



JOIN IN THE SPIRIT OF GRANGE MONTH!

by Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

Every April, the National Grange and Granges across the country come together to celebrate **Grange Month** - a time to showcase the incredible work we do in our communities.

Resources, including a Presidential Proclamation, posters, social media headers, and more are available on the National Grange website at www.nationalgrange.org/grange-month-2025, so be sure to check them out and use them to help spread the word!

One of the highlights of Grange Month is **Grange Spirit Week**, happening April 13-19! Each day, the National Grange will share a special prompt on Facebook and LinkedIn, inviting YOU to share your Grange stories and help grow the movement.

Whether you're a longtime member or just starting your Grange journey, your voice makes a difference. This is a great time to honor dedicated members for their years of service, present a Community Citizen Award, award a scholarship, hold an open house, or host a large and impactful community event. However you choose to celebrate, do it with pride and help amplify the Grange's impact!

Let's make Grange Month 2025 one to remember!

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Grange Month 2025

Grange Spirit Week



April 13

#GrangeStrong
Day

April 14

Service
Spotlight Day

April 15

Talent
Tuesday

April 16

Why I Joined
Wednesday

April 17

Grange
Apparel
Day

April 18

Parade
Day

April 19

Grange Future
Day

Share on Social Media with #grangemonth25 and #grangestrong

OPINION - A BETTER PATH: WHY “SLASH AND BURN” SOCIAL POLICY FAILS RURAL AMERICA

by **Christine E. Hamp**
National Grange President

Across America, we are seeing an alarming trend in policymaking – what I call the “slash and burn” approach. In an effort to cut costs, some leaders are gutting programs that support hardworking families, rural infrastructure, education, and agriculture. In the name of “efficiency,” communities are being stripped of essential resources and funding, leaving small towns and rural areas to fend for themselves.

Let me be clear: fiscal responsibility is important. Wasteful spending must be curbed, and government programs should be accountable to taxpayers. But reckless, across-the-board cuts without consideration for real-life consequences are not leadership – they are short-sighted, reactionary decisions that harm the very people they claim to serve and weaken the foundation of rural America.

The Cost of Cutting Without a Plan

Too often, rural America bears the brunt of these cuts. Programs that provide high-speed internet, rural healthcare access, agriculture research, and small business support are slashed with little thought to the long-term economic impact.

Consider proposed cuts to broadband expansion: Gutting funding for rural internet access doesn’t just save money – it puts a stranglehold on rural America. It means students will struggle to access education and complete assignments, farmers will be cut off from critical tools that help increase yield and market their goods, and local businesses will be unable to compete in a modern digital marketplace. That’s not “fiscal responsibility” – that’s setting rural America back by decades, pushing young families and businesses out of rural communities.

The same goes for cuts to agricultural programs. Farming isn’t just a business – it’s a way of life that feeds this nation. Slashing conservation programs, research funding, or cooperative extension services doesn’t “trim the fat” – it cripples family farms, undermining the very foundation of American food security.

Investing Smarter, Not Cutting Deeper

Instead of knee-jerk cuts, we need smart, strategic investment that ensures efficiency without abandoning

communities. The National Grange has always believed in local solutions, self-reliance, and responsible governance – but we also know that government has a role in laying the foundation for rural success by building up these communities before it’s too late.

Rather than gutting rural healthcare, let’s reform existing policies to reduce administrative or overhead waste while expanding access to care. Rather than slashing funding for schools, let’s invest in vocational training, apprenticeships, and modernized rural education. Rather than cutting agriculture programs, let’s ensure funding prioritizes family farms and rural resilience.

“Slash and burn” cuts weaken rural America, but smart investments make it stronger. Creating the right policies and reforms won’t just prevent economic decline; they will create opportunity, growth, and the potential for prosperity, thus allowing rural communities to rely less on government funding in the long term.

The Grange Way: Strong Communities, Strong Nation

For almost 160 years, the Grange has stood for rural prosperity, community-driven solutions, and balanced leadership. We reject the idea that progress comes from tearing down – we believe in building up and giving every citizen the opportunity for success.

