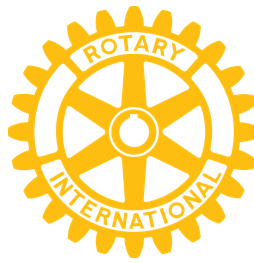


Rotary

District 7570



District 7570 Conference 2026: More Than a Conference

By Andrew P. Vanhook



There are moments in Rotary that remind you why this organization matters.

This year's District Conference in Harrisonburg was full of them.

Over the course of the weekend, nearly 350 Rotarians, partners, students, speakers, and community leaders gathered in the Friendly City for conversations, inspiration, laughter, fellowship, and service. Looking back, I can honestly say this conference became something far greater than I ever imagined.

And for that, I am deeply grateful.

From the beginning, our goal was to create a conference that felt meaningful and energizing — one that celebrated Rotary's impact while also challenging us to think bigger about the role we can play

in our communities and our world.

Mission accomplished.

Not because everything went perfectly, but because people showed up fully for one another.

One of the most powerful moments of the weekend came when polio survivor and Rotary leader Ramesh Ferris made his way to the stage — crawling forward before rising to share his story. The room was silent. His message was deeply personal: adoption gave him opportunities that many children affected by polio will never receive. Rotary's work to eradicate polio is about more than disease prevention. It is about giving children a chance at life, dignity, and possibility.

Another unforgettable moment came from Nobel Peace Prize Laureate David Beasley, whose challenge to put down our phones and work together — regardless of how we worship, vote, or look — struck a chord throughout the room. Rotary may be one of the few places left where people from different backgrounds come together not to argue, but to serve. In many ways, Rotary is the perfect vessel for peacebuilding.

Our TED-style talks reminded us that Rotary's future is bright.

Zion Brooks shared her Four-Way Test Speech Contest-winning speech and reminded us why those principles still matter. Youth Exchange students shared stories of courage, growth, and cultural understanding that embodied the Four-Way Test in action. Sean Sawyer challenged us to reconnect with our "why" and rethink how we approach membership and engagement. Dr. Tamara Dias delivered a timely reminder that service without self-care eventually leads to burnout — and that sustainable leadership matters.

The Human Trafficking Panel was eye-opening and deeply important, reminding us that exploitation is not a distant issue. It exists in our communities, and every one of us has a role to play in awareness, prevention, and advocacy.

The conference also honored 14 Rotarians with the District 7570 110% Award, recognizing individuals who consistently go above and beyond in service to their clubs and communities. The stories Area Governors shared about the honorees were reminders that Rotary's impact is built not only through large moments, but through faithful leadership, generosity, and everyday commitment.

Meanwhile, Josie Russell and Dave Urso brought new life and humor to the Club Awards celebration, proving that recognizing good work can still be meaningful while making people laugh.

And speaking of humor... imagine my surprise when I discovered our conference team had included hair gel, a comb, and stickers of my face in every welcome bag — while also unveiling a

Your District Leadership



[Andrew P. Vanhook](#)
District Governor



[Charlotte G. Whitted](#)
DG-Elect



[Amber Wilborne](#)
DG-Nominee



[Bret W. Hrbek](#)
iPDG



[Anna Clark Lester](#)
Administrative Assistant Governor



[Lori W. Glascock](#)
Area 1 Governor



[James B. Baisden](#)
Area 2 Governor



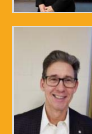
[Lydia Heatwole](#)
Area 3 Governor



[Diantha Gail McCauley](#)
Area 4 Governor



[Traci Blido](#)
Area 5 Governor



[James Michael Halasz](#)
Area 6 Governor



[Inez J. Rodenburg](#)
Area 7 Governor



[Carolyn C. Gordon](#)
Area 8 Governor



[Mike Jones](#)
Area 9 Governor

[Kelly McBride Delph](#)
Area 10 Governor

giant fathead of me at registration. Apparently, there is something to be said for asking forgiveness instead of permission. I felt incredibly loved (and only mildly concerned for everyone's judgment).

And yes... the rumors are true. Somehow the hospitality suite eventually required police involvement on Saturday night. No charges were filed. Mostly because there were no actual crimes — just Rotarians refusing to let fellowship end.

One of my favorite moments of the weekend was recognizing Woody Sadler with Rotary International's Service Above Self Award — a fitting tribute to a lifetime dedicated to helping others.

Beyond the stage, however, the true magic of the conference happened in hallways, over meals, during workshops, and in countless genuine conversations between people building friendships and new ideas together.

That's Rotary at its best.

Not perfect people. Just people choosing to show up for one another.

And the impact extended far beyond the conference walls.

