



NEWSLETTER

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The more things stay the same, the more they have to change

Do you drink Coke? If so, you probably already know that prices for Coke products have doubled since 2020. A 12-pack cost less than \$5 five years ago but is nearly \$10 today.

Beer prices are worse. The average price for 16 ounces (a standard pint) of malt beverage was \$1.48 in 2020. A draft beer today will run you between \$5 and \$15, depending on the brand. The average price is \$6.25.

Blame it on COVID, inflation, what have you; the point is, costs have increased for nearly everything we enjoy - except for your Elk dues.

The annual Elk dues to join the Columbus Country Club have been the same for the past 15 years! A Columbus Elk in 2010 paid \$125 to belong - the same price you will pay in 2026.

These dues are used to fund student scholarships, community causes of various kinds, and the administrative costs of operating a not-for-profit, Elks organization.

The rest of your membership fees - whether you are a Family, Clubhouse and Pool, Out-of-Town, or any other member - pay for the Club's operations (e.g., payroll, course equipment, food, utilities, etc., as well as the Coke added to every well drink or every beer kept cold in the cooler).

The challenge is, ECC's membership dues are not enough to cover the costs of operating the course and club.

Earlier this spring, the Elks' Board of Trustees approved a budget of \$1,420,280, which was \$71,856 less than what the Club needs to operate. In other words, we did not set dues for this year at a level that would cover our total costs.

So, what does that mean? The honest answer is: membership dues will need to increase for 2026-2027.

How much? That answer is being determined right now.

Management, the Finance Committee, and the Board of Trustees are in the process of finalizing budgets. Once set, they will put pencil to paper and hold an All-Member Meeting in October or November to present their findings and ideas for the future of the club. So, stay tuned and stay faithful. An Elks membership is always a great



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value, and it will more than likely remain more economical than its peer country clubs in York, Norfolk, Yankton, and Fremont.

But you deserve to know that what we are doing now is simply not sustainable. Put differently, the Elks cannot continue collecting \$1.48 for a beer that costs the club \$5.

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Lodge #1195 honors, thanks veterans

More than 120 participate in Elks' annual Veterans Outing



The day began with a pork burger lunch, group photo, and a patriotic flyover of two, WWII-era planes. Attendees then played 18 holes of golf, enjoyed a great steak dinner, and listened to a few words from Nebraska Governor Pillen. The day ended with emotional Quilts of Valor presentations to four unsuspecting veterans.

Such was this year's Veterans Outing, hosted by the Columbus Elks Country Club Lodge #1195 on Friday, August 22, 2025.



Military planes piloted by Kurt Muhle and Keith Harbor conducted a special flyover just after the veterans gathered together for a photograph. This year's annual Veterans Outing hosted 77 golfers (19 teams) on the course and served approximately 120 people at the banquet.

Yet, the idea to do something to honor and show gratitude to America's veterans originated long ago.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, commonly called "The Elks," originated in 1868. As the organization evolved, it incorporated community service, mutual aid, youth, scholarships, and patriotism into its programming. Even today, the Elks adhere to the pledge, "So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

The Columbus, Neb., lodge has done just that for nearly 10 years with a complimentary day of fun for veterans and their families. Marty Divis, an Elk and retired Senior Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force, ANG, who started his career in the Army, leads the event as its organizer.

"I know what these men and women did for our country," he said. "They have such pride in having served, no matter their military branch. Their loyalty needs to be celebrated. This is a very special group of people."

Businesses help sponsor the event, many of which do so because they employ veterans, are veteran-owned, or are patriotic companies. This year's sponsors contributed more than \$10,000 to the Outing.

About half of that money is used to pay for the veterans' experience, prizes, lunch, and evening banquet shared with their families. The other half supports programming for veterans' needs, like that provided by the Norfolk Veterans Home. It is also awarded in scholarships for veterans or their children who seek to further their education.

"One of the best parts of the evening is when we surprise a few veterans with handmade Quilts of Valor," Divis said. "Their families know they are receiving it, but more often than not, the veteran doesn't."

"Joy Dannelly, one of our generous quilters over the past several years, made a quilt specifically for a Navy veteran. So, it was precipitous to learn Lynn Purdy, who served in the Navy from 1974-1977, recently moved into the Norfolk Veterans Home. She was awarded that special quilt."

Three other quilts were made by Theresa Jones, a family friend of Navy veteran Frank Korth and his sons, Army veteran Sean Korth, and Navy veteran Lou Korth.

"All I can say is, it is gratifying to be in an organization that encourages and supports the celebration of our veterans," said Divis. "We hope our event gets better each year, because our veterans deserve it."



As he does every year, Elk member and expert griller Jim Morris grills up the banquet steaks.



