District 17N News

67 Lions clubs serving in south central and south east Kansas | November 2026
Find us on the web at kslions17n.org or on Facebook as KansasLionsDistrict17N

Goddard Lions bring holiday cheer

As the holidays approach, many Lions Clubs are busy serving their communities in a variety of ways. Successful projects often are built on community partnerships—and the Goddard Lions Club has capitalized on that with its Mitten Tree program.

From early November through Christmas, Goddard Lions are offering a helping hand to families in need with the support of the entire community.

The program started about 30 years ago with holiday help for a handful of families. Lion Debra Funke remembers helping her Dad, PDG Dan Funke, deliver food and gifts to several families on Christmas Eve. Today, she runs the technical side of the club's application process and takes time off from her day job to help inventory, shop and prepare for distribution of food and gifts for more than 400 children in 175 families.

"Mitten Tree is a program with community-wide impact made possible only by community support," said PDG Dan, who has chaired the program for more than 25 years.

"This program would not be possible without the cooperation and generosity of our business community, school district, and numerous local service organizations. Groups such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Women's Club, Goddard Senior Center, and the City of Goddard have all played an important role in making this project successful."

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Tables will be overflowing with thousands of pounds of canned and boxed foods collectied from various community food drives—community and Lions working together."

Save the Date!

2nd 17N District Cabinet Meeting
Saturday, November 7
Emporia
Didde Center on the ESU campus
1415 Merchant St

State 3rd Council Meeting
January 23, 2026
Zoom

3rd 17N District Cabinet Meeting
January 30
Zoom

LCI Week of Service: Youth
February 13-21, 2027

17N District Convention
April 9-10, 2027
Parsons
See page 9

Kansas Lions District 17N Leaders

District Governor
Melanie Snider
Baxter Springs Lions Club
417-529-2138
lionmelsnider@gmail.com

1st Vice District Governor
Barb Schattak
Lyndon Lions Club
785-221-7994
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2nd Vice District Governor
Joyce McDaniel
Valley Center Lions Club
316-259-4122
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District Governor Notes

Have an Idea? Don't Let It Stop There!

How many times have you been sitting in a Lions Club meeting and heard someone say, "You know what we ought to do?"



There's some enthusiastic discussion, everyone agrees it's a good idea, and then the meeting moves on. Somewhere along the way, the idea gets lost.

I've been thinking about why that happens.

Do we assume someone else will take the lead? Are we expecting our club officers or the same dependable Lions to take care of everything?

Recognizing a need is a great start, but what if we took the next step and invited a few Lions to explore the possibilities?

A committee doesn't have to be large or complicated. Two or three interested Lions can explore the need, identify resources, and bring recommendations back to the club. Not every idea will become a project, and that's okay. Sometimes the best opportunity is partnering with someone already doing the work.

And here's something I'd really like us to think about — let's eliminate those committees of one!

Our officers provide leadership and direction, but they shouldn't have to carry every project. Committees do more than divide the work. They help us discover talents, develop leaders, build relationships, and give more Lions the satisfaction of contributing.

Isn't that part of what belonging to a Lions Club should be about?

A suggestion starts a conversation. A committee explores the possibilities. Working together turns possibilities into service.

The next time someone says, "You know what we ought to do?" let's not allow the conversation to end there.

Let's ask, "Who would like to help explore that idea?"

Remember, you don't have to do it all yourself. But you may be the person who gets it started.

17N Lions — what are we waiting for? Let's see what we can accomplish together!

Melanie Snider
District Governor 17N

1st Vice District Governor

Fighting Hunger During the Holidays

Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner. This is a time when we think of our family dinners, what is going to be cooked and where we are going to spend time with our families.

We also give to food pantries to help those in need, but have we ever thought of the shut-ins? Those who do not have families, or the funds to buy their meals?

There are different ways we can serve such as help—with Meals on Wheels, serving on a food line, collectiong donations. Food insecurity is an ever-widening dilemma today. Our clubs do fruit baskets, community dinners including brunches, food drives—all projects that workin with community partners.





This year I challenge Lions to seek out those shut-ins, individuals who can't drive due to surgery or a health issue. Ask your friends, neighbors, family, or church members to find those who need some cheer, fellowship, and a warm meal. Let's make sure they also have an enjoyable holiday this year. Happy Holidays to all!

