



REIMAGINING RURAL AMERICA - AND THE GRANGE THAT BUILDS IT

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

You care deeply about equity, climate, community, and making a real impact. You want your work to matter, your voice to be heard, and your time to count. That's exactly why the Grange is your advantage.

Rural America isn't dying. It's evolving. And today's changemakers aren't waiting for permission - they're building community, creating opportunity, and solving problems locally. And at the heart of that transformation stands the Grange.

For almost 160 years, the Grange has been a cornerstone of rural life - a nonpartisan, community-rooted organization where neighbors gather to solve problems, develop leaders, and uplift one another. Today, that mission is more urgent, more needed, and more relevant than ever.

The story of rural America isn't one of decline - it's about reinvention and reinvigoration. Families are returning to small towns in search of connection. Entrepreneurs are building businesses with broadband in

addition to barns. Communities where everyone once looked and acted the same are growing more diverse. And young people, when given the opportunity and proper support, are eager to shape the future of their hometowns.

The Grange is the vehicle for this rural renaissance.

As a Grange member, you'll gain real leadership experience - not five years from now, but today. You'll have opportunities to travel, attend national events, and collaborate with leaders and influencers from across the country. You'll network with people of all ages and backgrounds who are doing the work - revitalizing towns, building community programs, and shaping public policy from the grassroots up.

This is your space to launch projects, to learn by doing, and to build something meaningful and lasting in your hometown. You'll gain skills that set you apart professionally - public speaking, organizing, advocacy, coalition

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NORTH CAROLINA BARNYARD LIVESTOCK & POULTRY “SAVE THE FARM” THINK TANK MEETING



North Carolina Swine and Poultry Industry representatives held a “Think Tank” meeting on June 5, 2025 at the invitation of Prestage

Farms in Clinton, NC, on how to address the potential loss of farms near and around livestock and poultry operations that serve as a buffer for these production facilities.

The attending agricultural industry leaders discussed the recent released NC Ag Leads Strategic Plan for North Carolina Agriculture that identified the key finding and recommendations of the importance to preserve the family farm and the lands supporting the producers of these farms which are the bedrock for the North Carolina’s largest industry, agriculture and agribusiness, which is estimated to be more than \$111 billion annually.

Attendees included representatives from Prestage Farms, Smithfield Foods, Murphy Farms, NC State Grange, NC Farm Bureau, USDA NRCS, NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund, Working Lands Trust and Johnston County Soil & Water.

The meeting focused on the potential threat of non-compatible land use change of current agricultural lands in and around major livestock and poultry production facilities in addition to loss of local farm acres that produce the feedstock for the livestock and poultry. Jimmy Gentry, NC State Grange President, noted, “This meeting was exceptional and much needed by the Livestock and Poultry industry

to get ahead of the many forthcoming land use changes facing the agriculture producers and NC State Grange stands ready to assist”.

Attendees discussed the pros and cons of land management options for these threatened lands in the near and long term. These options included the use of agricultural conservation easements, local zoning and planning, and land use recognition and incentive programs such as Voluntary Agricultural Districts and Present Use Value (PUV) property tax for agricultural production. The agricultural industry group also received information from experts from USDA, NCDA&CS and Working Lands Trust on how to participate and seek funding resources for voluntary placement of agricultural conservation easement and the use of Buy and Sale Options for farm land transition from owners who desire to separate from their land holdings and for new or existing producers to secure these land holdings for the continuance for production of food and fiber. The funding resources for these type of activities was stressed needing to be collective of all resources including federal, state, county, agricultural industry, and private sponsors.

Attending livestock and poultry representatives and invited resource attendees mutually agreed to continue meeting and work to develop an agricultural industry plan to partner with other supporting entities to address the future challenges associated with potential threat of non-compatible land use change of current agricultural lands in and around major livestock and poultry production facilities.

REIMAGINING RURAL AMERICA

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building - and you'll do it all with a supportive, multigenerational community at your back.

