

TEXAS LIONS FOUNDATION

HISTORY AND GROWTH

The idea of a Foundation owned by and for the benefit of the Lions of Texas was the foresight of PID Edwin H. Flood of Amarillo. Lion Ed was successful in selling the idea to the 1983-84 Council of Governors. This Council of Governors approved the Articles of Incorporation and the Texas Lions ratified it at their 1984 State Convention. A preliminary meeting of the Foundation was held in Kerrville the first weekend of August, 1984. The first organizational meeting of the Foundation was held in San Antonio on November 3, 1984 where the Constitution and By-Laws were adopted and PID Ed Flood was elected the first Chairman. Ed Flood carried the Articles of Incorporation to Austin and the Articles were approved by the Secretary of State on December 4, 1984. The Constitution and ByLaws were ratified by the Texas Lions at their 1985 State Convention.

On December 31, 1984, the Foundation showed a bank balance of \$16,006.24 with \$6,304.50 in Accounts Receivable and \$1,221.60 in Accounts Payable. At the end of approximately one year of operation, the net worth of the Foundation was in excess of \$21,000.00. All of this money was derived from the sale of Lions Mints.

The mints were bought from F & F Laboratories in Chicago. They were specially prepared and packaged for the Lions of Texas and purchased at a cost of 9 1/2 cents per roll. The mints were sold to the districts for a profit to the Foundation of 2 1/2 cents per roll. This 2 1/2 cents per roll remained in the Foundation Trust Fund and continues to benefit Lions projects.

From the sale of mints, the Foundation continued to grow. When the sale of mints was discontinued, an amount in excess of \$150,000 had been placed in the Trust Fund. The Foundation is structured so that only interest from the Trust Fund can be used for grants. The Constitution and By-Laws specifically state how this money can be spent. It states the Trust Fund Corpus may not be spent for any purpose. Only the interest Funds of the Foundation may be expended by the Board for grants by the Foundation or the following reasons:

1. To promote any charitable activities sponsored by the Lions of Texas.
2. To Support the Texas Lions Camp.
3. To Support any Lions International program.
4. To help defray costs of any designated disaster.

It further states that the disbursement of Foundation funds in the amount of Two thousand dollars (\$2000.00) or less shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee or a majority vote of the Board of Trustees present and voting; disbursement of Foundation funds in excess of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2000.00) shall be made only on approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Trustees present and voting at such meeting.

For the first four years of its organization, the Foundation did not actively solicit any donations from Lions or other individuals. In 1988, the Foundation established several award categories that have helped entice individuals and clubs to contribute money to the Foundation. The designated awards are:

1. Texas Lions Foundation 100% Club Award
2. The Texas Lions Foundation Award
3. The Texas Lions Fellow Award
4. The Ed Flood Award
5. The Cornerstone Club

Each club that contributes \$2.00 per member each year to the Texas Lions Foundation will be designated a 100% Texas Lions Foundation Club for that Lions year and will be so honored.

The Texas Lions Foundation Award is designed to honor a person in whose name a monetary gift in the amount of one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) is given to the Foundation. The person honored will receive a clear, acrylic etched award.

The Texas Lions Fellow Award is given to honor a person or business in whose name a monetary gift of five hundred dollars (\$500) or more has been made to the Foundation. This Award consisting of a plaque and a pin will be presented on an appropriate occasion. For each five hundred dollar (\$500) additionally donated in the name of the same person to the Texas Lions Foundation, a diamond will be added to the pin. For example, a gift of fifteen hundred dollars (\$1500) would entitle the individual to be a 2-diamond on the star also known as a Texas Lions Progressive Fellow. All Texas Lions Fellows and the year they were designated are now posted on the website.

The Ed Flood Award will be presented to each District Governor in whose District an accumulative amount of money is raised which equals \$2.00 per member in their District. The Foundation year is July 1 through June 30. Presentation of the Award will be made at the annual August Council of Governors meeting in Kerrville.

All monies raised from these awards will go directly into the Trust Fund of the Texas Lions Foundation. There will be no expenditures made from the Trust Fund. Only interest and earnings from the Trust Fund will be available for Lions projects.

Many District Governors and Trustees have qualified for the Ed Flood Award and approximately 700 Lions Clubs in Texas are qualified for the 100% Club Award. The Texas Lions Foundation Award and the Texas Lions Fellow is an outstanding way to honor an outgoing President of a Lions Club, Lion of the Year for a club, District Governor or some individual in the Club or community who has given exceptional service to the Club.

Any monies can be sent to:
PCC Bernie Gradel, Jr.
TLF Chief Operations Officer
P.O. BOX 64881
Lubbock, Texas 79464

Please include with the money, the name and address of the honoree and to whom the presentation items are to be sent, along with the District and Club name. Physical addresses are required, no post office box numbers may be used as the items are sent by UPS or FedEx.

The Foundation was established to provide a non-profit structure with which to advance the purpose and objectives of the Lions of Texas. It is governed by sixteen (16) Trustees who are appointed by the Governor of each District for a 3 year term.

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, therefore, all contributions are fully tax-deductible. Money that is given to a Lions Club is not generally tax-deductible.

At the January 31, 2003 Board Meeting, PID Marshall Cooper was appointed as Advisor to the Foundation. On June 14, 2004, PID Cooper was appointed as Executive Administrator.

On May 6, 2006, PID Edwin H. Flood was elected Executive Director Emeritus with a permanent position on the Executive Committee. PID Cooper became Chief Operations Officer. PCC Jack Harris became Assistant Chief Operations Officer.

In May, 2008, PDG Claude Durham was appointed Assistant Chief Operations Officer. He served well in this capacity until May, 2015, when he resigned due to eyesight problems. PID Edwin H. Flood continued to serve as Executive Director Emeritus until his death in July of 2012. PID Marshall Cooper resigned as COO effective June 30, 2017. The Board appointed Past Council Chairman Bernie Gradel, Jr. as Chief Operations Officer beginning July 1, 2017. PDG Peg White Neyland was appointed by the Board in November 2024, to begin serving as Assistant Chief Operations Officer on January 1, 2025.

In March of 2014, the Foundation, with a \$250,000 grant from the 2013-2014 Texas Lions Council of Governors, purchased a building in Kerrville for a Texas Lions Museum and State Office. The building has been transferred to a 501(c)(3) entity.

Application for a grant can be made to the Foundation, in writing, stating the purpose and benefit of the grant requested. As much detail as possible should be given in the application so the Trustees can make an informed decision. Humanitarian Grants must be submitted at least 45 days before the next scheduled Executive Committee meeting.

Application forms are available and should be submitted to the District Governor, Trustee or PCC Bernie Gradel, Jr., Chief Operations Officer.

An Investment Committee was appointed and presented an Investment Policy which was adopted. The Foundation can be a great force that can help promote Texas Lions projects. A gift to the Foundation will continue to give for all times. The Foundation is a sleeping giant, which, when fully supported by the Lions of Texas, can be a great force that can help those in need from natural disasters and promote Texas Lions projects.