



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES, ONE GRANT AT A TIME

Highlights from the National Grange's 2025 Rural Life Initiative Summer Grant Cycle

by Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

Across the country, Granges continue meeting local needs with creativity, dedication, and deep community roots. Following a successful pilot in 2024, the National Grange launched efforts to provide direct support to local Granges for a wide variety of projects. (Read more about the Rural Life Initiative: <http://www.nationalgrange.org/rural-life-initiative-program>.)

The National Grange's 2025 Rural Life Initiative (RLI) Summer Grant cycle reinforced that reality, awarding \$1,000 grants to 30 Community Granges nationwide to support projects centered on food security, community and personal resilience, and self-sustainability, connected to [Project Sustenance](#). Two additional \$5,000 grants were distributed and will wrap up and report soon.

While each of the funded projects made a meaningful local impact, several Granges stood out for the scope of their work, the partnerships they built, and the lasting momentum they created.

In Oregon, Little Deschutes Grange #939 (La Pine Grange) demonstrated



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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.

“SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE”

A “Share Your Project’s Story” submission

by Bonnie Mitson & Randee Farmer

National Grange Community Service Co-Directors



Thank you to Rainbow Grange #527 (WV) for submitting the electronic **SHARE YOUR PROJECT'S STORY** form located at <https://www.nationalgrange.org/community-service-programs>. Details of how the Grange accomplished their successful project are shared in this article.

It is our hope that by sharing a project's story, details might be helpful suggestions to other Granges on future projects. Thank you and great work, Rainbow Grange!

Project Name: Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Grange: Rainbow Grange #527, Pennsboro, West Virginia

Approximate Hours Expended: 6 hours

Members: 7 (3 hours)

Non-Members: 1 (3 hours)

Rainbow Grange member Misty Ross has a family member who donates time helping to build beds for the community with the local football team. One of the volunteers spoke



Rainbow Grange donated both funds and bedding to their local Sleep in Heavenly Peace chapter.

Photo provided



NO KID SLEEPS ON THE FLOOR IN OUR TOWN!

with the Grange about the need for the beds, which are built for local children who may not have the funding or resources to be able to have permanent beds. Members of Rainbow Grange donated personal funds to support the organization with monetary donations as well as bedding.

What does Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) provide?

SHP provides single beds or bunk beds, including a mattress and bedding.

Who is eligible?

Families with children between the ages of 3 and 17 who reside full-time in their primary home are eligible to receive this gift. There is no income eligibility. The only requirement is that they have sufficient, clear space for the beds.

Anyone can request a bed for their family or somebody else at shpbeds.org.

Does SHP accept donations?

Sleep in Heavenly Peace is completely donation-funded and volunteer-driven. 90% of donations are applied to the organization, while 10% of the donations are used for overhead, like insurance, website fees, etc. **No one is paid!** SHP relies on corporations, organizations, businesses and individuals to provide funding, supplies, and volunteers to build and deliver the beds.

Learn more about volunteering at <https://shpbeds.org/volunteer>. There are currently over 370 chapters in 47 states, and applications are being accepted to open new chapters in underserved areas.

If there's no SHP chapter near you, donations are also accepted at the National level that can be distributed to chapters in need.

Editor's note: Do you like this kind of content? If so, be sure to check out Good Day! magazine which includes a “Share Your Project’s Story” in every issue. Please also submit your story online to the National Grange Community Service Team - the more stories that are submitted, the more frequently we can feature them! We know we can feature a story in **EVERY** issue of Grange Today!.

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RLI SUCCESSES

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Children attending Little Deschutes (La Pine) Grange's "Drop-In" Garden Day Camp were able to get hands-on experience in a fun and supportive environment. *Photo provided*

how hands-on education can strengthen both families and food systems. With support from RLI funding, the Grange launched its first-ever "Drop-In" Garden Day Camp at the Rosland Community Greenhouse, introducing children and families to gardening basics, environmental awareness, and the possibilities of local food production in Central Oregon's challenging climate. The program extended beyond youth engagement, intentionally welcoming parents and caregivers into the experience and connecting them with future volunteer opportunities and Grange programming.

That momentum continued into a Fall Gardening Class focused on seed saving and winter preparation, led by an OSU Extension Master Gardener. Participants were encouraged to apply their new skills during a follow-up volunteer day, reinforcing self-sufficiency and shared stewardship. The Grange also hosted two Open Door Day events that transformed the Grange Hall into a welcoming community hub - one centered

on donations for local organizations, and another culminating in a free community barbecue attended by more than 150 people. The result was tangible: strengthened partnerships, renewed visibility, and four new members in a single grant period. Together, these efforts illustrated how a modest investment can reestablish a Grange Hall as a vibrant center of rural life.

