

Happy New Year

THE YUCCA

Rotary



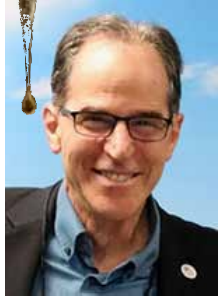
DISTRICT 5520

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

ROTARY DISTRICT 5520

January 2026 ♦ NO. 7

DISTRICT GOVERNOR Tom Simon



DG Tom

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The New Year is a time for optimism. A New Year by its nature makes us think of new opportunities, new ways of thinking, a fresh start. As we consider what Rotary holds for us in 2026, I encourage you to reflect on the words of Anthropologist Jane Goodall, who reminds us that *“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.”* When combined with the Rotary Vision Statement, *“Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves,”* we have our inspiration and mission for 2026.

As we move into 2026, I encourage you to continue connecting -- or reconnecting -- with your fellow Rotarians and to share the gift of Rotary with those beyond our membership. Invite a friend, family member or colleague to a club meeting or a service project. Announce a pop-up (meeting for breakfast or an event) to club members and join with them for fun and fellowship. Bring your spouse.

Bring a friend. Have fun!

Be a part of our global movement to bring positive change to the world, beginning in your home community. People want to make a difference but often don't have the tools or the means to do so. Let us all come together under the banner of Rotary to connect and engage across cultures and artificial boundaries to bring about lasting change across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves.

Tom Simon, District Governor



Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one.

Brad Paisley

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right. Oprah Winfrey

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.

Henry Ford

Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.

Benjamin Franklin

Whether we want them or not, the New Year will bring new challenges; whether we seize them or not, the New year will bring new opportunities.

Michael Josephson

Do one thing every day that scares you. Eleanor Roosevelt

I know. I'm lazy. But I made myself a New Years resolution that I would write myself something really special. Which means I have 'til December, right?

Catherine O'Hara





Rotary District 5520 Conference & Celebration Downtown Hilton, Santa Fe, New Mexico Inspiration – Connection – Engagement

- ◆ Tours of Santa Fe sites
- ◆ Home hospitality with Santa Fe Rotarians
- ◆ Breakout sessions on membership, public image, public speaking, Using AI in Rotary
- ◆ Be inspired by Raj Sisodia, New York Times bestselling author of *Conscious Capitalism & The Healing Organization*, *How to Awaken the Conscious of Business to Help Save the World*
- ◆ Be inspired by Alan Mallory, Author of *Life Lessons from the top of Mount Everest & Reaching New Heights*, *the Power of Connection*
- ◆ District Awards
- ◆ Rotary Youth Exchange

...and so much more!

We're bringing **Raj Sisodia** author of **Conscious Capitalism** and **Firms of Endearment**, to talk about how businesses and service organizations create lasting stakeholder value.

This year's conference focuses on the Vocational Avenue of Service - using your professional skills for community impact. More details coming soon! **Mark your calendars.**



Rotary



JANUARY IS

VOCATIONAL SERVICES MONTH

"TEAMWORK IS THE ABILITY TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON VISION. THE ABILITY TO DIRECT INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARD ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES. IT IS THE FUEL THAT ALLOWS COMMON PEOPLE TO ATTAIN UNCOMMON RESULTS."

- ANDREW CARNEGIE



Ideas for Vocational Service Month Activities

Vocational Service focuses on:

- Adhering to and promoting the highest ethical standards in all occupations
- Recognizing the value of all useful occupations, not just those that are pursued by Rotarians
- Contributing one's vocational talents to meeting the needs of the community

During October, Rotary clubs are encouraged to focus on this important avenue of Rotary service.

Consider dedicating at least one meeting to discussing Vocational Service and plan a project or other activity to carry out through the year.

Following are some suggested activities for clubs to consider:

- ▶ Devote the first meeting in October to examining Vocational Service, including The Four Way Test and the Rotary Code of Conduct. After expanding members' awareness, solicit their input in planning projects for the remainder of the year.
- ▶ Introduce a "classification talk" series in which each member gives a five-minute talk on his or her vocation. These presentations give members the chance to learn the inner workings of jobs other than their own, including the various problems that arise and the solutions used to address them.
- ▶ Present a vocational award to someone in the community who has exemplified outstanding professional achievement and high ethical standards. Promote the presentation in the community, and consider making it an annual event each October.
- ▶ Help young people prepare for their careers by sponsoring a character building project, career day, job shadowing day, or mentorship program.
- ▶ Support professional development in the community by sponsoring a professional networking event or workshop, or start a career counseling program to help unemployed or underemployed adults compete in the job market.
- ▶ Have club members volunteer their vocational skills on a community or international service project. Many volunteer opportunities can be found at <http://ideas.rotary.org/> an online database that allows Rotary clubs to publicize projects in need of assistance.



