



A YEAR OF MOMENTUM: THE NATIONAL GRANGE'S 2025 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

by Christine Hamp
National Grange President

As 2025 draws to a close, I am proud to reflect on a year defined not by caution or maintenance, but by momentum – real, measurable, forward-moving momentum that has strengthened our Order and elevated the voices of rural America. Across the country, in our halls, our communities, and on the national stage, the National Grange has shown what is possible when we lead with purpose, unity, and heart.

This has been a year of expansion, visibility, and impact – and every success belongs to the members, leaders, and partners who believe in the mission of this great organization.

Advocating for a Strong Rural America

The National Grange continued to expand its trusted national voice in rural health and rural policy. Our 2025 Rural Health Report (nationalgrange.org/rural-health-report) elevated urgent issues – maternal health deserts, gaps in mental health access, hospital closures, inequitable provider reimbursement – and strengthened our advocacy for vital programs like 340B,



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“WHAT DOES THE GRANGE MEAN TO YOU?”

As the National Grange continues to shape the organization we are today—and the one we aspire to be tomorrow—we want to hear directly from our members across the country.

Whether you joined last week or have been part of our community for generations, your voice matters. We invite you to answer one simple but meaningful question: “What does the Grange mean to you?”

Please visit our VideoAsk link to share your perspective – ideally through a quick video recorded on your phone. The form includes just two brief questions, and each response should be 60 seconds or less.

Share your insight and help guide the future of our organization by visiting <https://grange.biz/videoask>.

Your story helps shape our story.

All responses must be received by December 31.

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Anote from the Office:

The National Grange offices will be closed December 24-26 and December 31-January 2. Limited staffing will be available between the holidays. Full office hours will resume on January 5.

RURAL LIFE INITIATIVE: A YEAR OF IMPACT

by Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

The National Grange's **Rural Life Initiative (RLI)** continues to prove what's possible when local communities are empowered to lead. Building on its successful 2024 pilot and the holiday mini-grant cycle, the 2025 RLI summer grants expanded both reach and impact, supporting dozens of Granges as they transformed creative ideas into real, measurable change in their communities.

In 2025, 45 Granges submitted 60 applications, with 32 Granges in 14 states ultimately receiving grant funding. These projects quickly translated into action: between July and September, participating Granges hosted nearly 50 community events and formed partnerships with over 110 other organizations, including schools, nonprofits, churches, and other community organizations. Collectively, these efforts generated more than 350 new members – and even more people interested or engaged, reflecting renewed awareness of the Grange's relevance and value in today's communities.

This year, RLI ran two funding tracks designed to support both short-term impact and long-term strategy. Thirty \$1,000 Summer Grants enabled local Granges to rapidly implement community-based events and services, while two \$5,000 Larger Grants supported more complex, scalable initiatives. The larger grants were awarded to Dry Creek Grange #646 (Washington) and Little Lake Grange #670 (California), supporting projects with extended timelines and deeper community engagement; their programs wrap up soon.

Projects funded through RLI addressed a wide range of community needs while advancing the Grange's mission of service and leadership. In Pennsylvania, Eagle Grange #1 hosted "Prep for Success," distributing school supplies, hygiene items, shelf-stable food, and providing complimentary haircuts to help students begin the academic year prepared and confident. In New Jersey, Meyersville Grange #188 hosted a community screening of Saving the Great Swamp, fostering dialogue around environmental stewardship. In Oregon, Little Deschutes Grange #939 and Rockford Grange #501 created hands-on youth and family programs focused on gardening and food preservation. Idaho's Mica Flats Grange #436 launched a senior-focused wellness initiative designed to reduce fall risk and improve mobility, while Washington's Whelan-Ewartsville Grange #114 revived traditional community dances to restore its role as a central gathering place.



From mental health workshops in New York to quilt raffles and community 5K races in Kansas that helped reduce student lunch debt, each project reflected a deep understanding of local needs and a commitment to service.

