



# The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE



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## Two Grange members seated on national advisory groups

WASHINGTON, DC - The National Grange is pleased to announce that President Christine E. Hamp has nominated two members to appointments for nationwide industry and governmental advisement groups on behalf.

Marilyn Blasingame will serve as the National Grange representative to the [Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention](#) (AWHP) Advisory Council, and Matt Peterson will represent the Grange on the Accelerating Broadband Deployment on Unserved Agricultural Lands Working Group of the [FCC's Precision Agriculture Connectivity Task Force](#). Both positions were previously held by past National Grange President Betsy E. Huber.

Blasingame, a Prairie Grange #1832 member in Belvidere, Illinois, lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she is a public health worker specializing in infectious disease and sexual health technical assistance. "It is my passion to educate health professionals and do what I can to improve the healthcare system," Blasingame said. She is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a master's in public health. She will serve as the National Grange's Liaison and capacity building specialist for the AWHP Advisory Council

"I am excited to represent the National Grange," she said. "The AWHP is working on some incredible campaigns around women's health, obesity, and cardiovascular health, and I feel honored to add my voice to the many passionate and dedicated members of the organization. Women's health is such an important and often overlooked field, and I am excited to help bring more attention to improving the lives of women across America." Blasingame hopes that working with the AWHP Advisory Council will be able to advance advocacy related to applicable health and healthcare resolutions that have been accepted on the National Grange level. She also plans to highlight important information from the



Marilyn Blasingame (left) and Matt Peterson were each nominated to appointments on behalf of the National Grange.

Advisory Council through Grange news channels to educate Grangers on current events in women's health advocacy.

Founded in 2022, AWHP is focused exclusively on women's preventive health across all life stages and irrespective of any one disease area. We work in partnership with a diverse ensemble of leading women's health-focused organizations to advocate for equitable, accessible, and affordable preventive care.

Peterson is a member of Custer Center Grange #103 and lives in Ansley, Nebraska. He is a member of a multi-generational family farm and ranch operation, serves as a customer enablement specialist for a digital agriculture company, and owns and operates Peterson Clear Creek Ag Solutions, LLC. "I am excited to be part of bringing broadband access to all of rural America," Peterson said. "I bring the perspective of the agricultural business owner who relies heavily on dependable internet access."

He believes that the FCC's Precision Agriculture Connectivity Task Force is aiming to advocate for the needs of rural America – just like the Grange.

Peterson will serve on the Accelerating Broadband Deployment on Unserved Agricultural Lands Working Group. This Working Group aims to develop policy recommendations to promote the rapid, expanded deployment of broadband Internet access on unserved agricultural land, aiming to achieve reliability capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural land in the United States by 2025, including recommending specific steps for the FCC to consider, as well as indicating areas where funding should be directed.

National Grange President Christine E. Hamp nominated Blasingame and Peterson for these appointments based on their direct connections to the missions of the working groups. "I believe wholeheartedly in finding members with expertise in the field to fill positions like these," Hamp said. "I want to use and showcase their talents and get as many of our members involved in public policy and advocacy issues on behalf of the Grange as possible."

## Using the Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors program



Announced in November at the National Grange Convention, the National Grange received a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award (EADI #30051). This award has allowed the development of the [Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors](#) program, which aims to help prepare senior citizens and others living in rural communities for surgery, post-surgical care, and decisions that must be made when aging.

In January, every Grange in the country should have received packets of information about the program, including a flash drive of videos and other files. We encourage **all Granges** to present this program or portions of it to their Granges and communities.

**About the Program:** The Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors program includes more than two dozen videos and two guides/question prompt lists to help older adults make decisions about their healthcare and home life. It includes a [2-minute trailer](#) and [22-minute video](#) that are great introductions to the program and will lead people to the program website – [www.seniorsurgeryguides.com](http://www.seniorsurgeryguides.com) – where all the materials are available to watch, download, and use at home.

This program was prepared by the National Grange and medical experts, with input from Grangers and community members.

**How to use the program:** We encourage Granges to hold community meetings where they can present the information to their Grange and the community. The Grange is a natural conduit, working for the benefit of the communities where they serve, and this is just one more form of outreach to make a stronger, more resilient community.

