

158th Annual Convention
of the

NATIONAL GRANGE

Journal of Proceedings



**Journal of Proceedings
of the
National Grange
of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry**

158th Annual Convention
Bettendorf, Iowa
November 12-16, 2024

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THE GRANGE MISSION



Strengthening individuals, families and communities through service,
education, nonpartisan grassroots advocacy and agricultural awareness.

- Adopted 2024

2023-2024 NATIONAL GRANGE OFFICERS

President	Christine Hamp 14619 West Jacobs Road, Spokane, WA 99224	(509) 953-3533	champ@nationalgrange.org
Vice President	John Benedik 1401 Cobblestone Court, Flemington, NJ 08822	(908) 507-7999	jbenedik@grange.org
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Gatekeeper	David Allen 11255 Unity Church Road, Mooresville, NC 28115	(704) 640-4893	
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High Priest Emeritus	Bruce Croucher 2414 County Road 25, Clifton Springs, NY 14432	(315) 462-3067

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Howard "Sonny" Hays-Eberts
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TENNESSEE

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WISCONSIN

Debbie Vine
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*Honorary Delegate***POTOMAC (DC)**

Mark Gibbons
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Crofton, MD 21114

CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Agriculture

Kevin Cooksley, NE – Chair

Lynette Schaeffer, IL – Secretary
Melanie Bostwick, KS
Wayne Campbell, PA
Mike Griffin, ME
Melvin Phelps, NY
Allen Stiles, MD

Audit & Budget

John Benedik, NJ – Chair

Joyce Billquist, MT – Secretary
Dwight Baldwin, IA
Duane Hamp, WA
Susan Hanks, CA
Chip Narvel, DE
Buddy Overstreet, TX
Judy Sherrod, TN
Sarah Strawder, KS

Citizenship & Taxation

Christopher Johnston, MI – Chair

Corey Spence, MA – Secretary
Robert Buck, CT
Crystal Allen, NC
Harry Greer, CO
Mike Russell, OH
Martha Stefenoni, CA
Debbie Vine, WI
Gary Wardle, CO

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Kay Stiles, MD – Secretary
Matt Espenshade, PA
Tom Gwin, WA
Sonny Hays-Eberts, OR
Richard Javaux, ID
Don Schaeffer, IL
Stephen Seuberth, DE
Billy Shufeldt, OK

Education & Health

Mark Gibbons, DC – Chair

Debbie Campbell, PA – Secretary
Ann Bercher, MN
Christopher Dean, MA
Danielle Hartley, RI
Eileen Javaux, ID
Barb Narvel, DE
Debbie Russell, OH
Anna Seuberth, DE
Tricia Taylor

Grange Growth & Development

Richard Stonebraker, MD – Chair

Joseph Stefenoni, CA – Secretary
Kathy Baldwin, IA
Marty Billquist, MT
Donna Keeton, OK
Karen Overstreet, TX
Pete Pompper, NJ
Jay Sexton, OR
Jason Smith, IN

Grange Law

Walter Hartley, RI – Chair

Cindy Greer, CO – Secretary
Roger Bostwick, KS
Kathy Gibson, MA
Joe Goodrich, VT
Sandra Green, NY
Susan Noah, OR
Nathan Strawder, KS
Kathy Wardle, CO
Leroy Watson, NH

Labor, Judiciary, Transportation & Postal Policies

David Allen, NC – Chair

Mark Noah, OR – Secretary
Glenn Gibson, MA
Kendal Holden, VT
Connie Johnston, MI
Brittney Pittman, WA
Ted Powell, CT
James Taylor, VA
Cheryl Watson, NH

OFFICIAL CONVENTION PROGRAM

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

8:00 a.m. Executive Committee Meeting
11:30 a.m. Host Banquet – Aboard the *Celebration Belle*
2:15 p.m. Delegate & