



NC GRANGE LEADS DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS

Edneyville Grange and the surrounding Hendersonville, North Carolina community was in the path of Hurricane Helene. The aftermath is devastating as many families have lost everything. Clean-up crews have been working tirelessly to restore power, internet, and roads.

Grange members have been reaching out to the State Grange Office asking how they can help. We have been in touch with Wendy Henderson, President of Edneyville Grange. She informed us that she has reached out to a local school in Edneyville that is extremely concerned with the wellbeing of children and parents. They gave her a list of items that would benefit these families.

Jennie Gentry also spoke with high school teachers in Henderson County, friends associated with FFA and 4-H. Their main concern has been making sure students are accounted for and determining their families' needs. This has been very difficult without the ability to communicate or travel into areas to check on their students, some of whom live in other local hard-hit communities like Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, Bat Cave, and Gerton.

Wendy Henderson mentioned a great need for several items that schools will need for students and their families. Below is information on how you and your Grange can help.

What to Collect:

- New Coats of all sizes
- New Sweatshirts of all sizes
- Gift cards to Walmart

Drop Off/Mailing Location:

- Grange Office in Statesville:
by Monday, October 14

Address: 1734 Wilkesboro Hwy,
Statesville, NC

Hours: Monday - Thursday,
9:00am - 4:00PM; Friday, 9:00 am
- 1:00pm

To arrange Saturday or Sunday drop off, or outside of these hours during the week, contact our office: 704-878-0000 or jwgentry@ncgrange.com.

Making Cash Donations:

- Write a check to **Edneyville Grange** and mail to:
Wendy Henderson
29 Arabian Ln
Hendersonville, NC 28792
- Write a check to the **NC**

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UPCOMING

October 16 @ 8:30pm ET
Membership Matters
<https://grange.biz/matters>

October 20
GROW Club Travel Scholarship deadline
<https://grange.biz/gctravelscholarship>

October 22 @ 8:30pm ET
Lecturer's Forum
<https://grange.biz/lecturerforum>

November 1
Deadline for National Grange Convention Registration
<https://grange.biz/ng158>

KANSAS WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT

Nathan Strawder of Burlington, KS, has been elected President of the Kansas State Grange by the delegate body at the 153rd Annual Kansas State Grange Convention held in Gardner. Strawder, who previously served as President from 2012 to 2016 and was most recently a member of the Executive Committee, is taking on the leadership role once again.

Reflecting on his election, Nathan shared, "It is a privilege to serve this incredible organization in this position once again, and I am eager to continue our mission of supporting Kansas

agriculture and rural communities. I am excited for what lies ahead!"

Since its founding in 1873, the Kansas State Grange has been a key force in strengthening the state's agricultural sector and rural communities. Strawder is committed to upholding the Grange's values, stating, "I am eager to continue our mission ensuring that our rural way of life is allowed to prosper for generations to follow."

For more information about the Kansas State Grange, visit www.kansasgrange.org.



Nathan Strawder was elected as Kansas State Grange's new president. He previously served in the office from 2012-2016. *Photo provided*

VILLEWORTH GRANGE BRINGS JOY WITH FLOWERS

submitted by Jessica Horton

VilleWorth Grange #1300, North Carolina

VilleWorth Grange located in Huntersville, NC has operated a community garden since 2021. Each season has brought different challenges and opportunities with the garden and 2024 was no different. Despite starting over 40 tomatoes, 10 okra and 9 peppers, the vegetables just were/are not performing as expected.



When VilleWorth Grange's vegetables didn't take off, they pivoted and planted flowers, which "blossomed," then were given away for free to community members. *Photo by Jessica Horton*

We were able to collect some produce and distribute it, but not the amount we had hoped for. We believe the initial visit from our four-legged friends who topped many of the plants are to blame for most of our heartache and frustration.

However, in the spirit of not giving up, we pivoted. A few weeks after getting the vegetables in the ground, we sowed flower seeds as well on either side of our center row. Those flowers grew with vigor and became a happy spot in the garden. Once the flowers reached maturity in August, we began harvesting blooms. For several weeks we simply cut flowers and left them for people to take home during the weekly community breakfast. Then, on the final week of breakfast, we made 12 individual bouquets for people to take home.

