievements of the ENF. I am hopeful that every Lodge will strive to meet or surpass this amount.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to serve as your national leader.