



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

In this Issue:

February 2, 2024

[The Presidential Perspective](#) by Christine E. Hamp
[Fellowship First Friday](#)
[Meet the National Grange Community Service Team](#)
[Grange Heirloom for February](#)
[Have you joined The Birthday Club?](#)
[Grant money still available for raising awareness about ACP](#)
[Grange Foundation's Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship](#)

[Last Chance: Register for National Grange/Rural Minds introduction to "Rural Mental Health Resilience" program](#)
[Rural Minds Receives National Advocacy Award](#)
[Register for the Virtual Legislative Fly-In](#)
[Making Mountaintop Removal Renewable](#)
[Grange Strong Fundraiser](#)
[Grange Supply Store: Seven-Sided Patch](#)
[Grange Member Benefit: Start Hearing](#)

The Presidential Perspective

By [Christine E. Hamp](#), National Grange President

SPEAK LIKE A "CHAMP"

Speak like a "CHAMP" will be a monthly word or phrase designed to get everyone speaking the same language to build a positive message as we Grange.

"GOOD ENOUGH, ISN'T!"

Good Enough Isn't! is a phrase that emphasizes the pursuit of excellence and high standards. The expression suggests that settling for mediocrity or accepting something as merely "good enough" falls short of the desired level of quality or achievement. It conveys a commitment to continuous improvement, exceeding expectations, and refusing to be complacent with average or satisfactory results.

FEBRUARY 2024 NATIONAL GRANGE EVENTS

TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP
JOIN US ON ZOOM FOR THESE EVENTS!

- | | ALL TIMES
EASTERN | ALL TIMES
EASTERN |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2: FELLOWSHIP FIRST FRIDAY
A new program! Connect: grange.biz/FirstFriday
Join us for this fun NEW monthly program - a time for fellowship, thought-provoking conversation, and the chance to connect with Grange members from coast to coast! Includes a short program, activity, and time to socialize around topics of your choice.
February topic: Lunar (Chinese) New Year , which includes a look at history and traditions and a cooking lesson on a traditional Chinese dish, plus a game! | 8:30 P.M. | |
| 7: RURAL MENTAL HEALTH RESILIENCE WEBINAR
Join leaders from Rural Minds and the National Grange as we introduce the Rural Mental Health Resilience Program to our Grange members via Zoom.
Register: grange.biz/RMHR | 8:30 P.M. | |
| 16-18: NATIONAL GRANGE LEADERS' CONFERENCE
National Grange leaders, State Grange Presidents, and more will be gathering in Myrtle Beach, SC. Be sure to ask them what they learned afterward! | | |
| 21: MEMBERSHIP MATTERS
Now on a new night! Connect: grange.biz/matters
Join Membership/Leadership Development Director Amanda Brozana Rios for this monthly time to learn about various membership challenges and growth opportunities. | 8:30 P.M. | |
| 21: 1-IN-1000 CLUB MEETING
Connect: grange.biz/in1000
The Grange Foundation's 1-in-1000 Club will hold its annual meeting. Want to join this Club to help secure the longevity of the Grange? Visit www.grangefoundation.org to learn more! | 8:30 P.M. | |
| 27: LECTURER'S FORUM
Connect: grange.biz/LecturerForum
Join National Grange Lecturer Tom Gwin to learn about what's happening in the National Lecturer's Department - from contests to programming, and more!
Questions? Email lecturer@nationalgrange.org | 8:30 P.M. | |
| MARCH 1: APPLICATIONS FOR THE ERNESTINE KEISER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP DUE | | |



JUNIOR GRANGE FOCUS AREA:
LEGISLATIVE
YOUTH FOCUS AREA:
RITUAL



Grange's Grassroots Process in Action

Last week, National Grange President Christine Hamp met with U.S. Representative [Cathy McMorris Rodgers](#) (WA-5) to discuss the Grange's position on many issues, including opposing the removal of the Lower Snake River Dams unless certain economic, agricultural, and infrastructural conditions are met.

This position comes directly from a resolution passed at the 2023 National Grange Session, submitted by Washington State Grange, and originating with San Juan Island Grange #966.



Join us tonight for **Fellowship First Friday!** This will give a look at Lunar New Year and some insight into Chinese culture, including the link between the holiday celebration and agriculture and food.

[Click Here to Join](#)

Meet the National Grange Community Service Team

By the National Grange Community Service Team



Hello from The Community Service Team! We want to introduce ourselves to all of you. We hope you all stay tuned as the Patrons Chain brings you updates and highlights from Granges all over the nation, serving their communities.

