

# DISTRICT DIALOGUE - December 2025

## Northeast Kansas Lions District 17A

### Chart Your Course



#### Save the Dates:

**Cabinet Meetings 10 am to 12:30 pm**

Feb 7 – Zoom only

Jun 13 – Salvation Army  
Worship Center, Olathe

#### PLAN TO ATTEND

##### District 17A Convention

April 10 - 11 (NEW DATE)

DoubleTree Inn & Suites  
Manhattan, KS

#### SAVE THE DATE

##### State Convention

May 30- 31, 2026

Hutchinson, KS

#### Zone Meetings:

Scheduled by the Zone Chairs for the clubs in each zone attended by club presidents & club secretaries. club vice-presidents are welcome

#### District Officers:

##### Irene Haws

*District Governor*

##### Roger Yost

*1st Vice District Governor*

##### Cheryl Kerns

*2nd Vice District Governor*

##### Stephanie Heisler

*District Secretary*

*StephanieRHeisler@hotmail.com*

##### Ron Nichols

*District Treasurer*

*coachronnichols@gmail.com*

##### Rick Dodson

*District Administrator*

*dodsonr23@gmail.com*



I was excited to visit Leavenworth Lions on November 20th to induct 4 of their new members! Congratulations to the Leavenworth Lions. On December 5, I was invited to the Tonganoxie Christmas party and had the honor of inducting two of their new members! On December 10th the Olathe Noon Lions asked me to induct one of their new members. Again this is great news! Way to go Lions for growing our impact by growing our clubs with new members. Be sure to get them involved right away with service to the community. When new members are active in their club they are much more likely to enjoy themselves and invite others to join them. Each new member will benefit by the club providing them with a New Member Orientation. Here is a link to a video that you can share with new members of your club: <https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/search-results?keys=new+member+orientation> Club leadership can download a powerpoint from this page on the LCI website: <https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/search-results?keys=new+member+orientation> **Customize the new member orientation with what your club does in your community too!** We still have two more quarters to grow our membership in District 17A. Let me know about the new members coming into your club, ask me to come and induct your members if you would like. Keep up the effort as we chart our course and celebrate our successes one new member at a time!

Many clubs are busy this time of year with service to the community. I was asked again to help with face painting at the Auburn Lions Community Christmas. Many clubs are busy with their traditional holiday service projects. As noted by Vern Failor in his article, Jan. 3-11 is the International Week of Service for Hunger Projects. Food Drives, Meal preparation, Serving the Hungry and many other projects can be planned for this week. It must be reported in the Service report for your club to be considered for the Club Excellence Award this year.

We have some opportunities for Leadership Development and membership growth. See the Growth Workshop in this issue, Required Club Officer training in the portal due by Dec. 31- See Article by Vania Castro, GLT. Also note the Regional Training for GPLLI & FDI in Baldwin City this summer, and save the date for the 50th Anniversary of the USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum in Memphis this coming in September 2026.

**Please mark your new 2026 calendar and plan to attend the District 17A Convention in Manhattan this April 10-11, 2026**

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
And Thank You for all that you do for your communities!**

*DG Irene Haws*  
*irene@idesignGS.com*





## Roger Yost 1st Vice-District Governor

It's the time of year that procrastinators need to be on the back burner. I have the responsibility to fill many spots for the Lions 17A cabinet for my year 2026-2027. This is no easy task as all past District Governors will attest. Lions International sets minimum requirements for several others are filled by Lions from our 68 clubs and 1,375 Lions in 17A. Lions with the knowledge and desire to lead our district forward.

Some are filled by elections for multi-year terms. The hardest to fill consists of 10 zones made up of our 68 clubs. These are commonly called Zone Chairs. This position shouldn't be taken lightly. This person shall be willing to contact each club in the individual zones, attend cabinet meetings and be able to communicate with the District Governor and other committees as needed. Work with other Zone Chairs to conduct zone meetings either individually or as a combined group. The Zone Chair is the Governors right hand in knowing what the clubs need and concerns they may have.

Governor training is required by in person classes, online courses and by zoom. All are rewarding, full of information and as all are designed to keep you up to date with the day to day changes that take place within your state and multiple districts but also our Lions World.

My Christmas wish is to always keep an open mind, accept change and work for the betterment of Lions Worldwide.