We encourage Granges to show the trailer, introduce the program, and then show the 23-minute video which highlights portions of the program that can be found online. If time permits, showing some

of the other videos about specific aspects (i.e. Falls, Talking to Others, Preparing Your Home) can help get those in attendance acquainted with the program. Additionally, we recommend printing copies of the guide and brochure to distribute, encouraging those in attendance to use them.

The Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors program can also be used as an ongoing Lecturer's Program, as many facets of the program can be used and talked about – consider bringing in other medical or senior care experts in your area to enhance the program and make it “your own.”

This program is also an easy outreach opportunity for your Grange in places like county fairs, bazaars, Grange dinners and fundraisers, or other places your Grange is visible in the community.

Other ideas include working with your local health system or neighborhood pharmacy to distribute the information, and partnering with churches, Lions Clubs, senior centers, or other groups to present the program.

**Why should you participate:** The first 15 State Granges and 250 Community Granges across the country can receive a cash incentive for presenting the program and [submitting a report](#). Check the images for the requirements. When submitting your report, include the number of people impacted (or give a rough estimate if it's presented at a fair/festival/hospital/etc.) so we can ensure we have reached enough people, which will give the National Grange further opportunities to develop impactful programs like this.

The Grange is the *trusted voice of rural America*, and this is one more way that your Grange can make an impact!

If you have questions about the program, contact Joan C. Smith, project manager, at [rrss@grange.org](mailto:rrss@grange.org).

#### STATE GRANGE INCENTIVES

**FIRST 15 STATE GRANGES = \$500**

- State Grange Host a RRSS Event - #s
- Publish RRSS Program in State Newsletter 6 Times - # Of Folks Receiving Each Newsletter
- Provide Info On Social Media, Local Media [TV, Radio, News] (Provide Screenshot Or Full Article) - #s Circulated
- Display/Give At State/County Fair, Guides – Provide #S Exposed
- Incorporate Into State Convention – Workshop On Topic (Joan C. Smith Can Present, Only Housing Req)
- PROVIDE SEMI-ANNUAL TOTALS OF PEOPLE INFLUENCED - Report In May And October Email: [rrss@grange.org](mailto:rrss@grange.org)
- Conduct any 3 of above. Checks at 2024 NG Convention



#### COMMUNITY GRANGES INCENTIVES

**FIRST 250 COMMUNITY GRANGES = \$100**

- Conduct a Grange Program - # present
- Conduct a Public Forum(s)/Program(s) - #present
- Provide Video/Guides to 3 Other Organizations (Church, Senior Cntr, VFW, Masons, Clubs, FFA, 4H) – name and #s present/provided information
- Have a Display/Fair & Hand-Out Guides - #s
- Provide Info on Social Media, Local Media [TV, Radio, Newsprint] (Provide screenshot or full article)
- PROVIDE SEMI-ANNUAL TOTALS OF PEOPLE INFLUENCED – Report in May and October Email: [rrss@grange.org](mailto:rrss@grange.org)
- Conduct any 3 of above. Checks at 2024 NG Convention

## Introducing The Grange Hall podcast



“The Grange Hall” podcast has launched! “**Episode 0**” with Meagan & Phil is now available.

Join hosts Meagan McDonald (WA) and Philip Vonada (PA) as they interview Grange members from around the country about their Grange history, their Grange’s history, and where they see the Grange going in the future – and anywhere in between.

**The Grange Hall** aims to welcome diverse voices within the Grange, highlighting local members who are “movers and shakers” within the Grange.

This podcast is *not* just for current Grangers! We encourage you to share this podcast with friends, family, and others who may be interested in or curious about the Grange.

The Grange Hall will release a new episode every other Wednesday, starting April 17. Listen on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Amazon](#)/Audible, or [iHeartRadio](#). You can also listen on [PodBean](#) or watch on [YouTube](#)!

*Do you know a Grange member who would be a “good fit” for the podcast? Email your suggestion to [grangehallpod@gmail.com](mailto:grangehallpod@gmail.com) and let us know why they should be featured. Please include your Grange, State, and your suggestion’s contact information.*



## Middle Branch Grange seeks support after fire

In late January, a fire badly damaged the 112-year-old hall owned by Middle Branch Grange #463 (Bethel, VT). Grange President Jillian Dean says, "We are desperately trying to recover and discover how we can keep our Grange alive while we have no hall to meet in or host fundraisers in." Unfortunately, their insurance will not cover all of the damage to the Hall.

