

IATIONAL GRANGE

COMMUNITY SERVICE

HOST A "FUN DAY" FOR YOUR GRANGE

by Randee Farmer

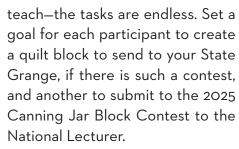
National Grange Community Service Co-Director

Grangers, during this cold winter season, we suggest having an indoor **FUN DAY** that includes community service projects, infused with Lecturer's contests and the recently announced Project Sustenance, in an environment that is inviting to current and potential members of all ages! Yes, you read that lengthy sentence right. Emphasis is on three different departments, all on one FUN DAY.

Sound like a challenge? Grangers can multitask and handle challenges with the best of them, so let's do it!

Each member of your Grange is encouraged to personally invite a non-member to come and participate in your Grange's FUN DAY. Equally important is encouraging your current membership to participate. If done effectively, there will be roles available for everyone.

Decide and plan a project that encompasses various levels of participation, like sewing and quilting. Those of you who sew will be essential to the planning and success of this type of project. You will be the leaders and teachers. Some can cut fabric pieces, some can iron, some can sew, and some can



BONUS: Remember those extra quilt blocks you created, not realizing at the time that you had miscounted while having so much fun? Why not gather them up and create a quilt or pillow to donate to a charity in your community?

For those not comfortable with sewing quilt blocks, invite them to help prepare the feast for the day. Grange events are known for good food! Put a few ladies (and gents) in charge of the food. Consider having a favorite soup and snack/dessert contest, or ask attendees to bring various ingredients for a stew and mix it all together. Bring recipes to share and, during mealtime, tell the stories and memories

continued on page 2

In This Issue

••
Host a "Fun Day" for your Grange
Youth Department Updates
Deadlines, Adds New Contests
3
View from the Hill 4
Commentary: The Definition of
Rural
Grange Store:
Grange Socks
National Grange Program Updates
for 2025
Help Shape Safety Standards for
Power Tools - Apply to Join a
ULSE Technical Committee 9
Grange Store:
Grange Jewelry9
Grange Member Benefit:
Wyndham Hotels 10



associated with them. Teach the youngsters in attendance how to prepare your soup or snack. These are moments they—and you—will never forget. Oh, and don't forget the dishwashers. Some actually like doing that! Everyone has an important role in this FUN DAY.

BONUS: Breathing in the aroma of homemade soup is a recipe for a successful, FUN, and YUMMY DAY. Consider sharing this soup with others in your community who would appreciate it. Ask attendees for names of such individuals and plan to empty those soup pots by making deliveries at the end of the FUN DAY.

Take photos of the day to show others how much fun it was. Oh! That's another department — Publicity. Now, we're multitasking across four different departments. Grangers candoit! Everyone should take photos, or assign someone to be in charge. Teach those who are not comfortable how to edit cell phone pictures. Write up a story to accompany the pictures and

submit it to communityservice@grange.org. We want to send your Grange an electronic certificate commemorating your FUN DAY and will forward the story and pictures to the National Grange Communications Department for potential use in Grange publications.

BONUS: Enter the photos taken during your FUN DAY into appropriate Grange contests at the State and National levels.

Take a few minutes at the end of your FUN DAY to recap the projects completed. Encourage participants to submit quilt blocks and photos to State and National contests. Use this opportunity "jump-start" participation. Announce the new Project Sustenance program and discuss what project your Grange will undertake to support it. The National Grange website has many wonderful ideas, and perhaps you have your own. Use this day to inspire future participation.

Okay, multitaskers. You had a full day of creativity, learning, teaching, sharing, leading, following, eating, thinking of others, and, hopefully, many good laughs and lasting memories.

You should be proud as a Granger of your successful FUN DAY. Now, there is one more thing—ask those non-members in attendance to join the Grange! Have brochures and information about upcoming events available as they leave. Follow up with a phone call or visit, letting them know how they played an important role in making the FUN DAY a big success. Invite them to return, or better yet, ask them to join the Grange! Look at you—you just multitasked again by promoting membership!

