



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

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What is precision agriculture and why should we care?

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

Precision Agriculture – a term we are beginning to hear more and more these days. But what is it exactly?

You hopefully are aware that I've been serving on [a couple of task forces](#) of the [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](#) for broadband deployment for six years. Currently, I'm on the working group for rural deployment of broadband to support precision ag. The official definition of precision ag is *a farming management strategy based on observing, measuring and responding to temporal and spatial variability to improve agricultural production sustainability in both crop and livestock production.*

Precision ag uses computer software programs to collect massive amounts of data from the field to enable the farmer to adjust levels of pesticide, herbicide, fertilizer, and water used so the farm can be more economically and environmentally sustainable. Sensors in the fields or on the equipment are connected to tablets and smartphones located on the tractor or harvester or in the farm office.

For instance, fertilizer sprayers can “read” the field yield maps and know where more nitrogen is needed to produce a better crop, or where the soil is fertile, so fewer additives can be used to save money and prevent excess runoff. Spray nozzles are automatically turned on or off when the machine passes over the appropriate section of the field. This also prevents duplicate spraying.

There are many other applications of P.A., from irrigation controls to cattle tags that can tell when an animal is sick even before any signs are visible. And we haven't even mentioned auto-steer and driverless tractors.

Of course, this equipment is expensive, so it's clear that larger farms will adopt the technology quicker than small farms. USDA's Economic Research Service report on [“Precision Agriculture in the Digital Era”](#) found that 7% of farms with cropland less than 200 acres used yield maps, but 50% of corn farms with cropland greater than 1725 acres used yield maps. Auto-steer guidance

Energy & Agriculture – The Nexus We all Depend Upon

Grangers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia (and beyond!), here is a great conference to attend if you are interested in ag and energy.

“Energy and Agriculture – the Nexus We All Depend Upon” sponsored by [America's Rural Energy Coalition](#) and the National Grange.

May 3-4, Canonsburg PA, Hilton Garden Inn
Registration: <https://arenergyc.org/conference-2023/>

Great nationally-known speakers from government, energy, and ag sectors.

systems were used on 5.3% of corn acres in 2001; by 2016 it was 58%.

All these technologies require internet service - in the barn or office or field - to operate. That's why we are advocating for broadband expansion to the last acre as well as the last mile in rural America.

It's fascinating to see the advances in the last 50 years that have allowed production to increase greatly using less land and inputs - advances that must continue if we are to [feed 9.7 billion people by 2050](#).

Celebrating inclusion and actively recruiting diverse membership strengthens the Grange while honoring our roots

By [Amanda Brozana Rios](#), National Grange Membership & Leadership Development Director



Diversity is a key ingredient for a strong organization. When people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives come together, they can create a more innovative and productive environment.

There are many ways in which diversity can strengthen an organization. For one, it can lead to better and more informed decision-making. When people from different backgrounds and with different experiences are involved in decision-making, they are more likely to consider all sides of an issue and come up with creative solutions. Similarly, people from diverse backgrounds are together more likely to come up with new ideas, which can lead to new services, outreach, important areas of advocacy, and more.

Diversity in an organization can also improve morale and engagement. When members feel like they are part of a diverse and inclusive organization, they are more likely to be engaged and feel a sense of belonging. This can lead to increased productivity and a more positive Grange experience.

Finally, diversity can help attract and retain talented individuals to join; this is especially true for younger generations who expect to see people from diverse backgrounds involved in an organization or they may choose to go elsewhere because they are concerned that their friends and others who value diversity are not welcome.

Unlike 1867, there are quite literally hundreds of organizations in many communities that someone can belong to which make a difference, each one looking for talented and passionate volunteers. So, making clear the Grange does (and has since our founding and early days) value people from all backgrounds, helps us stand apart.

Studies have shown that organizations and companies that embrace diverse individuals are more likely to be successful in the long run – and the Grange is a perfect example of that. In our history, there are so many publicly celebrated and quietly memorialized spaces made to embrace marginalized individuals as equals in Grange. From women to formerly enslaved sharecroppers to LGBTQ individuals, membership and leadership opportunities have been open equally to all in Grange. That's not to say every member has equally embraced this idea – certainly, some pushed back at the Grange's expectation that women, people of color, non-native English speakers, and queer individuals should share space with, vote with (or against) and hold office in the same local Grange or organization as a whole, but always inclusion and equality has prevailed in our Order.

