

**GRAND LODGE OF TENNESSEE
LONG RANGE PLAN--PAGE 1**

May 11th, 2011

My Dear Brothers,

Please take time to look through and study this plan for Freemasonry in Tennessee. This plan is the culmination of three years of work from brothers across the state. This year we are presenting copies of this plan to every lodge in the state. Brothers are encouraged to offer suggestions. This will be our plan for the whole fraternity for the next 5, 10, and 20 years. It is a work in progress and we will look for feedback in determining the direction of our fraternity.

This plan will also be posted on the grand lodge website with a suggestion form. Please visit the website to offer your suggestions and thoughts. As always feel free to call me with any questions you may have. This plan, made stronger by the efforts of our brothers from around Tennessee, will chart the path to a bright future for our Masonic family. I thank each of you for making ours the finest fraternity in the world.

Fraternally yours,

Nathan R. James PM 414
Chairman Long Range Planning Committee

4200 New Hope Meadow Rd.
Hermitage, TN 37076
Cell 615. 305.8224
Hufnegel@hotmail.com

Members:
Kristopher Fisher (375) RECORDER
Casey O. Griffin (332)
Robert Nolan (736)
Larry Price (469)
R. W. Delbert R. Musick (599), Junior Grand Warden

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Grand Lodge of Tennessee Long-Range Plan

Mission

To teach and perpetuate a way of life that promotes the tenets of the Fraternity, brotherly love, relief and truth, and to assist the lodges in growth and prosperity.

Vision

To be an organization comprised of men of integrity and character, who believe in God, serve the community, and are loving and supportive to their families and each other.

Purpose of the Plan

To be a living document consisting of the five (5), ten (10), and twenty (20) year benchmarks, updated as needed, and encompassing the input from any Freemasons in the State of Tennessee.

Strategic Plan Pillars

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Pillar of Fraternalism

Rationale:

Freemasonry is founded on the principles of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love. If we, as Freemasons, plan for our Fraternity to prosper with new membership and to have brethren remain active in our lodges, we must all share these common principles.

Objectives:

- To communicate the meaning and importance of Fraternalism.
- To promote programs encouraging visitation and cooperative activities among lodges.
- To be able to identify talents within the Fraternity and encourage active participation.
- Promote pride and cohesiveness to lodges and districts.

Actions/Benchmarks:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Create Vision 2013 Posters which promote different pillars of Masonic activities.
- Initiate an Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason Masonic Enlightenment Program
- Establish active, proficient degree teams in all districts
- Add "hidden meaning" of teaching lectures to Grand Lecturers' talks

- 10-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Initiate a ritual competition, District against District

- 20-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Initiate a "Big Brother Lodge" mentor program

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Pillar of Conduct & Accountability

Rationale:

Freemasonry is first, and foremost, a beautiful system of morality. What separates Freemasonry from other organizations is our lifelong commitment to living the examined life. This necessarily includes accountability for our actions and conduct to our brethren of the Lodge and to the Craft, as a whole, and to all mankind. Where our standards of conduct are not enforced, our words of obligation become hollow.

Objectives:

- To establish clear expectations and understandings of Masonic conduct
- To educate the brethren on Masonic Code and jurisprudence.
- To work with appendent bodies to maintain Masonic conduct throughout the entire fraternity.

Actions:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Fine tune Title 6 of the Grand Lodge code to remedy inconsistencies
- Better educate lodges on how and what an investigating committee should do when confronted with possible unmasonic personal histories.
- Begin looking at ways to provide lodges with tools to better investigate the background of candidates. Within 1-2 years, negotiate with a vendor to provide lodges with a source criminal background searches and institute a code change to require all lodges to conduct multi-state background checks on all candidates for Freemasonry through a Grand Lodge negotiated contract. The fee for which may be passed on to the candidate, at the subordinate lodge's discretion.
- 10-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Better educate lodges on the requirement for and responsibilities of a lodge conduct committee.
- Add a question to the subordinate lodge annual report form to ask whether the lodge has an appointed conduct committee.
- Add education to Grand Lodge District Visitation agendas
- Train District Chairman to coach lodges on conduct issues.
- 20-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Develop an "Official Visit" for District Chairmen which involves assessing a lodge's management.

