



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

March 11, 2022

National Grange meets with Postmaster General DeJoy

By [Betsy Huber](#), National Grange President

On March 2, National Grange President Betsy Huber and Legislative Director Burton Eller met with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy in his office to discuss his vision and plan to achieve financial stability and service excellence in the U.S. Postal Service.

General DeJoy expressed his excitement to serve in his position because of his background in logistics and business organization. He told how the USPS still relies on 40-year-old procedure manuals and operates in facilities that are dark and outdated. He sees needed improvements in facilities and operations that he can make to enable the Postal Service to achieve financial stability and operate more efficiently.

The Postal Service Reform Act, passed by the Senate this week, will stabilize and reform the USPS for the future. The Grange supports and has lobbied for several years for passage of postal reform, and this Act contains most of the Grange's priority concerns, numerous common-sense reforms and cost savings measures. The Grange has long advocated for maintaining six-day delivery and elimination of the requirement to prefund retiree health benefits. It also expands special rates for local newspaper delivery, another Grange priority.

General DeJoy mentioned the recent successful delivery of more than 270 million COVID-19 test kits to American households across all states, with average delivery time of 1.2 days. This was a major, Service-wide mobilization effort with strong interagency collaboration among the Postal Service, White House, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Defense.

He also spoke about the new USPS Connect program which promises to offer affordable and faster local, regional, national and Sunday delivery and pickup options.

General DeJoy's ten-year plan includes over \$40 billion in capital investments over the next ten years to modernize the Postal Service, adapt to customers' changing needs, and achieve the universal service mission. The National Grange will continue to communicate with the Postmaster General's office and monitor progress of the planned reforms.



IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ!

Effective immediately, all Years of Membership pins are now available from the National Grange office. You can no longer order them through Monroe Classic's Grange store.

Available are pins recognizing 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, and 80 years of membership. Photos and pricing information will be added to the Grange Supply Store at www.grangestore.org as soon as possible over the next couple weeks. If you have questions about the pins, contact Loretta Washington at 202-628-3507 ext. 109 or lwashington@nationalgrange.org. Please be patient while we re-stock the items and organize our processing.

Also available are Past Master, Past Lecturer, Past Secretary, and Past Junior Master pins, and various Degree charms. Check the website for more information

“Suit Up!” – Your Brand

By [Amanda Brozana Rios](#), Membership and Leadership Development Director

Any given Saturday in fall and nearly anytime I'm in an airport, you can find me in my Crimson Tide gear with the Alabama script A.

When I pull those shirts on, I've suited up.

The same is true when at least once a week I pull on my “home team jersey” – the heathered blue t-shirt of our local Grange with a yellow and white image that includes a sunrise and rooster and the phrase “The work of another day demands our attention.”

In my Alabama gear, I'm continuing the tradition that started closing in on two decades ago on the first day I stepped onto campus when we were all gifted (what was my first) “Roll Tide” shirt.

Our local Grange has adopted the same approach – welcome them with the “team jersey” and they immediately feel like part of the team. So each new member gets one of our shirts when they join as part of their welcoming, and the results have been inspiring.



On any given Tuesday, you may run into one of our members wearing the shirts in the grocery store, post office or at home making dinner for the family.

In their shirts, our youth hit the pavement two weeks ago to solicit donations and promote upcoming events we will hold. Each put on the shirt without prompting from parents or other members of the Grange - they like them, they are comfortable and they raise their credibility as “do-ers” in our community connected with an organization that is identifiable in great part because of our “team gear.”

The recognizable image has caught observant eyes, so much so that several members have reported being asked what the Grange is or being told “We see you guys everywhere,” when they’ve been out in their gear. This is the best advertising yet.

Members, proud of their affiliation, talk about the “good stuff” of the Grange they live in today – the charitable work, the interesting things they learn, the networking, the potlucks (who could forget?). They’re not stiff or trying to remember facts and names. They’re connecting person-to-person in the off-the-cuff situation and often being praised for being part (“That’s really awesome. Keep up the good work.” “Oh, nice. That’s cool. I’m glad you guys are doing that.”)

You may also think “if we give you one, you’ll never buy another.” If my experience with my Alabama gear can be used as any parallel, I can promise, I’ve bought twenty times the number of free shirts I received over the years.