Each week, everyone commented on how much they loved the flowers. We even had a neighboring church come cut extra for their Sunday service. While this was never the intention of our garden project, we are glad to have still brought joy to our town!

OPINION: THE EXPIRATION OF THE FARM BILL HURTS US ALL

by Christine E. Hamp
National Grange President

The failure of Congress to pass a new farm bill—or even extend the current one—is not just political gamesmanship; it's a devastating blow to farmers, rural communities, those living in poverty, and ultimately all Americans. As the National Grange President, I am profoundly disappointed by Congress's inability to unite and renew this critical piece of legislation. The consequences of this inaction are far-reaching, and the ripple effects will be felt across our nation, from the most rural areas to our largest cities.

Farmers are the backbone of our nation's food system, and when a farm bill lapses, so too does the certainty farmers need to plan for the future. The 2018 farm bill was a comprehensive bipartisan piece of legislation that included provisions for crop insurance, conservation programs, and disaster relief—all of which provided a safety net to farmers facing volatile markets and unpredictable weather. With its expiration, farmers now face increased uncertainty, which can lead to reduced food production and higher consumer prices.

We had hoped for a new bill that would address the evolving challenges of modern agriculture, but instead, Congress has left rural America hanging. No new bill. No extension. No ability to show that Congress is truly working for or caring about the people who voted for them. This is a disservice not only to farmers but also to the entire rural economy, which relies on farm bill-funded initiatives, including broadband expansion, rural development, and healthcare programs. The longer this impasse lasts, the more rural America falls behind, widening the gap between rural and urban prosperity.

It's not just farmers who are hurt by this failure. The farm bill also encompasses essential programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps millions of Americans—especially families, seniors, and children—avoid hunger. For many in both rural and urban areas, SNAP is the difference between having a meal on the table or going hungry. By allowing the farm bill to expire without a new one in place, Congress is putting the most vulnerable Americans at risk. These families are already struggling to make ends meet as inflation drives up the cost of food and essentials. Failing to renew the farm bill or extend it is nothing short of negligence.

The National Grange is deeply disappointed that Congress has failed to reach a bipartisan agreement on either a new Farm bill or a meaningful extension. The 2018 farm bill was a remarkable example of what can be achieved when lawmakers work together. It provided comprehensive support not only for farmers and ranchers but also for conservationists, rural communities, and those needing food assistance.

The current political gridlock is unacceptable—especially when it directly hurts constituents who deserve better from their elected officials. Farmers, ranchers, and rural communities cannot be left to fend for themselves while Congress delays action. Americans struggling with food insecurity cannot afford to wait for political games to end before they receive the help they need.

The National Grange, along with millions of Americans, expects better from our leaders. This is not an issue of red versus blue; it is an issue of feeding our nation, protecting our land, and supporting the communities that



National Grange President Christine E. Hamp.

keep our country running.

We call on our elected leaders on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to rise above partisan politics and come together in the best interest of the country. The time for action is now. We urge Congress to work swiftly toward a new farm bill that meets the needs of modern agriculture and addresses the food security, environmental, and economic challenges of today. If that cannot be done quickly, then Congress must at least pass an extension of the 2018 farm bill to prevent further harm to farmers and struggling families.

We cannot afford to wait any longer. Each day without a farm bill or an extension deepens the uncertainty and pain for farmers, rural Americans, and those in poverty. The National Grange is ready to work with lawmakers from both parties to ensure that the next farm bill addresses the challenges of the 21st century. We urge Congress to act with urgency and to restore faith in the legislative process by passing a bipartisan plan that works for everyone—before more damage is done.

COW CHORES REQUIRE NO SECRET CODE

submitted by Claudine Lefever
Centerville Grange #81 (WA)
Amateur Cow Whisperer's Blog

I started this blog a few years ago but didn't finish it and it was lost in my writing files. This morning, I ran across it while sorting my writing files. The memory of it is much more humorous now after time has gone by than in the moment of it. If you're a Granger, you'll find it even fitting with National Grange Convention just around the corner.

The Gatekeeper replied a second time in a hushed annoying tone, "The Word?" At this my heart began beating so loud it was like thunder rolling in my ears and my face was flushing into deep shades of crimson.

I had learned **The Word** months ago and I had repeated it time and time again out loud to myself. Usually while doing cow chores. I had even made up a silly cheer song in which to remember it by.

