

2021 National President Linward Hedgspeth



Communication is Vital for our Success

Much has been said about leaving 2020 behind, but I am encouraged by the accomplishments from decisions we were forced to make. Year 2020 was unique, thanks mostly to the pandemic, but we are looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead in 2021, a new year brings new opportunities.

I am referring to the changes that took place in 2020 from the new experience of managing our Ruritan business from teleworking, a constant cycle of Microsoft Teams, and Zoom meetings. Yet we closed 2020 having served our communities and communicated with our clubs, districts, and national leaders with new innovative ideas. I cannot thank you enough for your generosity to your communities (health caregivers, first responders, sheriff/police, nursing homes, hospitals, and schools). You faced dangerous circumstances, trusted God, worked together, and succeeded.

Are we ready to keep it going by capitalizing on these new experiences and opportunities? I am talking about our goals and direction for 2021.

Goals / Directions for 2021

1. **Communication** is vital for our success. Encourage club members to maintain communication among each other, their districts, and communities by using telephone calls, teleconferencing, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and other means of technology. It is the key to maintaining member interest/involvement when many clubs are still not meeting in person.
2. **The safety and well-being of our members must be a priority.**
3. **Retention** of our current membership is another area of grave importance. Many clubs are not meeting and therefore members may not be communicating. Work with your district and zone governors to ensure they are contacting club members. Inform club members of communication technologies (Teams/Zoom) that are available and can easily allow for communicating and sharing documents. Provide instructions if needed or direct them to the Ruritan National staff.
4. **Growth** – Continue to monitor club growth on MMS by recognizing those that add new members. Send a personal note, email, or call them. Reach out to clubs that have a small membership and to those that need help or encouragement. Continue encouraging members to always be aware of potential new member opportunities. Many folks may have extra time on their hands because of the pandemic.
5. **Restructure** - The team's goal is to refine the preliminary report provided to the National Directors in 2020. The refined report will be available at the 2022 National Convention at a workshop to solicit input from delegates and Ruritan leaders. The mission of the restructuring committee was to study Ruritan data and history, provide findings and make recommendation/suggestions on how our organization can flourish in the current environment. This committee was created as a response to the request of many delegates and Ruritan leaders over the years recommending Ruritan make changes. This mission is a work in progress and is expected to take two or three years to conclude. Any changes made that require a bylaw change will require delegate approval. All Ruritans are encouraged to participate in this process by sharing your ideas. We are all in this together.

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6. **National Directors** - I commend the National Directors for their participation in our all-virtual Board of Directors meeting in January. It was productive and a major cost savings.
7. **Remembering** - we will always remember those caring, dedicated Ruritans that transitioned to God's Kingdom. **Romans 8:28** "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose," Amen.

Each day brings new opportunities for Ruritans to soar. As Ruritans we, rise to the challenges with ingenuity, compassion, resilience, and fortitude. I encourage you to continue to stand TOGETHER!



Youth Leadership Camp

Your Youth Committee Team Ed Hicks, Mike Wright, and David Hogan have nailed down **June 25-27, 2021** for the annual Youth Leadership Camp held at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Center in Wirtz, Virginia.



Summer Leadership Conference

Plans are underway for the 2021 Summer Leadership Conference on **August 13-14, 2021**. President Elect Glen Broadwater and the Leadership Development Committee Team Cleve Wright, Melody Davis, and Susan Greisz are planning an exciting and motivational conference.



2022 National Convention Let's go to the BEACH!

Join us **January 6-9, 2022** in Myrtle Beach. We will keep you up-to-date as information comes forth.

More information will follow in future publications and announcements from National.