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Pillar of Philosophical Renewal

Rationale:

The philosophy of Masonry lies within the history of the Fraternity – which has existed for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. In addition, the philosophy can be found in its myriad forms within each individual Mason. Therefore, no specific model can be presented that defines “Masonic philosophy”. The best approach to communicating this concept to our Brothers lies in revealing to them the almost limitless sources provided by researchers and analysts of the Craft and to obtain “light” on their own. Each Mason needs to understand the essence of Masonry in order to effectively utilize it in his daily life.

Objectives:

- To revive and renew the philosophical emphasis of Freemasonry.
- To expose Tennessee Masons to as many previous interpretations of Masonic philosophy as possible and to stimulate their own analyses, prompting the individual to arrive at his own conclusions.

Actions:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Ensure that each Lodge acquaints its newly-raised Masons with the Ancient Landmarks immediately after their 3rd Degrees.
- If the Lodge has developed its library, encourage the new Brother to use it.
- Develop an on-line reference page listing links to prominent reliable sources for Masonic study.
- Arrange easy access to Tennessee Lodge of Research publications.
- Encourage Lodges to set aside time for philosophical discussions at specific times each month, similar in nature to Schools of Instruction.
- Add these programs to the 2013 “contest” checklist.
- 10-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Develop a program by which District Chairmen and Grand Lecturers ensure that Lodges are following these guidelines.
- 20-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Utilize new technologies to facilitate the points mentioned above.

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Pillar of Preservation of Masonic Tradition

Rationale:

Masonry is a progressive moral science which can only be obtained over time; therefore, Masonry should not be simplified or summarized for the purpose of expediency or to simply increase membership. The traditions of Masonry lend them to study by the candidate which is indispensable. By reducing the requirements and time required to become a Freemason, the value of the institution is diminished. In the long-term, this decreases the retention and caliber of the members, and thus the fraternity, as a whole.

Objectives:

- To maintain the tradition of developing the value of Masonry with the brethren and adequately educating them on its lessons.
- To stress the importance of Masonic Landmarks and education.

Actions:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Utilize the 2013 poster to promote Masonic tradition
- Develop a mentor program and train mentors. Assign mentors by the time that the investigating committee reports. This plan should include having mentors escorting new brethren to degrees and meetings in other lodges.
- Be sure that the investigating committee meets with the candidate's family. Obtain a buy-in from the candidate's spouse and family.
- Begin to stress the importance of quality of membership rather than quantity of members.
- Begin to stress the concept of commitment of time and talent.
- Promote the Masonic library and the tools available.
- Develop a Speakers Bureau of Masons to give pre-written speeches related to Masonic tradition.
- Begin utilizing the Scottish Rite Educational series to promote fundamentals of Masonic Education.

- 10-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Create a recommended book list of at least 5 books.
- Develop a multi-media presentation, like the one provided in Indiana.
- Develop experts in the field.
- Review the process of new ways and media.

- 20-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Begin promoting the concept of each lodge having its own Masonic library of reference materials. This should include, at the very least:
- History of Freemasonry in Tennessee by Bobby J. DeMott
- Freemasonry for Dummies by Charles Haslapp
- Idiots Guide to Freemasonry by Brent Morris
- Rational of Freemasonry by Bobby J. DeMott
- Develop a system for the ongoing review of progress.

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Pillar of Grand Lodge Organization

Rationale:

A dedicated program to review and update our organization and the way we do business is needed to make our Grand Lodge capable of timely response to the needs of constituent lodges.

Objectives:

- Identify areas where the Grand Lodge may benefit from advances in technologies and resources to more effectively manage the organization.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Grand Lodge Organization to be responsive to positive changes and new opportunities.
- Assess the talents of individual members, as a pool of resources, to be placed in strategic leadership positions/roles.