DISTRICT LEADERSHIP SESSION FEBRUARY 27-28, 2026 SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO



RYLA

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

I hope you are doing well and enjoying a meaningful year of service.

We are beginning to gather interest for RYLA Camp 2026, and we would love to invite Rotarians—both men and women—to consider serving as **counselors** for this powerful leadership experience for our youth.

RYLA is truly transformational. As a counselor, you play a vital role in mentoring, encouraging, and guiding students as they discover their leadership potential, build confidence, and form lifelong connections. Many of our past counselors describe the experience as one of the **most rewarding ways** they've ever lived out "Service Above Self."

2026 Camp Dates:

Boys' Camp: Sunday, July 12 – Saturday, July 18, 2026

Girls' Camp: Saturday, July 18 – Friday, July 24, 2026

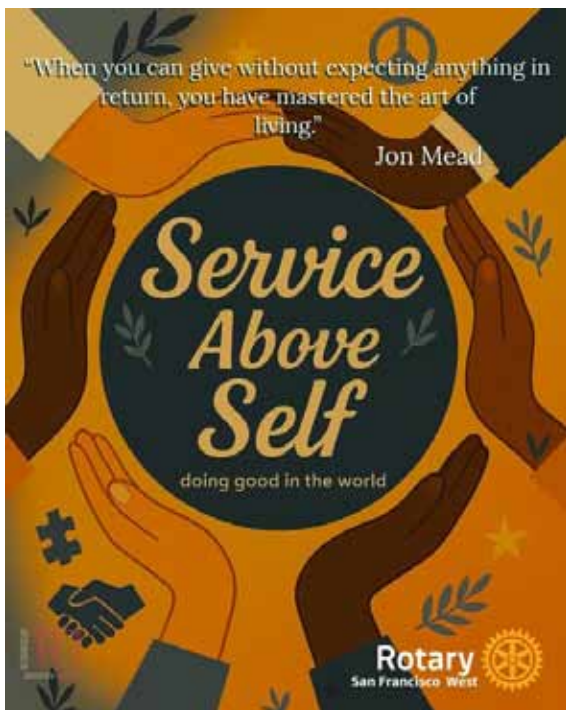
Whether this would be your first time serving or you've supported RYLA in the past, we would be grateful for your consideration. Your life experience, leadership, and encouragement can make a lasting impact.

If you have interest, questions, or would simply like more information, please contact either camp director listed below. There is no obligation at this stage—we are simply gauging interest as we begin planning for another outstanding year.

Thank you for all you do as Rotarians and for the difference you make in the lives of others. With appreciation,

Jill Cook | Girls' RYLA Director (505) 690-4910

Joe Gudenrath | Boy's RYLA Director (915) 400-2294



75 (GOOD) REASONS TO BECOME A ROTARIAN

26. Develop a sense of belonging and camaraderie with fellow Rotarians.

Rotary District 1700 | The Rotarian Minute



A Reference for the Rest Of Us!

You have heard a lot about it But what exactly is **PUBLIC IMAGE?**

Rotary’s “public image” refers to how the organization is perceived by the public—its reputation, visibility, and the clarity of its mission and values. It’s about shaping and sharing the story of Rotary in a way that attracts members, partners, and support.

What “Public Image” Means in Rotary

● Perception and Awareness:
Public image is how people outside Rotary view the organization. It includes recognition of Rotary’s humanitarian work, leadership, and global impact.

● Unified Branding and Messaging:
Rotary emphasizes consistent use of its logo, colors, and messaging tone—called the Rotary “voice”—to ensure that all clubs present a cohesive identity. This helps reinforce trust and familiarity.

● Storytelling and Outreach:
Rotarians are encouraged to share stories of service projects and community impact through media, social platforms, and public events. This storytelling helps people understand what Rotary stands for and why it matters.

See page ???? to share your story. Great Public Image material!