Together, attendees donated 1,846 items — including 354 hygiene kits — for Open Doors and neighbors experiencing homelessness. Our golf tournament raised nearly \$10,000 benefiting local nonprofits and the End Polio Now initiative. Our Foundation Celebration Dinner at the Explore More Discovery Museum blended fun, impact, and dancing. (Who knew Rotarians would get so excited over blinking rings and a game of Heads or Tails?) Participants explored Harrisonburg, toured Dynamic Aviation's historic aircraft, flew aboard a DC-3, and experienced the incredible hospitality of the Shenandoah Valley.

Most importantly, I saw momentum building around opportunities for collective impact:

- strengthening membership,
- telling our Rotary stories more effectively,
- supporting The Rotary Foundation,
- expanding youth engagement,
- and growing literacy partnerships like the inspiring work happening in Shenandoah County.

Those opportunities are in front of us right now.

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the incredible village that made this conference possible. Events like this do not happen because of one person. They happen because people lean in together.

Our local Rotary clubs — Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Harrisonburg-Massanutten, Broadway-Timberville, Bridgewater, and Rocktown Satellite — along with committee members, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners exceeded every expectation I had. Dynamic Aviation, James Madison University, the Rocco Forum of the Future, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance, our corporate and individual sponsors, and so many others embraced this vision and helped showcase the very best of Harrisonburg and the Shenandoah Valley.

I am unbelievably proud of what we created together.

To Lydia Heatwole, Jeremy Spilman, and Thomas Rea, I am forever grateful for your leadership, guidance, attention to detail, grace, and most importantly, your friendship. I love y'all!

And if you missed this year's conference... well... let's just say you don't want to miss Abingdon in 2027.

Create a great day,

Andy Vanhook
District Governor 2025–2026

PS – Find photos from [District Conference 2026 here](#).

PPS – Be on the lookout for Keynote speaker videos in the coming weeks.



[Heather A. Bunch](#)
Area 11 Governor



[Susan J. Mole](#)
Area 12 Governor



[Joseph A. Ley](#)
Area 13 Governor



[Gary McAllister](#)
Area 14 Governor

District Clubs recognized for EPIC Awards



The [EPIC Public Image Program](#) was created to help Rotary clubs tell their story more effectively. through intentional, monthly actions that build a strong, sustainable public image and showcase the good Rotary does in our communities.

Clubs that completed the program demonstrated a commitment to visibility, engagement, and brand excellence, earning the opportunity to be recognized in the EPIC Award in Zones 33/34.

It is our honor to introduce and celebrate our district's EPIC Award winners.

Platinum:

- [Clarke](#)
- [Giles](#)
- [Johnson City](#)
- [Rocky Mount](#)

Bronze:

- [Tazewell](#)

Member Survey Example

By popular request from District Conference here is the Johnson City Club survey. Several attendees at Mary Ellen "Mel" Miller's storytelling presentation asked for the Johnson City Club survey. "The Johnson City Club's survey and ensuing results, developed by President Cyrus Fees and Sergeant at Arms Nate Smith, were enormously helpful in providing direction for communications

Woody Sadler Receives Rotary International's Prestigious Service Above Self Award



The Rotary world is celebrating one of District 7570's finest leaders and servants. Past District Governor Woody Sadler, Jr., of the Rotary Club of Lexington Sunrise, has been honored with Rotary International's Service Above Self Award — Rotary's highest individual honor recognizing exemplary humanitarian service.

The Service Above Self Award is presented annually to only about 150 Rotarians worldwide whose service activities have had a meaningful impact on humanity and who truly embody Rotary's motto, "Service Above Self." Rotary International notes that while many members distinguish themselves through service, the award recognizes those who make service "a way of life."

Woody Sadler exemplifies that ideal.

A Rotarian for 34 years and founder of the Lexington Sunrise Rotary Club 31 years ago, Woody has dedicated his life to leadership, service, and community impact. Following a distinguished 28-year career in the United States Marine Corps, he spent 33 years teaching at Virginia Military Institute, shaping generations of future leaders.

Within Rotary, Woody has served in nearly every major leadership role in District 7570, including District Governor in 2012-2013, Assistant Governor, District Finance Chair, District Awards Chair, and Club President — twice. Most recently, when his club needed experienced leadership, he willingly stepped forward again to serve as president for the 2024-2025 Rotary year.

But Woody's impact reaches far beyond titles.

During his year as District Governor, he introduced two initiatives that continue to change lives today: CART (Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust) and the Wheelchair Project. Through his leadership and partnerships, nearly 5,000 wheelchairs have been delivered to 14 Latin American countries, improving mobility and quality of life for an estimated 35,000 people.

Past District Governor Frank Dean, who first introduced Woody to the Wheelchair Foundation effort, praised Woody's commitment to humanitarian service.

"Between 2013 and 2025 Woody has led the distribution of over 3,800 wheelchairs into over a half dozen third world countries," Dean wrote. "There are not enough good and positive things I can say about Woody Sadler."

