

REPORT OF THE STATE DEPUTY

Worthy State Chaplain Father John Rooney, Worthy Associate State Chaplain Father Borowiak, Reverend Fathers, Worthy Supreme Director and Chief Insurance Officer Thomas Smith, Worthy Supreme Director Michael Conrad, Fellow State Officers, District Deputies, Directors and Chairman, Delegates and Knights of Columbus members assembled here for our 112th annual state convention in Kearney Nebraska on this the 29th day of April 2017, greetings and may the Grace and Peace of Christ be with you.

It has indeed been an honor and privilege to serve you, 26,408 Brother Knights in Nebraska as State Deputy. I respectfully submit the following report.

It was just a year ago when the delegation at the 111th Annual State Convention unanimously re-elected me as your State Deputy. This vote of confidence was only the beginning of a blessed and memorable year for me and my family. It's because of you, the people & families, this One Body in Christ, that I have found this honor so gratifying and humbling.

This past year has been filled with challenges and blessings of evangelizing and sharing the mission of the Knights of Columbus with others. It has also been an opportunity to experience the Gospel principles of our order brought to life through the many council activities and events I have attended across the state. Thank each and every one of you, my brother Knights, for fulfilling the duties and the dreams of Father Michael J. McGivney.

While writing this report, I'm reminded of two important people in my life, my wife Laurie and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Lord has richly blessed me with my wife and family. Laurie and the kids have stood by my side, encouraged me, shared ideas, and offered constructive criticism all while being faithful supporters. They have shared their husband and father with their extended family that is the Knights of Columbus. This is just another way in which I have been blessed. I'm especially proud of my youngest son Josh who joined our Order in March.

To my fellow State Officers and supporting staff, thank you for your unwavering support and friendship. It is your commitment and dedication to the Nebraska Knights of Columbus membership which made this fraternal year's accomplishments possible. It is that same support and love of neighbor which motivates me to strive for greatness and reach for loftier goals and to become better at all I do. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To our Worthy State Chaplain, Father John Rooney, words cannot express my love for you not only as a faithful servant of our Lord and Shepherd of this flock, but also as a friend. God Bless you and thank you for being our Spiritual director and an inspiration to all of us. Please join me in showing State Chaplain Father John Rooney our appreciation.

This fraternal year the State Officers welcomed another spiritual leader to our family. It has been a blessing to have Associate State Chaplain Father Borowiak on our team. I thank you for your prayers, wisdom, and spiritual guidance. God bless you for all you have done and will continue to do for the State Council.

To all my program and membership directors and chairmen, I have often spoken of you as among the very best to have served in these capacities and as I stand here today reaffirming that very sentiment. I pray you are as proud of this team accomplishments as I am. Congratulations for a job well done and thank you for sharing your energy, time, and talents with the state and making this year so successful.

SUPREME MEETINGS

Laurie and I attended the state deputy's meeting in New Haven Connecticut June 9-12, 2016. The 74 Jurisdiction leaders from around the world gathered to nurture their faith in daily Masses, hear addresses from Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, from Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori, learn together in workshops, get reacquainted with each other, and get to know the incoming state deputy during social activities.

We once again had the opportunity to attend Mass at birthplace of our honored Order, St. Mary's Church. This year we witnessed the installation of the new State Deputies by Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. Topics of discussion included but were not limited to keys to success, membership 365, establishing long-term growth goals, and focusing on youth and youthful leadership. Action plans were reviewed and 2016-2017 incentives and goals were presented.

Later in June State Secretary Lou Gasper, State Program Director Bob Wolf, and State Membership Director Kevin Ost diek attended a training session in Dallas Texas. They received guidance and training and were also presented incentives and goals.

Laurie and I were blessed to lead the Nebraska Delegation at the 134th Supreme Convention in Toronto the first week of August 2016. It was an experience of a lifetime for all those in attendance. State Deputy Tony Hergott of Columbus, State Chaplain Father Rooney of Shelby, Immediate Past State Deputy Richard Lowery of Lincoln, State Secretary Lou Gasper of Lincoln, District Deputy Kent Lorens of Stratton, District Deputy Deacon Mike Leick of Omaha, District Deputy Chris Kreikemeier of West Point, Steve Beller of Norfolk, Mike Vaughn of Plattsmouth, Larry Koerner of Crete, and Dennis Podjenski of Omaha honorably represented the Nebraska Knights of Columbus.