● Strategic Communication Roles:
Rotary clubs have Public Image Coordinators who manage external communications, promote events, and ensure alignment with Rotary International’s branding guidelines.

● Campaigns like “People of Action”:
Rotary launched initiatives like “People of Action” to highlight members actively making a difference. These campaigns use templates for billboards, social media, and print ads to amplify Rotary’s visibility.



Why It Matters:

- Attracts new members and donors
- Builds credibility and trust
- Strengthens partnerships
- Ensures the public understands Rotary’s mission: improving lives locally and globally through service

Key Takeaway

Rotary’s public image isn’t just about logos or slogans—it’s about how the world sees Rotary’s values in action. Every Rotarian plays a role in shaping that image by sharing stories, using consistent branding, and engaging their communities.

“Next to doing the ‘right thing,’ the most important thing

is to let people know you are doing the ‘right thing!’”

- John D. Rockefeller



PR QUOTES

Become a Paul Harris Fellow \$95* For Only ...



Following Rotary's founder Paul Harris death in 1947, the PHF evolved from the Paul Harris Memorial Find in 1947 to the Paul Harris Fellowship in 1957. The Paul Harris Fellowship recognition was started to honor someone who has given a **substantial** contribution (**\$1,000 or more**) to The Rotary Foundation, recognizing those who support its humanitarian and educational programs. It forms the backbone of the Foundation's funding, supporting global projects and understanding.

And it was a **substantial** contribution in 1957! \$1,000 in 1957 has the same buying power as approximately **\$11,500** today, due to an average annual inflation rate of around 3.66% over the past 68 years. So, turning it around, **\$95** in 1957 has the same buying power as about \$1000 today. Not so substantial an amount anymore.

The average price of a car in 1957 was \$3000, today \$50,000. The average price of a house in 1957 was \$13,000, today \$500,000. The price for a Paul Harris Fellow in 1957 was \$1000, today \$1000.

I kind of worked out a point to all this. Perhaps it is time for us to **reevaluate our contribution** to the Rotary Foundation to get it more in the **substantial category** as those dedicated Rotarians in 1957.

May I suggest working toward becoming a **Major Donor**? When your *cumulative donations* reach at least \$10,000 you become a **Major Donor**. Major Donors can choose to receive a crystal recognition piece and a Major Donor lapel pin or pendant. See pin to left.



Or consider becoming a **Paul Harris Society** member. When you elect to contribute \$1,000 or more annually to the Annual Fund, PolioPlus, or an approved Foundation grant. See special pin above.



As you know, the **Rotary Foundation** is Rotary International's charity, funded by donations, that supports Rotarians' global service by funding projects in key areas: promoting peace, fighting disease (especially polio eradication), providing clean water, improving basic education, and growing local economies, with a focus on sustainable, community-led solutions. It channels money through its Annual Fund and Endowment Fund, enabling large-scale, impactful projects like vaccinating children and building schools.

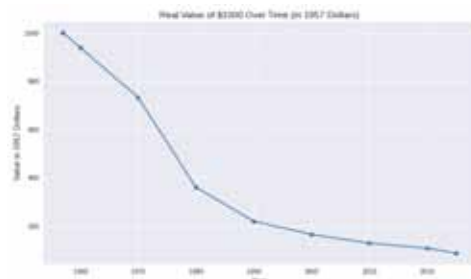
You are the backbone of the Foundation!

DISCLAIMER: In order to keep the article simple, I have not added all the details to these programs. Before deciding how you want to upgrade your foundation giving, get advice from your club

Foundation Chair or from the District experts:

Tom Walker - ftwalker1@comcast.net

Dick Jones - rjones9755@aol.com



* Inflation has devalued a \$1000 from 1957 until it is only worth \$95 today!



**LET'S
START
NOW**

**Start now to make this
the best RYLA year ever!**



Erin Connelly
Rotary District 5520
RYLA Chair
505-660-1825

econnelly.rotary@outlook.com

RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) takes place worldwide, with District 5520 camps held at Manzano Mount Retreat in July:

2026 Boys Camp: July 12-18

Girls Camp: July 18-24

Learn more at <https://rotary5520.org/page/rotary-youth-leadership-award>

Clubs help bring RYLA to youth in New Mexico and far west Texas by recruiting, selecting, and sponsoring students at no cost, supporting their leadership growth. Clubs are also encouraged to connect with RYLA Alumni as future Rotarians.