On the opposite coast, **Copake Grange #935** in New York addressed a growing but often under-discussed rural challenge: mental health. With RLI support, the Grange hosted *Mental Health Matters: Building a Community of Support*, a public program that united local residents, mental health professionals, and community partners for open dialogue, education, and shared learning. Held at the Copake Grange Hall, the event encouraged honest conversations about stress, anxiety, grief, and wellness while connecting attendees with local resources from partners at Columbia Memorial Health and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

The program aligned closely with the Project Sustenance pillars of community resilience and self-sustainability, emphasizing empowerment, mutual care, and belonging. Post-event surveys revealed strong interest in continued wellness programming, directly



Copake Grange's "Mental Health Matters" program was well-attended and offered real opportunities for dialogue - as well as opening the door for future events. *Photo provided*

shaping plans for a new "Wellness Wednesdays" series and potential expansion into schools and other community spaces. The impact extended beyond attendance: Copake Grange welcomed ten new members and deepened partnerships that will support ongoing mental health education and peer support. The project underscored how Granges can serve as trusted, stigma-free spaces for addressing critical community needs.



With support from an RLI grant, Whelan-Ewartsville Grange was able to hold its first public dance in over 7 years, which has led to new members, thanks to the family-friendly events. *Photo provided*

In Washington state, **Whelan-Ewartsville Grange #114** used its RLI grant to revive tradition and reinvigorate community connection through the "Good Ole Fashion Grange Hall Dance." Held as the kickoff to the Peel Good Apple Festival, the event marked the first major public program in the hall since 2018 and welcomed 64 attendees of all ages. Families, longtime residents, and newcomers gathered for music, line dancing, and shared memories—five joining the Grange that very evening.

The dance sparked a wave of renewed engagement, marketing, and visibility efforts, including a grain mosaic

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NATIONAL GRANGE

OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY



View from the Hill

NATIONAL GRANGE POLICY UPDATES & ISSUE NEWS

December 2025

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

“Bridge” payments coming to row crop farmers

The Trump administration will provide \$12 billion in financial support early next year to farmers who grow row crops. The first \$11 billion is scheduled to be distributed by the end of February 2026. The Farmer Bridge Assistance program payments will go to barley, chickpea, corn, lentil, oat, peanut, pea, rice, sorghum, soybeans, wheat, canola, crambe, flax, mustard, rapeseed, safflower, sesame, and sunflower growers. Payments are intended to help address market disruptions, higher input costs, inflation, and export losses. The remaining \$1 billion will be awarded to specialty crop producers.

Whole milk headed back to school

By unanimous consent, the Senate approved legislation to allow whole and 2% milk to again be served with school meals. The House then passed the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, introduced by Ag Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson of Pennsylvania, by voice vote. The Act then headed to the White House for the President’s signature. Whole milk was barred from school meals by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Schools will also offer lactose-free fluid milk, plus a dairy-free beverage, with a note from a parent, guardian, or licensed physician specifying which dairy-free beverage should be served to the student. Dairy food companies, dairy farmers, nutritionists, physicians, and parents applauded the passage of whole milk legislation. Restoring whole milk to school meals has been a long-term priority for the National Grange.

Regenerative agriculture pilot project launched

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced a \$700 million initiative to help farmers adopt regenerative agriculture practices. Regenerative agriculture is a conservation management approach that emphasizes natural resources, improved soil health, water management, and natural vitality for the productivity and prosperity of the farm.

USDA to complete reorganization in 2026

The Trump administration’s plan to move more than half the current DC-based USDA staff to five regional hubs will be completed in 2026, according to Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden. The reorganization will move more than 2,000 USDA employees to regional hubs in Raleigh, NC; Kansas City, MO; Indianapolis, IN; Fort Collins, CO; and Salt Lake City, UT. The USDA has not yet made public comments on the proposal. While moving employees to the heartland will station them closer to their constituency, some farm groups and other stakeholders fear a loss of experience and expertise in the process.

Screwworm and fever tick drug gets conditional approval

The Food and Drug Administration has conditionally approved a topical solution for the prevention and treatment of New World Screwworm and fever tick in beef cattle 2 months of age and older and replacement dairy heifers less than 20 months old. The product, Exzolt Cattle-CA1, is eligible for conditional approval because it is intended to prevent and treat serious or life-threatening diseases in cattle, it addresses unmet animal health needs, and it demonstrates effectiveness in studies.

