



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

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[Attend the National Convention – in-person or online](#)

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

In just 11 days, I will rap the gavel to convene the [157th annual National Grange Session](#). We are beyond excited to welcome over 575 Grangers to Niagara Falls. This is the highest attendance for a National Grange convention in more than ten years, and more than 100 candidates will receive the Seventh Degree.

We continue to add more workshops, interesting speakers, and special events to the [schedule](#). The latest addition is a “Training the Trainer” workshop presented by the Federal Communications Commission on Wednesday, November 15th at 2:00 PM. Participants will learn about the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) and how to sign up qualified people to receive this assistance toward their internet costs.

Several Quilts of Valor will be presented Wednesday evening — always a highlight of the convention; and four members will be inducted into the [Grange Hall of Fame](#). Over 55 youth and 40 Juniors will join the session that day, enlivening the hotel and convention center with their activities.

The Delegates will consider and decide on over 130 resolutions to set National Grange policy for the coming year. Their committees have already been meeting via Zoom so they will be ready to go when they arrive at the Session.

Portions of the convention will be livestreamed (see the schedule below), so if you are unable to join us in Niagara Falls you can watch some of the special events from home – or we encourage you to have “watch parties” with your Grange or Grange members. The annual Convention is the culmination of Grange activities and the highlight of our year. Whether in person or online, I hope you’ll join us!

157th National Grange Convention Livestream Schedule

All times are Eastern Time Zone

Tuesday, November 14

12:30 pm – Advocacy Luncheon
Speakers: Mayor Robert Restaino of Niagara Falls, New York;
NY State Assemblyman Brian Manktelow

2:40 pm – “State of the Grange” Address
by President Betsy E. Huber

Wednesday, November 15

12:45 pm – Salute to Agriculture Luncheon
Speakers: Kendra Lamb, Lamb Farms;
Richard Ball, NY Commissioner of Agriculture

2:00 pm – Federal Communications Commission Workshop - “Training the Trainer”

4:00 pm – Communication Fellows Workshop

7:30 pm – Grange Hall of Fame & Quilts of Valor presentation

Thursday, November 16

9:30 am – Communication Workshop
presented by the US Patent & Trademark Office

10:20 am – Membership Workshop
presented by the SHIPmates

11:10 am – Revitalizing the Grange in your community

2:00 pm – Rural Minds, NY FarmNet, & Travis Carlson - mental health in rural America

Friday, November 17

8:30 am – Opening of the Business Session by National Grange Youth Team

3:00 pm – Installation of Officers

7:30 pm – National Grange Honors Night

Saturday, November 18

9:00 am – Youth Workshop - “Leadership Dialogue”
presented by Dr. Daniel Pinti, Niagara University

11:00 am – Lecturer Workshop
with Ann Bercher, National Grange Lecturer

8:00 pm – Evening of Excellence

Watch on

@nationalgrange

#ng157

Be “Responsive” because that’s “what we do”

By [Pete Pompper](#), National Grange Community Service Director



Responsive. That is a word we don’t often use when we talk about Granges or even the Grange itself. When an incident happens to a member, friend, or in the community itself, the Grange has always responded in some way. We as an organization have the ability and “it’s what we do” to help others.

Throughout this year, we have seen many occasions when Grangers have opened the doors to their Halls so they can be used as a center for first responders during wildfires. Grange Halls have been used as warming centers or cooling centers during extremes in the weather. Grange Halls are frequently used by other organizations when they need to hold informational meetings about issues immediately affecting the community. The advantage that Granges have is that we don’t have to go through a lot of red tape to make something happen - it’s usually one phone call that leads to the Grange doing what we do.

There are times when the community meets us at the Hall to help because they know we are there. Heck, in some cases they get the Hall opened before us - everyone knew where we kept the key to the Grange Hall at my home Grange in New Jersey. We always laughed and said it was the worst-kept secret in the township.