Currently, no changes have been made to the National Grange's Community Service programs, so please continue to do your service and notebook or reports. Contact information will be coming to you shortly.

Introducing the Team:

Emma Edelen is a member of Chester Royal Grange #2181 in Iowa, where she is also the Iowa State Grange Lecturer and Youth Director. "I have been a Grange member my whole life; I attended my first National Grange session before I was even 1 year old," Emma says. "I am currently working on starting a Grange in Cedar Rapids. I am a 9th grade Earth Science teacher (6 years) and a throws coach (discus & shot put) (7 years)." Her hobbies include quilting/crocheting every Tuesday with her co-workers, Dungeons & Dragons, hiking, and learning new things.

Randee Farmer of Kansas is a member of Bayneville Grange #1810, Flint Hills Pomona Grange #49, and is also the Kansas State Grange Community Service Director. "I am a member of 50-plus years, not including Junior Grange," Randee says. "I have been married for 47 years to Junior Grange heart-throb, Michael Farmer. We have three grown married children, four grandsons, and one granddaughter. Michael and I are 5th generation members, making grandchildren 7th generation." Randee says their proud Grange moment is that 32 of 36 dependents, spouses, or grandchildren, spanning 4 generations from her parents, were in attendance at the 155th National Grange Convention in Wichita in 2021 to be recognized as a Legacy family. The current State Grange projects Randee is most proud of are - Introducing C.A.R.D.S. (making cards for military service persons abroad and VA hospitals every holiday) and developing a Quilts of Valor program.

Diana Nordquest from Ohio serves as Secretary and Community Service Chairman of Mile Branch Grange #933 and is the Lecturer of Ohio State Grange. "I love to quilt and bake," says Diana.

Rebekah Hodgson of Jonesboro, Maine and East Peoria, IL, is a member of Jonesboro Grange #357 (ME), where she serves on the Jonesboro Grange Executive Committee, and a member of Hopewell Grange #1747 (IL). Rebekah says, "My husband is active duty military serving with the United States Coast Guard for 19 years now. We have two children together - Jase, 6, and Kennedy, 4. I am a Commercial Maine Lobsterman and enjoy running long distances, photography, and coffee."

Bonnie Mitson of Idaho currently serves on the Idaho State Grange Executive Board, and is the Idaho State Grange Community Service Director. She is also a member of Mica Flats Grange where she serves as the Treasurer, and a member of Bellgrove Grange. "I enjoy my church family, quilting, cooking, and building projects, like sheds," Bonnie adds.

Marie A. Robidoux is a first-generation Granger, having joined the Chepachet Grange #38 in Rhode Island in 1975. "I immediately acquired an office (Steward) and Subordinate Master [President] in 1980," says Marie. "I went to meetings alone most of the time as my husband stayed home with our young daughter and our business, and he had to get up early to go to work. Dennis and I are innkeepers of a really nice, small motel just outside of Chepachet Village. This year we are celebrating 75 years in business. My parents started the White Rock Motel in 1949 and we have been proprietors since 1970. Our daughter is a second-generation Granger and will earn her forty-year certificate this year." Marie says the Grange has given them the opportunity and connections to other organizations in their small town, making friends and participating in community service in church and other local organizations. "I have been the Rhode Island State Grange Community Service Director for 14 years and enjoy the honor of belonging to the pink sash family. I am thankful now and will do my best to be a member of the National Grange Community Service team while making friends across the country," Marie adds.

Remember we no longer walk on rocky ground. We are here today to thank those who paved the trail for us.

Fraternally,

The 2024 Community Service Team

Grange Heirloom for February



In old age we enjoy the fruits of a well-spent life, surrounded by friends, and in a happy home, noted for Fidelity.

– Steward, Fourth Degree

Use the Heirloom Program to encourage your Grange members (and friends who aren't Grange members) to continue learning about the core tenets of the Grange, and what we stand for. These "digestible" bits of Grange ritual help our members grow in the Grange.

[Access the February Heirloom Materials here.](#)

Have you joined the Birthday Club?



The National Grange wants to celebrate and recognize **YOU** in your birthday month.

Members are encouraged to join by providing their name, email address, and birthdate. During the year, an electronic birthday card will be sent, in time for their birthday, to participants wishing them a happy birthday and reminding them they are valued as members by the National Grange.