"The Rural Life Initiative has strengthened local Granges and communities in a way that hasn't been seen before," said healthcare advocate and fundraiser Nona Bear, who has hosted several RLI webinars and serves on the review panel. "The way the grants function allows

Granges to dream bigger, dig deeper, and make a stronger impact than they've ever imagined. And the results speak for themselves, with growth and renewed interest in all corners of the country."

National Grange President Christine Hamp emphasized that the true success of RLI lies in its long-term community-building impact.

"The Rural Life Initiative is more than a grant program. It is an investment in people, leadership, and the future

of rural America. These projects show what happens when local Granges are equipped and empowered to lead. The impact goes far beyond a single event; it strengthens relationships, builds resilience, and secures the Grange's role in our communities for generations to come," said Hamp.

As the program moves forward, RLI continues to serve as a proven model for grassroots innovation, positioning local Granges as visible, active, and trusted leaders in community development. The Rural Life Initiative proves that when local leaders are given real support, rural communities don't just survive – they thrive.

Stay tuned to the next few issues of *Grange Today!* and *Good Day!* for success stories from some of the Granges who received grants, and sneak peeks at what's to come for the Rural Life Initiative.

It is recommended that all those interested in future opportunities to help bridge gaps in their hometowns should tune in to the National Grange's new **Strategies to Strengthen Our Communities** webinar series. These three webinars, "From Idea to Impact" on January 13, 2026, "Lessons Learned: Success Stories from 2025" on February 10, 2026, and "Engaging New Energy" on March 10, 2026, will focus on the RLI program. Register for the first webinar at <https://grange.biz/RLIwebinar>. Registered attendees who stay through the end of the webinar will receive a special gift following the event.

There are big things on the horizon - be sure that you and your Grange are part of the story and action.

YEAR IN REVIEW

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Medicaid, and Medicare. In communities across the country, Granges hosted wellness events, screenings, and educational programs that directly served their neighbors.

In addition to health care, agriculture, and reliable, affordable internet connectivity remained central to our mission. We amplified the message that farm security is national security, calling attention to the volatility and rise of input costs, fair market access, and the need for greater support for small and mid-sized producers. We also continued to advocate for complete universal broadband coverage.

Project Sustenance Creates Branded Narrative for Work of Granges



Project Sustenance, announced last year at our 158th annual convention, focuses on the outreach and programs being done by local Granges to improve food security, personal sustainability and individual and community resilience. The initiative saw the creation of a resource database (nationalgrange.org/projectsustenance) in which Granges have provided guiding documents and details that others can access for ideas or to duplicate efforts.

The Rural Life Initiative: Community-Led Impact at Its Best

The Rural Life Initiative (RLI) became one of our most successful and transformative efforts of 2025. With 60 proposals submitted by 45 Granges, RLI supported approximately 50 community events across 14 states, partnering with more than 110 local organizations and engaging 376 new Grange members. The work centered around the Project Sustenance pillars. From back-to-school events and health screenings to folk-art workshops, fall festivals, and intergenerational dances, RLI showcased the best of grassroots leadership – local people meeting local needs with creativity, heart, and purpose.

We are thrilled to share that additional funding has been secured for 2026. Information will soon be released for the 2026 RLI grants, opening the door for even more Granges to participate in this growing national initiative.

Learn more at nationalgrange.org/rural-life-initiative-program



Learning Through Innovation: The Pilot Program

This year also marked the launch of our multi-state Pilot Program, now active in six states with more knocking on the door. These State Granges are testing new approaches to membership structure, governance, and community engagement – models designed to lessen barriers, welcome new people into leadership, and adapt more flexibly to modern community needs. What we learn from this program will shape the future of our organization and help us expand into communities ready for connection and purpose.

Our 159th Annual Convention: Historic and Unforgettable

One of the defining highlights of 2025 was our 159th Annual National Grange Convention – our first ever held at sea. This annual convention proved something powerful: that we can complete our work with excellence and have fun doing it. The unique setting sparked excitement among new and long-time members alike and attracted participants of all ages. The result was a convention filled with energy, fun, productivity, and deep connections. We now know that innovative, engaging environments can ignite participation, enrich the delegate and member experience alike, and inspire future leaders.