Barb Schattak
1st Vice District Governor 17N

2nd Vice District Governor

Fun, Fun, Fun at Lions Fall Rally in McPherson!

Fun, fellowship, learning, and Lions spirit were in full swing at our Fall Rally in McPherson!

Close to 90 Lions members from across the state gathered for a day of fellowship, fun, and learning. It was wonderful to see so many Lions come together, reconnect with old friends, meet new ones, and share their enthusiasm for serving their communities.



One of the highlights of the rally was the **Kansas Lions Band Auction!** Thanks to the generosity of our Lions and the donations received, approximately **$2,500 was raised to assist the Kansas Lions Band Foundation.** What a wonderful way to support our band and invest in the future of the Kansas Lions Band!

Learning was also a big part of the day, with **five training classes offered throughout the rally.** My biggest takeaway was a simple but important reminder: **clear communication and listening are essential to being an effective leader.** We can have the best ideas and intentions, but if we don't communicate clearly and take the time to listen to one another, we may miss opportunities to learn, grow, and work together. As Lions, we need to remember that good communication goes both ways!

Events like the Fall Rally remind us that being a Lion is about more than the service we provide. It is also about the friendships we build, the knowledge we gain, and the difference we make when we work together.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped plan and organize the rally, donated auction items, participated in the auction, led the training classes, and attended the event. Your support and enthusiasm helped make the day a success!

Remember, Lions, **service is important, but having FUN along the way makes it even better!**

Keep serving, learning, listening, and sharing the joy of being a Lion!

Together We Serve!
Joyce McDaniel
2nd Vice District Governor 17N

Kansas Lions Band Marching Hats and Plumes Available!

Kansas Lions Clubs and Lions Members — Would you like to own a piece of Kansas Lions Band history?

Several years ago, when the Kansas Lions Band purchased its new uniforms, the marching hats no longer matched the updated uniforms.

The marching hats, complete with plumes, have been stored on racks at the Kansas Lions State Office. Now, it is time to clean out the storage room and find new homes for items that are no longer being used.

Would your Lions club like one or two marching hats to display in your local museum, club meeting place, or other location celebrating Kansas Lions history?

I would be happy to bring hats to your District Convention or the Kansas Lions State Convention for those interested in having one.

Let's give these pieces of Kansas Lions Band history a new home where they can be displayed and appreciated for years to come!



Contact: PID Hans Neidhardt
hnwizardofoz@gmail.com
(316) 435-2800



Fast Facts:

• Did you know? Service projects aren't the only activities worth reporting. Time spent planning, organizing, and carrying out service activities may also count toward your club's service reporting. Don't overlook the work behind the scenes!

• LCI Social Media tips, tools and how-to videos: https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/resources-for-members/social-media

Social Media – Making It Work for Your Lions Club

Social media offers Lions Clubs an opportunity to share our service, connect with our communities, and encourage others to become involved. Most clubs have a Facebook page, but are we making the best use of it?

Our postings can do more than announce events or report accomplishments. They can tell the story of our service and help others see how they might become involved.

Tell the Story

"Our club collected 500 pairs of eyeglasses." That's an accomplishment, but why does it matter? Who benefits? How did the community help?

A picture of a Lion collecting glasses from a local business or members sorting glasses for recycling can help tell the story behind the numbers.

Invite Participation

When posting about a project, include an invitation: "Would you like to help with our next service project?"

Not everyone is ready to become a Lion, but volunteering provides an opportunity to experience our service, meet members, and perhaps consider membership. Be sure to include contact information.

Recognize Contributions

Showcase the teacher supporting your Peace Poster Contest, a business donating supplies, volunteers assisting with an event, or Lions coordinating a project.

Recognition demonstrates appreciation and reminds others that community service is something we accomplish together.

Help Others See Themselves Serving

Share pictures of Lions and community volunteers working together. Show the variety of service opportunities, friendships, and enjoyment that come with serving.

Would someone viewing your page think, "That's something I could do" or "That's a group I'd enjoy being part of?"

Listen and Engage

Social media is also an opportunity to learn about our communities. Follow local schools, businesses, and organizations. Respond to comments and questions. We may discover new service needs or opportunities to work together.