Around Christmas, we even added a red Junior Grange shirt with a modern design and words from the Junior degree: “In your search for the good, the beautiful and the true, may you never falter.” All our Juniors got one, and their parents, too. Then anyone who has done a background check (hint – a few more have done it since we’ve put this in place). They’re starting to get noticed, too, and people can see that Grange has got something for every age group.

So, if you need a spark in your membership or just hope to make new members feel welcome, what about creating stylish shirts and ordering enough for those regularly in your Hall, those you hope to entice back and those you want to join you in the near future? Have a few of the popular sizes on hand and be ready to include presenting some “team apparel” to your next new member.

Need help creating a design that is more than just an emblem people can ignore? [Contact me](#) or National Grange Communications Director [Philip Vonada](#), and we’ll try to help. We’re here to help you succeed.

Sometimes a bit of comfy cotton can be the warmest welcome and reminder of good friends, good memories and good work.

Roll Tide and Go Grange!

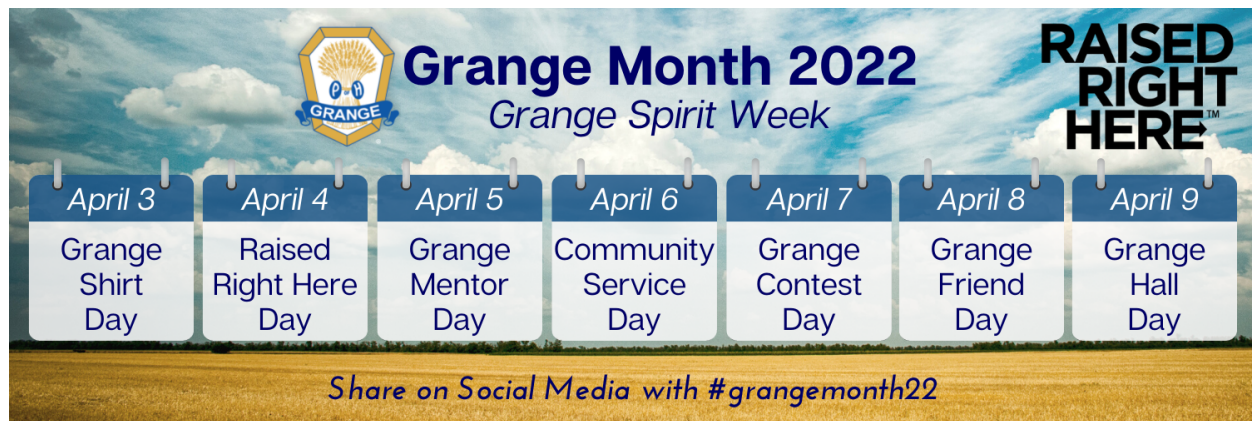
Grange Month is just around the corner

It feels like the year has just begun, but April will be here before you know it. And that means it’s time for *Grange Month*. This year, we encourage you to use our National Grange Theme “Raised Right Here” in your Grange Month Open Houses or other programs. Over the next few weeks, we will be releasing social media images, graphics, posters to use in your Grange Hall, and more!

This year, we will be celebrating ***Grange Spirit Week*** April 3 - 9, with a different “challenge” each day.

Check out everything we have ready for you for Grange Month – these materials can be used on social media, in your newsletters and local newspapers, as posters in your Hall or community, or more!

Visit the [Grange Month 2022 page here](#).



National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference – Registration Open



The 2022 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference "Empire State of Agriculture" is the premier professional development event for Pre-K through 12th grade teachers, volunteers, and professionals in agricultural literacy. Taking place in beautiful Saratoga Springs, NY, this event will inspire attendees to teach through a lens of agriculture.

You must register for the conference to participate.

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization works to increase the agricultural literacy of teachers and students by helping

them communicate the source and value of agriculture in our lives.

