



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

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Legislative Fly-In puts focus on advocacy for all Americans

All Grange members are encouraged to register for the National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-In on Monday, March 18. This year, the event will be **LIVE** and viewable on YouTube starting at 1:30pm Eastern.

Hosted by Burton Eller, National Grange Legislative Director, the program will feature several speakers putting the focus on the Grange's advocacy work for all Americans, and especially in rural areas.

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. Even if you cannot view the event live, we encourage you to register to receive early access to the recording.

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



Speakers include:

- National Grange President Christine Hamp
- National Grange Legislative Director Burton Eller
- [Senator Debbie Stabenow](#) (MI), Chair of the Senate Ag Committee
- [Congressman Glenn "GT" Thompson](#) (PA), Chair of the House Ag Committee
- [Randy Rutta](#), CEO of the [National Health Council](#)
- Lukas Pietrzak, Special Policy Advisor for Broadband, Office of the Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce, [NTIA](#)
- [Charlie Cook](#), political analyst and founder of [Cook Political Report](#)
- **More speakers coming soon!**

[Learn more about the Fly-In here.](#)

USDA Finalizes Voluntary “Product of USA” Label Claim to Enhance Consumer Protection

Courtesy of the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

Phoenix, Ariz., March 11, 2024 – At the National Farmers Union Annual Convention, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the [finalization of a rule](#) to align the voluntary “Product of USA” label claim with consumer understanding of what the claim means. Secretary Vilsack also announced USDA is awarding \$9.5 million to 42 projects through the [Local Meat Capacity grant program](#) to expand processing options for the meat and poultry industry and new actions to ensure transparency and a fair and competitive market in the U.S seed industry.

“Today’s announcement is a vital step toward consumer protection and builds on the Biden-Harris Administration’s work to bolster trust and fairness in the marketplace where smaller processors can compete,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “This final rule will ensure that when consumers see ‘Product of USA’ they can trust the authenticity of that label and know that every step involved, from birth to processing, was done here in America.”

“In addition, the Local Meat Capacity grants are addressing critical processing infrastructure needs for local and regional livestock and poultry producers, ensuring their products get to market efficiently and cost effectively, which supports local economies, new jobs, and more choices for consumers,” Secretary Vilsack added. “USDA is also committed to boosting the farmer’s voice in our seed patent system and enforcing the disclosure laws on the books as we deliver more and better choices for farmers.”

These actions build on President Biden’s [Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy](#) and the Biden-Harris Administration’s [Action Plan for a Fairer, More Competitive, and More Resilient Meat and Poultry Supply Chain](#). They complement a series of other all-encompassing actions by USDA to increase competition in agricultural markets, create a fairer playing field for small- and mid-size farmers, lower grocery costs for consumers, and strengthen local and regional food systems.

“Product of USA” Final Rule



USDA’s final “Product of USA” rule allows the voluntary “Product of USA” or “Made in the USA” label claim to be used on meat, poultry and egg products only when they are derived from animals born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States. The rule will prohibit misleading U.S. origin labeling in the market, and help ensure that the information that consumers receive about where their food comes from is truthful.

USDA’s final “Product of USA” rule is supported by petitions, thousands of comments from stakeholders, and data from a [nationwide consumer survey](#).

Under the final rule, the “Product of USA” or “Made in the USA” label claim will continue to be voluntary. It will also remain eligible for generic label approval, meaning it would not need to be pre-approved by USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) before it can be used on regulated product, but would require the establishment to maintain documentation on file to support the claim. The final rule also allows the use of other voluntary U.S. origin claims on meat, poultry and egg products sold in the marketplace. These claims will need to include a description on the package of the preparation and processing steps that occurred in the United States upon which the claim is made.

USDA has also published an updated [labeling guidance](#) on the use of voluntary U.S.-origin label claims to provide examples of claims and the types of documentation that establishments may maintain to support use of the claims. The guidance will be open for public comment for 60 days after publishing in the Federal Register. Public comments can be submitted at www.regulations.gov.