Members of all ages - from the highest to the lowest Degree - are valued and should be recognized. Even better, Granges can submit the information for members to receive their card as a surprise!

If you would like to join or submit names for The Birthday Club, please visit:

<http://grange.biz/birthdayclub>

Most importantly, we wish you a very **happy birthday** and many more!

Grant money still available for raising awareness about ACP

The Affordable Connectivity Program outreach grant action is still taking place and Granges are encouraged to take part in order to raise awareness about the ACP and receive incentive funds for their work. These funds come from the Roots of Connectivity grant won by the Oregon Institute for a Better Way and the National Grange in 2023.



More than 80 Granges have qualified so far for incentive payments with more qualifying each week.

For Granges who have already signed up, it's time to report your work so you, too, can receive your incentive check.

If your Grange has not yet signed up, do so today at <https://forms.office.com/r/ZwZ72RVmaq>. If your Grange has already signed up to participate, and you've completed a project, don't forget to report your work at <https://forms.office.com/r/X6M51U2mG1>.

Are you signed up and you need more cards, signs, placemats or other items to promote ACP? Order free materials from the product order form here: <https://forms.office.com/r/eYxbhBSwfs>. If you have any issues or have not heard back from a Navigator, please email connect@acprc.org.

Grange Foundation's Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship

By [Joan C. Smith](#), Grange Foundation Chairperson



In November, the [Grange Foundation](#) announced the creation of a new scholarship. In the upcoming issues of the Patrons Chain, we will be highlighting some of the application requirements for the scholarship – we hope you'll apply!

This scholarship fund was established in 2023 by friends and family of Ernestine "Ernie" Keiser. Ernie was a long-time Grange member in Virginia and was a charter member of Beach Community Grange #958 (VA) in 1959. She was very supportive of the Youth program at the local, state and national levels. Ernie was a firm believer in the importance of education and her family and friends desired to continue her legacy by establishing this scholarship program. For 2024, the value of the scholarship is \$1,000. Application packets are DUE March 1, 2024.

Get started on your essay as part of the applicant packet. Each applicant must use one of the five (5) prompts below for their essay; maximum of 500 words or the equivalent of two pages, typed, double-spaced

- How will the furtherance of my education help the Grange or my community?
- What does Grange membership mean to me?
- What are my goals with furthering education?
- What lessons have I learned from my Grange experiences?
- How has the Grange helped to develop me as a person/leader?

Full requirements and application at: www.grangefoundation.org

Last Chance: Register for National Grange/Rural Minds introduction to “Rural Mental Health Resilience” program

HAPPENING THIS WEEK!



The National Grange and Rural Minds are pleased to present the
“National Grange Introduction to the Mental Health Rural Resilience Program” Webinar

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

6:00 pm ET; 5:00 pm CT; 4:00 pm MT; 3:00 pm PT

This **free** 30-minute webinar on Zoom is being offered **only** to members of the National Grange. As a follow-up to the launch of the [Rural Mental Health Resilience Program](#) at the Annual National Grange Convention on November 16, 2023, this webinar will provide:

- An introduction of the ‘Rural Resilience’ program
- Online tour of the program webpage (Host will share his screen.)
- Demonstration of accessing and printing program documents
- Explanation on the value of program materials
- Suggestions for how to use the ‘Rural Resilience’ program to help improve rural mental health

In recognition of the self-reliance and a do-it-yourself mindset that are common among many people living in rural communities, the Rural Mental Health Resilience Program elevates these attributes to help empower rural Americans to become part of the solution to improving rural mental health. It provides Grangers and others across the country with free online access to relevant information, content, and action items so they can help themselves and serve as a trusted source of mental health information for their families, friends, and members of rural communities.

[CLICK HERE](#) or scan the QR code for more information about the webinar and a link to free webinar registration.



Rural Minds Receives National Advocacy Award

MAYVILLE, NY (January 25, 2024) – Rural mental health national nonprofit Rural Minds was selected as the 2023 STARR Coalition Advocacy Organization of the Year and received the prestigious STARR Award.

“This recognition is bestowed upon the advocacy organization that has demonstrated exceptional dedication to advocating on behalf of those living with mental illnesses, their efforts to fight the stigma of mental illness, and support of the STARR Coalition’s collective efforts to expand mental health clinical research,” said STARR Coalition Director of Operations Erica Moore.

"We thank the STARR Coalition for this award and recognition of the collaborative work that we are doing through Rural Minds to help people in rural communities overcome unique barriers to mental health," said Rural Minds Executive Director Chuck Strand.