A Future Built on Momentum

We continued to strengthen organizational culture through our monthly *Speak Like a CHAMP* series. We expanded partnerships through the National Grange Advocacy Corporate Council. We brought together the boards of the National Grange, Grange Advocacy, and the Grange Foundation to identify how we can best use each of the knives in the drawer.

Momentum will continue as we work with each state on Performance Improvement Plans to ensure they identify the resources needed to become stronger tomorrow than they are today. We are also on the cusp of launching statewide Growth Teams to support our bold goal for 2026: At least one newly chartered Grange in every State Grange by our 160th Annual Session.

As we prepare to celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, we can be proud of our membership in the Grange, because it is not simply a historical institution – it is a modern, mission-driven force shaping and strengthening rural America's next chapter.

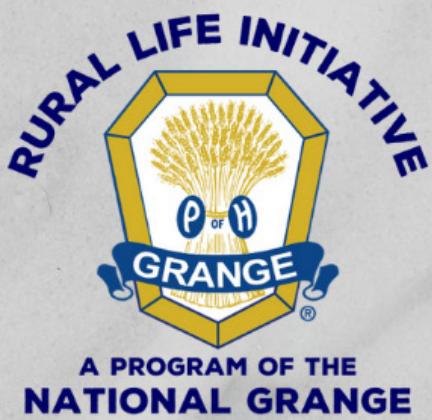
Together, we are **Grange Strong**.

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Good Day!

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STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES

A National Grange Webinar Series

JANUARY

13

60 MINUTES

FROM IDEA TO IMPACT

Join Nona Bear and Beth Westbrook as they transform sample event ideas into real, workable plans—offering clear steps, smart planning strategies, and proven examples to help your Grange launch impactful community projects.

FEBRUARY

10

60 MINUTES

LESSONS LEARNED: SUCCESS STORIES FROM 2025

Hear directly from Granges funded in the 2025 RLI grant rounds as they share achievements, challenges, and insights to inspire your next community-focused event.

MARCH

10

60 MINUTES

ENGAGING NEW ENERGY

Join Amanda Brozana to explore strategies for welcoming and involving new members who join through the Rural Life Initiative, fostering active participation, lasting connections, and stronger, more vibrant Grange communities.

Register: <https://grange.biz/RLIwebinar>

All webinars will begin at 8:30pm ET / 5:30pm PT.

Can't make it? Recordings will be available following the event

SUPPORT THE GRANGE FOUNDATION THROUGH THE COMMON ROUTES CHALLENGE

This fall through next April, the Grange Foundation is encouraging members and friends of the Grange to celebrate unity through movement by participating in the [Common Routes: Choose Your Challenge](#) event.

This virtual -thon allows individuals to support the work of the Grange Foundation at the level and with the activity of their choice, from running a 10K to taking a few long Sunday drives. Pets and children can even take part!

"The idea is simple - use your time on the move to reflect on the impact the Grange has had on your life or community and share that with others," Grange Foundation Chairman John Benedik said. "You can choose how you want to participate, when you want to participate and in doing so, you'll move the Grange Foundation forward into 2026 and beyond."

Adult and Junior racers will receive a cooling towel and sticker pack. If you sign up a child under 5, you will receive a special waterproof "Baby's first 5k" sticker.

You can even choose to have your pets get in on the fun by signing them up to take part in the pup strut - though it's



open to any pet you'd like to participate. They will receive an event-branded pet bandana.

Racers are encouraged to have friends register and enjoy being on the move together, but they may also want to secure sponsors. By encouraging people who do not wish to race to sponsor you, you'll be helping the Foundation and entered into our contest for "biggest fundraisers." Just tell your friends and family to click the donate button on the website, select their amount and choose "Other" and enter your name under the On Behalf Of option.