Slashing budgets without a plan is easy. Leading with vision, investing in people, and creating sustainable solutions is harder – but it’s the right path forward.

I urge our leaders to abandon the “slash and burn” mindset and instead commit to a measured, thoughtful approach that strengthens rural America rather than leaving it behind.

Equally, I urge those living in rural communities to demand policies that build up, not degrade, our communities. Demand support for policies and initiatives strengthening rural infrastructure, education, and agriculture.

Because when rural communities thrive, our entire nation is stronger.



REACH RURAL SURGICAL SENIORS

Since 2023, the National Grange has been a proud advocate for the Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors (RRSS) program, a vital initiative designed to help individuals, regardless of age, better prepare for surgery by knowing what questions to ask, and make informed decisions about their future care.

While the grant supporting this program is set to conclude in the coming months, the valuable resources at seniorsurgeryguides.com will remain available. We strongly encourage Granges nationwide to continue championing and promoting this important program in their communities.

Grange Month events present an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the RRSS program. The National Grange has a limited supply of additional 8-page full-color "Planning for My Future" guides available. If you'd like to receive up to 50 copies for distribution at your event, please email rrss@grange.org with your name, Grange, mailing address, and event date to ensure timely delivery.

Granges that have presented or promoted the RRSS program must submit their final reports by the end of May. As a token of appreciation for your efforts, Community and Pomona Granges can receive \$100

for hosting a presentation, while State Granges can earn \$500. Be sure to download the final report form and submit it on time to secure these funds.

Together, we can continue making a meaningful impact by ensuring that individuals in rural communities have access to crucial surgical preparedness resources. Let's keep the momentum going!



GET ON BOARD FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE CONVENTION



Grange members and friends, get ready for an experience like no other! The 159th Annual National Grange Convention is setting sail aboard the Carnival Horizon, from November 8-16, 2025, offering the perfect blend of Grange business, fellowship, and fun on the high seas.

While we come together to conduct the important work of the National Grange, this unique convention also provides the opportunity to enjoy world-class entertainment, delicious dining, and breathtaking ocean views - all while making memories that will last a lifetime.

Youth members can take advantage of the Youth Leadership Academy, while all members can also take part in workshops, excursions, and more!

Fun Awaits You Onboard!

When the meetings wrap up, the real adventure begins! Take a relaxing dip in the pool, race down the exhilarating waterslides, or challenge friends on

the SkyRide, an elevated bike course with stunning ocean vistas. If relaxation is more your style, unwind at the luxurious Cloud 9 Spa or take in a movie at the outdoor Seaside Theater.

Dining & Entertainment

Indulge in everything from classic comfort food to fine dining at specialty restaurants like Guy's Pig & Anchor Smokehouse or the elegant Fahrenheit 555 Steakhouse. After dinner, catch a Broadway-style show, laugh out loud at the Punchliner Comedy Club, or dance the night away to live music.

Fellowship & Friendship

More than just a cruise, this is a chance to connect with fellow Grange members in a fun and relaxing setting. Whether you're a first-time attendee, a longtime member, or a friend or family member of a Granger, this convention is an opportunity to share stories, strengthen friendships, and celebrate the values of the Grange in a truly unforgettable way.

Don't miss this one-of-a-kind National Grange Convention - book your spot today!

Visit the website at <http://www.nationalgrange.org/159ngconvention> to learn more and book today.

NEW YORK GRANGES TO PRESENT RURAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

submitted by Carol S. Bailey

Wayne County Pomona Grange #34 (NY)

Mental health is a challenge in rural America. [Rural Minds](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, serves as a voice for mental health in rural America and provides information and resources. With a vision for a rural America where there is no stigma, silence and suffering with mental illness, this is a national organization.

The Granges of Wayne County are hosting a presentation by Rural Minds founder, Jeff Winton, as a community service to this rural county and surrounding ones. The program will be at 1p.m. on Saturday March 29 at the Newark Grange Hall, 101 Woodlane in Newark.