Here are some tips for creating a more diverse and inclusive Grange:

- **Recruit for diversity.** When you are working on your next membership campaign, consider where and whom you are recruiting. Make sure you are both informing and welcoming people from all backgrounds. Look for places that individuals less like you frequent and try to include as your target market people with different experiences, skills, and perspectives.

- **Promote diversity and inclusion.** Before your membership campaign, inform yourself and members of your Grange about our Order's long history of inclusion. Engage your members in a discussion about concerns they may have about blind spots in their understanding of others and consider providing training on diversity and inclusion from a local professional such as someone in education, the human resources field, clergy or others. Encourage your members to learn about and respect each other's differences as well. Then, make it clear to potential new members that your Grange values diversity and inclusion.
- **Create a culture of inclusion.** Make sure that everyone feels welcome and included in your organization. Ensure your Grange's calendar includes celebrations for major holidays from a variety of faith traditions; have Lecturer's programs that celebrate people from different backgrounds; consider outreach events that include or help those from minority communities. Provide opportunities for members and volunteers to get to know each other and to build relationships.
- **Address discrimination.** If you see or hear discrimination, take action to address it. Make sure that everyone feels safe and respected in your Grange.

Creating a diverse and inclusive organization is not easy, but it is worth it and it follows a 150-plus-year tradition in the Grange. When we embrace diversity, we create a more vibrant and attractive Grange for our entire community.

Grange Month continues – Grange Spirit Week!

Thank you to everyone who has tuned in for our **Grange Month** events!

Coming up this week, join us on Zoom for the following events:

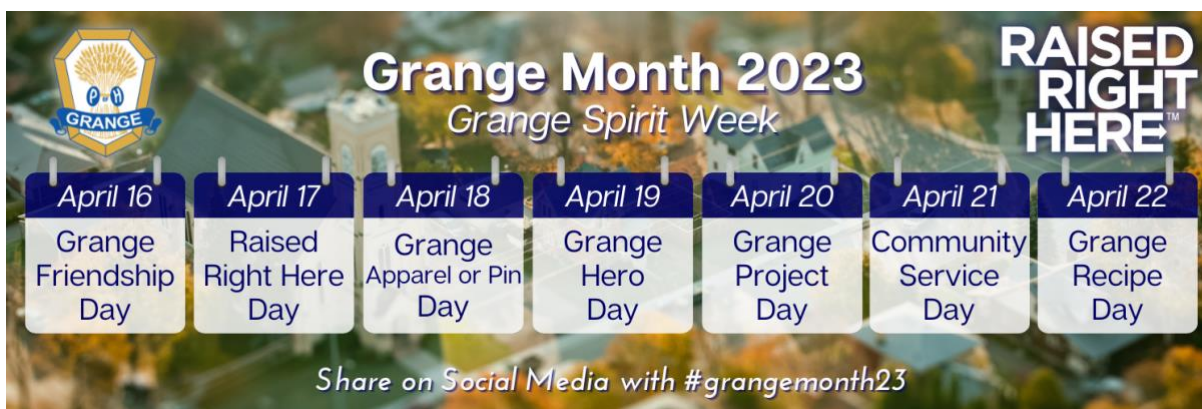
"Youth Yammerings," "Ritual and the Present Day," "Serving with Passion," "The Beginner's Mindset," and the "Community Service Forum."

You can catch up with this month's presentations on our [YouTube Channel!](#)

It's also **GRANGE SPIRIT WEEK** – so please join us on social media OR in "real life" to be a part of seven themed days that celebrate some awesome parts of our organization!

