Serving America’s Communities Since 1928

“Creating Thriving Communities Across America”

Member Handbook
Welcome to Ruritan!

Ruritan is a civic service organization with the purpose of creating a better understanding between people and, through volunteer community service, making America’s communities a better place to live and work. The slogan of Ruritan is Fellowship, Goodwill, and Community Service. Each Ruritan Club surveys the needs of its community, and then works to meet those needs.

Ruritan’s main purpose is to serve the community – the center of American life. From the community comes our ideas, our integrity, our moral strength, and our leadership. Membership in a Ruritan club is an honor and a privilege. However, because service so important, membership also involves duties and obligations. Your Ruritan duties and obligations should be performed by you with faithfulness and enthusiasm.

Together we are strong!
Ruritan History

Ruritan began in Holland, Virginia in 1928. Tom Downing of Suffolk, Va. and Jack Gwaltney of Holland, Va. are known as the co-founders of Ruritan. Downing and Gwaltney recognized the need for an organization where community leaders could meet and discuss ways to make their communities better places in which to live. The name “Ruritan” was suggested by Daisy Nurney, a reporter for the Virginian-Pilot newspaper in Norfolk. The new organization unanimously adopted “Ruritan” for its name.

Since then, the Ruritan tradition of local community service has expanded to include more than 20,000 Ruritan volunteers in more than 800 communities across the nation.

About Us

Ruritan is a national organization dedicated to improving communities and building a better America through Fellowship, Goodwill and Community Service. Club membership represents a cross section of the community the club serves and is available to all persons interested in their community. Unlike most service organizations, Ruritan has no national project or program; instead each club surveys the needs of its own community and then works to meet those needs.
Benefits of Ruritan Membership

Club Income Tax Exemptions
Volunteer Leadership
Ruritan Name and Reputation
Educational Materials
Networking and New Friends
Ruritan Supply Items
Liability Insurance Protection

Leadership Development
Ruritan Awards & Recognition
RURITAN magazine
Ruritan National Web Page
Ruritan National Foundation
Partnership Discounts

Ruritan Club Officer Structure

**Elected Officers**
- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Three Directors

**Appointed Officers**
- Sergeant-At-Arms
- Song Leader
- Club Reporter
- Chaplain
- Foundation Committee

Ruritan Club Committees

**Community Service**
- Social Development
- Environment
- Public Service
- Community Engagement
- Citizenship & Patriotism

**Standing**
- Fellowship
- Program & Entertainment
- Membership
- Finance
- Public Relations

The Objective Committee is made up of the chairs of the above five committees.
Ruritan Club Fees and Dues
(complete this page with information for your particular Ruritan club)

The yearly membership dues, as prescribed in the bylaws shall be paid quarterly in advance and shall be used to pay national dues and expenses of the club. Membership dues for the______________Club are $_______ per quarter. Dues include $_______each quarter for Ruritan National, $_______for the District, and $_______for the expenses of the club. (Note that money made by the club in fund-raising efforts can only be used for community service.)

Club Meetings
The Ruritan club shall hold at least one meeting each month, the time and place to be designated by the Board of Directors. Special meetings may be called when considered necessary by the Board of Directors. Recommended length of club meetings should be sufficient to conduct club business and a meal may be served at the discretion of the club.

Club Board of Directors
The Board of Directors shall be composed of President, Immediate Past President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and three elected Directors. The Board of Directors should hold regular monthly meetings on a set date, preferably one week before the regular club meeting.
RURITAN CLUB MEETING PROCEDURE

Start On Time.

1. Call to order - president.
2. Song: “America” - club members.
3. Invocation - chaplain.
4. Meal (during meal: welcome new members; reading of minutes; roll call by first names or nicknames; and announcements.)
5. Objective Committee report - vice president, as chair, will report on progress being made by various standing committees from information given by committee chair, or may have each committee chair make own report.
9. Unfinished business - secretary will provide president with a list of unfinished business, taken from minutes.
10. New business - secretary will provide president with a list of possible new business, taken from communications or correspondence received from the District or Ruritan National during month, and from provisions in constitution and bylaws of local club.
11. Program and entertainment.
12. Pledge of allegiance to flag and adjournment.