Woody is equally devoted to service in his local community. In the Shenandoah Valley, he has chaired numerous nonprofit organizations, including United Way, church leadership, veterans organizations, and historical societies. He also founded the local Community Foundation, helping it achieve a remarkable \$10 million milestone. His innovative Fourth of July hot-air balloon rally continues to thrive nearly 20 years after its founding.

Those who know Woody best describe him as a servant leader whose enthusiasm inspires others to action. His nomination praised his ability to "mingle, help, laugh, and cry," while sharing both joy and purpose with everyone around him.

channels including newsletter, social and traditional media used throughout the year." - Mary Ellen Miller



Scan me!

Or access it via [THIS LINK](#).

Your District on YouTube



Did you know the District has a YouTube page? Be sure to Subscribe or Browse the

uploaded videos.

There are great past interviews and lots of club resources provided!

<https://www.youtube.com/@RotaryDistrict7570/>

Honoring the Legacy of Our Rotarians

With nearly 3,000 Rotarians across our district, each member contributes in meaningful



and lasting ways to their club, community, and to Rotary. When we lose a fellow Rotarian, we lose not only a member, but a servant leader, a mentor, and a friend.

To thoughtfully and equitably honor those who pass away, the district invites clubs to submit a brief tribute celebrating the Rotarian's life and service. Submitted tributes will be published in an upcoming district newsletter or in DACdb stories.

Tribute Guidelines:

- 150–300 words
- Include years of Rotary service and notable roles or contributions to Rotary
- One high-resolution photo (optional)
- Please submit within 30 days of the member's passing, if possible

By sharing these stories within a consistent

Woody and his wife, Lori, are also deeply committed supporters of The Rotary Foundation as members of the Paul Harris Society, Bequest Society, Major Donor program, Legacy Society, and Sustainers program.

District Governor Andy Vanhook presented the Service Above Self Award to Woody during the District 7570 Conference held April 23–25, 2026, at the Atlantic Union Bank Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

“It was my honor to present the Rotary International Service Above Self Award to PDG Woody Sadler at our District 7570 Conference,” said District Governor Andy Vanhook. “Woody’s lifelong dedication to serving others is an inspiration to me and to Rotarians across our district. He truly lives Rotary’s vision of people uniting and taking action to create lasting change in our communities and around the world.”



From Lexington to Latin America, Woody Sadler has spent a lifetime demonstrating Rotary’s vision of people coming together to create lasting change. His leadership, compassion, and commitment to service continue to inspire Rotarians throughout District 7570 and beyond.

District 7570 Governor and Area Governor Installation Invitation

By Charlotte G. Whitted



Please join me at the District 7570 Governor and Area Governor Installation luncheon on Saturday, June 6th, 2026 at 12:00 noon at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia. The luncheon is open to Rotarians and guests with a delicious lunch catered by The Pakalachian. The cost is \$40 per person.

Click on the link below, which takes you to the calendar section of www.rotary7570.org directly. Arrow over to the right to June 2026.

Click on Saturday, June 6th 12 noon to reach the registration page for the Installation Luncheon. If you want to log in as a member, please do, but it’s not required. YOU MAY REGISTER AS A

GUEST:

[Calendar | Rotary International District 7570](#)

King Charles III and Queen Camilla visit Front Royal

By Elizabeth Lewis

On April 30, 2026, the town of Front Royal welcomed King Charles III and Queen Camilla for a historic visit, and at the heart of it all was a place, and a story, deeply connected to our [Front Royal club](#).

The royal couple toured John Marlow Plaza, the newly dedicated town square on Main Street named for one of Front Royal Rotary’s most beloved members. John Marlow was the visionary behind the plaza’s original revitalization in the 1980s, and last fall the town honored his legacy with a dedication in his name. It was fitting, then, that this was the setting chosen to welcome a king.



Club member and Apple House owner George McIntyre, alongside his daughter, co-owner and fellow Rotarian Katie McIntyre Tewell, had the

format, we ensure that every Rotarian is honored with dignity while building a collective legacy of Service Above Self that can inspire others.

Tributes may be submitted to Tim Wilborne, District Public Image Chair at tim@twcontrols.com.

Photo by *Hakan Erenler*

Mark Your Calendars!

May 16th
Armed Forces Day Concert
June 6th
2026-27 District and Area Governor Installation Luncheon
June 23rd
End of Year Dinner

Club Anniversaries

Frederick County

May 1st

Buena Vista

May 1st

Amherst

May 1st

Blacksburg - 16 Squares Satellite

May 6th

Bedford

May 10th

Strasburg

May 11th

Floyd County

May 16th

Nelson County

May 19th

Tazewell

May 21st

Washington County

May 23rd



rare pleasure of speaking with King Charles about their specialty offerings, including the Apple House's famous donuts. Meanwhile, Queen Camilla sat down for a heartfelt conversation with Avery Harper, executive director of the Phoenix Project, Front Royal's local domestic violence and sexual assault prevention organization and a proud Rotarian herself.