Social media doesn't replace personal conversations and invitations. It provides another way to share our service, build relationships, and invite others to join us.



Keep It Current and Meaningful

One or two meaningful posts each week may be enough. Consider having two or three members share responsibility for photographs, postings, and responses.

A few reminders:

- Focus on community service rather than routine meeting notices.
- Include more photos of Lions actively serving and less of awards or ceremonial pictures of Lions.
- Share the purpose of fundraising rather than using posts to request donations.
- Obtain permission before sharing photographs, especially of children or individuals receiving assistance.
- Use genuine photographs, follow Lions branding guidelines, and keep contact information current.
- Post consistently keeping club info current and easy to find.
- Start with one social media platform, become comfortable then add other platforms increasing community exposure.
- A private Facebook group only reaches its group members vs. a public page allows many to see what your club is doing.

Take a Look at Your Club's Page

What would someone visiting your Facebook page learn about your club?

Would they see Lions attending meetings or people working in service? Would they see opportunities to help and a club they might want to join?

Our goal isn't simply to show what Lions have done, but to help others see what we can accomplish together.

Editor's Note: A little use of AI tools isn't off limits—DG Melanie's image above has a little AI help.

Goddard Mitten Tree

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It starts with November food drives in local schools and businesses. Thousands of pounds of non-perishable food items are collected and delivered to a church gym in the community by the school district's maintenance department. On Friday night of the week before Thanksgiving, the Lions are joined by an army of community volunteers to sort hundreds of boxes of food onto tables throughout the gym.

On a Saturday morning, families in the Mitten Tree program come and "shop" for food for their families. The Lions Club purchases turkeys, potatoes, celery and carrots for each family. Many volunteers make the workload lighter by showing up to help with "shopping," handing out turkeys and loading cars.

Before Thanksgiving, trees are put up in several businesses and the public library—decorated with paper "mittens" with the Christmas wishes of children. Each mitten represents a child and community members are encouraged to take a mitten (or two) and go shopping. This is when the real "magic" that is Mitten Tree begins.



The club doesn't slow down while it waits for "mitten" gifts to be returned. Instead the club shifts gears and assembles fruit plates for elders and shut-ins in the community. Lions come together one evening in early December and create plates of fresh fruit, candy and peanuts. More than 70 plates are put together in an assembly line. Club members deliver the goodies the next day. Holiday fruit plates are a long-standing club project, stretching back at least 50 years.

Then it's back to Mitten Tree. Lions check daily and pick up bags of donated gifts from the drop off locations.

How do gift bags for more than 400 children get filled?



Bags of Christmas gifts line the gym floor on the morning of Mitten Tree distribution.

The answer lies in the community. For example, last year alone, 150 mittens were filled by school district staff, students, individual classrooms and school organizations.

Once all the bags of gifts are collected, Lions Club members and community volunteers begin the task of taking inventory of the bags of donated gifts—in 2025 that was 430 bags.

Each bag represents a child. The goal is that each child's bag has two complete outfits, socks, underwear, hat and gloves or mittens, a coat if needed, and two or three age-appropriate gifts. After inventory, volunteers make lists and start shopping to fill in any gaps. These shopping trips are supported by cash donations from the community.

On distribution day, Lions and community volunteers set up a drive-through delivery. Volunteers load the recipient's trunk with bags of gifts, a roll of wrapping paper, a roll of tape and a ham.

"It truly takes a village to support more than 175 families and over 400 children," said Lion Dan. "While the Goddard Lions Club serves as the catalyst and organizer of the program, everyone involved has a voice and an opportunity to contribute to how we serve our community. Their generosity demonstrates the incredible difference we can make when an entire community comes together to help its neighbors during the holiday.

"This is what makes the Mitten Tree program so special."



Arkansas City Early Bird
45 Years
11/17/1981

Arkansas City
106 years
11/24/1920

Baxter Springs
85 years
11/5/1941

Columbus
86 years
11/18/1940

Lyndon
73 years
11/19/1953

Mulvane
60 years
11/18/1966

Ottawa
90 years
11/23/1936

Around the District

Submit your club activities to newsletter17n@cox.net
Deadline is always the 25th of the month



Marquette Lions had some friendly/spooky characters for Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat, collecting 1,480 pounds of food for the McPherson County Food Bank.