During his address, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson noted the Order's record levels of charity, with over \$175 million in donations and over 73.5 million hours of volunteer service. Mr. Anderson also spoke of Pope Francis' call for Catholics to a new sense of missionary discipleship and fraternal brotherhood and his great confidence in the Knights of Columbus. Carl Anderson said, "Our charity is motivated by faith and our faith is a gift to be shared...When we bring new men into the Order, we give them the opportunity to be better Catholics and we multiply the good works that we can do."

I also had the opportunity to accept the Circle of Honor award on your behalf. It had been 8 years since Nebraska last received the great honor. Congratulations Nebraska!

Orlando Florida was the location of the Supreme mid-year State Deputy meeting November 18-20, 2016. Supreme Knight Carl Anderson gave yet another inspirational speech on strategies to help councils. He said the first and primary responsibility as leaders of the Knights of Columbus is to assure continued growth and sustainability of our Order. He stressed that charitable activities are extremely important but are not

sufficient enough to advance the Good of the Order without continued membership growth. I am proud to announce Nebraska has recorded positive membership growth for 36 consecutive years. Congratulations my brothers!

STATE MEETINGS

Our Grand Knight/Financial Secretary organizational meeting was July 15-17, 2016 at the Ramada / Rivers Edge Convention Center in Columbus. State Program Director Bob Wolf and his staff of directors and chairmen along with and State Membership Director Kevin Ost diek and his team of regional membership directors introduced their respective programs, incentives and goals for this fraternal year. The Inter-Council Competition awards program better known as ICC was re-introduced with a couple slight adjustments. It was a privilege to introduce our new District Deputies and later install them at the Saturday night Mass at St. Isidore with His Excellency The Most Reverend Bishop Hanefeldt of the Diocese of Grand Island officiating. Saturday evening, following the dinner banquet, those in attendance were treated to a dance.

The State Officers and District Deputies gathered Dec. 2-4 at the Divots Conference Center and Norfolk Lodge and Suites for the 2016 Nebraska State Council Mid-Year meetings. We discussed the many challenges we face in carrying out the mission of the Knights of Columbus including, but not limited to, recruiting young men and fathers of young families. Other topics discussed were programs relevant to families with young children and the necessity to recruit younger members with respect to the limited time young fathers have to participate in activities outside the home. Familiarization with tools such as the internet, social media, and text messaging were also discussed.

This meeting later provided an opportunity to reestablish goals on membership for the final 6 months of the year. Kevin Ost diek and his membership team did an outstanding job presenting new incentives and goals for our District Deputies to take to their respective councils in order to increase their evangelizing efforts.

I had the opportunity to attend numerous council meetings, functions, and events across our great state, including a 100 year anniversary celebration in Sidney honoring Msgr. Anton Link Council 1861. What an amazing evening it was. Attending these types of events is probably the most fulfilling part of my job. I get to meet so many faith-filled families and be witness to the good works performed daily in our parishes and communities statewide. What a joy it is to serve you as State Deputy.

MEMBERSHIP

State Membership Director Kevin Ost diek and his team consisting of Al Pfeifer, Iggy Cervantes, Mike Esselstein, Steven Dethlefs, Stephen Lowery, and PSD Rod Hofschulte have done an exceptional job. After experiencing the thrill of victory last year, this team has our state on track to once again achieve Circle of Honor status. To date your evangelization efforts have produced nearly 90% of our fraternal year intake goal of 895 new members placing the Nebraska Jurisdiction at #10 in the order. We have also surpassed our Net Goal of 630 and Net/Net goal of 315.

I'm also pleased to announce we have achieved our new council development goal of 1 new council. Would the Grand Knight and any other representative from newly

established St. John Paul II – UNO Council 16680 stand to be recognized? Thank you, Worthy Grand Knight and Brother Ian (pronounced EEan) Ostdiek, for being here today. Rest assured, Father Taphorn and Father Roza, that the state council remains committed to your new council's success and we wish you well!