Although they have received support from their community, and the American Legion is letting them meet there, they are struggling to get back on their feet. "Our hall is a great loss to the community," says Dean, "We are so lucky to have our hall still standing, although it has sustained serious damage." One of their members is a volunteer firefighter, who made sure the Charter was saved, just as it started to burn. Thankfully, it is able to be saved and restored.

Middle Branch Grange is asking for your (or your Grange's) support in helping them come back to life for their community.

Donations can be mailed to:

Middle Branch Grange  
PO Box 296  
Bethel, VT 05032

Or you can donate through their [Zeffy fundraiser](#), where all donations go directly to the Grange as a nonprofit.



**LECTURER'S FORUM**  
with Tom Gwin,  
National Grange Lecturer  
April 23  
8:30pm Eastern/5:30pm Pacific  
Connect: <http://grange.biz/lecturerforum>

Join us next Tuesday evening (April 23 at 8:30pm Eastern/5:30pm Pacific) for the next **Lecturer's Forum** with National Grange Lecturer Tom Gwin.

Learn about various aspects of Grange programming and how you can get involved in this bi-monthly forum.

This event is open to more than just Grange Lecturers – anybody who is interested in making the Grange stronger is welcome and encouraged to attend.

[Click here to join](#)

**Save the Date!**  
REGISTRATION OPENS  
MAY 1  
Learn more: [www.nationalgrange.org](http://www.nationalgrange.org)  
MEET US AT THE RIVER  
BETTENDORF, IOWA  
NOV. 12-16, 2024

Stay tuned for more information about the 2024 National Grange Convention in Bettendorf, Iowa!

This year's convention is going to bring many new ideas, great changes to the workshop schedule, a host "banquet" on a river boat – open to all – and more!

Registration will open on May 1.

## Climate change is shifting how and when we prepare our gardens

By Claire Carlson, for The [Daily Yonder](#) – originally written for Keep It Rural

Gardening is changing. Last fall, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released an updated [plant hardiness zone](#) map that shows which plants do best in which parts of the country. About half the country was moved into a warmer hardiness zone, reflecting our climate change reality.

The map update puts to paper what farmers and gardeners across the country have been noting for more than a decade now: summers are on average getting hotter and drier. Extreme weather events like heat waves or flooding are also becoming more common, according to [climate scientists](#), which means that even if you're now technically able to grow warmer-weather plants, you're still contending with extreme weather that could put stress on your garden. In other words, an early cold snap could kill those lemons you were so excited might finally grow in your hardiness zone.

This new map also reflects the effect of growing metropolitan areas where pavement and buildings absorb more heat than rural areas, according to [researchers](#) from the University of Washington. You can see this play out in my corner of Oregon, where the farther outside of the Portland metropolitan area you go, the later the [average last frost date](#) is.

To me, this shows how essential it is to pay attention to your specific locale. Take my mom, for instance: she's in a small suburb outside of Portland where 100-foot trees line her property and deer the size of elk (her words) strut across her front lawn, gnawing on every alleged "deer resistant" plant in sight. She's had to adapt to a shady yard with voracious herbivores. She grows a lot of potted tomatoes that she can position in the spots of sun that speckle the fenced part of her yard, away from the deer. Her plants are well-hydrated thanks to the enormous trees that keep temperatures at her house 10-15 degrees cooler than less vegetated parts of town during the hottest parts of the year.

In contrast, at my house in southeast Portland, there are miles of paved road and nary a tree in sight. During the peak of summer, temperatures can reach over 100 degrees Fahrenheit and *feel* like 100 degrees, and you can imagine how unhappy that makes my plants. I grew up in a desert where water conservation is second nature, so the idea of watering during the hottest weeks of summer is a total contradiction in my mind.

This year, I've decided I won't be gardening in late summer because of this. My gardening season will be from late March to early July, and anything that survives past then? I'll take note of it for next year, but I'm not going to fret over which plants I did and did not keep alive while we (me, my plants, and I) were fighting for our lives inside an urban heat island. To use the words of Ifeoma Ozoma from this wonderful [interview](#) about gardening in New Mexico, "...[I] believe that anything planted in the ground that can't survive without assistance after it's established isn't meant to be planted here."