AG WORKFORCE / IMMIGRATION

Fewer ICE raids on farms

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in recent months appears to be refraining from conducting agricultural workplace raids even as it targets cities for immigrants who are in the country illegally. In addition, the government expects to issue an additional 119,000 H-2A farmworker visas for larger operations. The shifts come as Americans are concerned about the rising cost of food. The administration has also lifted tariffs on some foreign food products, including bananas, beef, coffee, and tomatoes, in an effort to lower food prices.

HEALTH CARE

Congress fails to extend health premium tax credits

The National Grange recently engaged a high-profile public media campaign to urge Congress to extend the enhanced premium tax credits program, which helps individuals and families lower the cost of health insurance purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace. Today, 2.8 million Marketplace enrollees live in rural counties. The Grange also joined 27 rural health groups on a letter to Senate and House leadership warning that allowing tax credits to expire would worsen existing health coverage and jeopardize access to care for entire rural communities. During the pandemic, Congress temporarily expanded these credits to make coverage more affordable for middle-income and rural households. The tax credit expires on December 31, 2025. Rural families often face higher insurance premiums and have fewer plan options. Rural hospitals and clinics already operate on thin margins, and these facilities absorb uncompensated care, which increases financial strain when more people are under- or uninsured. The Grange supported extending the credits to give Congress more time to determine the appropriate path forward for health insurance cost relief. Congress will need to return to this debate in January.

National Grange files comments with CDC advisory committee

The National Grange filed comments with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to urge the committee not to change existing vaccine schedules and to make future decision-making on sound, high-standard science. The committee subsequently made several controversial changes to its childhood vaccination recommendations, sparking backlash from the medical community.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Broadband permitting bills move

The House Communications and Technology Subcommittee has cleared legislation to make it easier for broadband providers to cross railroad lines, set shot clocks on local and state permit processing, limit fees on state and local permitting agencies, and exempt certain projects from environmental and historical reviews. The adopted bills would give state and local permitting agencies 90 days to approve or deny requests for new construction. Expedited permitting for broadband deployment is a priority for the National Grange.

PERSPECTIVES

“Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.”

- Ronald Reagan, 40th US President

“It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady of the United States (1933-1945), diplomat, and activist

“Courage is the price that life extracts for granting peace.”

- Amelia Earhart, American aviation pioneer

“Peace is a weekly, a monthly process gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.”

- John F. Kennedy, 35th US President

TRADE

U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement hearing

The USMCA trade agreement was the subject of a three-day trade hearing in Washington recently. It focused on the winners and losers in American agriculture because of the agreement. Winners appeared to be U.S. grains, beef, pork, poultry, and dairy. Losers appear to be fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, and tomatoes. A bipartisan group of more than 100 House lawmakers argued that the UCMCA has benefitted U.S. agriculture exports and warned against weakening the deal as part of a forthcoming review.

OF INTEREST...

Congress clears Secure Rural Schools Act

Both the Senate and House have passed a long-awaited bill that provides funding to keep certain rural schools and communities up and running. Counties around the country with a majority of federal forest land base do not have the ability to levy taxes on federal lands. Therefore, these jurisdictions face a challenge in adequately funding schools, infrastructure, Sheriff's offices, and more. Federal funding helps mitigate the loss of the federal land tax base in these areas.

VIEW FROM THE HILL

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A PROGRAM OF THE
NATIONAL GRANGE

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.

JOIN THE GRANGE FOUNDATION'S COMMON ROUTES CHALLENGE

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>

WEBINAR: WHAT THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT COULD MEAN FOR YOU

The National Grange, in partnership with CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP), invites Grange members to a special webinar on January 6 at 8:30 PM ET / 5:30 PM PT examining the potential impacts of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). As federal policy discussions continue, this session will focus on possible tax changes and emerging financial opportunities that may affect Grange members, family farms, and rural small businesses.

Connect at <https://grange.biz/OBBBA>.

WHAT THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT COULD MEAN FOR YOU

A National Grange webinar
In partnership with CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP)

On Zoom

January 6, 2026

8:30 PM ET / 5:30 PM PT

Join: <https://grange.biz/OBBBA>

Robb Way, EA
CLA Director
Presenter

HAMP WATCH: WHERE IS OUR 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 celebrate December!



December 6: Five Mile Prairie Grange #905 - Our community filled the hall for Pancakes with Santa - more than 260 plates filled (many, more than once)!