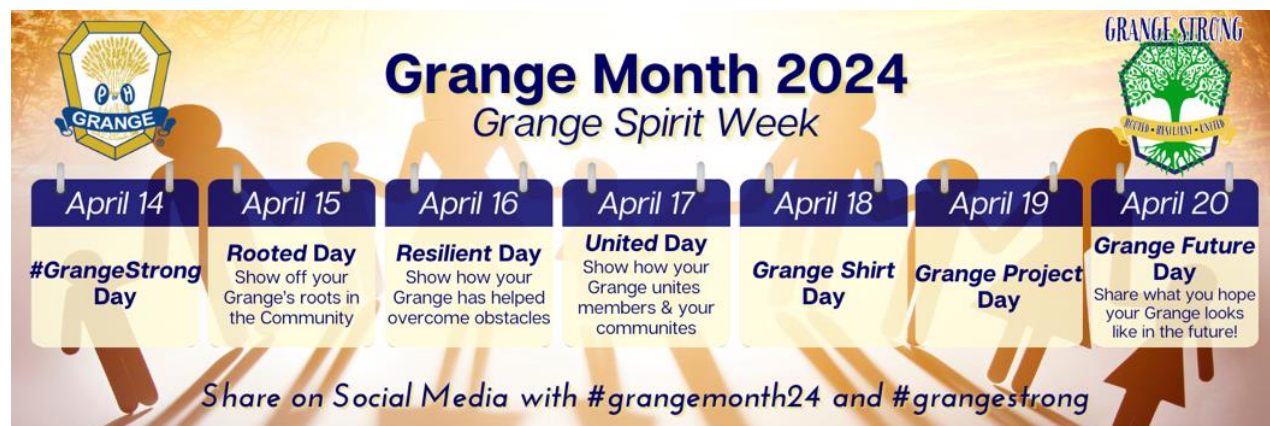
Establishments voluntarily using a claim subject to the final rule will need to comply with the new regulatory requirements by January 1, 2026, and are encouraged to do so as soon as practicable after the publication of this final rule.

This “Product of the USA” labeling is in line with longstanding National Grange policy. The National Grange endorsed and lobbied for this rule after it was announced in March of 2023. This is another great win for Americans, and the National Grange is proud to support the USDA’s decision.

Grange Month materials available

Grange Month is coming up quickly in April, and it's time to start planning! New resources are available on the National Grange website, including new themes and ideas for Grange Spirit Week. This year, the theme **#GrangeStrong** will help focus the work of Granges nationwide.

Please take advantage of the materials in your Granges. Is there something you're missing that you'd like to see? Contact us and we'll see what we can do! [View the materials here.](#)



Save the Date: Rural Minds and National Grange to present webinar

Be sure to save the date – Wednesday, March 27, at 7pm ET (4pm Pacific) – for our first “Connections” webinar in the 2024 series: “Rural Mental Health Resilience Program Launch Webinar.” [Learn more and register for free here.](#)

Have you successfully used the Rural Mental Health Resilience Program in your Grange, or have you used any of the materials to talk to an individual or with a small group or other organization? Please reach out to [Philip Vonada](#), and we may feature your story on the webinar.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

with Amanda Brozana Rios



Join Membership & Leadership Development Director Amanda Brozana Rios on March 20 at 8:30pm Eastern (5:30pm Pacific) for the next **Membership Matters**.

This month's Zoom event features John Neff, Midwest Region SHIPmate, as he discusses the importance of proper **coaching**.

[Click here to join](#)

Grange Spotlight: White Clover Grange “Pie Day”

Written by Ken Erickson, White Clover Grange #784 (OR)

Welcome to the Nehalem Valley in Oregon!

For 93 years, this valley has been home to our beloved White Clover Grange #784. We are proud members of our tri-village area (Manzanita, Nehalem, and Wheeler) and are the caretakers of our grand 102-year-old (and counting) Grange Hall.

This stately building was erected in 1921 as the Mohler Schoolhouse, designed by noted architect A.E. Doyle. Doyle was famous for designing many historical buildings in Portland, Oregon, including the Multnomah County Library, and the Benson Hotel, as well as three ocean front homes in Manzanita which still stand to this day. Doyle enjoyed his own seaside cottage, and hosted many dignitaries of the day at his ocean front retreat in the 1920's.

When the area schools were consolidated in 1930, the Mohler School District deeded their land and building for one dollar (\$1.00) to our White Clover Grange. Along with Grange meetings, our 3 close-knit communities also found that the 50' x 25' main hall was the perfect venue to hold events such as weddings, receptions, family reunions, celebrations of life, square dances, concerts, pinochle games, potlucks and many other family and community oriented activities. The Grange sponsored a vibrant 4-H club where local youth honed their skills showing cows, raising small animals, as well as engaging in photography, sewing and other crafts.

The main hall, with its old growth fir floor patina, charming beadboard paneling, and large light-gathering windows that encompass one entire wall, was in great demand and that popularity continues to this day. The ambiance of our building continues with a large downstairs kitchen and dining facility, with cafeteria-style seating, imparting a real hometown flair to whatever event is being held.