There is a mental health crisis in rural America with suicide rates that are 64% to 68% higher among people living in rural areas compared to people living in large urban areas, according to the latest research from the CDC. To confront rural mental health challenges and the stigma surrounding mental illness, Rural Minds provides free information and services and launched the [Rural Mental Health Resilience Program](#) in conjunction with the National Grange

Recognizing self-reliance and a do-it-yourself mindset common among many people living in rural communities, the program empowers rural Americans to become part of the solution to improving mental health. In support of Rural Minds' focus on industry collaboration, the STARR Coalition will be one of the valued program distribution partners to help launch the new Rural Mental Health Resilience Program.

"We are honored and grateful to have received the STARR Award on behalf of the 46 million rural Americans we serve," said Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton. "We look forward to our ongoing collaboration with other nonprofits, corporations, and individuals across the country as we collectively confront this growing health issue facing rural America."

ABOUT RURAL MINDS

Rural Minds is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. For more information visit www.RuralMinds.org.

ABOUT THE STARR COALITION

The STARR Coalition facilitates partnerships with nonprofit and advocacy organizations that serve those living with mental illness and raises awareness for clinical research as a viable and trustworthy option for care. For more information visit <https://thestarr.org/>.

Register for the Virtual Legislative Fly-In



This year's National Grange Legislative Fly-In will be held virtually on **March 18**. We hope you'll join National Grange staff, federal legislators, and issues partners for this educational afternoon. You'll learn what the National Grange is working on, how it affects all of rural America, and how you can get involved.

This is a **FREE** offering from the National Grange for all members and friends of the

Grange. Feel free to share this information and invitation with potential Grange members.

Register today at <http://grange.biz/flyin2024>.

Making Mountaintop Removal Renewable

by Kim Kobersmith, [The Daily Yonder](#)

Originally published January 12, 2024

In Eastern Kentucky, a utility-scale solar installation built on a mountaintop removal coal mine could be a game changer for future renewable energy projects and, done right, bring real benefits to the rural communities around it.

The dirt road to Starfire Mine is rough, bumpy, and rutted, with a view of undulating terrain covered and scrubby vegetation rolling out into the distance. This is one of the largest mountaintop removal mine sites in Appalachia – at 27,000-acres, it's as large as Disney World – and the site of one of the most significant renewable energy projects in development in the eastern U.S.

In continuous operation since 1975, Eastern Kentucky's Starfire Mine has long been an economic foundation and cultural touchpoint for the region. Yet this type of coal mining makes a significant impact,

leaving behind relatively flat but barren, unstable land that is often considered undevelopable. The success of the pilot project happening on the Starfire Mine site could change possibilities for these sorts of mines moving forward.

The Plan

BrightNight is a global integrated power company that designs, develops, owns, and operates large-scale renewable power projects. Its [ambitious plan](#) to create an 800-megawatt solar energy project, enough to power 170,000 homes annually, on a 7,000-acre brownfield could tip the scales toward future similar projects.

“It can demonstrate a replicable process for developing environmentally sensitive sites not ideal for traditional infrastructure,” said Maribeth Sawchuk, Vice President of Communication for BrightNight, during an interview with the Daily Yonder. “Sites like this are critical to the clean power transition.”

In addition, several factors are making the time right for this kind of project: Recent federal infrastructure legislation is funding renewable projects on formerly mined lands; environmentally responsible corporations are working towards a carbon neutral energy footprint; and geographically, Kentucky is uniquely positioned to develop power close to much of the nation’s population

The Process

There is a certain symmetry in converting a former fossil fuel site to a renewable energy site – taking it from extraction to generation. The process of mining coal leaves behind the kind of large, open landscape with potential for large scale solar installations, and some power lines built to bring electricity to fuel mining can be converted to transmit renewable power away to communities and people.

But realistically, BrightNight has to clear some significant hurdles before construction begins in 2026. The challenges are three-fold: the physical characteristics of the site itself, the number of partners involved, and the complexity of the engineering. As evidenced by the rough road to get there, Starfire is remote, and parts of it are still actively mined or require current remediation work. Starfire also spans three counties – Perry, Breathitt, and Knott – and as such, has a diverse pool of stakeholders involved. Its gently sloping grade and often unstable soil requires advanced geotechnical analysis to determine optimal, and feasible, infrastructure.