Here is a copy of the **RYLA In-A-Box** and a link to it in the Google Folder "RYLA for Rotary Clubs".

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aF_j49gWhitd3u6-HwzDXHqe9iMKpRsl?rtpof=true&usp=drive_fs

Here's also the link to the entire folder "RYLA for Rotary Clubs" which contains lots of info, and some examples and templates.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1IZmyrHoK5zh4SwSeyHEWqxrjR3m_Xz3&usp=drive_fs

Online Application

It's just about ready. A few more t's to cross and i's to dot then a quick test. When it's ready we'll also get it linked on the District 5520/RYLA webpage.

<https://rotary5520.org/page/rotary-youth-leadership-award>

Brochures!

...are now available! Please complete the Camper Commitment Form and send to Debbie LeMon. It's where you let us know how many brochures you need too. While you are waiting for the hardcopy brochures, you might want to check out the digital version RYLA Brochure 2026_both pages.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TkYrACzWXqzQ0trp0z0p_Nf_0YVh4f5M/view

The Commitment Form is available in the RYLA for Rotary Clubs. I've attached a copy here that you can fill out, save, and send to Debbie. We would LOVE to have these forms from each club by December 1, and funds to Debbie (RYLA Foundation) by Jan 1.

<https://donpowell.biz/DistrictNewsletter/Camper-Committment-Form.docx>

Contact me if you need help with access or have other questions that I might be able to answer.

Thanks
Erin

Where is the ... District Governor?

The Pecos River as it glides lazily through the town of Carlsbad is a hidden gem for most of us that don't know Carlsbad. Deborah and I enjoyed visiting the Rotary Club Carlsbad earlier in the month for their **Christmas on the Pecos** float trip. It was a beautiful experience that we highly recommend, even better when hosted by Elizabeth Higgins and her amazing club members.



Rotary 

OUR HISTORY

From the
Rotary Global History Fellowship
<https://rghf.org>



WHY DOES THE ROTARY YEAR END ON JUNE 30?

Rotary's first fiscal year began the day after the first convention ended, on **18 August 1910**. The 1911-12 fiscal year also related to the convention, beginning with the first day of the 1911 convention on 21 August. Rotary's first fiscal year began the day after the convention ended.

The next August, the Board of Directors ordered an audit of the International Association of Rotary Clubs' finances. The auditors recommended that the organization end its fiscal year on **30 June** to give the secretary and treasurer time to prepare a financial statement for the convention and board, and to determine the proper number of club delegates to the convention.

Since the executive committee's decision in 1913, the end of the Rotary year has remained 30 June.

Attendees at Rotary's first convention in Chicago in 1910.





Invitation to Submit Letter of Interest – **BOOKKEEPER**

Dear District 5520 Members Rotarians,

Rotary District 5520 is seeking **Letters of Interest** from qualified Rotarians or non-Rotarians familiar with Rotary for an important contracted position within our District.

Attached is the job description for the bookkeeper position. Current budgeted annual funding level is
Bookkeeper: \$15,035 per year

Interested individuals should submit a Letter of Interest outlining their relevant experience, skills, and understanding of Rotary, along with contact information to the District Governor: tomrsimon@gmail.com, by no later than **January 31, 2026**. The duties will begin July 1, 2026 with training from the existing Bookkeeper prior to that time period.

I also want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to **Debbie LeMon**, who has faithfully and expertly served in her role for many years and will continue to do so through June 30th, 2026. Debbie's skill as Bookkeeper has kept our finances transparent, compliant, and in excellent order. Her commitment and institutional knowledge have been invaluable to the success of our district.

This is an exciting opportunity to serve our District behind the scenes—ensuring that our operations remain strong, our members well supported, and our mission of *Service Above Self* carried forward efficiently and professionally.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Rotary and to the success of District 5520.

Yours in Rotary Service,
Tom Simon
District Governor 2025–2026, Rotary District 5520



Bookkeeper



Mission

To explore, educate, and implement artificial intelligence solutions that create meaningful global impact, empowering communities, strengthening humanitarian work, and promoting the ethical and responsible use of AI across Rotary and beyond.

<https://airotaryfellowship.org>

Vibrant Club Workshop for all club members



January 31
2026
9:00 am - 11:00 am



Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee

Thanks for the dedication of Cantwell Sacred Heart of Mary Interact club, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Montebello. An amazing group putting "Service Above Self"



Get your club activities on the District Facebook page so we can see all that our District is doing!