Finally, deliver the soup, rest up, and fill your mind with thoughts of the next opportunity for good Grange work. **WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL GRANGERS!** You are truly the best at multitasking!

stories, GRANGE events, and ideas to... http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit

YOUTH DEPARTMENT UPDATES DEADLINES, ADDS NEW CONTESTS

by the National Grange Youth Advisory Team



Greetings from the National Grange Youth Advisory Team! We are pleased to announce that the 2025 Program Book has been released and can be found on the website to download.

With the National Session being at sea this year, we have

made some changes to our contests, so please take notice of the new guidelines. We are excited to see the hard work and creativity of our young members through these various opportunities.

For any youth or young adult wanting to serve as a National Youth Officer or wanting to represent their state as an Ambassador at this year's National Convention, the application deadline has been moved to May 1. The deadline for booking and paying for cabins for the cruise is in August, so we updated these application deadlines to allow young people time to make their arrangements to attend. Please note that minors attending the convention must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.

The Public Speaking and Sign-a-Song Contests will be held in person at the Regional Conferences. This year, both state and regional winners are permitted to enter the national competition in hopes of increasing participation. There will not be a live competition at the convention this year. Therefore, to enter the national contests, speeches, and performances must be made via video and submitted through an online application. Those submissions are due September 1.

We are excited to announce a new contest that our department is holding this year, the Sticker Design Contest. Youth and young adults are encouraged to design a Grange-related sticker using as many colors and as much creativity as they desire. Designs are to be submitted using the online application by September 1. The winning sticker will be printed and used to promote the Grange. Along the same lines to promote the Grange, young people can participate in the Social Media Reels Contest. Reels must be Grange-centered and submission is also due September 1.

With updated deadlines, new contests, and old contests updated, we encourage everyone to download a copy of the 2025 Program Book from the National Grange Website. All contests and programs can only be entered using their respective online applications, which can also be found on the website. We will announce all winners in an online awards program this fall using Zoom. We look very forward to receiving your submissions this year.

Please contact our department with any questions at youth@nationalgrange.org.





NATIONAL GRANGE

OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

View from the Hill



NATIONAL GRANGE POLICY UPDATES & ISSUE NEWS

February 2025

WASHINGTON OVERVIEW

To say the least, it's not your "same ole Washington" these days, no matter what side of the political spectrum you're on. Uncertainty and confusion might best describe the environment permeating through all sectors. Law firms have a tsunami of new business as court challenges are filed against President Trump's executive orders. The administration found it necessary to walk back on several executive orders that resulted in unintended consequences. An example was the firing of several of USDA's Veterinary Services personnel working on bird flu.

The National Grange is engaged with several coalitions to monitor the effect of executive orders on Grange policy concerning agriculture, food, healthcare, broadband, rural life, programs for the aging and elderly, and more. National Grange policy is not opposed to trimming the federal deficit or reducing the size of the federal government. However, the return to the office order has caused a stir. Telework had become the norm among federal employees. As employees return to work in person, some are without offices and desks. Several agencies have relinquished unused office space. Congress is doubling down on budget reconciliation and a legislative package to enable President Trump's policy priorities to move forward, while the current short-term federal budget expires on March 14.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Rollins Settles In

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins settled into her office at USDA on February 13 after being confirmed by the Senate on a vote of 72-28. She said her long-term goals include realigning the agency with its original intent of "working for our agriculture community, our farmers, ranchers and our rural communities." In her prepared remarks at USDA, Rollins asked USDA personnel to understand the charge laid out before them:

- That we are not administrators, we are stewards.
- That we are not federal employees, we are servants of the people.
 - That we do not have a job, we have a mission.

Her entire fellow Texas state FFA officer team alumni showed up to welcome her to USDA with their blue jackets.

Hamp welcomes Rollins

National Grange President Christine Hamp sent a letter of welcome and congratulations to Secretary Rollins as she was confirmed. Hamp pointed to the Grange's long history of working with USDA to foster vibrant rural communities and support the agriculture industry that serves as the backbone of our nation. She pledged that the Grange stands ready to collaborate with the Secretary and her team.