Stop On Time.
Ruritan Objectives
The “Objects of Ruritan” as set forth in Article II of the local club constitution are as follows:

1. To promote fellowship and goodwill among its members and the citizens in the community, and to inspire each other to higher efforts by:
   a. Getting together at monthly meetings.
   b. Working together on committees and various activities.
   c. Striving to create harmony in the community.
2. To unify the efforts of individuals, organizations and institutions in the community toward making it an ideal place in which to live by:
   a. Recognizing the importance of other worthwhile organizations in the community, and encouraging them by:
      1) Learning more about their objectives and accomplishments.
      2) Helping them to reach their objectives when possible.
      3) Encouraging members of Ruritan to take an active part in other organizations serving the community.
   b. Encouraging the forming of special purpose organizations such as PTA, Volunteer Fire Department, and Boy Scouts.
   c. Taking the lead in helping all community organizations work together effectively and contributing to community development.
3. To work with those agencies that serve the community and contribute directly to its progress by:

(Continued on page 8)
a. Studying the role of the different agencies that serve the community (County Extension Service, Vo Ag Department, Social Service Board, etc.)
b. Asking agency representatives to assist in establishing short and long-range community goals.
c. Encouraging the community service committee chairs to invite agency representatives to meet with them to help set up yearly objectives.
d. Determining from each agency representative how the Ruritan club can best cooperate to be the most effective.

4. To encourage and foster the ideal of service as the basis of all worthy enterprise by:
   a. Helping all members of the club and other persons in the community to understand that genuine happiness comes from doing things for others.
   b. Providing opportunities for club members and others to serve their neighbors.
   c. Helping individuals understand that, in following their chosen occupations, they are making a contribution to others.
Other Sources of Information

Club and District Officers’ Handbook

❖ Responsibilities of club and district officers
❖ Appointed club and district officers
❖ Yearly schedule for club and district officers
❖ Standing Committees of a Ruritan Club
❖ Ruritan Community Service Committees
❖ Ruritan Clubs and the American Flag
❖ Club guide to visitors and protocol
❖ Instructions for Organizing a Ruritan Club
❖ Ruritan National Foundation
❖ Ruritan Awards
❖ Ruritan Reports
❖ Growth and Development
❖ Parliamentary Procedure
❖ Ruritan Programs and miscellaneous information
❖ Bylaws Ruritan National
❖ Bylaws of a Ruritan District
❖ Bylaws of a Ruritan Club

You are a member of Ruritan National. Please offer your ideas and suggestions to your club to help serve your community. If you have questions, please feel free to ask your club officers or other members.
Organizational Description

Ruritan National is an organization consisting of Ruritan clubs. Individuals are members of clubs and clubs are members of the national organization. Ruritan National operates under a constitution and bylaws. Each Ruritan club is entitled to send delegates to the national convention and only these delegates can change the National Constitution or the National Bylaws. These delegates elect a National Board of Directors and Officers and a Foundation Trustee at the National Convention. The Board of Directors is a policy-making body that acts on behalf of the delegates throughout the year. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors consists of the National Officers and the immediate Past National President.

The National Board of Directors employs an Executive Director who in turn employs a national office staff. The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Board of Directors. The National Board of Directors also establishes geographical areas called districts and the president of Ruritan National assigns one director to each district to assist district leaders in following approved procedure and policies of the organization.

Club delegates at district conventions elect a district governor and a lieutenant governor for each district. The district governor appoints district officers and zone governors who constitute the district cabinet. As a recommendation to the governor, elections may be held for the other district offices and zone governors. The national director assigned by the national president is also a member of the district cabinet.

The purpose of the district cabinet is to provide assistance to the clubs within the district and organize new clubs. To facilitate providing these services, districts establish subdivisions within the district called zones, with a zone governor in charge of each zone. The zone consists of three to ten clubs at the discretion of the district cabinet.

Basically, the delegates at the National Convention and Board of Directors create the policies and programs of Ruritan National. The district officers and national office staff are the administrators who implement the policies and programs.
Ruritan Opportunities

Ruritan Forever:
Ruritan Forever” is a plan for the payment of national dues by members who wish to make a long-term investment in Ruritan. A “Ruritan Forever” endowment may be purchased by a member in good standing or may be purchased for a member in good standing. A Ruritan Forever endowment may be purchased to honor a non-member provided they are brought into a club as an Associate Member at the same time.

Project FOCUS:
Project FOCUS (Funding Our Communities Under Stress) was approved by the National Board with the goal of establishing a new 501(c)(3) to resume the administration of Operation We Care. Project FOCUS plans to expand OWC to include disaster relief and humanitarian aid.

Ruritan Paver Program:
The Ruritan Paver Patio is a beautiful place to remember loved ones and honor special Ruritans. The funds raised with this program will be used for capital reserves and to make improvements to the building.

Ruritan National Foundation:
Mission: The Ruritan National Foundation provides financial assistance to qualified individuals and groups for educational, charitable, and benevolent activities.
Programs:
1. Build Your Dollars (BY$)
2. Birthday club
3. Tom Downing Fellowship
4. Permanent funds
5. Endowed/contract funds
Ruritan National

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Ruritan National Pledge

Ruritans pledge to support
Urban and
Rural communities
In
Times of stress
And
Need through Fellowship, Goodwill, and Community Service