CLICK THE FACEBOOK LOGO TO SEE ALL THE OTHER GREAT THINGS GOING ON IN OUR DISTRICT!
GET A FACEBOOK PAGE AND JOIN IN!

Rotary  *Newsletter*
 Rotary Service and Engagement



Wreath Across America at Fort Bliss Cemetery this cold morning with El Paso Northeast and West Rotarians.



Excited to see all the dedicated Rotarians and Interactors on the first day of decorating! Looking forward to seeing you soon!

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
 TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026
 Register today at convention.rotary.org.

Rotary  

<https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/>

Rotary  *Rotary Brand News*

We're all Rotary brand ambassadors!

Helping others understand how we make a difference as people of action is something all Rotary members can do. Use the resources in the improved Brand Center to publicize your work and strengthen the Rotary brand.



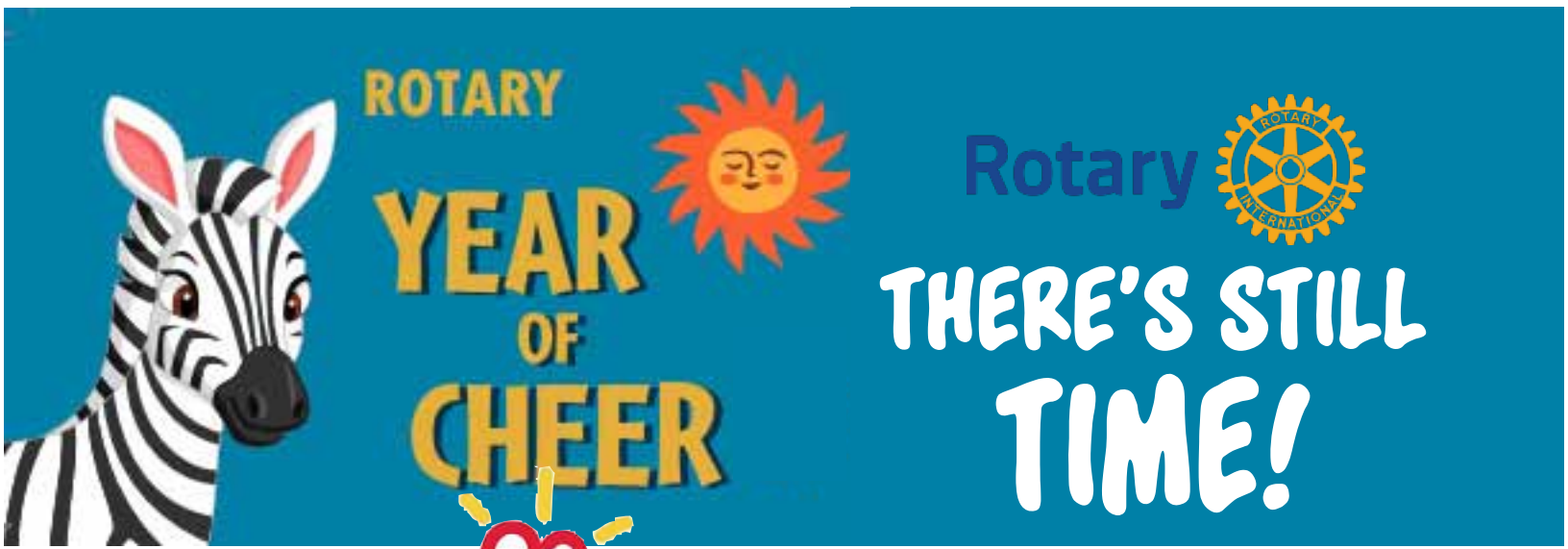
To see the Public Relations page on the Rotary site...



To read and subscribe to the monthly Brand Newsletter...



To view and subscribe to the Rotary Brand YouTube channel, click on the YouTube logo



El Paso Children's
HOSPITAL



CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL

*The Rotary Year of Cheer
Brings Smiles to Hospitalized Children*

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

The Rotary Year of Cheer is going great! From July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, clubs across District 5520 will be collecting new toys and gifts to bring comfort and joy to children at **UNM Children's Hospital and El Paso Children's Hospital**.