USDA releases frozen funds

The Department of Agriculture will release approximately \$20 million in funding for several previously approved conservation program contracts that had been frozen by the push to overhaul the federal government. More funds are expected to be released soon, including wildfire mitigation monies. In the meantime, some farmers and ranchers are struggling to make critical decisions ahead of the spring growing season. Of particular concern are grants linked to the Inflation Reduction Act that funded projects such as rotational grazing systems, waterways, the installation of solar panels, conversion from diesel to electric irrigation systems, and other grants related to "climate-smart" farm projects.

AG WORKFORCE

Agriculture's migrant workforce in limbo

President Trump's sweeping crackdown on undocumented immigrants could have a major impact on the agriculture industry, which relies on migrant labor. In recent years, 42% of hired farm crop workers have no work authorization, according to USDA. Feedback from agriculture producers is that the vast majority of undocumented immigrant workers are hardworking people who pay taxes and have contributed to the American society, some for decades. They fill jobs to make sure crops are planted and harvested, cows are milked, and other labor-intensive jobs that aren't appealing to many Americans.

Temporary worker visa reform badly needed

American agriculture producers feel strongly that it is far better to import farm workers than to import our

food. Without a better way to get a legal temporary ag workforce, America may have to depend on a growing supply of foreign-grown food. Temporary worker reform will take new legislation from Congress. But for the past 40 years, Congress has been unable to come to a consensus on updating legal, workable temporary worker immigration laws. The Labor Department's current H-2A visa system is bureaucratic, expensive, administratively burdensome, and slow. Stories abound of fruits, vegetables, and other crops spoiling in the field before the H-2A workers arrive. The H-2A visa was designed for large operations. American agriculture desperately needs a legal, simple temporary worker permit system for small and medium-sized operations.

HEALTHCARE Pharmacy benefit manager reform needed

Pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are negotiating entities between several parts of the prescription supply chain. Insurers work with PBMs as third-party contractors that manage prescription drug manufacturer benefits such as discounts and rebates. For instance, PBMs can negotiate greatly reduced costs of drugs from the manufacturer yet charge the patient full price at the pharmacy counter. In addition, drug manufacturers originally intended for the discounts and rebates to be passed directly to the patient. National Grange's Burton Eller participated in a Capitol Hill briefing with a bipartisan group of congressmen, patient advocates, and community pharmacists to call for legislation requiring full transparency and accountability of PBM practices as they affect prescription drug prices for the patient.

Multi-cancer screening bill reintroduced

The popular Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act has been introduced in the 119th Congress. This legislation would require Medicare to cover the cost of this test that detects a wide range of cancers with a simple blood draw. The bill enjoyed a supermajority of both the House and Senate as cosponsors in the 118th Congress but failed to get floor action in December. The bill's chief sponsor and House Budget Committee chairman (Jodey Arrington (R-TX-19) quoted support from National Grange President Christine Hamp as well as Jimmy Gentry, North Carolina State Grange President, and Dwight Baldwin, lowa State Grange President, whose members of Congress are cosponsors of the bill.

TAXES Taxes are on Congress' agenda

Major tax legislation is brewing on Capitol Hill. Most of the tax breaks we've enjoyed in recent years, courtesy of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, have expired or will expire by the end of 2025. The lower tax provisions from 2017 include personal tax rates, child tax credits, capital gains, estate taxes, depreciation, and many more. The National Grange will work hard to extend those lower tax rate provisions. The Grange is a member of the Family Business Tax Coalition and the Tax Aggies Coalition, which enables the Grange to work with a large number of like-minded groups on common tax policy.

TRADE

Tariff concerns

In early February, it appeared as though the United States was headed for a full-blown tariff trade war with Canada and Mexico. These are two of our top trading partners for agriculture products. Such a three-way trade scuffle would seriously affect farmers, ranchers, processors, and many more. Upon the announcement of a 30-day pause by the White House, National Grange President Christine Hamp issued a statement of appreciation for this action by President Trump, President Sheinbaum of Mexico, and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada. Hamp urged the trio to "use the grace period to negotiate a fair and lasting agreement that protects rural livelihoods, strengthens our economy, and ensures that the burden of trade disputes does not fall on the backs of hardworking Americans."

