



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

August 28, 2020

DON'T LET THE CONNECTION GO COLD

As we are not permitted to meet, we ask you to share these newsletters by forwarding this or printing and mailing to your Grange friends

Action and Information on USPS - PART 2

By Betsy Huber National Grange President

During a speech on his first day on the job June 15, Postmaster DeJoy said he wanted to place the USPS “on a trajectory for success.” He then began making moves recommended under Brennan’s administration by an independent watchdog of the agency to reduce costs – recommendations made prior to the pandemic.

The move to eliminate extra trips, adhere to a more standardized schedule for carriers including the requirement to return to their post office by a certain time regardless if all the mail on their route had been delivered, and the elimination of overtime were [a few of the recommendations put into play in July](#).

The recommendations now being acted upon by DeJoy to reduce costs were made prior to the pandemic, which has become the backdrop to much of our way of life. While still relevant, carrying them out today as if we were still living pre-COVID will not work. The pandemic has changed everything about normal life, and the USPS is no different. At the same time as the USPS [has taken a financial beating](#) due to the coronavirus pandemic, it has also taken an even more essential role in our lives as millions have been forced to work, learn, and do business from home. The Grange has long called on every publicly funded entity to use good discretion and manage funds well for the good of the people. We’ve asked for a review of best practices but always stood on the side of keeping Americans from every part of our republic connected.

[Removing underperforming mailboxes, dismantling sorting machines, reducing runs, and eliminating overtime](#) may well be a steps in the right direction - but now is the wrong time. With bailouts and federal dollars going to other major industries, such as airlines, to keep them solvent and viable for the day we return to a semblance of normal, it only makes sense to include the USPS in these relief packages.

It is important to note as well that the USPS has been on a correction course for a number of years, trying to get its obligations and pricing in line with the volume of service. Yet more, the USPS has evolved and found new ways to engage and attract customers.

The USPS is the second-largest employer in the nation, with nearly 100,000 veterans on the payroll. As part of its belt-tightening, it has shed hundreds of thousands of career personnel over the past two decades, down to just under a half-million employees today from its peak in 1999 of nearly 800,000.

UPS, FedEx and other private delivery services have no mandate to deliver to every residence in the nation, while the USPS does. It serves as the last-mile carrier for many packages and envelopes left on its doorstep by its privately-owned competitors.

The idea has been floated to privatize the USPS - the most popular government entity with more than 90 percent favorability ratings – a cause for concern specifically because of the issue of access. Should the USPS be run for break-even or profitability, many of our farthest flung countrymen may feel like they are transported back to the early 1890s when rural free delivery did not exist and they had to travel miles to a nearby town to collect mail and packages.

In addition, the USPS is the delivery method used by millions of Americans for life-saving and sustaining prescription drugs. As of 2013, 20 percent of all Americans receive their medicine by mail, including 50 percent of all Americans 60 and older. That number has undoubtedly grown, especially in the time of COVID-19.

The most pressing issues for Veterans amid these mail slowdowns has been the impact of their ability to receive medications on time. According to the VA website medications should be arriving within 3-5 days, but report from VA staff and veterans have said these medications are sometimes taking weeks to be delivered and causing missed doses. With 80% of the VA prescriptions filled by mail and the continuation of a global pandemic, we should be able to rely on the USPS for timely deliveries.

Privatization could leave mail and packages unsecured, putting tax documents, social security checks, prescription drugs and ballots, to name a few, in jeopardy for theft or tampering.

Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, Colorado and Utah have moved to an all-mail voting system in the past several years, and while modest, participation rates in elections in those states has generally increased. As the pandemic took hold, California, Nevada, New Jersey, Vermont and the District of Columbia have all made provision to mail to each registered voter a ballot for the November election. Montana is leaving to the counties the decision to mail ballots.

We should be seeking secure and safe ways to make voting more accessible for every eligible elector because this ensures a stronger democracy. The USPS must be supported so that voters are certain their ballots will be received and delivered to the polls on time this November.

If you would like to take action check out our FreeRoots campaign on Facebook and send a letter to your local representative today.

ARE YOU A JUNIOR AT HEART?

WE'RE INVITING YOU TO BECOME A JUNIOR AGAIN BY TAKING PART IN OUR CONTESTS

The Junior at Heart division allows you to enter our contests and help support the Junior program you love. Submit an original piece created within the last year to our creative art, handicraft, creative writing or mini scrapbook divisions. (No more than one entry per person, per division, please.)

Entry fee of \$5 per submission may be sent by check or money order made out to Grange Foundation along with entries postmarked by Oct. 30 2020 to National Grange, ATTN: Junior Director, 1616 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20006.

FIND ALL CONTEST INFORMATION AT NATIONALJUNIORGRANGE.ORG



**SEND ENTRIES TO:
NATIONAL GRANGE
SAMANTHA WILKINS
1616 H ST. NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20006**

Gatekeepers of Democracy Young American Poll Workers

By Mandy Bostwick National Youth Director

Each election, millions of Americans dedicate their time to ensure that registered voters have reliable places to cast their votes. With the continuing Covid-19 challenges across the nation, it is expected that there will be a shortage of poll workers. Poll workers are already in short supply, but as we navigate this global pandemic it is important to protect high-risk Americans including the elderly and immunosuppressed. The typical election worker, the one that greets you as you walk into the local library, fire department, church, or wherever your local polling place is, someone who has retired which more often than not puts them into the high-risk category. We need more young Americans to volunteer to continue to sustain the election process.