This **District-wide initiative** is our chance to make a meaningful impact—one toy, one act of kindness, one smile at a time.

Want to get involved?

Click on the QR code or the toy logo below and see the ways you can help!

For questions or district-level coordination, reach out to the project co-chairs:

* QR Code will take you to both hospitals and will allow you to donate money or to buy gifts.



Alice Mehlberg
amehlberg@yahoo.com
(505) 463-6593

Berdel Boulanger
berdel.boulanger@gmail.com
(505) 328-2166



** Or you can click on the toy logo to the left to go to the site, then you can **CLICK ON** the QR code for the hospital you want to support and the type of donation you want to make. It's easy!



To Highlight your club's impact on the community!

Hello Public Image Chairs, Club Presidents and District 5520 Leaders,

I'm excited to share that we've launched the District 5520 Story Bank at rotary5520.org/stories - a showcase of the incredible work happening across our clubs in the district.

To make this valuable for everyone - we need YOUR club's stories :)

Why submit your stories?

- Share your success District website and social media.
- Use the stories on the site to show people the huge impact Rotary has in the community
- Get community service ideas for your club.

How to submit:

Scroll to the bottom of the district homepage at rotary5520.org and click "Share a Story" or go directly to the form below. The form takes about 10 minutes and asks for:

Project details and impact

- A photo
- A memorable moment or quote
- Contact information
- What makes a good story?

The form includes:

- Recent projects (last 6-12 months)
- Measurable impact (people served, funds raised, lives changed)
- Community partnerships
- Unique approaches to service

Every story submitted gets reviewed and published within a week. The best stories also get featured on my LinkedIn (5K+ connections) and in district communications.

For questions, please email me.

Thank you for all you do!

Meredith Eisenberg

District 5520 Public Image Chair
meredith@mereditheisenberg.com





The Rotary Minute is a creation from District 1700. Please send your comments or suggestions to laminute1700@gmail.com

No. 45 – December 21, 2025

1 minute to discover Rotary news

United Nations and Rotary celebrate 80th anniversary of UN charter

Rotary International and the United Nations reaffirmed their historic partnership during the 80th anniversary of the UN Charter signing.

Leaders from both organizations recalled how, in the aftermath of World War II, Rotary helped shape the UN by serving as observers at the 1945 Charter Conference, contributing to agendas, resolutions, and mediation efforts.

Speakers emphasized that global cooperation is more vital than ever as the world faces conflicts, inequality, climate change, and technological risks.

Despite challenges to multilateralism, progress offers hope: education access has expanded, poverty has declined, and health outcomes have improved worldwide. UN leaders stressed that such achievements result from sustained collective action.

Rotary's grassroots initiatives align closely with UN agencies in education, health, peacebuilding, environmental protection, and the fight against polio.

The enduring Rotary–UN relationship reflects a shared belief that peace is built through cooperation, service, and the everyday commitment of individuals choosing unity over division.



Rotary
District 5520



**RIO GRANDE
PETS**



President Elect Learning Seminar

Mar. 13, 2026 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. [Mountain Daylight Time](#)

Dear Presidents-elect,

Registration is now open for this year's Presidents-Elect Leadership Seminar (PELS), March 13–14 at the Sheraton Uptown in Albuquerque!

PELS is required for all Presidents-elect and will give you the tools, inspiration, and connections to lead with confidence.

Your club officers and board members are also welcome to attend. Their presence can be especially valuable as you begin planning for the year ahead. Working together at PELS helps ensure your leadership team is ready, aligned, and energized to make the most of the opportunities and challenges that come with a new Rotary year.

Please feel free to share the registration link below with your leadership team if they are interested in participating.

Register soon to reserve your spot and take the first step in preparing for an impactful year of service.

Register by Jan 15th for \$30 savings! Register at web site below.

Warm regards,



Jeff Weinrach, District Governor 2026-2027
(505) 400-1403 Jweinrach5520@nmia.com



Jen Dresser, District Learning Facilitator
484-983-5514 jendresser.rotary@gmail.com



P.S. Save the Dates (all Saturdays, 9–11 AM):

Jan 17 – Pre-PELS I (required for Presidents-Elect; registration opening soon)

Jan 31 – Be A Vibrant Club Workshop (registration opening soon)

Feb 21 – Pre-PELS II (required for Presidents-Elect; registration opening soon)

<https://rotary5520.org/events/president-elect-training/>