Actions:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- Develop and implement a training and education day for appointed District Chairmen and Deputy District Chairmen on the expectations of the position to better equip them to fulfill the written job description and reporting responsibilities.
- Better development of IT committee to deal with electronic communication and administration.
- Continue to refine the Grand Lodge code
- Continue to hold quarry meetings to inform the brethren and gather ideas for improving masonry in Tennessee. Continue to refine and develop consistency in agenda and planning statewide.
- Submit a chart of talent and hobbies. Publish that chart for use by the brethren.

Pillar of Financial Sustainability

Rationale:

To insure the long-term financial sustainability of the organization, we must insure that proper financial resources are obtained and effectively managed.

Objectives:

- To identify ways to increase income, while being sensitive to the aging demographics of the brethren.
- To examine ways to effectively minimize expenses.

Actions:

- At the suggestion of the 2010 Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, the committee recommends that an economic summit be convened to investigate and consider all possible options for meeting these objectives before any specific recommendations are included in the long-range plan.

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Pillar of Communication

Rationale:

Communication is the bulwark of the success of any organization. Without effective communication, the fraternity cannot succeed in its mission.

Objectives:

- To strengthen the line of communication between the Grand Lodge, the subordinate lodges, and the brethren

Actions:

- **5-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Collect emails of members of subordinate lodges to provide interactive communication.
- Require new lodge secretaries to attend the Grand Lodge quarry meetings, or to complete training provided by the Grand Lodge.
- Develop a bi-annual newsletter
- Include in boxes sent to lodges in April with the minutes from Grand Lodge Communication and then again in September with the dues cards.
- Adapt the newsletters to become a subscription based program after the first year to offset the cost of printing. Give the lodges an option to subscribe to the electronic version for no cost or reduced cost.
- Research social media outlets as a vehicle for communicating to members.

- **10-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Implement efforts to eliminate adversarial feelings between Grand Lodge and subordinate lodges.

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Pillar of Cooperation with Concordant Organizations

Rationale:

Many members of the Masonic Fraternity are also members of concordant organizations. These organizations share the same basic tenets and are another avenue to participate in good works and fulfill the desire to make a difference in a brother's respective community.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness and strengthen the bond that exists within the Masonic Family including its concordant and appendent organizations, while not alienating the subordinate lodges.
- To foster support for Masonic Youth Orders and recognize that their strength and viability will improve the future of the Masonic Fraternity.
- To recognize that by working together, we can strengthen our combined abilities to take advantage of the various opportunities facing the Fraternity today and in the future.

Actions:

- **5-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- To develop a Masonic Unity Council consisting of the Presiding Officers of each of the Tennessee Bodies, or designee, which meets to discuss Tennessee Masonry, as a whole.
- Make sure that Masonic events involve participation by the DeMolay, Rainbow, and Job's Daughters. Make sure that Masonic Youth Groups are recognized at Masonic events.
- Develop a special event designed to recognize the accomplishments of the Masonic Youth Organizations.
- Develop plans to sponsor non-Masonic youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of America, Kiwanis clubs, and Little League teams, by providing meeting locations, adult leadership and/or sponsorships.
- **10-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Develop a plan to help sponsor groups and chapters
- Provide lodges and properties for use in special events, such as ceremonies and celebrations.

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Pillar of Family Involvement

Rationale:

To attract men of high quality, Masonry must develop and implement programs, which are of interest to the whole family. The time spent in Masonic brotherhood should, to a certain extent, fulfill a brother's needs as a Mason, while concurrently satisfying his wishes to be with his family or to meet their needs through his Masonic association.

Objectives:

- To develop a closer tie between individual Masonic families by well-planned activities within the lodge framework that will include all family members.

Actions:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
 - Plan and program an event for family and friends at least once per quarter
 - Develop a plan for presentation of 10-year pin and 25-year pin recognition of members.
- 10-YEAR BENCHMARKS
 - Help lodges develop a homecoming event at each lodge at least once per year.
- 20-YEAR BENCHMARKS
 - Set a goal to have at least one DeMolay chapter and one Rainbow chapter in each district to help develop future membership.