***It does not matter how slowly you go. As long as you do not stop.***  
- Confucius

**Roger Yost  
1VDG 17A**

## Lead to Serve. Serve to Lead.



### District 17A Global Action Team

**Vania Castro**  
Global Leadership Team Coordinator  
[drvaniacastro@gmail.com](mailto:drvaniacastro@gmail.com)

**Rick Dodson**  
Global Service Team Coordinator  
[dodsonr23@gmail.com](mailto:dodsonr23@gmail.com)

**Eric Strimple**  
Global Membership Team Coordinator  
[estrimp81@msn.com](mailto:estrimp81@msn.com)

**Eric Tweedy**  
Global Extention Team Coordinator  
[erictweedy@icloud.com](mailto:erictweedy@icloud.com)

### Kansas Lions Directory is online

The Kansas Lions Directory is online - visit [KansasLions.org](https://www.kansaslions.org). This is password protected. Your President/Secretary & Zone Chair have the password (listed in the hardcopy directory). Any changes to club meeting dates/times/locations can be updated on the digital version of the Directory when emailed to [kansaslions@gmail.com](mailto:kansaslions@gmail.com)

Be sure to update club details in the Edit Club Details section on the Lions Portal too! Thank you for keeping your club details current.

*Publication details: Email news articles and upcoming events to [17Anews@gmail.com](mailto:17Anews@gmail.com)*

*Deadline is the first of the month for publication at mid-month.*

Visit and Join the District 17A Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/kansaslionsdistrict17a> Share your posts to this group too!



**Cheryl Kerns**  
**2nd Vice-District Governor**

November included the second district cabinet meeting and a couple zone meetings. I always enjoy learning about the service projects around the district and working together to better our communities. I also relish sharing ideas on how to grow our membership base and help our members stay in our club!

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. Let us be thankful for the friends and family around us. Thank you to our Veterans...who give us the freedoms we enjoy (and sometimes take for granted). Thank you to our police force...who protect

our communities. Thank you to our teachers...who have the difficult task of creating decision makers, independent thinkers, and contributing citizens! And thank you to Lions...who go where there's a need, without fanfare, and make a difference.

May the holidays be joyful. May you have the gift of family around you. May the blessings of the season abound and may you find health, success, and joy in the new year.

Cheryl Kerns  
2nd Vice-District Governor

## **Lions Health Program**

***January 2026 is Hunger month as proclaimed by Lions Clubs International***

January 3-11, 2026 is a special push by the International President AP Singh to fight World Hunger. He is asking each club to provide a meal for a group in your community or some kind of a project that promotes community hunger relief. There are many ways to do this and it is a requirement for being Club Excellence this year. Look at the LCI website for information to help you with your project. Please look in your community and find a project that you think will work, plan it, take pictures of it, write a story about it and submit it to LCI through Service Reporting in the Lions Portal.

To me Lions Clubs go about their Community service and do not promote the project well enough. So let's get the community involved and see what you can do for relieving World Hunger in your community. If you need help please contact Lion Vern.

Lion Vern Failor,  
Kansas Lions Health Program Chair  
vlfailor@gmail.com, Cell: 785-231-3960



**Auburn Lions Community Christmas at the Auburn Community Center Dec.6.**



Challenge continues...



## Warm Hearts, Strong Pride:



**A Winter Membership Challenge for Lions  
December 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026**

As the snow falls and the days grow shorter, let's keep our Lions Pride shining bright!

This winter, the challenge is simple: stay connected, serve together, and share the warmth of Lionism.



## How to Build the Pride This Winter

### 1. Warm Hearts Through Service

Choose a project that spreads warmth — literally or figuratively — throughout your community.

Here are some **winter service ideas** for your club:

- Host a coat, glove, or blanket drive for those in need
- Sponsor a "Souper Bowl" food collection for your local food pantry
- Volunteer to serve hot meals at a community kitchen
- Partner with schools to provide winter care kits (hats,

- socks, hygiene items) for students
- Deliver Valentine's cards or small gifts to nursing home residents or first responders
- Offer to shovel snow or do light yardwork for seniors or disabled neighbors
- Organize a pet food drive to help local shelters through the winter months
- Collect and donate books or puzzles for hospital or senior center activity rooms

*Nothing warms a cold day like the heart of a Lion in action.*

### 2. Stay Connected With Fellow Lions

Winter can feel long and quiet — so make sure your club keeps the fun alive!

#### Try one of these:

- Chili cook-off or soup supper fundraiser or social
- Game or trivia night with prizes or themed teams
- Hot cocoa and cookie exchange before or after a meeting
- "Ugly sweater" night at your January meeting for laughs and fellowship
- Host a virtual meeting or service event if weather keeps people home — it still counts!

### 3. Reconnect & Reach Out

Take time to personally reach out to members you haven't seen in a while. A phone call, coffee meetup, or handwritten note can make a big difference.