In addition to county buy-in, BrightNight needed willing partners to make this project a reality, and two significant power-purchasing entities have joined them. The first, Rivian designs, develops and manufactures electric vehicles and is working towards a net zero operation by 2040. The second, The Nature Conservancy, is a nonprofit dedicated to conserving land, water, and biodiversity. Both Rivian and The Nature Conservancy chose this project for its potential positive impact on what is termed the 3Cs: climate, conservation, and community.

“Significant investments in infrastructure will be critical to solving the climate crisis, but how we invest is just as important as how much we invest: We need to ensure both people and the planet are central to these decisions, especially in communities like the Appalachians that have powered America for centuries and have tremendous natural resources,” stated Jennifer Morris, CEO of The Nature Conservancy. “We are proud to collaborate with Rivian and BrightNight on this important project.”

Including the Community

Especially in a region with a history of extraction, making sure that some of the wealth generated in the area benefits local people is a crucial element of development. In this vein, BrightNight is exploring avenues for community engagement.

While nothing is solidified, the company is hoping to partner with area educational centers like Hazard Community and Technical College to provide training for the 250 construction jobs that will be created by the project. In addition, they hope to support electricity, road construction, and engineering needs for the [Olive Branch Community](#), a state-supported flood recovery housing development slated to be built on the mine, adjacent to the renewable energy project.

Adam Wells is Regional Director of Community and Economic Development for [Appalachian Voices](#), a grassroots environmental organization. The group advocates for early and deeply meaningful local engagement. Increasingly, U.S. Department of Energy funding for these types of projects requires a community benefits agreement, he said.

If done well, these agreements outline direct benefits for the community, selected by the community. In addition to hiring and infrastructure improvements, they can also include direct cash payments, community grants to fund local infrastructure like playgrounds and libraries, and operational practices that will increase ecosystem health.

One example is Savion, the developer of another mine-to-solar project in Martin County, Kentucky. Savion worked with community leaders to determine an appropriate way to benefit the county, and in October, they donated \$100,000 to install a solar array at the local high school. The 100-panel system is

expected to save the school system \$12,500 annually, and the district is exploring ways to add solar-related programming for students in the on-site technology center.

In the case of Starfire Mine, the BrightNight Starfire Renewable Energy Center will create a taxable asset where there would not otherwise be one, generating an estimated \$150 million tax revenue over the life of the project. Developing energy production can attract new industries and generate new resources, but in Appalachia, renewable energy infrastructure like this can also offer something less tangible.

"The narrative of renewable energy is powerful in an energy producing region," said Wells. "It sends a positive message of people not grasping at the past but looking to the future."



Are you GRANGE STRONG?

Support this fundraiser through customink.com to purchase your own #GrangeStrong shirts!

must purchase by February 23!
delivery by mid-March

T-Shirt - \$22* (Navy)
Women's V-Neck - \$22* (Steel)
Long-Sleeve T-Shirt - \$28* (Navy)
3/4 Sleeve Raglan T-Shirt - \$20* (Gray/Blue)
Hoodie - \$40* (Royal)

**plus applicable taxes and shipping*



grange.biz/grangestrongshirt

Are you **Grange Strong?**

If so, support the National Grange's #GrangeStrong fundraiser by purchasing a shirt!

MUST ORDER by February 23, with delivery by mid-March for Grange Month.

[Click here to order today!](http://grange.biz/grangestrongshirt)



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

SEVEN-SIDED PATCH



\$2.00 EACH
PLUS SHIPPING

AVAILABLE IN MAROON OR GREEN

These patches feature the Grange emblem in Junior (maroon/dark red) and Youth (green) colors. Perfect for sewing onto jackets, totes, or more.

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

Grange Member Benefit: Start Hearing

START  **HEARING**

Helping you find the best solution for your hearing needs and lifestyle – at the best value. Grange Members and their families receive:

- Discounts up to 48% on today's latest technology, including hearing aids and tinnitus options
- FREE annual hearing consultations
- Access to a nationwide network of 3,000+ hearing professionals
- Three-year supply of FREE batteries (40 cells per hearing aid purchased per year)
- One year of free office visits (limit of six) 60-day risk-free trial period
- FREE Deluxe Warranty Plan, including loss and damage
- Financing plans available (subject to credit approval)

With **Start Hearing**, their hearing care advisors are with you each step of the way. To find out more and to schedule your hearing consultation, please call (833) 926-2824 or visit www.starthearing.com/partners/grange.



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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Leadership Training and Membership Development

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