Responsive. How many times have we seen Grangers step up individually to help someone or a family in need? How many meals, casseroles and cakes has your Grange made over the years? Usually, it’s not because we were asked to, but because “that’s what we do” for our communities. How many fundraising dinners or bake sales have we held to help in times of need? Our community members see this - and all we do throughout the year - as part of our community service programming we do each year. People see it and, I truly believe, want to be part of helping their members. How many times have perfect strangers shown up to help at an event because they want to be part of something? Of course, we as Grangers welcome them and make them feel part of the group because we are about building stronger, welcoming communities. There is a saying: “Enter as Strangers, Leave as Friends.” I firmly believe this to be true when it comes to community Grange events, whether community service related or not.

As we are wrapping up another Grange year, I personally thank each and every Granger who has stepped up and stepped out this year to help in some way. Whether big or small, each time we do anything to help is HUGE to the people we are helping. Most of the time, we will never know how much that little act of kindness impacted someone who really needed it. We will never know the positive impact that was needed right at that moment to get them through some bad times. But we don’t need to because it is the effort to help that is important.

Keep up the good work,
Pete

National Grange Convention is nearly here



We are just **ONE WEEK** away from when we “Flow into the Future” in Niagara Falls, New York as we celebrate the 157th Annual Session of the National Grange. ***We want you to be there!***

We invite ALL Grange members to participate in the Convention activities, so please make plans to attend from November 14-18, 2023.

This year's Convention will be just blocks from the Falls! The [Sheraton Niagara Falls](#) is an incredible hotel that will also house the hospitality room, while the convention itself - including the Showcase and many of the evening activities will be held at the [Niagara Falls Convention Center](#), just across the street!

At this point, both the Sheraton and our additional block of rooms at the Wyndham have been filled. We encourage you to book through Choice hotels – see the information in the **Grange Benefits** below!

Late Registration - \$42 – available through November 8th

Registration on Site - will be available at the late registration cost, however, you will not be able to obtain tickets to any meals.

[Register for Convention](#)

National Convention Advisory Work Group issues report

From [Chris Hamp](#), Advisory Work Group Chairperson

The members of the National Convention Advisory Work Group have been hard at work for the past year. We were tasked with identifying how to make our National convention the most important Grange event of the year. Period.

We have made every effort to talk with, and receive feedback from, as many individuals and internal groups as possible to gain perspective and history while hearing dreams and wants along with concerns and frustrations. We have taken this opportunity and responsibility very seriously.

Within the report, we are proposing a fundamental transition in how we conduct our annual National Grange convention. Rather than the pyramid being upright with National Grange at the top, we are turning it upside down so our focus and resources go to the wide base of our community Granges and members.

[Read the full report here.](#)

Introducing new State Grange Presidents

In the past few weeks, State Granges across the country have held their annual sessions and conventions, and a few saw changes in leadership. We welcome all of the new State Grange Presidents! Meet them here:

Indiana – Jason Smith



Jason Smith has been a Grange member all his life; a 5th generation Granger on his father's side, and a 3rd generation Granger on his mother's. He started in the Junior program at Fairview Grange, then joined the Grange at age 14. He quickly found himself as State Steward and soon after became the Youth Director for the state of Indiana for 10 years. Jason has also held the offices of Lecturer, Secretary, membership chairman, and Overseer (VP) of the Indiana State Grange, as well as holding numerous positions in three different Granges in the state of Indiana, as he moved around a bit before returning to the Grange where he originally started, Fairview Grange #2177 in Goshen, IN. Jason is also a member of the local Lions Club.

Jason works in maintenance tech for State Cleaning, a chemical company specializing in commercial laundry and dish machines. He manages all over northern Indiana and some of east-central Illinois, but feels fortunate to be home every evening - it's a job that allows him time to spend with his family. Jason visits each of his customers each month to perform preventative maintenance, responds to emergency calls when something breaks, and sells and registers new accounts.