Reciprocal tariffs investigated

President Trump has instructed the Department of Commerce and the Office of U.S. Trade Representative to lead a study into non-reciprocal U.S. trade relationships and the use of reciprocal tariffs as a remedy. Reciprocal tariffs mean that whatever tariffs countries charge the United States, the U.S. will charge those countries the same rate.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Postal changes proposed

The United States Postal Service is proposing operational changes to financially stabilize the agency, which has operated at a loss for several years. Losses are over \$6 billion for both 2023 and 2024. The plan, "Delivering for America," would consolidate 19,000 delivery centers into new, larger, and more centrally located sorting and delivery centers. The plan promises faster service to customers within 50 miles of the largest processing facilities. USPS promises no local post offices will be closed or services impacted by the new plan. The National Grange will be closely watching developments as they unfold.

But what about rural mail?

Does the plan discriminate against rural residents who live hundreds of miles from these large regional hubs? Pick up and drop off will occur primarily in the morning for post offices far from regional hubs, allowing rural mail and

VIEW FROM THE HILL

continued from page 5

packages to sit for an extra day. Distance between local post offices and regional hubs could add another day to delivery. Outlying rural areas still rely on mail for communication and business transactions. Much of rural America is still waiting on high-speed internet. Rural residents depend upon the postal service to bring prescriptions, household goods, farm and ranch supplies, machinery parts, and more. For many, the postal service is the only delivery service available. UPS, Amazon Prime, courier services, and others do not deliver to the last mile of country road. The USPS is also in the crosshairs of the Trump administration's cost-

cutting and efficiency initiative. There's no word yet on what possible actions may be taken by the administration.



VIEW FROM THE HILL
is written and compiled by
Burton Eller
National Grange
Legislative Director
beller@nationalgrange.org

COMMENTARY: THE DEFINITION OF RURAL

Whether a community is designated as "rural" could mean the difference between access to grant funding and lack of it. Unfortunately, many definitions of rural currently used by different federal agencies only add to the confusion.

by Christopher Chavis

originally published in The Daily Yonder

Do you live in a rural area? For most of us, that question is relatively easy to answer. We can simply look outside of our windows and make an assessment. This simple question, however, becomes complicated when you consider the many definitions of "rural" that currently exist within the federal government.

There is no standard definition of "rural" and

whether you live in a rural area depends on who you ask. This makes defining rurality complicated and has real impacts on both our understanding of Rural America and the ability to ensure that some rural communities have access to grant funding to address the issues in their community.

The federal government must work to correct this issue.

Perhaps the most egregious example of this can be found in San Bernardino County, California, the largest county (as measured by area) in the United States, approximately the size of West Virginia. It has deserts, mountains, and sprawling cityscapes. Most of the county is

sparsely settled with most of its population residing in a relatively small strip of land between the Los Angeles County line and the City of San Bernardino. To a casual observer, most of the mountain and desert towns in San Bernardino County would seem rural and according to some definitions, they are. The complication exists within the definitions that would classify these remote communities as "urban."

Consider Joshua Tree National Park, which is in San

continued on page 7



A road cuts through Joshua Tree National Park in California. Joshua Tree is in San Bernardino County, which is classified as "urban."

Photo licensed via AdobeStock

THE DEFINITION OF RURAL

continued from page 6

Bernardino County, approximately 80 miles away from the City of San Bernardino. Is Joshua Tree rural? That depends. The Rural Health Information Hub has a resource that you can use to determine whether your location is rural. If you type in the address for Joshua Tree National Park's visitor center (6554 Park Blvd, Joshua Tree, CA 92252), you are going to get a variety of results.

agency that defines Any "rural" at the county level (such as the Office of Management and Budget definition) is going to flag Joshua Tree as metropolitan. In fact, the Economic Research Service has multiple metrics for "rural" that operate at the county level, both designate Joshua Tree as metropolitan. However, the Economic Research Service's Rural Urban Commuting Area code system (which operates on the Census Tract level) recognizes Joshua Tree as rural, as does the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

Joshua Tree is not an anomaly. Consider also Needles. relatively isolated mountain town near the Nevada and Arizona borders. Needles is approximately 200 miles from the City of San Bernardino. By any reasonable metric, it is well outside of the influence of any city. If San Bernardino County were a state, it would unquestionably be a rural community. Despite this however, it has the exact same profile as Joshua Tree. Multiple federal agencies would classify it as metropolitan.