Our favorite event, out of the many taking place year-round, is our annual **Pie Day Auction and Feast**. The entire community, including local residents and our fine local businesses, join together to donate pies, sponsorships, and culinary expertise to support maintenance and upkeep projects for our beloved Grange Hall. Plus, holding this event in late January, close to [National Pie Day](#) which shows up every year on January 23rd, is a great way to break up the winter monotony after the holidays. Having an older structure to take care of requires our full-time vigilance. Getting the local population's awareness of and involvement in our needs is also very important, and this event draws folks together to showcase our facility and what we have to offer while also providing an enjoyable and entertaining experience that supports our cause.

Over 130 folks, both young and older, attended this year's 14th annual Pie Day, paying the \$15 admission fee, and then ogling the 24 wonderful hand-baked pies waiting to be auctioned off to the highest bidder, plus two other delicious pies that were raffled off. A gorgeous cheesecake-pie made by our own Grange member Evelyn Mast garnered top bid of \$300. [We've included her recipe!](#) Evelyn created this unique contribution using her homegrown marionberries for the crowning sauce. These berries are a cross between raspberries and blackberries, first grafted together by the Oregon State University agricultural research service. Marionberries are coveted by bakers - not to mention being delicious - and this pie made a delightful dinner dessert for one local family.

A unique feature of our event is the opportunity for the audience members to bid on a “no-calorie pie” at the conclusion of the auction. This allows any audience member to make a contribution to our building fund without inhaling a single calorie! A \$500 bid for said “no-calorie pie”, the highest, garnered the bidder the coveted auctioneer's “I Love Pie” apron. Numerous other “no-calorie” bids were generously offered up by members of our community, bringing the total amount raised for the event to a little over \$11,000.

Immediately following the auction, a table of 35 “feast pies” was laid out and sliced into serving sizes for all to enjoy. Adding to the gastronomical delight was a dollop of creamy Tillamook vanilla ice cream. All the “feast pies” were crafted by local artisan bakers—both individuals and businesses.

Suffice it to say, Pie Day '24 was a rousing and successful fundraising extravaganza—thanks to our dedicated team of Grange members and volunteers alike—kudos to all of you!!!

Being a rural Community Grange with 22 worker-bee members has its challenges, but those are greatly outweighed by the many benefits. We are keeping this wonderful tradition and facility alive and well, and giving the community a place to gather and celebrate, fulfilling the Grange mission statement. To that end, we are proud to espouse our affiliation to the National Grange, and blessed to be a part of the heritage of our wonderful “tri-village” community on the beautiful North Oregon coast. Seeing the myriad of smiling faces at the events at our Grange building is gratifying to say the least making our contribution to our “little slice of heaven” that much more profound.

Happy Grange-ing!!



L-R – Guests check out the pies ahead of the auction; The Pie Day auction in action in the packed Hall; Guests enjoy the feast table!
Photos submitted by Vivi Tallman

Do you want to see your Grange in the Spotlight? Send a brief write-up of an event at your Grange with a few pictures to Philip Vonada, Communications Director, at pvonada@nationalgrange.org. It may be printed immediately, or may be held for a future Patrons Chain or Good Day! magazine.

2024: The Road Ahead to Connect America

By Ed Gillespie, Senior Executive Vice President, AT&T External & Legislative Affairs

2023 was a landmark year for connecting more Americans to high-speed internet access. With all 50 states submitting proposals to participate in the \$42.5 billion BEAD Program, the NTIA is positioned to allocate an historic amount of federal funding to states for broadband deployment projects – which will help connect communities across the country that need it most. And more than 23 million low-income Americans signed up for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), giving themselves better access to education, employment, healthcare and above all more opportunity.¹

Internet service providers like AT&T continued last year to invest billions in infrastructure to expand high-speed broadband access to more counties and cities. Community organizations, private companies and federal and state programs have also invested in innovative solutions to help individuals acquire the digital skills they need to use the internet.

Each of these measures is critical to expanding opportunity for Americans and solidifying the United States as a leader in technology and innovation. While we recognize these accomplishments, it's also important to reflect on the current state of connecting America, there's more work to be done on the road ahead to fully connect our country.

Here are 3 essential areas where we must work together to make progress on our shared national goal:

1). Expand wireless spectrum licenses to meet the data needs of tomorrow

The ability to innovate is vital to our country's international competitiveness and to bettering the daily lives of Americans in every corner of the country.