December 10: I always enjoy the opportunity to speak with our Grange Advocacy Corporate Council members - the theme this year was the importance of their partnership and thanks for their help in strengthening rural America.



December 8: DC in December is always a busy and fun trip, especially with the First Dude.



December 10: It was an honor to present to Stephanie Wilkins, our National Grange IT Director, a beautiful handmade quilt by Betty Lake of New Jersey as a thank you for her 25 years of service to the National Grange.



December 10: The Hamp Night Hike included checking on the National Grange's monument on the National Mall.



December 11: In eager anticipation of your work and focus on growing the Grange in 2026, I signed a stack of charters so that they will be ready to send on request.



December 9: I attended my first National Health Council Annual Membership Meeting as a voting delegate - a great program and lots of positive energy!

RLI SUCCESSES

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displayed at the county fair, and provided impetus for the Grange to make other improvements, such as new signage and lobby displays, making the hall more welcoming for members, renters, and visitors. The project advanced all three Project Sustenance pillars, including an unexpected food security partnership that provided temporary space for a local food and personal care bank following displacement. At the close of the quarter, the Grange reported 33 new members, and nearly a dozen Juniors or children under 5, all saying they joined because the Grange was active with family-friendly community events.

In Idaho, **Mica Flats Grange #436** focused its RLI-supported efforts on seniors, wellness, and connection. Through a partnership with the Panhandle Health District, the Grange offered a free, certified Fit and Fall Proof exercise program twice a week for adults aged 60 and up. While physical benefits like improved balance, strength, and fall prevention were significant, participants consistently emphasized something more: connection. Group exercise created space for social engagement, information sharing, and mutual support, reducing isolation and strengthening both personal and community resilience.

The program doubled class participation and increased Grange membership among participants, demonstrating how meaningful, accessible programming can organically grow engagement. By opening its doors and meeting a clear community need, Mica Flats Grange reinforced the Grange Hall as a place of belonging and lifelong vitality.

These four Granges provide only a small snapshot of the impact generated through the 2025 Rural Life Initiative Summer Grant cycle. Across all of the funded projects, Granges demonstrated that financial support, when paired with out-of-the-box ideas, local leadership, and community trust, can produce real, tangible, community-improving results.

HAMP WATCH (CONTINUED)



December 13: It was our honor to be a small part of the Wreaths Across America effort at Arlington National Cemetery.



Mica Flats Grange's RLI grant helped support a certified "Fit and Fall Proof" exercise program for seniors. Photo provided

As the National Grange looks to the future, additional RLI grant rounds are on the horizon, offering new opportunities for Granges to turn ideas into action. Stay tuned to *Grange Today!* and *Good Day!* magazine to be the first in the know when future grants are released. The complete **2025 Rural Life Initiative Report** is available on the National Grange website.

Granges interested in strengthening their capacity and preparing for future funding are encouraged to tune in to the *Strategies to Strengthen Our Communities* webinar series beginning in January, which will highlight practical tools, lessons learned, and real-world examples from successful projects.

Together, these efforts continue to advance the National Grange's commitment to resilient, connected, and thriving rural communities—one local program or event at a time.



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) - here are some great ideas for your holiday table!

Mississippi Mud Cake

Recipe courtesy of Judge Charles E. Wiggins
California, Member of Bicentennial Commission

Yield: 12 servings

1 cup margarine, softened	1/2 cup chopped nuts
2 cups sugar	7-ounce marshmallow creme
4 eggs	1/4 cup margarine, melted
1 1/2 cups flour	3 Tablespoons milk
1/2 cup cocoa	2 Tablespoons cocoa
1 cup flaked coconut	2 cups confectioner's sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cream 1 cup margarine and sugar in mixer bowl until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs.

Add flour and 1/2 cup cocoa; mix well. Stir in coconut and nuts. Batter will be thick.

Spoon into greased and floured 9" x 12" pan. Bake until cake tests done.

Spread marshmallow creme over hot cake. Cool.

Bring mixture of melted margarine, milk and 2 tablespoons cocoa to a boil in saucepan; remove from heat. Mix in confectioners' sugar. Spread over marshmallow layer.



Cheese Ball

Recipe courtesy of Susie Culler
Glade Valley Grange, Maryland

Yield: 15 servings



16 ounces cream cheese, softened	1 teaspoon chopped pimento
2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese	2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon chopped onion	1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon chopped green pepper	Finely chopped pecans

Combine cream cheese, Cheddar cheese, onion, green pepper, pimento, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice in bowl; mix well. Shape into ball. Roll in pecans. Chill for several hours. Place on serving plate. Serve with crackers.