This has real consequences. For example, federal agencies use a variety of definitions of rural when making grant opportunities available. An isolated town in San Bernardino County may not be eligible for one opportunity because it is located in a "metro" county but be eligible for another because they are located in a "rural" Census tract. It really depends on which definition of rural a federal agency chooses to

adopt. This can create a confusing landscape for local governments and non-profits. It also means that some opportunities are simply unavailable to these communities. It also distorts any count of rural people. 15-20% of Americans live in rural communities, but these different definitions make it difficult to land on an exact percentage.

The federal government must work to achieve uniformity in its definition of Rural America, and I would recommend using definitions that focus on the Census tract level. It is important to ensure that all Rural Americans are not only accurately counted but afforded access to the resources necessary to address their communities.

Christopher Chavis grew up in rural Robeson County, North Carolina, and is a frequent writer and speaker on baseball history and rural access-to-justice issues. He is a citizen of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. He is also a former Policy Director at the National Indian Health Board.



NATIONAL GRANGE PROGRAM UPDATES FOR 2025

In addition to the Youth Department updates from page 3, other National Grange departments have been hard at work updating their programming for 2025.



As announced at the 2024
National Grange convention, the
Distinguished Grange Program will
continue, adding the Pomona and
Junior Grange categories this year to

the ongoing Community Grange and State Grange categories. New criteria to achieve the Distinguished Grange status have been added, making it more attainable for every Grange. National Grange President Christine E. Hamp has said she believes **every** Grange across the country has the ability and should strive to be a Distinguished Grange.

Learn more about the Distinguished Grange Program and find the application forms at http://www.nationalgrange.org/distinguished.



The **Grange In Action** program

was designed for

Granges who are working their way toward being a Distinguished Grange. This year, we are also introducing the State Grange President in Action program, which encourages State Grange Presidents to be active across the State. With Grange Month approaching, there are myriad opportunities for Granges and state leaders to be active!

Learn more at https://www.nationalgrange.org/ grange-in-action/ or https://www.nationalgrange.org/

Tom Gwin, National Grange Lecturer, has announced new contests and categories in the Lecturer's Contests. In addition to the Quilt Block

contest (this year's pattern is the Canning Jar), the Virtual Photography contest with categories for adults and Juniors, the Design-a-Program contest, and the Garden Design



contest, Gwin has added a Creative Writing contest.

The guidelines and directions for these contests,

which can easily be turned into programs for your Grange, can be found at https://www.nationalgrange. org/lecturer-contests/. Please note that some rules for contests have been adjusted from previous years.

The Community Service

Department has updated rules and suggestions for this year's programs.

While there will no longer be Community Service Book judging at



the National Grange level, individual State Granges may still hold their own contests. Individual Granges are encouraged to "Share Their Project Story," submitting a simple form to the National Grange - these ideas and projects may be shared in future National Grange publications.

Learn more at https://www.nationalgrange.org/
our-values/community-service/.

Former contests within both the Communications,
Membership/Leadership Development, and
Legislative Departments will not continue for the
2025 year due to lack of engagement.

In general, most contests and programs have a September 1, 2025 deadline for submission to the National Grange, so please read all guidelines carefully so you don't miss your chance to participate!

Updates from the Junior Department will be released soon - we encourage you to stay tuned.

HELP SHAPE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR POWER TOOLS - APPLY TO JOIN A ULSE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

submitted by Cleo Stamatos

Consumer & Legislative Outreach Manager, ANSI

UL Standards & Engagement is inviting members of the National Grange to apply to join important technical committees that develop safety standards for power tools and lawn equipment. If you have experience with electric hand tools, transportable tools, or lawn and garden machinery — or simply an interest in product safety — this is a great opportunity to make an impact!