And perhaps most importantly, you'll belong. In the Grange, you are part of a living legacy of action, of service, and of progress, and you're also part of writing the next chapter - one that reflects your values, your voice, and your vision.

We're rebuilding strength - not through nostalgia, but through action. Grange halls are reclaiming their place as centers of your community, as makerspaces, meeting places, and local innovation hubs. Our members are launching initiatives on everything from food security to civic engagement, and from homesteading classes to town halls. We're welcoming new voices, championing inclusive and dynamic leadership, and opening our doors to those who believe in the power of community. Not just any community - your community.

And for those of you raising families, the Grange welcomes every member of your household. Children, parents, and grandparents alike can be active participants - learning, leading, and serving

together. It's a rare and powerful opportunity to belong to something as a family, while each person finds their own purpose and place.

What makes the Grange unique is its deep respect for local autonomy; that means we believe that each Grange - and each Granger - can work to make their hometowns better, stronger, and more resilient. Solutions don't come from Washington or Wall Street - they come from people living the challenges every day. The answers to our greatest problems are already in the room - if we create the space to hear them and put them into action.

Let's be clear: rural America doesn't need saving. It needs partnership, purpose, and platforms for innovation. That's what the Grange provides. We're not clinging to the past - we're building the future, together.

So, if you're ready to be part of something bigger than yourself - to connect, to lead, to belong - there's a seat for you at the Grange table. Let's build strong communities, stronger together. Let's grow the Grange. *Find your people. Find your purpose.*

Submit your stories, events, and ideas to...

GRANGE Today!

<http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit>

GRANGE HEIRLOOM FOR JUNE

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>.

You are welcome to choose any of the Grange Heirlooms at any time.

Use the hashtag #GrangeHeirloom when you share these important pieces of our Order on social media.

**LET 'NO FEAR...
DETER YOU FROM
DOING WHAT IS
RIGHT.'**

President, Second Degree

KEEP IT SIMPLE: HOW GRANGES CAN THRIVE BY EMBRACING FLEXIBILITY AND FRESH IDEAS

by Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

In a world where we often overthink and overplan, sometimes the best events are the ones that come together with a spark of inspiration, a dash of courage, and a willingness to try something new. For local Granges across the country, the message is clear: you don't need to overcomplicate things to have a meaningful impact.

Too often, we fall into the trap of believing that every aspect of every event must be scrutinized by multiple committees, planned months in advance, and follow a rigid format. In reality, some of the most successful and engaging Grange events are those that are created quickly, adapt to community needs in real-time, and allow members, especially new or younger members, to bring fresh ideas to the table.

Let's empower our members to test the waters. Let someone try that new workshop format. Let a youth member organize a community cleanup. Let a Lecturer run with an idea for a pop-up open mic night. The beauty of the Grange is in its flexibility and its deeply rooted connection to local communities. Last year, we saw just how powerful that can be.

Learn and Do

If you're looking for inspiration, the [National Grange's YouTube channel](#) is a great place to start. Two standout events from last year, "[New Ideas. New Approaches.](#)" and "[Shortcuts to Success,](#)" offer practical advice, motivational stories, and innovative strategies shared by members and leaders who have embraced change and seen real results.

These webinars showcase how thinking outside the box, without overthinking it, can breathe new life into your Grange Hall or community and spark community engagement in exciting ways.

Also, check out some of the Communication

Department Zoom-tutorials that provide information on utilizing online design programs, leveraging social media, tips and tricks for newsletters, and developing a positive brand strategy. All of these may help your Grange take your programs to the next level.

Finally, don't forget to keep the National Grange's [Project Sustenance](#) in mind when designing events. How can your Grange be a part of creating meaningful programs about food security, community and personal resilience, and self-sustainability? (*And there's a YouTube webinar on that, too!*)

The success of the National Grange's [Rural Life Initiative](#) in 2024 showed that when Granges tune in to what their communities really need, powerful things happen. Participating Granges hosted events that focused on agriculture, cross-generational connection, healthcare, and community development, all tailored to their unique communities.