John Marlow's daughter, Emily Marlow Beck also a club member, was present to witness the day unfold on the plaza that bears her father's name. The Rotary presence didn't stop there. Past District Governors Ron Napier and Bret Hrbek, Area Governor Lori Glascock, and club member Susan Hrbek were all on hand, along with Warren County Rotary President Kahle Magalis, Past President Ellen Aders, and club members Glenn Wood, Kathy Napier, and Katie Tennant. Warren County Sheriff Crystal Cline, also a Rotarian, was part of the day as well.

The visit drew dignitaries from across the Commonwealth, including Governor Abigail Spanberger, who joined local leaders for the occasion. Behind the scenes, Front Royal Club President Lizi Lewis played a key role in planning and executing the royal visit alongside Town Manager Joe Petty and Mayor Lori Cockrell, in her professional capacity as Front Royal's Community Development and Tourism Director.



It was a day Front Royal won't soon forget and Rotary was woven into every thread of it.

Rotary Readers Making Impact at Mountain View Elementary School

By Mary Ellen Miller



Once a week [Johnson City Rotary Club](#) member Joan Mitchell, a retired accountant, walks through the doors of Mountain View Elementary School and into Mrs. Van Dyck's kindergarten class. There she will spend one hour reading to and with 5- and 6-year-olds. Mitchell is part of The Johnson City Rotary Club "Rotary Readers" program at the Title 1 School. The club piloted the program at Mountain View Elementary School in the spring of 2025 and it has been growing ever since. In addition, Rotary supplies a new book for each of the kindergarten and first grade

students.

"This is exactly what I wanted to do when I retired," said Mitchell. "I listen to them read and I can see how much better the majority of the class is reading."

"Six Rotarians actively work each month with the Mountain View teachers and students to encourage what we hope will empower a lifelong interest in reading for our youngsters," said Jeff Anderson who chairs the Rotary Readers program. "It is such a pleasure to be one of the Readers and see first-hand the students' energetic response and delight as we enjoy assisting them as they read a variety of young children's books to us."

"One of Rotary's most important initiatives is literacy, so having an impact like we do at Mountain View is everything to us," said Cyrus Fees, President of Johnson City Rotary Club.

All Rotary Readers have passed security and background checks by the Johnson City schools. According to the school's principal, Dr. Chelsea Lee, the reading investment is making a difference. "As of early 2026 Rotary readers have read over 2,100 minutes with kindergarten

students since starting the program. We have seen a positive impact on kindergarten reading scores since implementing Rotary readers,” Dr. Lee said. And, as an added bonus the children get to take home a book of their own for summer reading. Lee said that The Johnson City Rotary Club will have provided 1600 books for kindergarten and first grade the 2024-25 and the 2025-26 school years.

A Lasting Literacy Investment:

Immediate Past President Raleigh Green, who launched Rotary Readers during his 2024–2025 presidential year, emphasized the long-term vision behind the initiative. Green sought grant support to ensure the program would extend beyond a single Rotary year and become a lasting literacy investment for Mountain View students. Through district funding and continued commitment from club leadership, Rotary Readers now provides kindergarten and first-grade students with new books four times each school year—books the children keep to build home libraries and share with their families—along with supplemental school supplies to help close everyday classroom gaps.

Green said, “Sustaining literacy support at the earliest stages of learning was a central goal of my presidency and remains a priority for the Johnson City Rotary Club moving forward,”

Early Act Club in Bristol

The first [Early Act Club](#) in Bristol recently showed off their new t-shirts! They were designed by 5th grade club member Kayla Rogers and were voted on through a student vote. Congratulations on all the successes!



Danville Pittsylvania County Community Services



The [Rotary Club of Danville](#) was honored to welcome Jim Bebeau, Executive Director of Danville-Pittsylvania County Community Services (DPCS), as their speaker in April.

Jim shared an informative and impactful presentation about the vital role DPCS plays in our community. Established in 1972, DPCS has grown into a cornerstone organization serving both Danville and Pittsylvania County by providing mental health, developmental disability, substance use, and prevention services.

Today, DPCS supports nearly 6,000 individuals annually through more than 50 programs, while also reaching thousands more through prevention and community outreach efforts. Their work spans a full continuum of care—from crisis intervention and behavioral health treatment to residential, day support, and community-based services—all focused on helping individuals achieve independence, recovery,

and improved quality of life.

Jim also highlighted the organization's mission of empowering individuals through dignity, choice, and accessibility, ensuring that services are tailored to meet people where they are and help them reach their fullest potential.

We are grateful to Jim for shedding light on the incredible work being done right here in our community and for the dedicated team at DPCS who make a difference every day.