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Pillar of Community Involvement & Public Relations

Rationale:

To be relevant in today's society, the Masonic Fraternity must recognize that its members desire to use their personal and collective talents to promote the basic tenets of our institution outside the walls of their lodge rooms. The perception the public has of Freemasonry affects our ability to enrich our communities through our various philanthropic projects, as well as, our ability to attract new members.

Objectives:

- Develop and foster positive relationships and partnerships within Tennessee as a community at large.
- Seek ways in which Masons and lodges can be significant and meaningful participants in the health, growth, and enrichment of their local communities.
- Recognize organizations and individual members of the community, from outside of the Fraternity, who espouse Masonic ideals and character, for their outstanding service.
- Develop, publish, and execute a Long Range Public Relations Plan.
- Encourage and assist the constituent lodges to develop good working relationships with the local media in their communities or geographical areas.

Actions:

- **5-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Task the Public Relations Committee to develop a Long Range Public Relations Program. The program should include as a minimum, the identification of the target audience, media they use or observe, and a proposed budget for at least a three-year time period.
- Task the Public Relations Committee to develop and deliver to the constituent lodges a comprehensive training program, including how to write a Press Release, on the media available to them, and ways to publicize events.
- Task the Public Relations Committee to submit positive examples of public relation successes for publishing on the Grand Lodge web site and in Masonic publications.
- Develop "boiler plate" or sample forms for public relations events for subordinate lodges to use to promote the activities of the lodge.
- Assist subordinate lodges in utilizing social media outlets available.

- **10-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Develop a public information campaign
- Better publicize the Hospital Hospitality program.
- Assist in promoting a Community Open House in each of the 3 divisions.
- Further develop and promote the CHIP program as a part of community outreach.

- **20-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Develop more scholarship programs, possibly using a regional concept, to assist the community in educate and assistance in promoting the Fraternity to the general public.
- Develop and promote an essay contest for local grade school, high school, and college students.
- Investigate the possibility of a promotional website similar to www.BeAMasonNow.com

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Pillar of Membership Development

Rationale:

In order to uphold the traditions and purposes of Freemasonry, it is necessary to only admit those men of good character who are interested in improving themselves through education, association of other men of high character, and ability to provide service to society. In doing so, the fraternity of Freemasonry, and the appending bodies, benefit.

Objectives:

- To refocus the fraternity on the true purpose of Freemasonry, which we believe is the development of men, by association and education, so that they may enjoy the benefits of the fraternity and in turn benefit society, not the expansion of membership numbers, so that men of exceptional character are attracted to the fraternity by our example.
- To educate our members on what are purposes are
- To provide our members resources to carry out those purposes

Actions:

- 5-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- To better utilize the CD available at the Grand Lodge
- To utilize programs, such as 2B1ASK1, to educate the public on how to become a Freemason.
- Develop a document that describes who we are, what we do, and how a person becomes a Freemason.
- Task Education and IT Committees to develop a communication strategy and program, internally and externally
- Task the Education Committee to educate the members on how to discuss Freemasonry with possible interested candidates.
- Task the Education Committee to revise and revitalize the Tried and Proven program by John B. Arp
- Public Relations/Communications committee
- 10-YEAR BENCHMARKS
- To validate that at least 80% of the subordinate lodges are utilizing some program of education for the development of new members.

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Pillar of Leadership Development

Rationale:

In order insure the long-term sustainability of the organization, strong leaders must be identified and developed. By its very nature, leadership within the fraternity is fluid. A continual stream of leaders must be involved to move the fraternity forward, under a united plan of action. Without leaders who can inspire members to participate and effectively execute the strategy, the fraternity risks becoming stagnant or regresses.

Objectives:

- To better develop skills and desires of the brethren to the needs of the subordinate lodges.

Actions:

- **5-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Develop a leadership mentoring program
- Develop a Master and Wardens Workshop to assist in improving the leadership skills of future subordinate lodge officers.
- Develop, or re-develop, a subordinate lodge training manual or CD/DVD.
- Award lodges additional points on an official visit for having officers who have completed officer training.

- **10-YEAR BENCHMARKS**
- Institute a Leadership Development Committee to identify possible future leaders and assist in developing their skills in leadership