

Fall Conference at Breezy Point

Convention Planning Notes

Revised 6/23/25

If the convention co-chairs keep the age-old advice “keep it simple” in mind, this can be a relatively painless convention to organize! Be sure to rely on the State Meetings Chairperson and past Convention Co-chairs to help guide you so you can avoid some of the pain that they’ve felt and learn from past challenges as well as successes.

It’s important to keep in mind that the reason for holding this convention at Breezy Point and having events on Friday at Camp is to get members out to enjoy our property and see what the camp has to offer while enjoying some fellowship.

This document lays out the bare minimums for planning a Fall Convention. Suggestions for future improvements are welcomed.

State Meeting’s Chairperson responsibilities include:

- Negotiate the contract with the Sales Teams at Breezy Point. Typically, this is locked in for 2 or 3 years whenever it’s renewed including dates, guest room rates, comp’d room nights for State Sponsor and Current State President along with the meeting rooms.
- Share the above information along with recent convention reports with the convention co-chairs as soon as possible.

Convention Co-Chairs responsibilities include:

- Ongoing dialogue with the State Meetings Chairperson, State President and State Secretary to confirm all plans for convention
- Discuss overall convention plans with representatives from all lodges in the district and designated committee chairs.
- Coordinate periodic meetings of all committee chairs to keep lines of communication open
- Work with the district’s lodges to determine how the financial obligations of the convention will be handled. (See the budget section at the end for some framework that other district’s have used)
- Work closely with the Camp Board regarding any plans for use of camp facilities. (NOTE: No one is allowed to stay at camp during convention weekend without the approval of the Camp Board)
- Work with the Registration Committee to draft a Welcome letter. Insure that the Registration form, room reservation information and booklet ad requests are sent out to all lodges in a timely manner.
- Determine with the Committee chairs if any other items (T-shirts, hats, koozies, whatever) will be sold. Past conventions have indicated these items were NOT very successful and were more of a challenge than they were worth. (Members didn’t pre-order, quantities needed for decent pricing were high, developing a logo took resources, what to do with leftover t-shirts, hats or koozies, etc)

Suggested Convention Committees

(Details for each to follow)

- 1) Breezy Point (Meetings, Rooms, Meals at Breezy, etc)
- 2) Convention Booklet (Ad requests, design & print book)
- 3) Registration (Registration form, tickets and delegate bags)
- 4) Dignitary (Hospitality and transportation needs for State Sponsor & State President)
- 5) Friday at Camp Committee (Broken into four sub-teams)
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Food
 - c. Bar
 - d. Games

Other Activities to be aware of and support:

- Basket Auction in meeting room (Barb Schindele / Stacy Ryan will run? Just need to make sure they have tables for the baskets)
- Raffle drawing on Saturday at 1 (Charlie & Becky Radika run. Make sure they have a table and microphone)
- Insurance Policy – Camp Board should handle. Discuss with Charlie Radika / John Miller

Breezy Point Committee

This committee could be the co-chairs or just a person designated to coordinate with the various parties involved in running anything held at Breezy Point including:

- **Breezy Point Sales Dept:** Kevin Riegelman, State Meetings Chair is the main contact for anything related to Breezy Point. He would be the one to work with regarding room rates, promo code to use, instructions on how to book.
 - Kevin will be the one to work with the MN Elks webmaster to post the room reservation information and can provide information for you to send to the lodges.
 - Saturday lunch before Raffle Drawing – Should you choose to have the Pizza / Salad bar prior to the raffle drawing, Kevin can assist with providing the order and other instructions to the Breezy Point team.
- **Registration tables / Meeting Rooms / Breakout Rooms / Technology / Credential sign-in rooms:** After conferring with the State President and State Secretary and any notes from prior year co-chairs, you should basically just need to confirm that we'd like things set up like they were in the prior year. For the past couple years, we have JUST provided water in the meeting room. (Coffee got way too expensive and the coffee shop is open across the street or they can make in their room)
- **Hospitality Room:** Confirm that we'd still like to have that larger room available at the Inn for convention delegates to gather in the afternoons / evenings for hospitality
- **Comp'd Rooms:** At this convention, our contract includes a total of 6 room nights comp'd. 3 nights each for the State President and State Sponsor. Provide Breezy Point with their names, phone numbers, emails and any special needs (IE – Handicap Room for Radikas)
- **Friday's Meeting Session:** Arrange someone to Welcome the Conference AND the Color Guard for the posting of the colors.