Another task I challenged the team with was to reduce the number of suspended councils from 5 to 3. It gives me great pleasure to announce that goal has also been achieved. Burwell Council 7959 has merged with Ord council 2292 and Gordon Council 7988 has been re-activated and will soon have an election of officers.

As we continue our evangelization efforts, we must remember each of us have a moral obligation to offer the gift of membership to every eligible Catholic man. I invite all brother Knights to share your faith by offering that gift of membership.

CEREMONIALS

PSD Larry Reed and David Wiedel have done well with ceremonials. A minimum goal of 1 major exemplification per district was set forth. With 42 districts, that is a lofty goal. A total of 50 major exemplifications were scheduled throughout the state of which I will have or will have attended 30 of these. Because of many brother knights giving of their time and talents, Nebraska is blessed to have 7 Formation and 7 Knighthood degree teams. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely express my appreciation to all ceremonial teams for their hard work and dedication and the sacrifice of time away from your families several weekends a year.

PROGRAMS

This year has been a very busy time for all of us. State Program Director Bob Wolf and all our Directors and Chairmen have done outstanding job conducting and maintaining state sponsored programs including in the ICC Awards Program of which you witnessed its success at last night's awards banquet and at today's meeting at which the 2nd annual ICC champion of the year was crowned.

As a state, we conducted the supreme-sponsored Silver Rose program which made 31 stops in 29 days, picked up at the Colorado Boarder and delivered to the Kansas border south of McCook. The run began its statewide tour at the conclusion of the Grand Knight Seminar first at St Isidore council 12086 in Columbus and made its last stops at Councils 1211 and 10506 in North Platte.

The State Council again conducted an extremely successful Coat for Kids project at Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska in Lincoln on November 12th. Because this day was also a home Husker football game we decided to give it a tailgate atmosphere offering the kids and families hotdogs, chips, and drinks once being fitted with a new coat, hat, and gloves. Special guests include but were not limited to His Excellency Bishop James Conley, Heisman Trophy winner Johnny "The Jet" Rodgers, Outland and Lombardi trophy winner Rich Glover, former NFL lineman Chris Bober, many UNL student athletes, a Nebraska state Patrolman, and teammates representatives . More than 130 volunteers representing 19 councils from 8 different cities were vital to its success. Participating councils were 833, 1793, 3019, 4923, 5529, 6192, 9563, 9704, 10305, 10510, 10909, 10913, 11001, 11280, 12086, 13015, 13576, 14423, and 15407. Their reward was the many hugs and thank yous received from the more than 800 children receiving the gift of warmth that day. The Supreme Council sent the "Spirit Juice" photographer and video crew which later produced a video to document the

success of the event. The video can be found on the state and supreme website. What and amazing experience it was.

A special thanks to the Supreme Council who matched coat for coat of those which we purchased, the many corporate sponsors, and of course the many local councils who gave their time, prayers, and monetary support.

The Holy Family Icons have also made a tour around the state stopping in all 42 districts. They were sent forth from Kearney at last year's State Convention and made their return this year as they have been on display throughout the weekend.

A record amount of ICC Gold, Silver and Bronze qualifiers were recognized at last night's awards banquet. A total of 10 Gold, 11 Silver, and 51 bronze winners receive awards. That is 72 (42%) councils in all receiving recognition for their good works in continuing the mission of the Knights of Columbus in their Parish Communities. Thank you delegates and all brother knights for the good works you continue to do.

INSURANCE

Nebraska is blessed to have three of the orders top General Agents. Neil Pfeifer serves Northeast Nebraska, Tony Swanson serves Central and Western Nebraska, and last but not least, Kevin Pfeifer serves Eastern Nebraska. What can I say about these three men and their crew of field agents? You will not find a better group of men more dedicated to the protection of our brother Knights and their families. Our GA's diligently work to obtain the manpower to staff councils with active viable agents. This is not an easy task and they continue to work hard to find the right fit of professional, courteous, and well-informed agents to assist in protecting our families. Nebraska continues to enjoy an amazing and unique relationship with our insurance force and we are proud to call each of them our friend and brother. Thank you for all you do.

