

Serving America's Communities Since 1928



**Ruritan**

*America's Leading Community Service Organization*

***Member  
Handbook***



# Ruritan

## ***Welcome to Ruritan!***

*Congratulations on your decision to join America's  
Leading Community Service Organization!*

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 34,000 Ruritan volunteers. This continued tradition has earned Ruritan the reputation of "America's Leading Community Service Organization" in more than 1,200 communities across the nation.

## **Ruritan Mission**

Ruritan is 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

## 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  
Business and Professions  
Citizenship & Patriotism

### Standing

Fellowship  
Program & Entertainment  
Growth & Development  
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. It is suggested that club meetings should be 1 hour and 30 minutes in length with 30 minutes devoted to the meal and fellowship, 30 minutes for business, and 30 minutes for a program.

### 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.
6. Report of special committees - committee chair.
7. Report of Board of Directors - secretary.
8. Report of treasurer - treasurer.
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.
  5. To create greater understanding between rural and urban people about the problems of each, as well as about their mutual problems by striving, where possible, to maintain both rural and urban representation in the club membership.

# Other Sources of Information

*(available from Ruritan National Supply)*

## **Club Officers' Handbook**

- ◆ Responsibilities of club officers
  - ◆ Appointed club officers
  - ◆ Yearly schedule for club 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
  - ◆ Parliamentary Procedure
- ◆ Constitution and Bylaws of a Ruritan Club
- ◆ Constitution and Bylaws Ruritan National
  - ◆ Ruritan National Supply Catalog

## **District Officers' Handbook**

- ◆ Officers' duties and responsibilities
  - ◆ District meetings
  - ◆ Club visits by District Officers
  - ◆ Growth and Development
  - ◆ Ruritan reports
- ◆ Ruritan programs and miscellaneous information
  - ◆ District Constitution and Bylaws
  - ◆ National Constitution and Bylaws

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.

# Communications Flow Chart

Org Chart Goes Here

# Ruritan National

<http://ruritan.org>

P.O. Box 487, Dublin, VA 24084

540-674-5431

E-mail: [office@ruritan.org](mailto:office@ruritan.org)

Member Name:

Club Name:

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