Jason is a father of six children, aged 5 to 22 - three boys and three girls. The five youngest are all in school and doing very well. The three little ones are Junior Grangers, and his oldest two girls are active Grange Members at Fairview Grange. Jason is very proud of his oldest daughter, 16, who became Pomona of the Indiana State Grange this past weekend. The family spends a lot of weekends working the Fairview Grange concession stand at festivals around the county every summer. They enjoy camping with the RV, playing games and cards, bowling, traveling, and helping their community.

Maryland – Richard Stonebraker



Richard Stonebraker comes from the Old Line State of Maryland. Having lived most of his life in Frederick County, he recently purchased a 103-year-old farmhouse in Washington County that he and his partner have been working to restore. Richard currently works for Frederick County Public Schools as an agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor at Frederick High School. Richard teaches in the areas of horticulture, intro to agricultural science, and forestry and wildlife management. Prior to teaching, Richard worked for the USDA as a microbiologist. Richard and his partner, Dalton, have two four-legged kids, Moose and Tank.

Richard joined New Market Grange #362 in 2004 and is proud of the fact that his parents joined alongside him at the same time. Richard is currently the President of New Market Grange, being the youngest president in New Market's 100+ year history. Richard also serves as Lecturer/Program Director for Frederick County Pomona Grange #11 and serves on several of the committees within the Pomona Grange.

Richard was also the youngest Youth Director (aged 16) for the Maryland State Grange. He has served as Maryland State Grange Steward and was most recently on the State Grange's Executive Committee and Community Service Director.

Massachusetts – Corey Spence



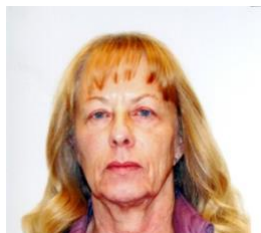
Corey Spence was born in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1976. While growing up, he was active in Grange, church choir and handbells, Boy Scouts, and the Lowell National Historic Park Junior Ranger program. He was a member of the Air Force Junior ROTC at Lowell High School, then took courses in the Biblical and Theological Studies program at Gordon College. After his time at college, he moved to Texas and was the Administrative Assistant and a choir member at the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas.

His wanderlust took him to Utah where he shared a house with two friends for six months. Corey moved back to Massachusetts and resumed Grange work in 2003, joining Dracut Grange and affiliating with Bedford Grange. He then made Bedford Grange his home Grange and affiliated with Ponkapoag Grange in Canton. He served as President of Bedford Grange until it closed, moving his home Grange membership to Beverly Grange. He is currently Steward at Beverly Grange, President of Ponkapoag Grange, President of Minuteman Pomona, and was installed President of the Massachusetts State Grange on October 22nd.

Corey has been the Weekday Receptionist at Old South Church in Copley Square in Boston for 14 years. In his free time, Corey is on the Vestry, head of the Worship Committee, and Altar Guild Chair at Saint Mary's Church in Rockport, Massachusetts.

Corey makes his home in Rockport with his husband Christopher, four blocks from the ocean and the famous Motif #1 - ask him about the life lessons he learned from this famous Rockport symbol!

Montana – Joyce Billquist



Joyce Billquist was elected President of Montana State Grange in October 2023. She is a 50-year member of Avon Grange #125 and often jokes that she "married" the Grange when she married her husband, Marty Billquist. Joyce has held various offices in her Community Grange over the years and is currently serving as Lady Assistant Steward. She served as the Montana State Grange Secretary and Executive Committee Member in the past. She most recently was again serving as a Montana State Grange Executive Committee Member at the time of her election to President.

Joyce holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology. She was employed for 32 years as a programmer/software engineer for NorthWestern Energy in Butte, Montana, until her retirement in 2021. Being bored with retirement, Joyce is currently employed as a part-time bookkeeper for Copper Village Museum and Art Center and as a front desk associate for The Forge Best Western Hotel, both in Anaconda, Montana.