Thanks to the mini-grants awarded by the National Grange in November 2024, local Granges were able to create or enhance end-of-year programs and holiday events. These projects didn't require overly complex planning. They required heart, commitment, and a willingness to get things moving.

Something Fun is on the Horizon...

We won't spoil the surprise, but let's just say... **something exciting is on its way soon.** Be sure to keep an eye on *Grange Today!*, our social media channels, and upcoming National Grange press releases to be the first to know what's coming.

In the meantime, take this as your sign: don't wait for the perfect committee consensus or six-month planning period. Trust your members. Try something new. Keep it simple. And remember—the heart of the Grange has always been about people coming together with purpose. You've got everything you need. Now go make it happen.



REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 2025 NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION



Registration is open for the 159th Annual National Grange Convention, aboard the

Carnival Horizon from November 8-16!

This year's convention promises to be a one-of-a-kind experience, combining time-honored tradition with the excitement of a cruise to the Caribbean ABC Islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao.

Registration fees (\$50 for adults 14+ and \$25 for Junior members age 5-14) include access to all official National Grange convention programming and onboard activities specifically tailored for Grange members and their families, including our exclusive sail-away party.

In addition to the National Grange session, attendees will enjoy networking opportunities, workshops, and youth and Junior Grange programming, all set

against the backdrop of the open sea.

During registration, everyone will also have the option to purchase limited-edition National Grange Convention "swag!" These special merchandise items include commemorative shirts, tumblers, tote bags, and beach towels - all perfect for showing off your Grange pride throughout the voyage and back home. Swag items will be delivered at check-in aboard the ship.

Whether you're a long-time delegate or a first-time attendee, the 159th Convention offers a chance to connect, celebrate, and chart the future of the Grange - all while enjoying the amenities of a world-class cruise ship.

Don't miss the boat! Visit <http://www.nationalgrange.org/159ngconvention> to register today and be part

of this unique and unforgettable gathering.

While you're on the website, also check out limited pre-cruise room blocks at a hotel in Miami and two hotels in Fort Lauderdale - don't delay in reserving your rooms at our special rates.

If you haven't booked your stateroom yet, there's still time to join us - and remember, **this cruise isn't just for Grange members!** We encourage you to invite friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to join us as we take the Grange to high seas.



Convention swag items offered by the Eastern region include a tote bag, beach towel, t-shirt, and insulated tumbler. Photos by Molly Newman

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT:

CHOICE HOTELS



Members save 20% at over 4,000 Comfort Inns, Comfort Suites, Quality, Sleep Inns, Clarion, MainStay Suites, EconoLodge, and Rodeway Inn and other Choice Hotels worldwide.

To receive Choice Privileges membership please call 1-800-258-2847 or visit www.choicehotels.com and provide the National Grange ID: 00211660.

Are you attending this year's National Grange Convention, and are you in need of a place to stay before or after sailing? Check out these options in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale areas:

Miami hotels - <https://www.choicehotels.com/florida/miami/hotels>

Fort Lauderdale hotels - <https://www.choicehotels.com/florida/fort-lauderdale/hotels>

GRANGE SUPPLY STORE



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

JUNIOR GRANGE PINS



Show off your Junior Grange pride with this 1" soft enamel Junior Grange clutch-back pin!

The JG emblem will be sure to stand out, whether you're wearing it at a fair, at a meeting, or just to show off how proud you are to be a Junior member or supporter!

\$5.00
PLUS SHIPPING

Order at www.grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.com

GRANGE PROMOTION KIT



With Fair and Convention season upon us, it's time to think about promoting the Grange to the public.

This kit includes multiple brochures and pamphlets about the Grange and how you can inform potential members about what the Grange has to offer, from Juniors and Youth to e-members and more!

Get your kit by ordering online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.com or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

\$20.00
PLUS SHIPPING

NATIONAL GRANGE

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