Technical Committee members are needed to contribute to the following safety standards:

1. UL 62841-1: Safety Standard for Hand-Held and Lawn & Garden Tools

- Covers electric hand-held tools (like drills and saws) and lawn & garden machinery (such as electric mowers and trimmers)
- This is the foundation for all related safety standards and sets the baseline requirements for these products
- Managed by UL Technical Committee 62841-1, which ensures these tools meet rigorous safety expectations

2. UL 745: Safety Standard for Portable Electric Tools

- Covers portable electric tools, including drills, screwdrivers, sanders, grinders, impact wrenches, and more
- Also applies to transportable tools like pipe

- threaders, drain cleaners, and diamond core drills
- This standard does not cover stationary tools, garden appliances, or heat guns
- Managed by UL Technical Committee 745, which oversees safety requirements for a wide range of power tools

Why Volunteer?

- Protect Consumers & Workers Help ensure that electric tools are designed with safety in mind
- Share Your Expertise If you work with tools, your hands-on knowledge can directly shape industry standards
- Network & Learn Collaborate with industry experts, manufacturers, and regulators
- Make a Difference Your input can help improve safety regulations that affect millions of users

Volunteers play a key role in shaping safety standards. Whether you're a contractor, manufacturer, engineer, or enthusiast passionate about safety, your voice matters!

Apply to join a ULSE Technical Committee today and help make tools safer for everyone.

Visit <u>s.ul.org/myinfo</u> to apply, or contact ULSE Stakeholder Engagement Manager Margi DeFord (<u>margi.deford@ul.org</u>) to learn more about contributing to the development of safety standards.



Grange Jewelry is now in stock at the Grange Store. Pins include years of service and member recognition pins from 5–80 years, past officer pins, Degree recognition pins, and much more!

Some jewelry is now on clearance!

Prices vary

Order online through the Grange Supply Store at <u>grangestore.org</u> or by calling Loretta at (202) 628–3507 ext. 109.

www.grangestore.org

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT: WYNDHAM HOTELS



As a member of the National Grange you will receive up to 20% off the "Best Available Rate" at over 7,500 participating locations worldwide.

Book online or call and give the agent your

special discount ID number 1000007487 at time of booking to receive discount. So start saving now. Click here or call our special member benefits hotline 1-877-670-7088 and reserve your room today.

Book Today: http://www.wyndhamhotelgroup.com/?corporate_id=1000007487



NATIONAL GRANGE

HEADQUARTERS: 1616 H ST. NW, SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, DC 20006 | (202) 628-3507

Publisher Christine Hamp, National Grange President. Available to members at champ@nationalgrange.org or by phone at (509) 953-3533

Editor Philip J Vonada, National Grange Communications Director. Contact to submit a story idea for *Grange Today!* or *Good Day!* magazine, request assistance with publicity, business cards, social media, and more. Email pvonada@nationalgrange.org or call/text (814) 404-7985

Leadership Training & Membership Development - Amanda Brozana, National Grange Membership and Leadership Development Director. Contact us to learn more about membership recruitment or how to start or reorganize a Grange, leadership training, and more. Email abrozana@nationalgrange.org or call/text (301) 943-1090

Legislative and Policy Issues Burton Eller, Legislative Director - National HQ, ext. 114 or email beller@nationalgrange.org

Membership Recognition, Grange Supply Sales, Grange Programs and Member Benefits

Loretta Washington, National HQ, ext. 109 or email Lwashington@nationalgrange.org

Free Grange Websites, Emails, Good Day! subscription questions, and Membership Database Stephanie Wilkins, IT Director. National HQ, ext. 101 or email swilkins@nationalgrange.org

Lecturer Tom Gwin, lecturer@nationalgrange.org or (360) 581-0177

Junior Grange Programming Rebekah Hodgson, Director - junior@nationalgrange.org

Grange Youth & Young Adult Programming youth@nationalgrange.org | nationalgrangeyouth2@gmail.com

Grange Youth Fair Program grangeyouthfairs@grange.org

National Grange Community Service <u>communityservice@grange.org</u>

Distinguished Grange Connie Johnston, Administrator distinguished@grange.org

Grange Foundation John Benedik, Chairperson. ngfb@grange.org