Rural Minds will provide resources, information, and suggestions to assist in being part of the solution. In rural areas there are higher rates of depression and suicide than in urban areas. Suicide rates are 64% - 68%

higher among the rural populace than urban dwellers. Farmers are twice as likely as people in other occupations to die by suicide. Accessing care may be harder to find.

Jeff Winton, founder and chair of Rural Minds, is a dairy farmer on a multigenerational farm in Chautauqua County. When his nephew died by suicide the family decided to speak about it. Hearing about other farm families' struggles with mental health, Jeff was convinced to devote his energy to connecting rural Americans with mental health information and resources.

Other mental health professionals will be on hand as well to provide help and information. There will be beverages and snacks. Questions call 315-946-4379 or email barnlady38@yahoo.com. Come to Newark Grange Hall on March 29 at 1p.m. to get information that may save a life.



Jeff Winton, CEO and Founder of Rural Minds, Inc., will speak at the Wayne County Grange's meeting on March 29.

Photo provided

The next page is an example of some of the many resources available from Rural Minds on how to protect and care for our own mental health, as well as looking out for others in our communities.

NEW IN THE STORE!



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

VETERAN RECOGNITION PIN

Are you looking to honor a veteran in your Grange? This special .75" pin combines honoring their service in the military as well as honoring their Grange membership. Perfect for adding to a Quilts of Valor presentation or Veteran recognition ceremony.



\$5.00
PLUS SHIPPING

Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

GREAT FOR GRANGE MONTH



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

4TH DEGREE PIN



\$10.00
PLUS SHIPPING

This 1" pin with a clutch back is perfect for welcoming new members into the Grange, celebrating milestones, and more - and great as presents for your Grange family. Classic 7-sided Grange emblem shape, featuring the names of the Seven Founders.

Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

MANAGING ISOLATION + LONELINESS

In crisis? Call or text 988

12 Tips If You're Feeling Isolated And Lonely

If you are feeling lonely, here are some steps that can help you build social connection:

- Understand the power of social connection and the consequences of social disconnection by learning how the vital components (structure, function, and quality) can impact your relationships, health, and well-being.
- Invest time in nurturing your relationships through consistent, frequent, and high-quality engagement with others. Take time each day to reach out to a friend or family member.
- Minimize distraction during conversation to increase the quality of the time you spend with others. For instance, don't check your phone during meals with friends, important conversations, and family time.
- Seek out opportunities to serve and support others, either by helping your family, co-workers, friends, or strangers in your community or by participating in community service.
- Be responsive, supportive, and practice gratitude. As we practice these behaviors, others are more likely to reciprocate, strengthening our social bonds, improving relationship satisfaction, and building social capital.
- Actively engage with people of different backgrounds and experiences to expand your understanding of and relationships with others, given the benefits associated with diverse connection
- Participate in social and community groups such as fitness, religious, hobby, professional, and community service organizations to foster a sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose.
- Reduce practices that lead to feelings of disconnection from others. These include harmful and excessive social media use, time spent in unhealthy relationships, and disproportionate time in front of screens instead of people.
- Seek help during times of struggle with loneliness or isolation by reaching out to a family member, friend, counselor, health care provider, or the 988 crisis line.
- Be open with your health care provider about significant social changes in your life, as this may help them understand potential health impacts and guide them to provide recommendations to mitigate health risks.
- Make time for civic engagement. This could include being a positive and constructive participant in political discourse and gatherings (e.g., town halls, school board meetings, local government hearings).
- Reflect the core values of connection in how you approach others in conversation and through the actions you take. Key questions to ask yourself when considering your interactions with others include: How might kindness change this situation? What would it look like to treat others with respect? How can I be of service? How can I reflect my concern for and commitment to other?

Access Rural Minds [**Mental Health Resources by Topic**](#) for additional free information and resources about managing isolation and loneliness.