Derby Lions spent a recent Sunday afternoon painting almost 50 fire hydrants around the community. Refreshing these hydrants helps first responders quickly identify where they hydrant is as well as preserve the integrity of the hydrant.





Pittsburg Lions donated 24 hand sewn pillow cases to Dream Big Little One. Pictured with member Tanya Lloyd, founder Tess Watson and two of our amazing seamstresses: Carolyn Burchfield and Shannon Gerwert!



Augusta Lions PDG Bill Kincaid and Dianne Buggeln received Service Chevrons when Vice District Governor Barb Schattak visited their club in October. PDG Bill received his 45-year chevron and Lion Diane received her 35-year chevron.



At right: Wichita Downtown Lion Loleta Staver receives a 30-year Chevron from Second Vice District Governor Joyce McDaniel.



Six new Lions were inducted into the Eureka Lions Club during DG Melanie Snider's club visit in October.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

November is recognized as Diabetes Awareness Month, with World Diabetes Awareness Day observed on November 14. I encourage all clubs to consider organizing a Strides event or inviting a guest speaker to address your club about diabetes when planning upcoming programs or projects.



Emporia Lions put a window display in a downtown storefront in November.

With 249,000 Kansans diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, spreading awareness about diabetes is crucial. Raising awareness helps educate individuals and communities about the risks, symptoms, and management of diabetes, which can lead to earlier detection and better outcomes.

Encouraging regular medical exams and blood testing is especially important, as these screenings can identify diabetes in its early stages, sometimes before symptoms appear—allowing for timely intervention and improved long-term health. By promoting awareness and routine testing, we empower people to take charge of their health and potentially prevent serious complications associated with diabetes.

Please continue to support our diabetes camp scholarship initiative. Consider donating $100 today. New applications will be available soon. Camp Discovery dates will be June 6 – June 11, 2027. Registration will start in February. Camp fills fast so if you know of any children that would benefit from going to camp advise them to register early.

We don't have any information about any increase in costs. Last year it was $1650. We do not have any information on Camp Planet D yet. That camp is in Lawson, Mo and takes place in July. We should have more information for next month's newsletter.

PDG Don Cunningham
Diabetes Awareness Chair

Welcome to the Pride

New members in October

New Member	Sponsor
Eureka	
Dakota Brubaker	Marshall Kreger
Bryson Higbee-Wegner	Marshall Kreger
Justin Mead	Marshall Kreger
Taylor Mead	Marshall Kreger
Angela Turner	Marshall Kreger
Luke Turner	Marshall Kreger
Girard	
Cathy Pope	Daniel Duling
Greg Scott	Wilda Pentola
Humboldt	
Bret Sehorn	Cole Herder
Neodesha	
Michelle Burgell	Lloyd Baumwart
Parsons	
Patrick Duncan	Verlyn Bolinger



The Holiday Season: A Time of Giving

As we enter the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season, we reflect on the past year and enjoy special moments with family and friends. As Lions, it is also a time to remember those in need and find meaningful ways to serve others.

Throughout our communities, Lions demonstrate the spirit of giving by delivering food baskets, supporting Angel Tree gift programs, providing warm clothing, organizing holiday dinners, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, and hosting special visits from Santa. These acts of kindness bring joy and hope to those we serve.

However, our mission of service extends beyond our local communities to people around the world. One of the most effective ways Lions can support worldwide humanitarian efforts is through donations to Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF).



Lions can contribute through individual or club donations, either as a one-time gift or through convenient monthly contributions. Every dollar helps LCIF fund grants that support vision, childhood cancer, diabetes, hunger, the environment, disaster relief, and other humanitarian needs.



Another opportunity is to leave a lasting legacy through the Lions Legacy Society. By including LCIF in your estate plans through wills, trusts, retirement plans, life insurance, or beneficiary designations, you can help ensure that Lions continue making a difference for generations to come.

This holiday season, consider extending your spirit of giving beyond your community. Whether you give today or plan a gift for the future, your generosity helps LCIF empower Lions to change lives around the world. Your Gift. Their Future. Our Impact.

PID Hans Neidhardt &
PID Bill Phillipi
MD 17 LCIF Co-Chairs