SQUIRES

I would like to thank David Marx, and Dr. Therial Bynum for overseeing the Nebraska State Squires. Each has done an outstanding job as Counselors, working with our order's future leaders. We can expect our current Squires Circles to help pave the way as the Order's focus on youth is shifting more toward parish-based youth programs. I understand State Chief Squire Nathen Marx will be entering the Army following his high school graduation. He is now a 3rd degree knight and is planning to become a 4th degree member in Lincoln next weekend. Nathen, thank you in advance for your service to this great country! I'm proud of you and all our future leaders within the Squires. Please support the Squires by stopping by the Country Store and purchasing the beautiful selection of items on display.

FOURTH DEGREE

It is a great honor to serve with District Master Jim Haiar. Past State Deputy Haiar, in his 2nd year, has conducted Patriotic Degree Exemplifications in Ralston, North Platte, Hebron, Norfolk, and Alliance thus far. Next week Lincoln will host an exemplification while Omaha will host one June 25th. Our Patriotic Degree members are the most visible and recognizable members of the Order. I encourage all Knights to consider becoming members of Patriotic degree and making it more visible than ever

before. As a Veteran, I am proud to be a Sir Knight and ask all those having earned the honor of Knighthood in our Order to also consider joining the Patriotic degree.

VOCATIONS

In Solidarity with our Priests is the unwritten rule of our Order. Our dedication to our Clergy and Religious has earned us the reputation as the “Strong Right Arm of the Church.” We need to continue this dedication and support of all vocations. While our state raffle continues to struggle due to state gaming and Postal laws, I’m proud to announce we were once again able to provide each seminarian in the state with a Christmas gift of \$200 this year. I encourage you to continue to support our seminarian fund by purchasing raffle tickets. I also thank those councils who participate in the RSVP program. Please continue your prayers for vocations.

CHRISTOPHER FUND

Since 1993, the Nebraska jurisdiction has participated in a Supreme matching fund program known as the Christopher fund. Currently, \$123,845 has been contributed from the State Council which has been matched by Supreme for a total of \$247, 700. This year, the state has received \$9000 in benefits from the Christopher fund which will be dispersed to the three dioceses for Catholic education. I will present 2 of those checks this weekend.

CULTURE OF LIFE

Nebraska is blessed to have Brian and Mary Jo Hamik as Culture of Life Chairpersons. What a wonderful job they have done and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for all their efforts. Over \$172000 was distributed this fraternal year in support of life. One of the states finest accomplishments this year was the purchase of another ultrasound machine made possible through the matching fund grant provided by the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council. I’m pleased to announce we have the funds to purchase more machines and are looking for Pregnancy Care Centers that qualify for the supreme ultrasound initiative. If your community has such a center please contact us. We plan to continue to save lives one ultrasound at a time.

I pray we will see the day when Roe v Wade is over turned and I congratulate each and every one of you for your efforts in this fight for the unborn. This is a fight we will not back down from; this is a fight we will win! All lives matter!

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The State Intellectual Disabilities Foundation chair couple, Don and Terri Hypse continues to do an outstanding job maintaining and growing this foundation. The program formally known as the Tootsie roll drive continues to set new records in funds raised throughout the state to help those with intellectual disabilities. Once again a meeting was set up at the State Capital with Governor Pete Ricketts during which he signed a proclamation declaring October 3-9, 2016 as Support Citizens with intellectual disabilities week. I then presented the Governor, who is a brother knight, with a box of tootsie rolls in appreciation. I along with several other state officers was very proud to represent each and every one of you at the signing of this proclamation.