The new hardiness map is a good jumping-off point for gardeners, but paying attention to how specific plants respond to the different soil types in your yard or knowing which of your window sills is ideal for perching an oregano plant on is the best way to set yourself up for success. The more local your knowledge, the better.

And as the climate continues to warm, bracing ourselves for – and adapting to – the changes that come with it is going to be essential. On the plus side, maybe someday I actually will be able to grow lemons in Oregon.



2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Access a detailed map at <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>  
Courtesy of the USDA



## APPLY FOR A DEAF AWARENESS GRANT

DEADLINE: MAY 1  
AWARDS UP TO \$1,000!

All details and application available at [grangefoundation.org/deaf](https://grangefoundation.org/deaf)



## **SHIPmates applications open for second class**

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

TRAINING PROGRAM FOCUSES ON MEMBERSHIP, LEADERSHIP, FELLOWSHIP  
*2024 SHIPmates will be selected from each region; applications now open*



Are you seeking a way to get more involved and give back to the Grange, by strengthening and sharing our wonderful organization with the next generation of Patrons?

SHIPmates is a training program that focuses on Grange membership, leadership and fellowship development. Launched in 2023, we are seeking additional members to join the seven individuals selected for our first class and add to our crew so, together, we will chart a course forward.

The program offers participants professional-level training on various leadership topics and a deep dive into Grange rules and traditions, organizational procedures and much more.

### *What are some attributes of a SHIPmate?*

They are unashamed of their love for the Grange and belief that it is a necessary institution, perhaps now more than any time since its founding.

They can talk easily with people they don't know, and are described by some as having "never met a stranger."

They say "Box? What box?" They are creative and committed to finding solutions that others may see as impossible – a word that is like gasoline to the fire.

SHIPmates enjoy fellowship with other Patrons and make their rounds to talk to as many Grange Brothers and Sisters as they can at an event.

They are unafraid to express their opinion in a civil and respectful manner. Servant leadership is not just a concept to SHIPmates, but a mindset and something they live by.

SHIPmates don't shy away from learning more. They are willing to read books relevant to leadership development, membership growth and more.

They are confident communicators who can jump on a Zoom meeting, visit with others by phone, respond in a timely fashion to emails and are essential members of the hype squad for the Grange.

SHIPmates are dependable workhorses, not overcommitted to the point where they're unable to dedicate time and energy to a passion project.

**If this sounds like you, this is your call to action and invitation to apply to become a member of the SHIPmates crew this year.**

### *What are the time and financial commitments and how do I apply?*

SHIPmates begin remote training in August and will attend the 158th Annual National Grange Convention in Bettendorf, Iowa, for 9 days from the evening of Nov. 8 and leaving on Nov. 17. The crew continue to meet via Zoom at least monthly, attend their regional conferences as they are able and more.

Generous sponsorship by Potomac Grange #1, which prides itself as being "The Grange of the Founders," provides funding to cover participants' hotel, registration, ticketed meals, and books or supplies for SHIPmates. Additional sponsorship and support by some State Granges and individual state and national leaders helps offset additional meal costs. SHIPmates are required to fund their own travel, but may seek support from their local, Pomona or State Grange.

Any member of Subordinate Grange age may apply between April 1 through June 15 to be a part of the program. One member for each of the five National Grange Convention host regions will be selected to participate with an additional member from anywhere throughout the country selected to focus on "unestablished territories" and underrepresented populations. A special exception to the "one SHIPmate per region" rule may be made for a couple that wishes to participate together; however, the region or couple may have to provide funding for registration and meals (in the amount of approximately \$250).

To apply, complete the application online at [grange.biz/shipmateapply](https://grange.biz/shipmateapply) or use the application found on our website under the Programs tab on the Grange/Member Programs page in full by no later than June 15, 2024.



Completed applications will be sent to the State Presidents and/or deputies of each of the States in the applicable region. Together, along with the 2023 SHIPmate of their region, the leaders in that geographic area will choose the SHIPmate for their region and may select a "first alternate" in case their first selected applicant cannot participate. A sixth SHIPmate, focused on non-Grange territories and underrepresented populations, will be selected from the remaining applicants after regional representatives have been chosen. This individual or couple will be selected by the director, National President, Potomac Grange representatives and 2023 SHIPmates.