Winning team of (L to R) Henry Brader, Amber Bogle, Brad Balack, and Jeremy Wallasky pose with Veteran Outing Coordinator Marty Divis.



Above: It was a very special presentation when family members Frank Korth (father) and sons Sean and Lou Korth were presented with Quilts of Valor made by Theresa Jones, family friend and mother of Elk member Sara Weber. Navy veteran Lynn Purdy was also presented with a Quilt of Valor made by Joy Dannelly.



Above: Veteran Bill Klug won a special raffle prize of a Horse Soldier Bourbon oak barrel top and bottle of bourbon with stopper donated by the veteran-owned company.

Sponsors of the event included Behlen Mfg. Co., Dewine Mechanical, LLC, 5-Star Pumping, American Legacy LandCo, Bank of the Valley, Cargill, Clay Hills Ag., Columbus Bank & Trust, Commodity Solutions, Inc., eXP Realty, Louie's Liquor, NETS Transportation Services, Pillen Family Farms, and Whitetails Unlimited.



Marty Divis poses with Rich McPhillips, Bob Parker, Al Lerch, and Dick Beiermann, one of 19 veteran teams that played in the Aug. 22 Outing.



Governor Jim Pillen greets friend and fellow Elk member Marty Divis before sharing a few words of appreciation.

MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER

Hello, everyone.

Even though the summer is coming to an end, I feel we have a lot of the golf season left, and I would like to THANK all of the members for their support and compliments throughout the season!

You may or may not know that at the beginning of the year, the Board of Trustees asked management to buckle down, watch spending, and tighten up in all areas. As you may have read in the ER's column on the front page, our budget and expenses need to be better aligned. Yet, even with increasing costs in all areas, I believe management and staff have done a very good job.

Shifting our office practices and having more candid and honest discussions at all committee levels has been effective in keeping us on the same page and realistic about our budgets, what we can afford to do, and what still needs to be done to be a viable country club in the future.

Moving forward also involves implementing even better communication to members through our new ForeUp system, and I expect this will only increase member satisfaction.

I say it often, yet I cannot say it enough. The club is heading in the right direction with a staff that cares deeply about giving the members an unbeatable experience and product. An incredible amount of legwork is being done in all areas, and in the near future, we will present our findings and plans to the members on the major changes/updates that are necessary not only to move the club forward but to take it to the next level.

As members, you know there are many incredible people who have helped out behind the scenes and stepped up to donate their time and talent to rebuild the Elks Country Club and make it a place where all want to "PLAY HERE." I can't name them all here, but they know who they are. And on behalf of the staff and us managers, I - once again - say, "Thank you!"

- Trista

IT'S BACK!

1ST & 3RD

Wednesdays

of the month
starting Sept. 3

PASTA NIGHT

**RESERVE YOUR
TABLE TODAY!**

402.564.1451



"I didn't know!"

This is an expression sometimes shared by members, and it can be disconcerting to both the member and the Club.

The Elks' new customer management system, ForeUp was implemented at the end of last year, and it is used for points of sale, billing, reservations, and emails.

Members should receive emails every Wednesday about weekend menu specials and happenings at the club, tee-time confirmations, and the ECC's monthly newsletter. It is also used to communicate messages about the weather's impact on the course or facility.

If you have NOT been receiving any of these emails, please look in your email system's spam, promotions, or trash folders. You may need to flag the "Elks Country Club" as a preferred or priority sender. You can also call us, and we will see if we can help determine the issue; but if your email address is correct in our system, you should be getting all of the communications sent out.

ForeUp also has a texting feature we want to start using, as some people rely on text more than email. So, if you are in doubt, please call the office to verify your cell phone number.

Thank you!

Elks Management

MESSAGE FROM OUR GOLF PROFESSIONAL

Hello from the golf shop!

Thanks for a great summer season! We held some of the usual events, and we tried a couple of new ones. I encourage you to keep signing up for everything we offer here at the club to get the most out of your membership. Summer might be coming to a close but that doesn't mean golf season is over. Come out and enjoy what I believe to be the best time of year to play golf. . . FALL.

I wanted to take some time this month to talk about the Nebraska Open and what it means to the club. As many of you know, the second weekend of September brings the second-largest professional golf tournament in the state to your facility.

The Nebraska Open is important for a couple of reasons.

Exposure to the club is always paramount to me. I stepped foot on The Elks CC for the first time as a high school senior to play as an amateur in the tournament. So, I feel like I'm living proof in the value of exposing the club to future members, employees, and businesses.



Above: This year's Nebraska Open will boast a new title sponsor. BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska has taken the mantle for what will be the 34th NEPGA-sponsored event at the Elks Country Club.

There are quite a few aspiring tour pros who play in the event (who have only great things to say about our course). Some have become long-time tour players/winners like Zach Johnson, Peter Malnati, & Nate Lashley.