GRANGE MONTH EVENTS APRIL 16-22 (PART 1)	GRANGE MONTH EVENTS APRIL 16-22 (PART 2)
ALL TIMES EASTERN 16: YOUTH YAMMERINGS 9:00 P.M. National Grange Junior & Youth Development Director Samantha Wilkins leads this bi-monthly chat about what's happening in the National Grange Youth Department! Join: http://bit.ly/JuniorsYouth 17: RITUAL & THE PRESENT DAY 8:30 P.M. Amanda Brozana Rios leads a seminar on how to connect 21st-century Grange members to our historic ritual. Join: http://bit.ly/grangemonthzoom 19: SERVING WITH PASSION 8:30 P.M. National Grange Vice President Chris Hamp leads this forum on getting Granges energized and excited to serve their communities. Join: http://bit.ly/grangemonthzoom	ALL TIMES EASTERN 20: THE BEGINNER'S MINDSET 8:30 P.M. What if you approached every project as a beginner? What if you could start with a fresh slate? Join Communications Director Philip Vonada for this workshop on resetting your mindset. Join: http://bit.ly/grangemonthzoom 21: COMMUNITY SERVICE FORUM 8:30 P.M. Pete Pompper, National Grange Community Service Director leads this workshop, connecting Granges around the country with ideas and projects, and taking the spirit of Grange Month into the world. Join: http://bit.ly/grangemonthzoom
RAISED • RIGHT • HERE™ JUNIOR GRANGE FOCUS AREA: AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS YOUTH PILLAR FOCUS AREA: ACTION 	RAISED • RIGHT • HERE™ JUNIOR GRANGE FOCUS AREA: AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS YOUTH PILLAR FOCUS AREA: ACTION 

We regret that the "Date Night In" scheduled for tonight, April 14th, is unfortunately canceled. Thank you to all who wanted to share their talents. We hope to revisit this program in the future!



Grange Spirit week begins on Sunday! We hope you will “play along” with the daily prompts on social media.

National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-In

The National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-In is coming up on April 26th! The event will take place via Zoom, where you'll hear updates from National Grange staff and some guests, including:

- **Senator [Debbie Stabenow](#)** (D-MI), Chair, [Senate Committee on Agriculture](#)
- **Representative [GT Thompson](#)** (R-PA), Chair, [House Committee on Agriculture](#)
- **Janet McUlisky**, President, [McUlisky Health Force](#)
- **Jenna Alsayegh**, Senior Director, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, [USTelecom](#)
- **Mikayla Bodey**, Staff, [U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Nutrition](#)
- and other government officials and advocacy partners

The event will take place starting at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern) on Wednesday, April 26th.

Even if you cannot attend, please register so we can share videos and information from speakers with you after the Fly-In is completed.

Register Today!





157th Convention Registration to open May 1st



Get ready to "Flow into the Future" at the 157th Annual Session of the National Grange, hosted by the northeast region states of New York, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

This year's Convention will be in Niagara Falls, New York - just blocks from the falls! The [Sheraton Niagara Falls](#) is an incredible hotel, and the convention itself and many of the evening activities will be held at the [Niagara Falls Convention Center](#), just across the street!

We invite ALL Grange members to participate in the Convention activities, so please save the dates and make plans to attend!

This is your early warning to ensure your passport is up to date. You won't want to miss the opportunity to pop over to Canada when you're just a few steps away:

<https://www.usps.com/international/passports.htm>

Registration for this year's convention opens on May 1- we hope you're ready!

Stay tuned over the coming weeks and months for more information about speakers, tours, and other opportunities (both fun and educational!) for all Grange members during the Convention.

Advocacy Playbook: Broadband Permitting

By [Sean O'Neil](#), National Grange Legislative Assistant

The Issue:

In 2021, Congress passed [The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), which allocated \$65 billion for broadband expansion projects targeting unserved communities. The majority of the \$65 billion will be allocated to state-level governments by the [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) (NTIA) through a \$45 billion grant program. This massive injection of funds into broadband presents a serious opportunity for rural America to become connected to the internet and close the digital divide in America. However, to ensure that these broadband funds can be spent efficiently and connect as many people as possible, barriers to broadband deployment must be removed. These barriers include permitting and rights of way challenges, pole attachment fees, and arbitrary technology standards. Together, these barriers present serious obstacles to broadband deployment which could balloon project costs and decrease the number of people who are able to connect to the internet.