If you are ranked first in your region, you will receive notification of selection by July 5 and must confirm your availability to participate by July 20. If the first selection cannot participate, the first alternate will be contacted as soon as possible.

More information can be found on the National Grange website.

## **Be part of the Grange Story – apply for the Communication Fellows**



For the 11<sup>th</sup> year, the National Grange is accepting applications for Communication Fellows, to become a vital part of telling the Grange Story at the 158<sup>th</sup> National Grange Convention in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Communication Fellows receive training in various forms of press and media, including writing press releases, feature stories, and editorials, working in social media platforms, video editing, and much more. Fellows will have access to most parts of the National Grange Convention, with the opportunity to network with current and future Grange leaders, including past Communication Fellows – some of whom are now State Grange Presidents and National Grange Delegates.

Any Grange member is welcome to apply to be a part of this year's class of Communication Fellows. The application and more information is available on the National Grange website.

**NEW THIS YEAR** – we are reserving one position in the Fellows for a non-Grange member student leader from 4-H, FFA, AFA, MANRRS, NJHA, or other similar agricultural organizations. Applicants from this category must be at least 18 years of age – a separate application will soon be available on the website.

*All applications are due July 1, 2024.*

Training will begin in August 2024 with biweekly meetings covering various topics of the Grange and aspects of communication.

Fellows are expected to be in Bettendorf ready to work by 10am on Saturday, November 9, and to be on-site through November 16th.

Communication Fellows must fund their way to the Convention. Other related costs (hotel, per diem, and supplies) are covered thanks to funding by Grange Advocacy and [donations to the Grange Foundation](#).

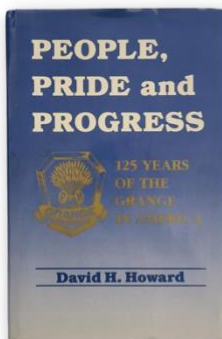
**[Find the application and more information here on the National Grange website.](#)**

If you have any questions, please contact Philip Vonada, Communications Director.



**SUPPLY STORE**

[www.grangestore.org](http://www.grangestore.org)



### **PEOPLE, PRIDE AND PROGRESS**

**125 Years of Grange in America**  
by David H. Howard

335 Pages, pub. 1992

**WAS: \$12**

**SALE PRICE: \$6.00**  
plus shipping

Get your copy by ordering online  
through the Grange Supply Store at  
[grangestore.org](http://grangestore.org) or by calling Loreta at  
(202) 628-3507 x109.

*People, Pride and Progress* is written by  
Grange member David H. Howard.

### **About the book:**

The Grange has been an important voice for the citizens of rural America. Over a century ago rural values and the traditional agricultural way of life were threatened, farmers felt, and concurrent with organization of labor unions, America's farmers joined together in the Grange for protection. This is the story of 125 years of the Grange.


## Grange Member Benefit: Lenovo - *Shop like Lenovo Employees!*

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Text **GRANGELENOVO** to 833-344-0228 to receive exclusive limited time offers.

For assistance with purchases, call: 1-888-315-7408 (M-F: 9am-9pm ET, Sat: 9am-6pm ET)

*Be sure to check the website often – special offers change frequently.*

**SUPPLY STORE**



## **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](http://grangestore.org) or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

[www.grangestore.org](http://www.grangestore.org)

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**Leadership Training and Membership Development** - Amanda Brozana Rios, National Grange Membership and Leadership Development Director. Contact to learn more about membership recruitment or how to start or reorganize a Grange, leadership training and more. Email [abrozana@nationalgrange.org](mailto:abrozana@nationalgrange.org) or call/text (301) 943-1090

**Legislative and Policy Issues** Burton Eller, Legislative Director. *National HQ*, ext. 114 or email [beller@nationalgrange.org](mailto:beller@nationalgrange.org)

**Membership Recognition, Grange Supply Sales, Grange Programs and Member Benefits**

Loretta Washington, *National HQ*, ext. 109 or email [Lwashington@nationalgrange.org](mailto:Lwashington@nationalgrange.org)

**Free Grange Websites, Emails, *Good Day!* subscription questions, and Membership Database**

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