We also have a large contingent of club pros who play here every year from across the Midwest and who support the tournament because of their admiration for our facility.

Beyond the exposure I feel it provides, ECC also hosts the NPPD Pro-Am on Thursday, before the tournament's first round on Friday, Sept. 12.

The Pro-Am is a terrific fundraiser that helps raise money for scholarships given to kids attending one of 11 Central Community College campuses in Nebraska, including the one in Columbus.

Not only is the kick-off event a great cause, but it is also one of our largest revenue-driving events we host all year, bringing in more than \$10,000 for club operations.

Long story short, the NE Open is a win-win for all of us here at the club, and we encourage you, as ECC members, to come out and watch some great golf being played September 12-14.

The course will be open for play around 5 p.m. on Sunday.

-Derrick



Above: Kathy Fuchser, Central Community College-Columbus Campus President, and Conrad Saltzgaber, Elk member and Nebraska Public Power District's Vice President of Corporate Strategy & Transformation, present the top purse prize of \$13,200 to last year's Nebraska Open champion, Andrew Beckler. Beckler, a former Washburn Rural and Washburn University golf star, won the 2024 Nebraska Open with a final round of 62 and a tournament-record, 19-under-par, and six-stroke victory over Zach Burry of Appleton, Wisc.

Mark Brown
Memorial
Hilltoppers
Cup
Champions
Charleigh and
Jarrod Spiegel



Men's
Club
Champion
Brock
Kuhlman



Men's
Stroke Play
Club
Champion
Brock
Kuhlman



August Winners Circle

Ladies' Club
Champion
Amy Brown



Ladies 'A' League
Champions Sara
Weber and
Cathy
Kurtenbach



Men's Tuesday
Night League
Champions
Jeremy Weber
and Rick
Hilbert



Memorial Member-
Member Champions Tom
and Louie Rambour



Not pictured:
Men's Pool League Winners -
Pete Balerud and Mike Miller
(Pool 1) and Eric and Keith
Bice (Pool 2)

Congratulations!!

MESSAGE FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

Hello, members.

I want to start by thanking you for your patience as we have made improvements to our small driving range tee. You have had to use the mats more than normal this year, and the wear and tear is certainly visible.

That's why I am excited to announce we'll be installing a new range mat this fall to replace our old and worn-out one.

This improvement also addresses feedback received in last fall's Member Survey, in which

- 36% said the driving range conditions and maintenance were "Fair,"
- 19% said they were "Poor,"
- 18% said they were "Excellent,"
- 9% said they "Need an overhaul," and
- 18% claimed "n/a."

As shown in the picture to the right, key features of the new mats include:

1. *Modular turf squares that can be rotated or replaced as needed for easy maintenance and consistent performance.*
2. *Improved durability for better value and less downtime.*
3. *The ability to use golf tees at any height.*
4. *A natural turf "feel."*



The new mats will fit perfectly on our concrete pad and feature rough-length turf that closely resembles natural grass.

Fundraising from the Memorial Foundation over the last four years will help pay for the new mats, which cost \$17,500.

Once ordered and delivered, my staff and I will install the mats, a project we plan to have completed by the end of October.

Thanks again for your continued support as we upgrade our facilities and make the Elks Country Club an impressive facility and course for your enjoyment.

-Eric

Learning the game from dad!

Leading Knight Justin Laudenklos shows 1-year-old daughter, Liv, a good putting stroke while 3-year-old Lanie waits in the wings for her turn.

"Fun. Keep it fun," said Tiger Woods about children learning the game of golf. "Don't force your kids into sports. ...It's the child's desire to play that matters...."



CALENDAR



September | Elks Country Club

- 2 Labor Day Holiday
- 4 Fall Men's League (5:30 pm shotgun)
- 11 NPPD Pro-Am Kick-off
- 12-14 Blue Cross Blue Shield Nebraska Open
- 15 CCC Foundation Tournament (10 a.m. shotgun)
- 16 OFC (Our Finest Citizens)
- 17 Elks Lodge Meeting @ 7 p.m.
- 18 Fall Men's League (5:30 p.m. shotgun)
- 21 Sammy's Family & Friends (12 p.m. shotgun)
- 22-23 Fall aerification (all golf facilities closed)
- 24 Cactus
- 25 Fall Men's League (5:30 pm shotgun)
- 27 Couples Golf Night (5:30 pm shotgun)
- 30 CHS JV Invite (10am shotgun)

Golf tournaments and outings requested by external entities are typically held on weekdays, keeping the course available for members. The Nebraska Open is an exception in that it is an NPGEA-endorsed event, the second-largest golf event in the state, and a rewarding event for the club from a revenue and public relations standpoint.

• Elks-sponsored

• External organization/
Business/Other