- Welcome speaker options include the Breezy Point Sales Team, a local Chamber or Visitor's & Conv Bureau rep or Mayor of Breezy Point, etc
- Color Guard – typically, most convention co-chairs have asked Herman Wisneski or someone from Brainerd for assistance
- If delegated to someone else, be sure to follow up and confirm plans
- **Tables for Ring Committee:** Make sure the final arrangements include tables with tablecloths and chairs for the ring committee to sell rings and Elks apparel. (Contact the Ring Committee to confirm table and chair requirements)
- **Saturday Lunch:** The last convention offered a pizza and salad buffet provided by Breezy Point. In talking with Lynn, her meal counts from the 2019 convention report were almost exactly the same as 2023. Be sure to provide the details and ticket cost to the Registration committee for the registration form.
- **Support the Basket Auction for Camp:** Really the only action is to confirm the tables with tablecloths are on the final layout
- **Support the Camp Raffle Drawing:** Again, just be sure the meeting room space is available from 1-3 PM Saturday along with a microphone

Convention Booklet Committee

This committee really only needs one or maybe two people who are responsible for:

- **Convention Ad Request letter and form:** Using templates from past conventions, update the convention ad request letter & form so it can be sent out with the registration forms.
- **Obtain quotes to select a printer:** After determining the # of books to print, obtain quotes from several options and select a printer. Identify parameters for the final booklet to be sent to the printer (pdf, camera ready art required, etc), number of pages, copies to print and timelines.
- **Layout the booklet for printing:** Receive and place ads from lodges, obtain other information (agenda, welcome letters, officer pictures from State Secretary, State President, etc) and prepare the final product for the printer.
- **Print booklet / Get to Registration Committee for distribution.**

Registration Committee

KEY NOTE: Gretchen Peterson has an online registration program developed and is happy to share / train anyone willing to utilize it instead of reinventing the wheel every convention.

This committee also only needs one or maybe two people who are responsible for:

- **Registration Form:** Using templates from past conventions, develop the Registration form for delegates. Key items include:
 - Delegate information (Name, lodge, phone, email, titles)
 - Registration Fees and Meals: \$15 Delegate Fee and, for this convention, Meals & Games for Friday at Camp and Meal for Saturday lunch at Breezy
 - Registration due date, how to pay including where to send checks
- **Tickets or Wristbands for Meals:** Determine what to use and obtain a supply prior to convention. The North District utilized wristbands for Friday at Camp to ID who had paid for games and food.

- **Delegate and Guest Badges / Lanyards:** Create and print name badges for all delegates and any registered guests. (badge templates *might* be part of the on-line registration that Gretchen created) Contact convention co-chairs from previous convention to obtain the box of lanyards.
- **Delegate Bags:** The North District had some great suggestions for accomplishing this with little to no budget. (However, keep in mind that there is an on-going “debate” whether each paid delegate gets a bag or just one per couple – you’ll see people actually requesting both ways)
 - **Walmart** – They used the Walmart donation request process to request the bags that would be used for the delegates and were able to get them donated
 - **Items for Bags** – Ask each lodge to provide XXX of something for the bag. There are tons of ideas including post its, magnets, hand sanitizer, snacks, pens, envelope openers, etc.
 - Be sure to plan manpower either in advance of convention or early on Thursday to assemble the bags
- **Volunteers to work registration table:** Develop a schedule and recruit volunteers to man the registration table to check in delegates on Thursday afternoon, Friday morning and Saturday morning. Volunteers will welcome guests, check them in, take payments, provide delegate bag and tickets for any meals.

Dignitary Committee

This committee really only needs one or maybe two people who are responsible for the hospitality and transportation needs of our dignitaries at the convention (State Sponsor and State President):

- **Gifts for their Rooms:** Traditionally, convention committees have put together a gift basket with their favorite beverages, some bottled water and snacks plus any other items lodges would like to donate. If unable to secure donated items, be sure to include some funding in the convention’s budget. (If committee doesn’t know what the dignitaries drink, ask another member who knows them well or just ask them)
- **Hospitality:** Since this convention doesn’t have a lot of planned meals like the summer convention, this committee could think about options to share some hospitality from the host district.
- **Transportation:** Again, not like a typical summer convention but it would be a good idea to reach out to the dignitaries to determine if they’d like transportation to camp and back on Friday. If they do, find a member in the district willing to provide transportation.