I had obtained my 5th and 6th Degrees at Washington State Grange a few months ago. They said it was important to remember "The Word" if you were going to gain entrance through the doors at National Grange Convention's 7th Degree ceremony. I had not taken this information lightly. I was no spring chicken. Perhaps that was the problem. Maybe I was too old to retain new information?

No. That couldn't be it. I had been given "The Word" in secret by a mentor Granger at my Pomona Grange to gain entrance at the Washington State Grange's 5th and 6th Degree ceremony. And it had worked and that was only a few months ago.

The cows had daily raised their heads, and you could almost see the disdain on their faces, and the rolling of their eyes at me as I had sung my made-up cheer

song to them repeatedly in those few long months.

"I'm a Granger D-E-T-E-R-M-I-N-E-D to remember the word determined. Yes, I'm D-E-T-E-R-M-I-N-E-D to get the highest Grange degree. Go determined, yes, yes, yes!"

Truth be told, I even sang it to my two young grandsons because even if they talked and could pronounce the word no one would know what in the heck grandma had meant by the word.

Now, back at the "gate", well the entrance doors into the 7th Degree ceremony at National Grange in Sparks Nevada. Surrounded by the glitzy lights and the snazzy outfits that were everywhere, a place where my cheer would have fit right in. Well, laugh out loud, maybe not!

The Gatekeeper on the entrance doors was a tall and burly guy who took his job seriously, as a Grange Gatekeeper should. Even though his arms weren't crossed his body language was stern and firm like a bouncer. He asked me again, "The Word?" and as I said, "determined" again and he shook his head almost rolling his eyes at me just as the cows had. I was certain he was going to bounce me right out of the lavish and ornate event hall. I would be too embarrassed to tell my Subordinate Grange that I didn't get my Degree because I couldn't even remember the simple word. And I wouldn't even be able to tell a tall tale about



Claudine Lefever poses with some of the cows she sang to.

Photo submitted

being bounced for being wild and crazy at the casino!

Out of thin air a kind, familiar voice was whispering a mind twister in my ear and if I could answer it then I would have the correct "word" because the word determined was only the yearly word for Subordinate Granges.

Really? I had been diligent and paid close attention to the 5th and 6th Degree work and ceremony that I participated in, and I could not recall having heard what she was whispering in my ear. The poor cows. They had listened to that silly cheer for months needlessly. I wouldn't tell them and no one else could either.

Thank you, Martha S., I will never forget your graciousness at helping a Granger National newbie. I'm so happy that you, like so many other Grangers from all over the Nation, have become friends of mine in the Grange. I sincerely hope one day I can pay your kindness forward to another Grange newbie, at any level because whether at Subordinate, Pomona, State, Regional, or National it is an organization full of wonderful people from all walks of life.

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GRANGE FOUNDATION SEEKS BOARD CANDIDATES

submitted by Joan C. Smith

Chair, Grange Foundation Board of Directors



The Grange Foundation is seeking candidates to join the Board of Directors, with election to be held on November 11 during the National Grange Convention.

The two-year term runs from November 2024 through November 2026. We will be electing two members for the expiring terms of Joan C. Smith (DC - not seeking reelection) and Marty Billquist (MT). The Board of Directors meets 8 times a year, every other month; five (5) meetings via ZOOM and three (3) face-to-face at National Grange Leaders' Conference and

at the National Grange Convention.

The Grange Foundation supports youth development, promotes agriculture education and research, improves communities, and fosters culture, heritage, citizenship, and charitable activities.

Come join your Grange Foundation Board, be part of the programming of the Grange at the National level.

Please email ngfb@grange.org telling us why you would like to be part of this Board and a short biography. I look forward to hearing from many of you. Your responses will be provided to all delegates prior to the Convention to support the voting on Monday, November 11.

Candidate information is **due by November 1.**



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SALMON RIVER GRANGE MEMBER SHOUTOUT!

submitted by Amy Brown

Salmon River Grange #516 (OR)



Laura Sweitz, a member of Salmon River Grange, receives a special shoutout from her Grange! *Photo submitted*

Today we have water. It's been a long couple of years and a battle like no other but with amazing people in our Grange we accomplished one of the most needed and most essential needs in the Grange building itself.