If mental health challenges become overwhelming, it may be necessary to seek professional help. Reach out to a mental health professional who can provide appropriate support or intervention, or **call or text 988**.

MANSON GRANGE HALL CELEBRATES RENOVATION MILESTONE

submitted by Debbie Conwell
Manson Grange #796 (WA)

The historic Manson Grange Hall, a cornerstone of the community since 1945, is proudly unveiling the first phase of a much-anticipated renovation project. Thanks to the tireless efforts of local volunteers, generous contributions from community members, and support from local businesses, the Grange Hall is ready to continue serving as a vibrant gathering space for generations to come.

The renovation, beginning in 2025, focuses on preserving the hall's historic charm while addressing critical updates to ensure safety, accessibility, and functionality. Key improvements include:

- **Modernized Facilities:** Upgrades to the kitchen, restrooms, and event spaces to better serve modern needs.
- **Enhanced Accessibility:** Installation of ramps, railings, and ADA-compliant features to welcome all community members.



Manson Grange in Manson, Washington, has started its 7-step renovation project, so that it can continue supporting and serving the community for generations to come.

Photo provided

- **Energy Efficiency:** New energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems to reduce environmental impact.

- **Internal refreshing:** painting, resurfacing the wood floor and installing new lighting.

"The Manson Grange Hall has always been more than just a building; it's a symbol of our shared history and community spirit," said Terri Carleton, Volunteer of the Manson Grange Renovation Committee. "This renovation ensures that we can continue hosting events, meetings, and celebrations in a space that reflects the pride we have in our town."

An Open House is scheduled for May. The event will include tours of the renovated space, live music, refreshments, and opportunities to learn more about the Grange's ongoing programs. All are welcome to attend and experience the revitalized hall firsthand.

The Manson Grange Hall renovation was made possible through the collaborative efforts of

- \$193,000 State Legislature Grant
- \$42,000 from our members and Community.
- \$10,000 anonymous matching fund donation
- \$6,000 Community Foundation of North Central Washington Regional Impact Grant
- \$2,000 Lake Chelan Community Services Council

Additional support came from countless community members and organizations who donated their time, skills, and resources.

Learn more about Manson Grange's updates and service to the community at mansongrange.com.



The first phase of the renovation includes repairs and updates to the basement of the Grange Hall, including updating a 75-year old sewer line and modernizing and making the restrooms accessible.

Photo provided

CELEBRATE NATIONAL AG DAY WITH YOUR GRANGE



National Ag Day, celebrated on March 18, is a prime opportunity for Granges across the country to highlight the importance of agriculture, support local farmers, and educate their communities about the industry that sustains us all. This day recognizes

the vital role of agriculture in providing food, fiber, and renewable resources. Granges, with their long history of agricultural advocacy and community service, are uniquely positioned to make a significant impact during these celebrations.

Beyond education and advocacy, National Ag Day is also an ideal time for Granges to align their efforts with National Grange's [Project Sustenance](#), an initiative dedicated to fighting food insecurity and strengthening local communities to make a lasting and sustainable impact.

1. Host Educational Events

Granges can organize farm tours, guest speaker panels, or agricultural fairs to educate people about modern farming, sustainability, and food security. Partnering with local schools to offer hands-on agricultural experiences—such as planting gardens or learning about food production—can inspire the next generation.

Incorporate discussions on food accessibility, sustainable farming, and the importance of supporting local food systems to ensure that everyone has access to fresh, nutritious food.

GRANGE HEIRLOOM FOR MARCH

Use the **Grange Heirloom Program** to teach your members and the community about some of the key cornerstones of the Grange. Materials are available at <http://www.nationalgrange.org/heirloom-program>.

Year D of the Heirloom Program begins in March 2025, but you're welcome to use any materials or resources available to help teach these valuable lessons.

2. Organize a Community Meal Featuring Local Foods

Hosting a farm-to-table meal using locally sourced ingredients is a fantastic way to bring the community together. This event can serve as a fundraiser for local food banks or agricultural scholarships while showcasing the importance of supporting local farmers.