To honor the idea that you can choose your challenge and move any way you'd like, we've also created a Sunday Driver

and passenger category. Sunday drivers will receive a keychain and sticker pack. Passengers will receive an event sticker pack.

Finally, if you don't want to race or drive but still wish to support the Grange Foundation and have your name added to the event supporters, you can register as a cheerleader.

Registration is open now through Grange Month (April)!

When you register however, you will receive a digital bib so you can show your support and participation on social media platforms. Print the bib and hang it at your hall or office to encourage others to take part. Swag items will be sent by mail.

"This is a great way to get a friend to support the Foundation and learn why the Grange is important to you while walking, running, biking, riding or doing any other type of movement that you choose," Grange Foundation Associate Amanda Brozana said. "No matter what mode of movement you choose, we challenge you to share the value of Grange with others through this event."

Register here: <https://runsignup.com/grangefoundation>

GRANGE HEIRLOOM FOR DECEMBER

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. We are currently in "Year D," which runs through February 2026. The final year in the Heirloom Program cycle will begin in March.

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



Vice President, Fourth Degree

... ESPECIALLY ADORN THE FAMILY CIRCLE WITH THE NOBLE TRAITS OF A KIND DISPOSITION - FILL ITS ATMOSPHERE WITH AFFECTION, AND THUS INDUCE ALL TO LOVE AND NOT TO FEAR YOU; FOR LOVE IS THE ONLY ENDURING POWER.

HAMP WATCH: CATCHING UP WITH THE NATIONAL GRANGE PRESIDENT

This monthly feature highlights where National Grange President Chris Hamp has been and what she's been up to. Do you want to see her in your neighborhood or at your Grange event? Email her at champ@nationalgrange.org. This week, we reflect on October & the first half of November.



October 4: I had the honor of obligating the officers-elect at the 87th annual convention of the Montana State Grange.



October 6: Five Mile Prairie Grange #905 - Our October "Crock-tober" Soup Showdown and the awarding of the Golden Ladle is quickly becoming a community favorite.

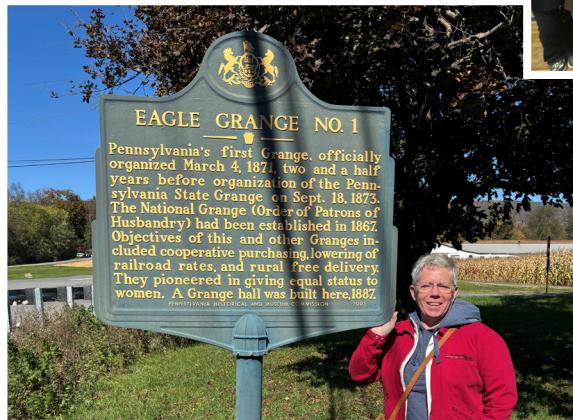


October 7: The drive from Sacramento to Humboldt County for the 150th annual convention of the California State Grange included a stretch of the beautiful Redwood Highway. Here I provide scale to the famous Grandfather Tree.



October 10: It is always fun to lead a workshop with engaged participants! Here I am discussing unity of purpose with the California State Grange.

October 9: Duane and I had a blast channeling Sonny and Cher for the "talent" show at the 150th annual convention of the California State Grange.



October 16: The pre-convention tour of the Williamsport, Pennsylvania, area included a visit to the beautiful and historic Eagle Grange #1 (whose charter was signed by National Secretary Oliver Hudson Kelley in 1874).

October 18: Duane and I joined the Pennsylvania State Grange Youth for their axe (and knife) throwing outing.



October 26: What a thrill to present Brother Jennell Branson of Moran Prairie Grange #161, Spokane County, Washington, with his 80-year consecutive membership award.



November 1: On the screen giving my annual greeting and shout-outs to the attendees of the 153rd annual convention of the Massachusetts State Grange. The state convention videos are a labor of love as each state gets their own, personalized message.



November 3: Five Mile Prairie Grange #905 - The hall was full for our November community potluck and Family Feud.