Remind every Lion how important they are to the Pride — because strong clubs are built on strong relationships.

### 4. Invite Others to Join the Pride

Every Lion has the power to grow our Pride!

Bring a friend, family member, or coworker to a service project or social night. Let them see first-hand what it means to serve with heart and compassion. The best invitation is your example.

### 5. Share Your Lion Pride

Post photos and stories of your club's winter service and fun using #WarmHeartsStrongPride and #LionsServe.

Share your warmth online — your story could inspire someone new to become a Lion!

#### ♥ The Goal

Keep our clubs active, connected, and growing through the cold months — proving that no season can freeze the heart of a Lion. Together, we'll build the Lions Pride, strengthen our friendships, and continue to serve with compassion and joy all winter long.



**Eric Strimple, GMT**

**(Remember grow your club by 2 members in 2025-2026 or by 10%)**



District 17A  
**A BIG HELLO TO OUR  
NEW MEMBERS!**



**Mark Walker, Bennington**  
Sponsor: Timothy Hart

**Christie Moman, Everest**  
Sponsor: Retta Snyder

**Corey Moman, Everest**  
Sponsor: Gerald Snyder

**Aimee Bateman, Leavenworth**  
Sponsor: Kenneth Bateman

**Ryan Kwan, Leawood**  
Sponsor: Herb Strain

**Melissa Pierce, Leawood**  
Sponsor: Herb Strain

**Linda Scott, Miltonvale**  
Sponsor: Doyle Scott

**Becca Johnson, Sabetha**  
Sponsor: Terry Weldin

**James Malsom, Sabetha**  
Sponsor: Terry Weldin

**Marcy Weldin, Sabetha**  
Sponsor: Terry Weldin

**Linda Layman, Tonganoxie**  
Sponsor: Donna Talbott

**Steve Layman, Tonganoxie**  
Sponsor: Donald Talbott

• • • NOVEMBER 2025 • • •

----- **LEAD TO SERVE. SERVE TO LEAD.** -----



**GPPLI and FDI Training this  
Summer at Baker University,  
Baldwin KS**

Multiple Districts 3 (Oklahoma), 9 (Iowa),  
17 (Kansas), 26 (Missouri), and  
38 (Nebraska) are hosting two outstanding  
“leadership enhancement” training opportunities.

**Great Plains Lions Leadership Institute (GPLLI) is July 17-19, 2026**  
**Faculty Development Institute (FDI) is July 16-19, 2026**

General information and application forms can be downloaded from <https://kansaslions.org/gplli-and-fdi>

When filling out the applications please complete all of the requested information prior to submitting your application.  
Course fee payment must be submitted with the application. (Plan ahead to apply soon)

**APPLICATION & PAYMENT DEADLINE - June 1, 2026.**

*A limited number of \$200 Scholarship Reimbursements are available from the District based on first to request. Reimbursement for after completing the course and submitting a copy of your certificate. Contact District Leadership Development Team Secretary, Rick Dodson.*



# Learn how to grow Lions & our impact

Join Lions & Leos across the U.S. & its Affiliates for **Let's Grow**, a 4-part interactive workshop designed to help you start new clubs, rebuild existing ones & ignite unstoppable momentum in your community.

You'll learn proven strategies, share ideas & leave each session ready to grow your pride.

**BONUS:** All new success stories, inspiration & interaction!

## Our Focus:

- January 6: Process & Club Types
- January 20: Recruiting
- February 3: Marketing & PR
- February 17: New Club Application & Keep Growing

## Perfect for:

- GAT Coordinators & Team Members
- Lions & Leos hungry for growth & impact



**January 6 – February 17**

*(Every Other Week)*

8 pm EST / 7 pm CST

/ 6 pm MST / 5 pm PST

Register Now: <https://bit.ly/GrowthWkshp26>

?s [membership@lionsusa.org](mailto:membership@lionsusa.org)

**Kansas State Lions Service Project  
January 2026**

(In conjunction with the Zoom State Council Meeting)

Kansas Lions from all three districts (17-K, 17-A and 17-N) are being asked to support the following Kansas veterans facilities;

- 1) Kansas Soldiers Home in Ft. Dodge,
  - 2) VA Eastern Ks. Health Care System in Topeka and Leavenworth, and
  - 3) Robert J. Dole Dept. of Veterans Affairs in Wichita.
- Each of these groups draws veterans from throughout Kansas.