DOCTORS' TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Courtesy of StatePoint

The holiday season is a joyous time to reconnect with family and friends, but it can also throw your wellness routines out of alignment. Doctors advise prioritizing healthy choices now so you can start 2026 feeling your best.

"Amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it's easy to lose sight of our well-being, overindulge in food and drink, and feel stressed. A little awareness and a few healthy habits can go a long way in helping you and loved ones enjoy the season in good health," says Dr. Bobby Mukkamala, president of the American Medical Association (AMA).

For a healthy and happy holiday season, the AMA recommends the following tips:

- 1. Watch what you eat.** Pay attention to labels and avoid ultra-processed foods, especially those high in added sodium, saturated fats and sugar. Consider having a healthy snack before the big meal or offer to bring a healthier dish for the holiday spread. Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, and eat nutritious, whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables alongside richer holiday dishes.
- 2. Prioritize your mental health.** Factors such as holiday spending and navigating time with extended family can bring on extra seasonal stress. Get sufficient sleep and exercise, and don't hesitate to talk to a mental health professional when you need help managing stress.
- 3. Prioritize physical activity during this busy time of year.** A good rule of thumb for adults is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity each week. Brisk walks, bike rides, hikes and family-friendly sports like basketball and touch football can provide easy, fun ways to get off the couch and elevate your heart rate. If you're traveling, don't forget to pack your sneakers!
- 4. Be prepared when traveling.** Whether you're flying or taking a road trip, you might be tempted to grab convenient yet unhealthy food for the journey. Consider packing your own snacks, such as fresh fruits and vegetables or small portions of dried fruits and nuts. When flying, pack your medication in your carry-on bag instead of your checked luggage so it's easily accessible. Keeping medication handy will help you avoid missing a dose on busy travel days, especially amid flight delays. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water during your flight as air travel

can cause dehydration. And keep your body moving in-flight to avoid blood clots.

- 5. Make smart choices and plan ahead if you're driving.** In December 2023 alone, 1,038 people died in alcohol impaired-driving crashes in the United States. If you plan to drink, always arrange for a sober driver or alternative transportation. And if you are the designated driver, commit to 100% sobriety. Also make sure to get plenty of sleep before your road trip as drowsy driving is responsible for an estimated 100,000 car crashes each year nationwide.
- 6. Vaccination remains the best protection** against several serious respiratory viruses circulating this fall and winter, particularly as people are spending more time indoors and gathering for the holidays. The AMA encourages you to speak with your physician or other health care professional to determine which vaccines are best for you. The AMA offers infographics to help patients and physicians cut through vaccine confusion and foster open, honest conversations with each other. The infographics can be found at <https://ama-assn.org>.
- 7. Start New Year's resolutions early.** Speak with your doctor or other health care professional about quitting tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarettes, and declare your home and car smoke-free to protect loved ones from secondhand smoke exposure.

"While you're celebrating this holiday season and reconnecting with family and friends, remember to take care of your health. Eating well, staying active, and taking precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses can help you enjoy the season and start the new year strong," says Dr. Mukkamala.



Photo (c) Marcos Elihu Castillo Ramirez / iStock via Getty Images Plus

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT: MEMBERDEALS

Looking for last-minute stocking stuffers or a gift for the hard-to-buy-for person?

Grange members enjoy exclusive savings on everything from travel essentials – like car rentals and hotels – to unforgettable experiences, including theme parks, Broadway shows, and sporting events.

Plus, take advantage of special seasonal discounts on computers, jewelry, phones, vision products, and so much more.

This holiday season, stretch your budget further and check off every gift on your list with MemberDeals.

Visit <https://www.memberdeals.com/nationalgrange/?login=1> today to start saving.



Savings include:

- Walt Disney World & Disneyland
- Six Flags
- Zoos & Aquariums
- Universal Orlando & Universal Studios Hollywood
- Busch Gardens
- Hotels
- LEGOLAND
- Shows, Sports, & Concerts
- Sea World
- Hersheypark
- Movie tickets at AMC, Regal, & more
- Sesame Place
- Water Parks
- Rental Cars (Avis, Budget, Hertz, & others)
- Shopping Deals
- and much more!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE GRANGE STORE!



Thank you for supporting the Grange Store throughout 2025. Your purchases help strengthen the work of the Grange and support our programs and members nationwide. We are grateful for your continued support and look forward to serving you – and fulfilling your orders – in 2026.

- Loretta Washington

NATIONAL GRANGE

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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.

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