Friday at Camp Committees

This committee will require the most manpower and, for a division of work, could be split into four sub-teams who are responsible for:

- **Transportation:** Determine if there will be transportation to camp on Friday. If yes, then
 - Work with the Food & Game sub-teams to determine times and seek quotes from possible bus companies (Reichert Bus in Brainerd was used by the North in 2023)
 - Be sure to provide information about potential costs to the Convention Co-Chairs ASAP.
 - Provide information on pick-up locations, times, etc to the Booklet Committee
 - Prior to convention, confirm plans are in place and arrange for payment as directed by convention co-chairs.

- **Food at Camp:** There are a ton of options to provide some food for the delegates at camp. Our best advice is to keep it as simple as possible. A meal in the dining hall for a set period of time with several options (gluten free, vegetarian) – food stations located in several different locations to keep people moving around the camp – etc.
 - Be sure to work with the Games Sub-team to set the price for Food & Games for the Registration forms along with the description to use on the registration forms.
 - Don't forget to discuss plans with the Camp Board due to restrictions after water is shut off to many of the buildings on camp.
 - Plan for food quantity (Lynn from the North said they had WAY too much food left over) and it wouldn't hurt to see if it's possible to order any of the food items using the camp's vendor
 - Don't forget other supplies needed (napkins, plates or paper boats, disposable silverware, condiments, etc)
- **Bar in the Cabana:** The bar at camp is one of the few places the convention can possibly make a little bit of money to help support transportation & other convention costs. The North district implemented a "regular drink pricing" guideline for serving beverages – we cannot legally sell alcohol but we can strongly encourage members to donate at least \$3-4 for each beverage
 - Liquor / Beer / Wine and Seltzers – have a somewhat standard selection but keep it tight. Look at past convention reports for possible choices and quantities
 - Mixes (pop, tonic, club soda, water, etc.) – again keep it simple and consult past reports
 - Ice – consult with Camp Board to see if ice machine will be in operation or make plans to provide ice for use in the cabana.
 - Coolers – ask Camp Board what is available for use or make arrangements to have some. There are a couple electric coolers in the cabana.
 - Other Supplies (cups, straws, napkins, etc.) – determine what and how many. Ask if any lodges are willing and able to donate?
- **Games at Camp:** This sub-team might have 4-5 people on it but will require a TON of volunteers to make it happen. You'll need to determine how many games and plan:
 - What to have and where to have it – might need a back-up plan for poor weather conditions
 - Create your scorecard for all the games and print / bring copies to give out with wristbands
 - What equipment is needed and who will bring it? Bean bag boards? Dart boards?
 - What are the rules for each game and how will you communicate them?
 - How many volunteers are needed? Determine for each game and get them signed up

DJ at Camp: Kevin Riegelman did talk to the DJ from Brainerd who was at camp last year and he's willing to set up his equipment again.

Camp Cleanup: Each of the Camp event committees (Food, Bar & Games) should be sure to include plans and manpower to clean up the camp after the events. All spaces used should be left as clean or cleaner than they were found. Any garbage or recycling must be brought to the dumpster area and properly sorted.

Camp Tours / Golf Cart usage: Discuss in advance these topics with the Camp Board and share decisions with all convention committees.

Handling of Convention Budget & Expenses

The Convention Co-Chairs and the various Committee Chairs should discuss options to handle the revenues AND expenses of hosting a convention including which lodge will handle depositing all income, write checks for expenses and provide reporting details to the entire team.

Here are some guess-timates:

- Income will come from: (Estimated \$15,004 based on Fall 2023)
 - Convention booklet ads (\$1930 in Fall 2023)
 - Meals and registration sign-ups (\$10,560 in Fall 2023)
 - Bar revenues & tips at the Cabana (\$2,514 in Fall 2023)
- Expenses will most likely include: (Estimated \$6,150 based on Fall 2023)
 - Bus Company for Transportation (\$900 in Fall 2023)
 - Breezy Point for Pizzas / Salads on Saturday (\$1700 in Fall 2023)
 - Convention Booklet (\$350 for Fall 2023 but most likely more for 2024 since a member of Eveleth did this production on her own equipment)
 - Youth Camp Donation (\$1,000 for utilities, supplies, etc at camp)
 - Food expenses at camp (\$1200 - \$1500)
 - Beverage expenses at camp (\$500 for purchase of liquor, beer and mix)
 - Games expense budget (\$0-\$100)
 - Dignitary expenses (\$0-100 for gift baskets)