NEBRASKA STATE COUNCIL MCGIVNEY FOUNDATION

Foundation Advisors PSD Jerome Smith, Manny Gallardo, and Larry Peetz have helped grow and promote the foundation. The Nebraska State Council McGivney Foundation

received its tax exempt 501(c) (3) status last year. This is something we should all be proud of. I am also pleased to announce the foundation has exceeded \$500,000. The Foundation continues to be our future but we need your support in order for it to grow. All contributions are held in perpetuity with the income used from charitable purposes. This year we have dispersed \$6000 to families in need. We also have an additional \$8000 which could be dispersed for those who qualify for such funding. The purpose of this foundation is to enhance and support the quality of life in Nebraska while supporting the Knights of Columbus mission. Thanks to all councils and individuals who have made this possible. It's important we remember the success of your foundation depends on you!

STATE DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Through a donation from the Supreme Council in 2011, the State Council has been able to help several individuals who have been the victims of natural disasters with funds to help purchase food, clothing and other immediate needs. Chaired by Past State Deputy Richard Lowery, applications available on the state website are reviewed by a committee and those applications which are approved will receive a grant. Councils can provide additional funds that will be matched to a predetermined limit.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is vital to our success. Nebraska has an outstanding reputation for timely and accurate communications to members and officers.

The Courier, published four times a year, is sent to every member within the state. We continue to encourage members, and especially Financial Secretaries, to sign up for electronic delivery. Our annual postage bill would be greatly reduced if more members would sign up through the website. Our website is another excellent source of up-to-date information, degree schedules and events throughout the state.

Last year the State Council officially launched state Facebook and Twitter accounts. The move to social media has given us a new way to communicate to the younger members of our order. Please go to Nebraskakofc.org and like our Facebook page. This weekend we ask councils to use their twitter account to share your convention experience by using #nekc2017.

Ron, Duffi and Aaron Goodrich continue to do outstanding work in preparing much of the printed material for the state, including the Courier and annual directory. Aaron is our webmaster and continues to improve our websites functionality and content.

Executive Secretary Ray Guggenberger continues to maintain our prayer list and diligently sends out requests every morning. Many requests have been answered through prayers from across the state and across the country. Ray also manages all of the communication for the State Convention, Grand Knight Seminar and Mid-Year Meeting as well as other information that needs to be distributed either by mail or in electronic format.

DISTRICT DEPUTIES

This fraternal year we have 42 Districts with dedicated brother Knights who represent the State Council at local council meetings and functions. Please accept my most sincere appreciation for all your leadership and commitment to growing the order and furthering the Mission of the Knight of Columbus. You are the back bone of our

Order. I have been blessed to work with the best group of District Deputies ever assembled in Nebraska. Thank you for all you do. I applaud each and every one of you!

CLOSING

In closing I first wish to thank our Bishops for their continued and unwavering support of the Knights of Columbus. I also thank State Chaplain Father Rooney and Associate State Chaplain Father Borowiak as well as all the local council Chaplains whom help form us and guide us in our efforts to live out the Gospel principals of our Order.

I wish to thank Supreme Membership and Program Consultant Joe Ramirez Jr. for sharing his expertise, insight and knowledge with the State Officers, Membership and Program Teams and of course myself.

But most of all I thank each and every one of the more than 26,000 brother Knights across this great state of Nebraska for saying Yes when the Lord called you to serve in this family ministry we call the Knights of Columbus.

As Knights we are not allowed to be complacent. We, as “One Body in Christ,” are called to be men of character and conviction, driven by our faith and conscience to selflessly serve our families, Church and communities.

United we stand together in faith, dedicated to uphold the principles we cherish.

There is a need for New Evangelization in order to combat the many challenges the Church faces today. I’m calling on all council leaders throughout the state, to accelerate their efforts in working with their pastors to help strengthen their parishes and strengthen Christian family life within our communities.

I pray each of us can refocus our lives to be Christ centered. I truly believe that if we want to enter into God’s Kingdom, our passport is the Knights of Columbus. There is no organization in the world more committed to Pope Francis’s message of Charity, Unity, and reaching out to those in need than the Knights of Columbus!

As Knights our lives can act a witness to our faith. We are “One Body in Christ.” May God Bless you and may God Bless the mission of the Knights of Columbus!

Vivat Jesus!

Respectively Submitted,

Anthony W Hergott
Nebraska State Deputy

I move for adoption of this report.