Innovation is powered by our network, and our network is powered by access to spectrum. These invisible airwaves are the conduits that carry data across the Nation's wireless networks. With Americans projected to use [five times more 5G data by 2027](#), we must act now to secure the necessary pipeline of spectrum to support the data needs of tomorrow and solidify America's place in the global economy.

In 2024, policymakers must take action on spectrum:

- To reassert ourselves on a global stage, we must **correct the imbalance between licensed and unlicensed spectrum** – a widening deficit in the U.S. compared to the rest of the world.
- The private sector cannot currently acquire any new spectrum in the U.S. **Congress must reauthorize the FCC to conduct spectrum auctions immediately** so we can continue investing in America's future.

Every dollar spent by the private sector on spectrum is a dollar spent on improving the quality of life for Americans.

2). Prioritize smart policy to maximize broadband deployment

Internet access means more opportunity for more Americans. We've seen it in places like West Baton Rouge Parish in Louisiana, where we [just connected](#) more than 500 locations as part of a [\\$22 million dollar project](#) between AT&T and the state of Louisiana.

- In rural Vanderburgh County, Indiana, we [recently connected](#) 20,000 homes, businesses and farms to high-speed internet.
- And in July of last year, we announced [AT&T Fiber](#) was available in parts of [Oldham County, Kentucky](#), as part of our build project to connect 20,000 customer locations in the county.

And as technology continues to advance, it's important we continue to invest in communications networks that keep pace with consumer demand.

To maximize investment and help the most Americans connect to the world of opportunities available online, we need to prioritize smart policy that:

- **Turns an eye to the future.** We know fiber is the best solution: offering faster speeds and more capacity today – as well as being easily scalable, less costly to maintain compared to other technologies and more sustainable in the long-term. To best serve consumers today and tomorrow, we need policy that enables investment, not regulations that divert funds toward legacy services that are used less and less by customers.
- **Avoids unnecessary regulations that interfere with the goal to get America connected.** [Overcomplicated and overzealous policies](#) around permitting, rate regulation, pole attachments and taxes on broadband impede expansive deployment. These regulations jeopardize momentum to bridge the digital divide by diverting private sector dollars from innovation and investment.
- **Leverages collaboration between the public and private sector.** When public entities team up with trusted providers, more Americans are connected to greater opportunity. Now is the time to leverage the technical and financial expertise of the private sector – to make sure broadband deployments are efficiently reaching the most people by pairing private and public dollars.

All Americans benefit from great connectivity, and now is the time to clear any roadblocks toward achieving that.

3). Make broadband affordability programs viable long-term

Broadband access isn't just a bipartisan policy priority; it's a major driver of economic opportunity. And Americans rely on internet access not just to compete in our digital economy, but also to support their overall health and well-being and gain access to educational opportunities.

The progress we've made as an industry in expanding broadband access will fall short of our shared goal if Americans do not adopt the services available.

We've seen the success of programs that help those who need it connect to the internet, like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). In fact, ACP has enrolled over [23 million Americans](#) to help them afford broadband services. These Americans are at risk of losing critical access and Congress should act quickly to secure funding for a low-income broadband affordability solution, both in the near term and for the long haul.

As the FCC winds down the ACP, one thing is clear: we need a permanent, sustainable solution to reform programs like the Universal Service Fund (USF) and ACP – and how they're funded – that's designed for how we connect today, and for the people who need it most.

Investment in fiber and spectrum availability is more than an investment in infrastructure. It's how we future-proof America's position as a global leader and expand economic growth.

Connectivity changes everything. Getting these 3 priorities right will improve the quality of life for all Americans.

¹ As of enrollment freeze date on February 8, 2024 (ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker – Universal Service Administrative Company (usac.org))



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

NEW 4TH DEGREE PIN



This is a **BRAND NEW** 1" pin with 1/4" clutch back. Perfect for welcoming new members into the Grange, celebrating milestones, and more. Featuring the Grange emblem, surrounded with the names of the 7 Founders.

Limited quantity available.

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

\$10.00
PLUS SHIPPING

Show that you are **#GrangeStrong** by purchasing your new 4th Degree Pin!



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

COMMUNITY CITIZEN AWARD



This Award is perfect to be presented to those who make a difference in your community. Presented in a vinyl navy folder with the Grange emblem on the front.

Wording: "In recognition of outstanding service to this community and mankind. Your dedication and personal involvement are gratefully and sincerely acknowledged by the members of..."

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

\$12.00
PLUS SHIPPING

Order with paperweight for just \$8 more!

Don't forget to order your Subordinate Community Citizen Award and other awards for Grange Month!

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.starhearing.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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