Poll workers can be the difference between a smooth election and long lines, confusion, and miscounted ballots. Being a poll worker is not overly strenuous, comes with training, and only takes one day. It also allows you to gain a broader understanding of our election process. These underpaid volunteers are more than just glorified receptionists, they are the gatekeepers to democracy.

According to the Election Assistance Commission poll workers are critical to an election. Having adequate numbers of poll workers to staff polling places on or before Election Day can ensure voters receive the assistance they need at the polls and can provide a positive and smooth voting experience for all. Most poll workers have traditionally been over the age of 61, making them especially vulnerable. This has resulted in a critical need for poll workers who are willing and able to assist with the administration of in-person voting on Election Day.

September 1st is National Poll Worker Recruitment Day. Each state recruits poll workers differently. Typically signing up to be a poll worker is done with your local election office. In some places, this is a county election office but it may also be at a county clerk or local level.

So where do Grange Youth and Young Adults come into play? Election offices are looking for younger people to work at the local polling place. The benefits of younger poll workers are undeniable. They bring enthusiasm, energy, and a familiarity and comfort with technology like electronic poll booths and optical ballot scanners. They are likely to remain poll workers for future elections. At a young age, it sparks interest in civic engagement and voting that might last a lifetime.

As Grange Youth and Young Adults, I encourage you to get involved in your community and register to be an election worker at the 2020 election in November. Follow the links and find what it takes to be an election worker in your state!

More information on Poll Worker Recruitment Day <https://www.eac.gov/help-america-vote>

Become a Poll Worker <https://www.eac.gov/voters/become-poll-worker>

NATIONAL GRANGE LECTURER

2020 PUBLICITY ITEM CONTEST



OPEN TO ALL GRANGES, GRANGE COMMITTEES OR GRANGE GROUPS

Two divisions: Professional or In-House

Eligible items include anything you create to promote Grange

All entries must be received electronically as a single file no larger than 1GB via Google Forms by Oct. 31, 2020.

For all details, visit nationalgrange.org/lecturers-programming/



VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOPS! OPEN TO ALL

AUG 15 12:30 EST

SEPT. 19 12:30 EST

National Grange Membership Director Joe Stefanoni will hold workshops via Zoom on the future planning of your Community Grange. Sign up for either session. Join us to spark new ideas for membership development and recruitment!

To register go to <https://bit.ly/ngvmw20> (link is case sensitive)

Communications Update

By Amanda Brozana National Grange Communications Director

The communications team has been up to quite a few projects and it is all paying off. Since the arrival of intern, Kennedy Gwin, a member from Washington State, we have been able to write and submit Op-Eds to papers across the U.S. and have been published in almost every Grange state.

With a wide variety of topics currently being discussed by Congress, the Grange has been able to place articles about USPS, importance of voting, rural suicide, whole milk in schools and the importance of filling out the Census. Along with op-eds we have been working closely with the legislative Director Burton Eller, and intern Sean O'Neil, to ensure our advocacy is at the forefront.

If you check our social media, you will see our most recent campaign about the USPS and a previous one about milk in schools through the online contact system called FreeRoots. FreeRoots helps our members send letters directly to Congress and other legislators about whatever topic the Grange has been advocating for.

As we continue to engage with newspapers, we have also been getting quite a bit of online traffic as our social media is getting regularly updated with press statements as well as legislative action, along with our other content. Visit our Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn to hear National President Betsy Huber's recent interview with FederalNewsNetwork on the current USPS issue and rural America.

The communications team is now gearing up for the upcoming magazine Good Day! magazine and is excited to continue our other outreach. We remind you that if you have not renewed your subscription to Good Day!, it may be time. Use the Member ID on your recent issue's mailing label to check when you are due to renew at www.nationalgrange.org/goodday now so you don't miss an issue. You will find more of our outreach and other great coverage in the next issue coming out in mid-October.

Your Easiest Community Service Project

By Kennedy Gwin National Grange Intern

While Granges can't meet at the moment there are still ways we can remain active in our community through advocacy. One way is engaging in local newspapers through Letters to the Editor focusing on a topic of importance. Below we have provided an example of a Letter to the Editor about the importance of participating in the Census. You can copy this letter to the editor and send it directly to your local newspaper or personalize it. Do not forget to include YOUR NAME and contact information when you submit. Let us know if it gets published by emailing communications@nationalgrange.org

Every ten years since 1790 the United States sets forth to count every human residing in the United States. The census helps the U.S. government draw boundaries for districts based on population density so that the people of these areas are receiving proper representation within the federal government. The Census also helps the federal government allocate money fairly among cities across the US to fund things like schools, hospitals, and roads. While politics may be a messy conversation in our polarized society that makes you want to turn a blind eye, filling out the Census is a way in which you can remain civically engaged with little to no controversy. Filling out the Census is a community action that better your hometowns and you can do it from your couch. If you received a mailer, simply fill it out and send it back. Another option is to fill it out online at www.census.org. Five minutes is all it takes and in those five minutes, you could be contributing thousands of dollars directly to your community. Take action and fill out your Census today.



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PEOPLE, PRIDE and PROGRESS



125 YEARS
OF THE
GRANGE
IN AMERICA

David H. Howard

PEOPLE, PRIDE AND PROGRESS: 125 YEARS OF THE GRANGE IN AMERICA

Written by David H. Howard, this 1992 text is an excellent resource for everyone interested in Grange history.

ONLY \$6 + shipping

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