November 9: Giving the President's External Address at the National Grange session is one of my most favorite and rewarding responsibilities.



November 10: I was thrilled to be able to have my mom, Margaret Ohlsen of Tualco Grange #284 (WA), be able to serve as President and close the second day of the 159th annual convention of the National Grange.



November 14: It was an honor to receive a personal invitation from the Carnival Horizon's captain to join him on the bridge while heading back to Miami.

Virtual Congressional Briefing

Rural Women's Health: Opportunities for Innovation and Investment

October 30, 2025 | 12 p.m. ET

Join us for a virtual Congressional Briefing discussing rural women's health. Experts and advocates will explore the urgent health challenges facing women in rural communities and highlight innovative solutions that are improving access and outcomes, strategies for scaling and sustaining those successes, and the role of emerging advancements in driving real progress. We'll also examine the economic case for investing in rural health innovation.

Opening Remarks

Beth Battaglino, RN-C
President and CEO, HealthyWomen

Speakers

Christine Hamp, MPA
President, National Grange

Joyce Knestrick, PhD, CRNP, FAANP
Professor, George Washington University School of Nursing; Family Nurse Practitioner, Wheeling Health Right

Ariana McGee
Founder and CEO, Navigate Maternity

Elizabeth Wallace
Executive Director, Mobile Healthcare Association

Closing Remarks

Martha Nolan
Senior Policy Advisor, HealthyWomen

[Register Today](#)

healthywomen

October 30: I was honored to be asked to be a panelist for the HealthyWomen virtual Congressional briefing to explore the urgent health challenges facing women in rural communities.

Recipes from the Heartland

The America's 250th Grange Workgroup is celebrating our country's 250th Anniversary by "throwing back" to some classic recipes from Grange cookbooks. Do you have favorite recipes that evoke the American spirit which you would like to see published again? Send them to Lew Gaskill at olgaskill@comcast.net. Please include which Grange cookbook your recipes come from.

This week's recipe comes from **The Glory of Cooking** (1986) - we're looking ahead to the holidays with some cookies and candies!

Pepparkakor (Swedish) Ginger Snaps

Yield: 4 - 6 dozen

Recipe courtesy of Anna Hesselman
Vashon Maury Grange, Washington

1 cup sugar
1 cup maple syrup
2 teaspoons cinnamon

2 teaspoons ginger
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1 cup margarine

5 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon soda

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Bring sugar, syrup, spices and 5 Tablespoons water to a boil in saucepan. Cook for 5 minutes. Stir in margarine. Cool. Add flour and soda; mix well. Chill for several hours to overnight. Roll on floured surface. Cut with cookie cutter. Place on baking sheet.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until brown. Cool on wire rack.

Surprise Cherry Balls

Yield: 32 servings

Recipe courtesy of Mary Grudowski
Wesley Grange, Pennsylvania

1/4 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup peanut butter
2 cups confectioner's sugar
1 teaspoon cream

32 maraschino cherries
5 squares semisweet chocolate, melted
Chopped walnuts

Cream butter and peanut butter in a mixer bowl until light. Add confectioner's sugar gradually, beating until fluffy.

Blend in cream. Shape heaping teaspoonfuls around each cherry. Let stand for several minutes. Dip in melted chocolate.

Roll in walnuts. Let stand on waxed paper-lined surface until firm.

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

GRANGE  Today!
<http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit>

WATCH OUT FOR FRAUD WHILE HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Courtesy of StatePoint

While gifts are being wrapped and lights are being hung, fraudsters are devising ways to leverage the holidays to scam you out of your money. Because an urgency to buy gifts and find deals make the season a time of high risk, it is more important than ever to exercise caution and to know that scams can come in-person, by phone, by email, by text or even via social media.

Last year, Darktrace researchers detected a 692% increase in Black Friday-themed phishing attacks in late November, where fraudsters sent emails to trick people into taking certain actions, and Visa identified a 284% increase in fake and spoofed merchant websites in the four months leading up to the holiday season. A Norton Cyber Safety survey found that around a third of Americans have been targeted by a holiday shopping scam, and around half of those targeted actually fell victim.