Basically, Lions will have an opportunity to support the needs of a veterans' home in their own district by purchasing items locally or ordering online with all items delivered to a designated Lion in his/her own district. Having one Lion collect items will give Lions a better idea of the number of individuals or clubs that participate—no matter whether one item or 100 items are donated. Delivery will be an opportunity to garner publicity for the facilities and Lions.

Lions Kathy and Mike Bell will handle delivery to the Kansas Soldiers Home.

Lion Rick Dodson will deliver to the VA Eastern Ks. Health Care System facilities. He will co-ordinate with Lion Bobby Duvall to deliver in Leavenworth and Topeka.

Lions Hans and Shari Neihardt will handle the Robt.J. Dole facility in Wichita.

A list of needed items for each facility is listed below. Choose what and how many of the items to send

**District 17-A** VA Eastern KS Health Care System  
Topeka & Leavenworth

Long johns (sizes Lg-->2XL)  
Briefs or boxers (sizes 34-40)  
White t-shirts (sizes (Med-->3XL)

Lion Rick Dodson  
306 Bambi Court  
Lansing, KS 66043  
(913) 240-5302  
dodsonr23@gmail.com



## **Atchison Lions are raffling off chances to win this Quilt**

**Entries are \$20 each or 3 for \$50**

**Funds raised go to help purchase eyeglasses.**

**Contact Atchinson Club President, Melisa Forbes,  
melissa\_forbes@att.net or call 913-370-1958**



## USA/Canada Forum – Memphis, Tennessee

September 3-5, 2026

### A Record of Developing Leaders

The 2026 USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum is set to mark a momentous milestone next September, celebrating its' 50th anniversary. Scheduled to be held in the vibrant city of Memphis, Tennessee, Lions, Leos, and guests from across North America will gather at the Renasant Convention Center to honor five decades of leadership, learning, and service. Since the very first Forum in 1976, the mission of the USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum has always been to develop leaders, motivate and educate attendees, as Lions continue to live by our motto: “We Serve.”

True to tradition, the Forum will offer an extensive lineup of educational seminars, covering topics from club growth and leadership skills to digital engagement, global humanitarian impact, and of course opportunities for speed learning sessions, where presenters will deliver powerful takeaways in fast-paced, interactive formats. Forum attendees will also have the opportunity to join in a Lions service project, making a tangible difference in the Memphis community and take part in the traditional Strides Walk, promoting diabetes awareness and healthy living.

Throughout the weekend, Lions will have the opportunity to meet and hear from Lions International executive offices and directors, as they share updates on global initiatives and celebrate the dedication of Lions across the U.S. and Canada. During the Friday luncheon, Lions will hear from two outstanding speakers; Stephanie Krieger Graef and Leslie F. King, on human trafficking. Ms. Graef is the founder of S7 Consulting, a small business exclusive to anti-human trafficking engagement, instruction and prevention. Ms. King is a survivor of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Utilizing her experience, she opened Sacred Beginnings, a safe haven that offers hope and healing to trafficking victims. Special guest speaker at the Saturday evening dinner will be singer, songwriter, and entrepreneur Floyd Armstrong. A former member of The Fifth Dimension, his high energy personality, will have the Lions out of their seats. If you attended the Reno Forum in 2023, you may remember this outstanding speaker.

Of course, Lions will have the opportunity to visit the Forum Store to purchase Lions apparel, pins, memorabilia commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and so much more. Another highlight will be the exhibit hall, showcasing innovative service tools, partner organizations, Lions programs, hands-on experiences, and exciting new ideas to take back to their districts and clubs.

Beyond the Forum, visitors can enjoy exploring the sights and sounds of Memphis. From the soulful rhythms of Beal Street to the world-famous Graceland, local hospitality and Southern charm will make your entire experience unforgettable.

PID Hans Neidhardt  
Education Committee Member



**As suggested by the Olathe Noon Lions Club:**

**Consider making this a road trip and gather  
Lions to go to Memphis!**



## **Leadership Excellence & Club Growth Update: Required Officer Trainings, Guiding Lions Info, and “Learn How to Grow Lions & Our Impact” Webinar**

### **Strengthening Our Leadership. Empowering Our Service.**

Club Officer Training Opportunities: Action Required Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries, and Zone Chairs are encouraged to continue strengthening their leadership skills through the **Lions Portal** and **Learning Path**. An email was sent to all club officers on **November 27th**, containing detailed instructions and a step-by-step guide on how to access the Lions Portal and complete the required online courses.

Once you complete your online training, please kindly report your completion by sending a quick email to **drvaniacastro@gmail.com**.

A heartfelt *thank you* to those who have already completed their courses — your dedication is greatly appreciated, and your progress will be reported to LCI as requested.