Laura Sweitz is a long time member and with several of us working our part we were finally able to utilize a grant that brought us the funds to make it happen.

I want to thank Laura Sweitz personally here for doing everything she could and using

every resource she had available to ensure that this happened. And it did.

She is a selfless woman with many talents and her strong connection to faith has made it possible to help us move forward together as a Grange. You will find she works despite personal and health issues. She works through the good and the bad. She just works. She's a gem.

We want to thank her for all she is and all she has done for this Grange.

FAIRDALE GRANGE GOLFS, DONATES



Every year, Susquehanna County Interfaith in Montrose, PA collects money to buy children a backpack and new pair of shoes to go to school. Fairdale Grange #1157 (PA) held a golf tournament earlier this summer and used proceeds from it to donate \$2,500 to the cause.

Photo submitted by Kathy Parks

SECRET CODE

I looked way up at the Gatekeeper (I'm short) one last time and met his eyes that appeared to be screaming, "You're never going to get this," and yet he asked me one last time, "The Word?" This time I answered correctly with, "___," and he made the signal with his hand that I could enter. Yep, he didn't even open the door for me. No balloons or glitter fell from the ceiling like it does in prize shows or contests. No fanfare yelled, "YAY". It was just a quiet memorious moment for me to remember with a chuckle once it was over.

I wouldn't have been handed a 7th Degree pin and a handshake if the cows had been there on either side of me like when I stand in the feeder chucking out their hay they would

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have at least swung their heads from side to side saying, "You did it Amateur Cow Whisperer, you don't need a code with us, we love you," and with the swaying of their heads the hay mucous spit would fly through the air slapping me on the back. That would have been good because on most days it hits me in the face! Just like my fellow Grangers my cow herd is full of friends too.

Life is too short. Try new things. Treasure the one's you love. Laugh daily, even at your own expense...



Claudine received her 7th Degree at the 156th Annual Convention in Sparks, Nevada.

Photo submitted

DISASTER RELIEF

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State Grange Disaster Fund with "Edneyville Relief" on the memo line and send to:

NC Grange
1734 Wilkesboro Hwy
Statesville NC 28625

You can also donate directly through Square by visiting this link:
<https://square.link/u/FPainwkz>.

Thank you for your willingness to donate these items to support Edneyville and its surrounding communities in Henderson County. We are relieved that our Edneyville Grange members are safe and appreciate Wendy for the information so that we can join together to assist their community in this desperate time of need.

Please contact the Grange Office (jwgentry@ncgrange.org) with any questions.

The National Grange is also aware of damage to Goodwill Grange in Virginia and the surrounding Troutdale area. We are in touch with the Virginia State Grange and are working to get information on how to support Goodwill Grange, too.

Submit your stories,
events, and ideas to...

GRANGE  Today!

<http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit>

YOUTH VOLUNTEER AT FARMAID

by Gayle Reyburn

National Junior Grange Ambassador

On Saturday, September 21, 2024, I had the opportunity to represent the Junior Grange at FarmAid in Saratoga Springs, New York. Grangers, FFA members, 4-H members, and members of other youth organizations worked together to run the HOMEGROWN Youthmarket.

The members of the youth organizations met before the event started to set up the Youthmarket stands. We then headed over to the amphitheater where multiple farmers from the region told their stories and where famous music artists, including Willie Nelson, showed their support for FarmAid.

After the event officially opened to the public at noon, we spent most of the day working in one of the two farm-fresh stands. The HOMEGROWN Youthmarket stands provided fresh produce, including fruits, vegetables, baked goods, cider, and juice, from local farms and businesses for people to purchase and enjoy throughout the day. While working in the stand I got to interact with FFA members and customers. Some of the customers were also Grange members!

Throughout the day, we got some breaks to see and enjoy the event. After the stand was almost completely sold out and closed for the day, we were



Gayle takes a break and poses with PA Grange Youth Ambassador Sadie Johnson while volunteering at FarmAid in late September.
Photo submitted

able to enjoy the rest of the concert. We heard artists like Willie Nelson and Family, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews, and Margo Price perform throughout the day.

Overall, it was a fun day representing the Junior Grange while meeting new people and selling farm-fresh produce to the attendees at FarmAid.