Joyce and Marty have one daughter, Jessie, and six grandchildren.

New York – Sandra Green



Sandra was born into a Grange family, the youngest of seven children. Her siblings were in Junior Grange; her parents belonged and were from Grange families: all her grandparents had belonged, and at least two great-grandparents.

Sandra has always considered the Grange Hall a second home: it was her “safe” place.

Sandra was very active in Cuba Junior Grange #50. Once she graduated into Cuba Grange #799, she enjoyed participating in the Youth Program, attending Leadership Weekends, entering contests, and was a member of the Fifth Degree team.

She has “gone right on working,” still a member of Cuba, and is currently their Secretary.

Sandra has worked in restaurants, a bakery, and a cheese plant. Currently, she am focusing on being there for her mom, so she continues to live at home.

Preview the Convention Program Book

[The 157th Convention Program Book can be located here.](#)

This book contains speaker bios, the full schedule, and details about this year’s Convention in Niagara Falls. There may still be updates in the coming weeks, but use this to plan your time at the Convention!

We encourage attendees to use this digital version of the program book throughout the week of the Convention! The book will continue to be updated online as changes happen.



President Biden over \$5 billion to support rural communities during Investing in Rural America event series

Courtesy of the [USDA](#)

WASHINGTON, November 1, 2023 - Today, President Biden will travel to Northfield, Minnesota to visit Dutch Creek Farms to lead his Administration’s Investing in Rural America Event Series and highlight investments from the Biden Administration in Rural America. **During the visit, President Biden will announce over \$5 billion in new investments from his Investing in America agenda** – including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act – to advance rural prosperity, economic development, competition, and sustainability. President Biden will also discuss how Bidenomics and his Investing in America agenda are ensuring rural Americans do not have to leave their hometowns to find opportunity.

Over the course of two weeks, President Biden, Cabinet members, and Senior Administration Officials are barnstorming across the country as part of the Investing in Rural America Event Series to highlight how the Biden-Harris Administration’s investments are bringing new revenue to farms, increased economic development in rural towns and communities, and more opportunity throughout the country. To lead the Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in Rural America Event Series, President Biden will announce over \$5 billion in new investments in rural America, including:

\$1.7 Billion in Investments in Climate-Smart Agriculture: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing nearly \$1.7 billion in funding to support the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices, which have direct climate mitigation benefits, advance a host of other environmental co-benefits, and offer farmers, ranchers and foresters new revenue streams. Dutch Creek Farms, where President Biden will visit today, is a family farm that grows corn and soybeans and raises hogs. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Dutch Creek Farms has used several climate-smart agriculture techniques to make their farm more sustainable, including growing crops that naturally sequester carbon and improve soil quality, farming in a way that limits soil disturbance, and creating riparian buffers to protect nearby waterways from pollutants.

The funding President Biden will announce includes an unprecedented \$1.1 billion investment across 81 projects through the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP), which takes a voluntary

approach to expand the reach of conservation efforts and climate-smart agriculture through public-private partnerships. The announcement also includes fiscal year 2023 investments from the Inflation Reduction Act that are helping farmers adopt [climate-smart agriculture practices](#). Through the Inflation Reduction Act, USDA has enrolled more farmers and more acres in voluntary conservation programs than at any point in history, following a backlog that has existed for years. In 2023, USDA enrolled nearly 5,300 additional producers in conservation programs across all 50 states (above what otherwise would have been possible through Farm Bill and appropriations funding), which will provide significant climate mitigation benefits. Today's announcement includes:

- \$100 million through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP);
- \$250 million through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP); and
- \$250 million through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

\$1.1 Billion in Investments in Rural American Infrastructure: USDA is announcing \$1.1 billion across 104 loan and grant awards to upgrade infrastructure in rural communities that will bring new jobs, clean water and fuel, and reliable electricity to people in nearly every state. This funding includes \$5 million from the Inflation Reduction Act to further increase the availability of renewable, homegrown biofuels. The announcement is part of President Biden's Investing in America efforts to rebuild the physical infrastructure of our country to grow the economy for decades to come, create good-paying jobs, and better position rural America to compete in a global economy.