### **Important Training Requirement for the Club Excellence Award**

As outlined in the global Club Excellence Award criteria:

“A minimum of two or more club officers (president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer — of which one must be the club president) complete Club Officer Training (online through the Lions Learning Center or in person as reported by a GLT coordinator in Learn) by **December 31, 2025**.”

### **How We Support Your Success**

To ensure every club meets this important requirement:

- Please complete the required online courses available through the **Lions Portal** by **December 31, 2025**. Your commitment to learning strengthens our clubs, our district, and our service to the community. Thank you for your continued leadership and engagement.

### **Join Our Upcoming Virtual Guiding Lion Program (January 2026 – date TBD)**

Calling all Lions who wish to renew their Guiding Lion certification or join this exciting leadership program for the first time! The Guiding Lion Program is an essential initiative within Lions Clubs International designed to strengthen clubs and empower their leaders. Experienced Lions volunteer for a two-year term to help new, established, or rebuilding clubs thrive.

#### **What does a Guiding Lion do?**

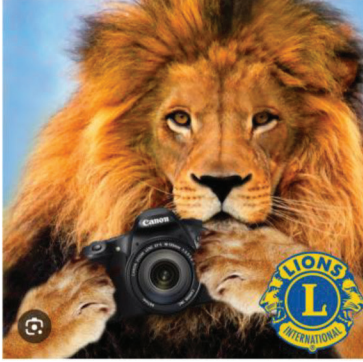
A Guiding Lion is a mentor and a resource for club members, assisting in several key areas:

- **Advising:** They offer guidance and share their knowledge on club procedures, governance, and effective meeting management.
- **Training:** They help orient and train club officers and members, ensuring a smooth and successful transition into their roles.
- **Motivating:** They inspire and support club growth and development by helping members identify and work toward their goals.
- **Connecting to resources:** Guiding Lions help clubs access the wide array of resources and materials available from [Lions Clubs International](#).

Stay tuned for the confirmed date and registration details soon!

Finally, the “**Learn How to Grow Lions & Our Impact**” **webinar flyer** is included at the end of this newsletter, along with a QR code for registration.

In Service  
PDG Dr. Vania Castro  
GLT – District 17A



## MD-17 KANSAS LION OR LEO 2025-2026 ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTO CONTEST ENTRY FORM

LION/LEO NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE SPECIFY PHOTO CATEGORY:

- \_\_\_\_\_ ANIMAL LIFE                      \_\_\_\_\_ PLANT LIFE                      \_\_\_\_\_ WEATHER PHENOMENON
- \_\_\_\_\_ URBAN OR NATURAL LANDSCAPE ( No people can be shown in picture)
- \_\_\_\_\_ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE PROJECT (People/Lions/Leos can be in photo)

1. All photos must be taken in Kansas and be your original work, i.e. taken by you.
2. Please submit this form with each category entry.
3. All submitted contest photos become the property of Kansas Lions.
4. MD 17 Kansas Lions reserve the right to disqualify entries that do not meet the contest criteria or that may be considered inappropriate.

## DEADLINES FOR CONTEST

1. Submit/email the digital photos and entry form to your respective district environmental chairperson before **February 1, 2026**. District K: Louise Greenberg, [gberg@ruraltel.net](mailto:gberg@ruraltel.net), District A: PDG Terry Weldin, [terryweldin@gmail.com](mailto:terryweldin@gmail.com), or District N: Kathy Pratt, [kpratt558@gmail.com](mailto:kpratt558@gmail.com)
2. Each district will select their contest winners in each category and then submit them to the MD 17 Environmental co-chairs by **April 20, 2026**.
3. MD 17 Lions will vote to select the final winners during a period of April 25 through May 15 by either paper ballot or by electronic means. Paper ballots will be sent out by email from the State Office.
4. To increase participation, a Lion may only win in one category.
5. Don't forget to enter photos of Lions doing service in the community.
6. Winners will be recognized and awarded at the MD 17 State Convention May, 2026. By submitting photos, the **photographer gives the Kansas Lion MD 17 permission to use the photos in any publications, social media, websites, displays and other places without payment or other consideration**. Additionally, by submitting a photo that includes human subjects, the photographer is indicating that they have obtained full permission from those subjects for the photograph to be used in department medium as well.
7. We ask that all photo submissions are **not digitally manipulated or enhanced**. Photos that have been altered will be disqualified. Photos that have been edited using Instagram filters will not be accepted. Normal cropping, color correction, etc. are acceptable. **Please remove watermarks/trademarks before entering.**

Plan ahead to enter the photo contest!