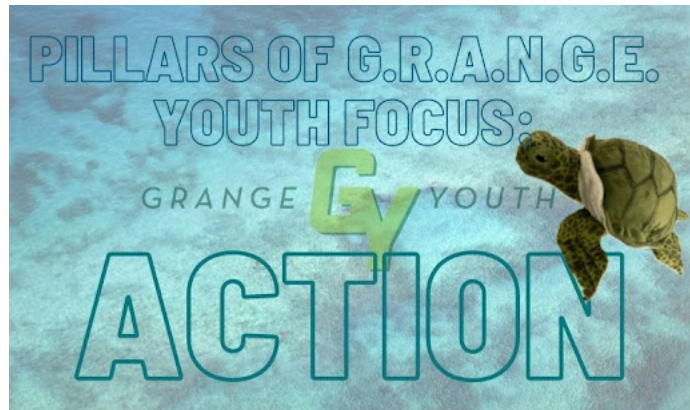
[Register here!](#)

National Grange Youth Trash Pick-Up Challenge

By [Mandy Bostwick](#), National Grange Youth and Young Adults Director

The National Grange Youth Department is challenging State and Local Grange Youth to organize a trash pick-up day in their community during Grange Month (April) and in celebration of Earth Day. In the **linked Google Doc** you will find full details, a helpful link to start your organizing as well as a fill-in-the-blank press release to use after your event. Any event organized counts towards the G.R.A.N.G.E. Youth Pillar Projects that

can be found in the 2022 Handbook and on the **National Grange Youth Website**. *Please pass this information on to the youth in your state and with your local Granges.* Be sure to Mandy photos (and media releases) to be shared on our social media pages! I can't wait to see all of the amazing work put in and our Grange Youth in ACTION! This is meant to be a quick and simple way to get your youth involved in their community and can be planned easily via Zoom, Google Meets, etc.



Join us on Zoom for this informational program

Solving the Puzzle of Long-Term Care and Estate Planning

with John T. Griffin, Esq.

April 6

8:30pm Eastern

Open to ALL Grange Members

presented by



Meeting ID: 853 2615 8138

Passcode: 864678

Or Dial In: (301) 715-8592



Join us for the National Grange Legislative Fly-In



Join Brothers and Sisters from around the country in promoting Grange policy priorities and participating in advocacy training. Then, put your training to use as you present your community's concerns to elected officials and their staff.

The Fly-In is one of the greatest ways members can engage in Grange advocacy and remind legislators and regulators of the unique grassroots way in which our policy is developed. Participants will help to tell the story of an organization that is relevant, vibrant, and speaks from and for the heart of America.

Registration is FREE at <http://bit.ly/flyin2022>

Sunday, April 24

Welcome reception at the hotel

***Monday, April 25**

Overview of Washington, Congress and Federal Agencies
How to best work with elected officials and staff
Issue briefings
Speakers from the Hill, government agencies, private industry and think tanks

Tuesday, April 26

Capitol Hill appointments
Champions of Rural America Awards Reception

Wednesday, April 27

Complete Capitol Hill appointments

*Monday's events will be able to be accessed virtually!

Hotel Information:

Quality Inn Tysons Corner
1587 Spring Hill Rd, Vienna, VA
703-448-8020

"National Grange" rate: \$79/night plus tax by April 1, 2022

More information on the Legislative Fly-In can be found here:

<https://www.nationalgrange.org/national-grange-legislative-fly-in-2022/>

Postal Service Reform Act Passes Senate

The National Grange applauds the House and Senate for passing the Postal Service Reform Act in a strong bipartisan manner. The bill is on its way to the President's desk where he's promised to sign it into law.

The National Grange worked hard to secure passage in both the House and Senate. Postal service reform has been a long-term top priority for the national, state and local Granges. Key provisions of the legislation are:

- Eliminates the requirement to prefund retiree health benefits
- Requires six-day integrated (mail and package) delivery
- Expands special rates for local newspaper distribution
- Requires congressional reporting on postal service operations and performance

These and other important provisions are intended to add permanence and enhance rural postal service delivery. Grangers, rural residents and small-town citizens depend upon.



Save the Date

Regional Leaders Conferences will be here soon!

Great Plains	June 10-12 Manhattan, Kansas	Midwest	June 24-26 Iowa
Eastern <i>Mid-Atlantic & Southeastern</i>	June 17-19 Delaware	Western	August 5-7 Eugene, Oregon

For Grange members of all ages

Registration information for all conferences will be available on the National Grange website



Falling Costs of Broadband Show Promise for Rural Communities

Thanks to the pressures of inflation, rural families and businesses are facing record-high prices across the board. But while gas, electric, and grocery bills are higher than ever, one critical service isn't part of the problem: broadband. In fact, the price of broadband is steadily falling.