\$2 Billion in Investments to Partner with Rural Communities to Create Jobs and Support Rural-led Economic Development: USDA is announcing \$2 billion across 99 economic development projects in [Rural Partners Network](#) (RPN) communities in nine states and Puerto Rico – funding that will create jobs and build infrastructure as well as increase access to quality health care, affordable housing, and clean water and energy. RPN is transforming the way the federal government partners with rural communities by putting federal employees on the ground to help rural communities access federal resources. Last year, the Biden-Harris Administration launched [Rural.gov](#) to help connect all rural communities to federal resources. Today, the Administration is announcing it is piloting a new resource clearinghouse function on Rural.gov with funding opportunities for rural communities to facilitate access to federal programs.

\$274 Million to Expand Critical Rural High-Speed Internet Infrastructure: USDA is announcing nearly \$274 million across 16 grant and loan awards to expand access to high-speed internet for people living and working across eight states. These investments include \$260 million as part of the fourth round of the [ReConnect Program](#) funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provided a total of \$65 billion to ensure every American has access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet. In total, the Biden-Harris Administration is investing \$90 billion to deliver affordable high-speed internet to everyone in America, including in rural communities that often lack access to high-speed internet.

\$145 Million to Expand Access to Renewable Energy and Lower Energy Costs for Rural Americans: USDA is announcing \$145 million in funding for 700 loan and grant awards through the [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP) to help agricultural producers and rural small business owners make energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy investments to lower energy costs, generate new income, and strengthen the resiliency of their operations. This funding is made possible in part by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act – the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis.

These announcements build on billions of dollars in investments the Biden-Harris Administration has already made to support rural America, including through expanding access to markets and increasing competition for farmers and producers. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA has committed \$1 billion to expand independent meat and poultry processing capacity to give farmers more market options and fairer prices, and reduce reliance on a small handful of large meat and poultry corporations. USDA has also made available \$900 million to spur the production of independent, American-made fertilizer, create jobs in rural America, and give farmers more options. These investments were funded in part by the President's American Rescue Plan and USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

To learn more about the Biden-Harris Administration's historic investments in rural America, visit the [Fact Sheet](#).

Grange Benefits: Choice Hotels & AVIS Car Rental



You may have heard that the host hotels for this year's National Grange Convention have sold out of rooms.

Not to fear – thanks to a great partnership with Choice Hotels, you can still get great savings in Niagara Falls as a National Grange member.

Use [this link](#) to see the available Choice Hotels in the region. Then, use the **Group ID #00211660** to save up to 20% on your hotel. Or, call 1-800-258-2847 to

make your reservations in Niagara Falls!



If you're flying into Buffalo for the National Grange Convention and would prefer to make your own way to Niagara Falls (and do some sightseeing on the way or while you're there), consider using the National Grange's exclusive discount code with

AVIS, available at the airport!

Grange members always receive up to 25% off their rental when using AWD# B291044, plus enjoy additional offers like dollars off, a complimentary upgrade, or a free weekend day.

With a complimentary membership in Avis Preferred®, you'll travel better, save time and gain access to exclusive offers. Skip the counter and paperwork at many locations and go straight to your car.

Visit <http://avis.com/en/association/B291044> or call 1-800-331-1212 to make a reservation.

Grange Store Reminder

While you can continue making your purchases through the [Grange Store online](#), any orders placed through November 21, 2023 will be processed following National Grange Convention, during the week of November 27.

We encourage you to visit the Grange Store in the Showcase at this year's Convention to make your jewelry and supply purchases in-person!



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

NATIONAL GRANGE

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