



What Is Ruritan?

Ruritan National and its members are dedicated to creating a better understanding among people, and through volunteer community service, making America's communities a better place to live and work. Ruritan members across the country represent a cross-section of the communities they serve. Ruritan National has over 20,000 members throughout the United States in more than 800 local communities. Ruritan clubs unify the efforts of individuals, organizations, and institutions in the community toward making it an ideal place in which to live. The clubs work with those agencies which serve the community and contribute directly to its progress – often providing financial support for programs that already exist in the community. Most importantly, Ruritan clubs encourage and foster the ideal of service as the basis of all worthy enterprise.

Celebrating 86 Years of Service

Ruritan National civic clubs improve communities across America every day. Getting involved in serving the community will change your life. Join a club near you – or start a club in your community.

We have all the support you might need just email us at office@ruritan.org and let's get started.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

Every community has gaps – areas where services or projects are needed and there is no one to fill that gap. Where are the gaps in your community? Do you need an after school tutoring program for your kids? Do you wish there was someone to raise money to support a local park or ball field? How about support for seniors? This series of four ads is designed to tell you more about Ruritan. Before we are through we hope you will be interested in joining a club if there is one in your area. And if there isn't – how about getting 15 other like-minded citizens together and starting a new club.

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Ruritan Community Service Projects

Faced with the goal of serving their communities – it has helped Ruritan clubs to divide the potential projects into five **C ommunity S ervice A reas**. Scan through the areas and their corresponding projects below. Which of these things does your community need? Couldn't you benefit by getting involved in programs like these?

The first is **Community Engagement**. Projects under this committee strive to provide and maintain the community's economic stability and growth. Projects may fall under areas such as agriculture, industry services, trades, or professions. Projects may be as simple as providing a community workshop on Social Security or as complex as establishing a clinic and bringing a doctor to a community that is underserved.

The second is the **Citizenship and Patriotism Committee**. The goal of this committee is to foster love of our country and pride in being a citizen. The areas for consideration should include the following: community pride programs, patriotic holiday observations, voter registration, support for our armed forces, programs to recognize veterans, or community flag displays.

The third is the **Environment Committee**. The goal of this committee is to improve the environment and conserve natural resources in the community. Projects may deal with improving water quality, decreasing air pollution, community beautification programs, wildlife conservation, soil and water conservation, rodent and pest control, and more.

The fourth is the **Public Services Committee**. Many services which are required by our citizens must be provided by governmental, corporate, and volunteer agencies. There was a time – in Ruritan's early years – when clubs actually sponsored telephone co-ops and rural electrification programs. Today many clubs work to support law enforcement, fire and rescue squads, transportation programs, waste disposal, and more. The Ruritan **Rudy Bear** program (shown above) falls under this committee – with thousands of Rudy Bears donated every year to those who serve children in crisis.

The fifth is the **Social Development Committee**. Because human resources are a community's most valuable assets, it is important to have facilities and services which will provide for the well-being and development of all people. For example, clubs may sponsor a drug abuse program, build handicapped ramps for individuals with a need, deliver Meals on Wheels, or help distribute and process home safety check lists for shut-ins. Often clubs partner with other local agencies.



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Starting a Ruritan Club in My Community

Every community needs a Ruritan club. With this in mind and with your desire to organize a new club, assess the commitment of your club, your district/area leaders, and yourself to this important project. Many materials are available from the national office by emailing office@ruritan.org. In addition to time, organizing a Ruritan club requires the four "Ps": planning, preparation, patience, and persistence.

Step One: Identify the community that needs Ruritan service. Look for an area:

- ◆ that you know has a particular issue to be addressed.
- ◆ where you know a leader of the community.
- ◆ where you want to help Ruritan grow.

Step Two: Make contact in the community. Seek out community leaders and develop a plan to address a specific need that has surfaced (see Step One). Talk with:

- ◆ someone you know.
- ◆ someone another Ruritan knows.
- ◆ an acknowledged leader in the community.

Step Three: Develop a list of key individuals provided by the initial contact. Follow the steps below.

- ◆ Get together four to six people, minimum.
- ◆ Visit with them and explain Ruritan.
- ◆ Set an initial meeting (within 10 days).
- ◆ Ask each of these four to six people to bring others – a goal of 16 to 20 at the organizational meeting is good.

Step Four: Plan the organizational meeting. This meeting is your opportunity to address as a group those individuals who have shown enough interest in Ruritan to attend. This will likely be the core around which the club will be built. Certain information is critical to pass along at this point.

- ◆ Prepare and mail letters of invitation to the contact list.
- ◆ Arrange for two or three Ruritan members to provide testimonials and answer questions at the meeting. If you need assistance locating these people in your area – contact the national office. They will be happy to help.
- ◆ Assemble materials for the meeting – brochures, video, constitution, Ruritan magazine, news clippings, and individual member handbooks. Again – the Ruritan staff will send you all of this material if you set up an organizational meeting.



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Incentives For Growing Ruritan

If you have been reading this series of advertisements about Ruritan in the previous three weeks, you know that our members are creating a better understanding among people, and through volunteer community service, making America's communities better places to live and work. If you believe this is important work – we hope you are interested in either joining a club near you, or starting a new Ruritan club.

But you may have the question – why Ruritan? Can't we just get a group of people together and do good work in the community? The answer is that the structure of the Ruritan organization provides members with protection and benefits that you wouldn't have otherwise. In addition to insurance, training, and a national awards program – the Ruritan organization sponsors annual national conventions with more training, election of new officers, patriotic programs, charitable projects, and great entertainment. Ruritan clubs are 501c(4) organizations with exemption from paying taxes on their fund raising dollars.

As a Ruritan member you will be encouraged to develop as a volunteer and can easily rise to positions of community leadership. Members of Ruritan also benefit from special discounts (such as auto rental and hotel discounts), savings, and promotions that are only available to them.

Doesn't Ruritan sound like a good idea? Doesn't it sound like something your community can use? Why don't you let us help you get involved? We have all the support you might need just email us at office@ruritan.org and let's get started.



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