Consider making this a pay-what-you-can event to ensure everyone has access, or consider donating the "leftovers" to a local shelter.

3. Engage in Advocacy and Public Awareness Campaigns

National Ag Day provides a platform for Granges to advocate for agricultural issues such as food security, farm sustainability, and rural development. Hosting letter-writing campaigns to legislators, organizing social media awareness drives using #AgDay, and publishing op-eds in local newspapers can amplify these efforts.

4. Recognize Local Farmers and Ag Leaders

Granges can honor local farmers, educators, and youth involved in agriculture by presenting awards or certificates of appreciation. Recognizing their contributions not only shows appreciation but also strengthens community bonds.

By participating in National Ag Day, Granges can do more than just celebrate agriculture, they can take meaningful action. Connecting these efforts to **Project Sustenance** ensures that the impact extends beyond one day, fostering stronger, more resilient food systems in local communities.

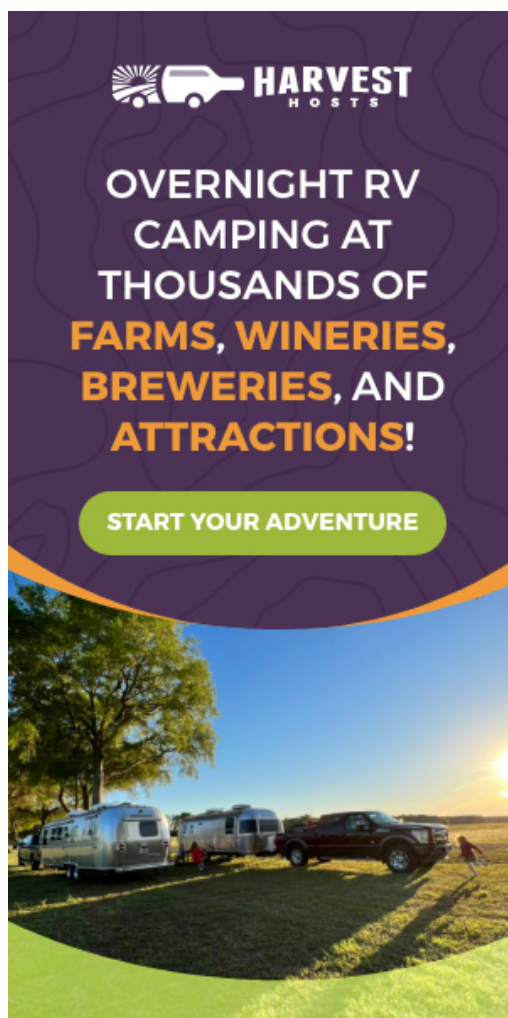
Learn more about Ag Day at <http://www.agday.org>.

A photograph of a man in a light blue dress shirt and tie, with his right hand over his heart. He is standing in front of a large American flag. In the bottom right corner of the image is a circular logo for the 'Heirloom Program' featuring a sunflower and the text 'Spring Year D.1'. Below the image, the text 'Lecturer, Third Degree' is visible on the left, and the quote 'AN HONEST MAN IS THE NOBLEST WORK OF GOD.' is centered in large blue letters.

Lecturer, Third Degree

AN HONEST MAN IS THE NOBLEST
WORK OF GOD.

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT: HARVEST HOSTS



Grange members **enjoy 20% off their membership** with Harvest Hosts! With thousands of unique locations across the U.S. and Canada, members with self-contained RVs or vans can stay overnight on the property of an agriculturally-oriented business with no camping fees.

With over 5,000 locations in the network, there is an adventure for everyone. The Harvest Hosts app provides maps of the destinations, trip routing and planning, and much more.

Members of Harvest Hosts can also enjoy other RV-oriented savings of over \$2,000 year-round. Join at harvesthosts.com with the code **GRANGE20** to redeem this offer.



NATIONAL GRANGE

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