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GRANBY HOSTS 2024 CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE FAMILY FESTIVAL

submitted by Dave Roberts

Granby Grange #5 (CT)

Granby Grange #5 in Granby, Connecticut, proudly hosted the 2024 Connecticut State Grange Family Festival on Sunday, August 4, at the historic Grange Hall.

The event was co-sponsored by the State Grange's Family Activities and Lecturer's Departments, co-chaired by Dawn Percoski and Dave Roberts. This year, the event featured a variety of activities, including a pancake breakfast fundraiser organized by Granby Grange, a photography contest sponsored by the Connecticut State Grange Lecturer's Department with 40 Adult entries and 11 Youth entries, and a crafts competition and teacup auction hosted by the Connecticut State Grange Family Activities Department.

The day was a hit, with many attendees praising the new accessibility improvements at the Grange, including the handicapped ramp, recently completed porch and unisex accessible bathroom. This was the first State Grange event hosted at

Granby Grange Hall since the Grange successfully rejuvenated its membership ranks.

Granby Grange is proud to be the home Grange of Connecticut State Grange's first President, Harvey Goddard.



Granby Grange Treasurer Carol Innes, Granby Grange Lecturer Judy Doyle, and Family Festival Co-Chair Dawn Perkosi prepare for the 2024 Family Festival. Photo submitted



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prices vary

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NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION REGISTRATION ENDS SOON

The 158th Annual National Grange Convention, being held in Bettendorf, Iowa from November 11-16, 2024, is now just about one month away.

We are in our final Late Registration period, which runs through November 1. If you're planning to **Meet Us at the River**, be sure to get your registrations in to ensure you have tickets to meals, tours, and events!

The schedule of events is available on the National Grange's website at <http://www.nationalgrange.org/158thconvention>.

In the past few weeks, we have been releasing our workshops. The full, tentative workshop schedule can now be accessed at <https://grange.biz/158workshops> or via the QR code at the end of the article. The workshop team is still finalizing some plans - so keep up to date with this live document.

In addition to workshops, we are excited to welcome Lukas Pietrzak, Special Policy Advisor, Office of the Assistant Secretary, National Telecommunications and



Lukas Pietrzak from the NTIA will be the speaker at the Advocacy Lunch on Tuesday, November 12. Photo provided



Information Administration (NTIA), who will be our speaker at the Advocacy Lunch on Tuesday.

Lukas is a policy expert on rural Broadband connectivity, who many may remember from our 2024 National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-In where he discussed reaching the "last country mile." He will lead a "fireside chat" at the lunch, so if you have questions, please submit them to pvonada@nationalgrange.org.

Some of the Convention workshops include:

Wreaths Across America, led by Connie Johnston (MI) and Bonnie Mitson (ID)

Learn more about the National Grange Community Service project and create mini wreaths to take back home.

Food Safety for Group Meals - Keep Your Food Safe, led by Ann Bercher (MN), certified culinary specialist.

Learn about food safety rules, times, and tips. How can you keep your food safe for consumption at

potlucks and other meal events?

Board and Brush

This special workshop requires pre-registration (\$40 + \$2 registration fee). Pick a design and create one-of-a-kind wood art.

Weather Forecasting Now & In the Future, led by Andrew Stutzke, Senior/Morning Meteorologist for Good Morning Quad Cities

Explaining the methods and tools that meteorologists use every day, trying to stay one step ahead of an ever-changing and dynamic atmosphere.

Stay tuned over the next few weeks to learn about our workshops and what YOU can learn at this year's Convention.



Scan to access the 2024 Convention Workshop schedule.

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NATIONAL GRANGE

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Publisher Christine Hamp, National Grange President. Available to members at champ@nationalgrange.org or by phone at (509) 953-3533

Editor Philip J Vonada, National Grange Communications Director. Contact to submit a story idea for *Grange Today!* or *Good Day!* magazine, request assistance with publicity, business cards, social media, and more. Email pvonada@nationalgrange.org or call/text (814) 404-7985

Leadership Training & Membership Development - Amanda Brozana, 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 or call/text (301) 943-1090

Legislative and Policy Issues Burton Eller, Legislative Director. *National HQ*, ext. 114 or email beller@nationalgrange.org

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Loretta Washington, *National HQ*, ext. 109 or email Lwashington@nationalgrange.org

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