What are some of the most prevalent seasonal scams?

Gift Card Scams. Pre-paid gift cards can be taken off the rack, drained of the funds and then repackaged, meaning you buy a gift card that has no value. Criminals attempting to scam you may also ask for payment via gift card, realizing payment is instant and your money will be irretrievable.

Package Scams. Scammers may make false claims about a returned package or other delivery issues to convince you to give them personal information. Criminals may even go as far as sending a package you didn't order to force you to engage with them with an aim to elicit your personal information or a payment.

False Claims. Holiday fraud attempts are often made by making false claims that either a credit card was declined or that you are owed a refund of some sort, prompting you to engage and provide information.

Online Scams. Fake online shopping websites and too-good-to-be-true sales or offers are widely promoted by email and on social media. A lot of these deals will highlight a limited window of opportunity to force immediate action and create a sense of urgency.

Charity Scams. Scammers create phony charities to exploit the generosity of people during the season of giving by creating professional and legitimate-looking material online, complete with branding, photos and compelling stories.

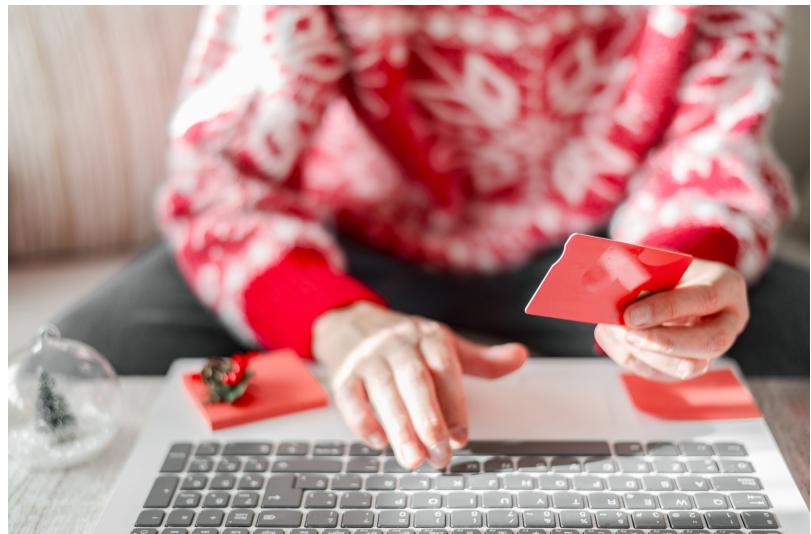


Photo (c) Nanci Santos / iStock via Getty Images Plus

Here are some ways to help protect yourself and your wallet:

- **Be Suspicious.** Maintain awareness that there are a lot of fake offers and false claims during the holiday season and take the time to carefully investigate anyone you don't know who contacts you or sends packages and asks for your personal or payment information.
- **Stay Alert.** Check gift cards to make sure the PINs aren't exposed with the coverings already scratched off before you purchase them. Keep track of your accounts and flag any suspicious transactions for your financial services provider or bank. If needed, freeze your account and have cards reissued. Setting up alerts with your bank enables them to flag these issues for you, too.
- **Don't Rush.** Even if the deal or gift offered online or on social media seems like a great value, pause before clicking. Research the organization and stick with trusted brands and points of sale when making purchases whenever possible.
- **Check Charities.** Research charities before giving by utilizing a reliable charity checking site like Charity Navigator, Charity Watch or GuideStar.

For more information on best practices to help prevent fraud, visit PNC's Security and Privacy Center.

A little extra caution around the holidays can make for a season that is merry and bright.

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT: CHOICE HOTELS



Are you traveling this winter? Grange members save up to 20% on best available rates 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 your **Choice Privileges** membership and discounts, please visit choicehotels.com or call 1-800-258-2847 and provide the National Grange ID: 00211660.



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NATIONAL GRANGE

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