Why it matters:

In order to close the digital divide and get more of rural America connected to broadband service, it is essential that broadband funds be spent efficiently and effectively. To do so, cities and states need to streamline and expedite the review process for broadband proposals. The federal government can help states with this process by providing technical assistance and support for increased staffing to move broadband projects forward as quickly as possible. As well, the Federal Communications Commission should move quickly to issue guidance to states

about how to deal with overlapping rights of way, pole attachment fees, and other barriers to broadband access.

What you can do about it:

If you want to get involved and make sure that these broadband funds can finally close the digital divide, you can advocate for streamlining the process for broadband projects by getting involved with your state-level broadband authority and providing your input about how these broadband projects should move forward. Information about the different state-level offices can be found here: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/states>. It is important to reach out to your local government about potential broadband projects in your area and advocate for a streamlined permitting process.

Farmers & Ranchers – have you filled out the Ag Census?



The U.S. Department of Agriculture is still accepting responses for the [Census of Agriculture](#)! Have you responded yet?

The Ag Census is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Even small plots of land - whether rural or urban - growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count ***if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year.*** The Census of Agriculture, taken once every five years, looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures. For America's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity.

Find the instructions and response form here:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/Report_Form_and_Instructions/2022_Report_Form/index.php

Register for the Rural Mental Health Caregiver Challenges Webinar



In keeping with our mission to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, [Rural Minds](#) and the National Grange are pleased to present another Rural Mental Health Connections Free Webinar.

This webinar will be held on **May 10th at 7:00 PM Eastern / 4:00 PM Pacific.**

Many people in rural communities struggle with mental illness, and their loved ones who provide care face challenges that are often overlooked. This webinar will feature:

- Two rural caregivers sharing their stories of lived experience providing care for their loved ones
- A conversation about stigma and the personal and professional sacrifices necessary in order to provide care
- Sharing of relevant free resources for the mental wellness of rural caregivers.

Register Today!



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

"RAISED RIGHT HERE" VINYL STICKERS



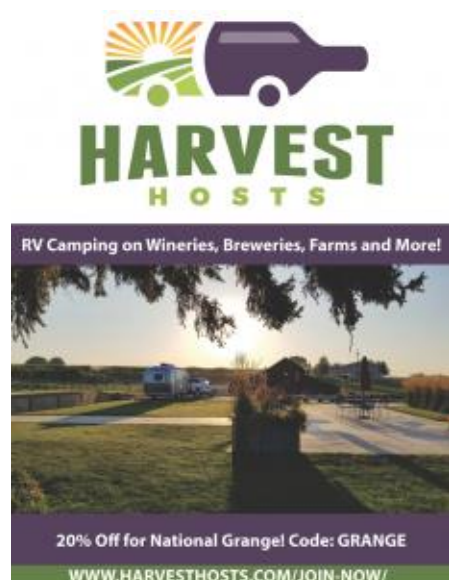
Great way to celebrate Grange month and to have at other Grange activities and events.

Die-Cut Vinyl Stickers - in two designs, celebrating the National Grange "Raised Right Here" theme
25 stickers of each design

\$12 for 50 stickers stickers
plus shipping

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

Grange Member Benefit: Harvest Hosts



Grange members can now enjoy **20% off their membership** with Harvest Hosts, which has more than 825 partner sites across the U.S. and Canada that allow members with RVs to stay one night free on the property of an agriculturally-oriented business. In addition to the ag-based destinations, individuals can add to their membership the “+golf” option that includes more than 350 golf courses.

There is an app associated with Harvest Host that provides maps of the destinations, trip routing and planning, and much more. Members of Harvest Hosts can also enjoy other RV-oriented savings.

Grange members with RVs are encouraged to check out Harvest Hosts at www.harvesthosts.com and use the code GRANGE at checkout.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](http://www.harvesthosts.com)



GRANGE JEWELRY



Grange Jewelry is now in stock at the Grange Store. Pins include years of service and member recognition pins from 5-80 years, past officer pins, Degree recognition pins, and much more!

Some jewelry is now on clearance!

Prices vary

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

www.grangestore.org

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