

Citizen of the Year

Eloise “Ellie” McGarry

Rutland Neighbors

The Citizen of the Year Award recognizes an individual whose tireless dedication and compassionate leadership have made a lasting impact on the Rutland community. This honor celebrates not only outstanding service but also the spirit of kindness and hope that strengthens our neighborhood. This year’s recipient exemplifies these qualities through unwavering commitment to helping others and fostering a sense of belonging for all.

guided by the words of Mother Teresa:

“At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by ‘I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in.’”

Ellie McGarry serves as the Executive Director of Rutland Neighbors, a day shelter in Rutland located at 60 Strongs Ave. in Rutland dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty. With a lifelong commitment to service and a background in education and community leadership, Ellie works to ensure that every neighbor who walks through the doors is welcomed with dignity, compassion, and practical support. Under her leadership, Rutland Neighbors has grown from a small meal program serving a handful of people into a vital community hub that provides thousands of meals each year, distributes essential items needed for people who are living outdoors, and connects neighbors with critical resources. Ellie collaborates closely with volunteers, community partners, local businesses, and civic leaders to build a stronger network of care throughout Rutland. Her work is driven by a deep belief that strong communities are built when neighbors support one another with kindness, respect, and hope.

Thank you Ellie for all you do for our community and sharing your heart. On behalf of Rutland Lodge 345, I present you with our Citizen of the Year Award.





Elk of the Year

This may be the most difficult award to select. So many members do so much for our Lodge. With the help of so many of you, we have initiated new members, had fun events, expanded our reach in our community and have done so much more as a lodge. I pondered this selection for about 2 months... It's no secret I can be random and spend a lot of my time "outside the box". This selection might be 'outside of the box' but in my mind the perfect Elk of the Year.

The 2025-2026 Member of the year honors a dedicated individual whose unwavering loyalty and spirit has enriched Rutland Elks Lodge for years. His daily presence, encouraging attitude and steadfast support

exemplifies Elkdom. He is quiet and positive and always has a kind word.

Over his 61 years of membership, he has become a beloved figure within the lodge. He's Loyal... rarely missing a daily visit to the Lodge enjoying a cold beer and conversation with friends. His dedicated parking spot sign remains though his daily trips to the lodge require a little assistance from family and friends. Members suggested our Lodge start a Scholarship in his name, reflecting the lasting impact he has made on the Rutland Elks and our youth and Communities. Fund raising for the Scholarship was a quick success.

His genuine love for our lodge and its members stands as a model of friendship and service, making him my choice for the 2025-2026 Elk Member of the Year. Coach.. This Bud's for you.

Greg "Coach" McClallen it's my honor to present the Elk of the Year to you with my thanks.

Barb Watters, ER

Officer of the Year

Your Lodge...yes this is your lodge and you have a great team if officers and trustees. You are fortunate to have a group of dedicated members helping guide the lodge to the future. Each has made a contribution to our year. Their time and commitment to Rutland Lodge 345 is commendable. Thank you to each of them on behalf of members of our Lodge.



The quiet leader... our 'go to' has served this lodge in an official capacity for around 20 years. He is so much more than the event scheduler and guy with the apron in the kitchen. He knows Elkdom in and out. The walking reference guide to BPOE statutes, guidelines and protocol, his dedication, experience and steady leadership have guided our Lodge through countless challenges. When we say HELP he's there to keep us on track. we rely on him as a mentor and appreciate his wisdom and expertise. Thank you Brian Gaura, PSP, PDD, PER and amazing Elk your officer of the year.