The cost of everything from groceries to vehicles is [soaring](#). Meat is up more than 12% from a year ago. Used cars and trucks are up 40.5% and household gas prices have increased by 23.9%. Rural consumers across the country are [disproportionately affected](#) by the rise in inflation and many are left wondering how to balance their checkbooks.

One bright point: broadband is not in this category. According to a recent [study](#) conducted by BroadbandNow, the cost of high-speed broadband has fallen by as much as 42% for customers with the fastest service, and has fallen significantly for all other speed categories as well. It is the continuation of a trend that spans over the past six years.

While costs to consumers have fallen, the quality of broadband service has actually improved. The study found that fiber tends to be cheaper than cable for most high-speed plans, even though it is generally thought to be the most robust and highest quality type of wired internet connection.

This trend did not happen by accident. Increasingly affordable broadband service is the direct result of the sizeable and consistent ongoing investments companies are making in their networks.

Rural America is set to benefit from the deployment of new broadband infrastructure. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) [recently announced](#) more than \$270 million in grants awarded as part of the \$65 billion allocated in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. These investments are dedicated to first connecting those without a connection at all, a critical part of closing the digital divide once and for all. States and localities will have the opportunity to partner with companies to build the network that works best for their state, be it wired, fixed wireless, or satellite.

And the economic benefits will be huge. The broadband deployment process alone is estimated to trigger [\\$275 billion](#) in U.S. investments, create 3 million new jobs and add an additional \$500 billion to GDP.

Consumers in rural America spend more money on food, energy, cars and other products that have risen in price dramatically. There's room for debate on what's causing this dramatic increase: government overspending, pandemic-related pent up consumer demand, and supply chain issues are frequently referenced as culprits.

One thing is for certain: broadband customers are paying less for better service. The continued deployment of broadband infrastructure and 5G will provide critical jobs, technology, and services to rural communities across America.



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SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org



Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

AGATE NOTECARDS

Tell a member you miss seeing them by using these simple greeting cards with "We miss you" on the inside and an agate design on the front. Send the card from you or your Grange to encourage them to reconnect.

10 cards for \$5
plus shipping

Grange Month Special
Save \$5.00
5 packs of 10 for \$20

National Grange Member Benefit – Choice Hotels



Grange Members save 20% at over 4,000 Comfort Inns, Comfort Suites, Quality, Sleep Inns, Clarion, MainStay Suites, EconoLodge, and Rodeway Inn hotels worldwide. Receive Choice Privileges membership please call 1-800-258-2847 or visit www.choicehotels.com and provide the **National Grange ID code number 00211660**.

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NATIONAL GRANGE

Brothers and Sisters,

As we approach Grange Month 2022, we are excited for the chance to come together in showing our pride and love for our great Order. As we emerge from two years of a pandemic that kept so many of us apart, it is time to reunite in fellowship and service.

For two years, we celebrated the importance of “Cultivating Connections” with one another, encouraging Granges to find ways to reach out and unite with one another in large and small ways. It was inspiring to see the myriad ways in which this theme was used, becoming more important than we ever would have thought possible.

This year, I encourage you to use the 2022 theme “Raised Right Here” in your Grange Month programming. There are many ways to interpret this theme – and do so as you see fit! The Grange grew from a place of taking pride in building our agricultural roots, our hometowns and the people who live there. Consider using this theme to show your Grange’s pride in the things, people, and places that make your town great, a 21st-century reinterpretation of the way we started.

- Celebrate education and agriculture, local resiliency and sustainability through the word “Raised.”
- Celebrate American freedoms, local leaders, and proper moral character through the word “Right.”
- Celebrate your hometown, local community members, the things that make your region great through the word “Here.”

Our longstanding tradition and purpose is to make our community and world a better place to be, but we are not in this alone. Everywhere you look, there are organizations, people, restaurants, stores, schools, farms and other agricultural institutions are making your community better, too. During Grange Month, invite them to be a part of your meetings or your programming, as a partner or as an honoree.

We are coming together to celebrate the 155th year of service from the nation’s oldest agricultural and rural service fraternity, and what an honor it is to be a part of it. I encourage you to share your Grange stories, your “Raised Right Here” successes and more on social media, in person or wherever you can.

Fraternally,

Betsy E. Huber
National Grange President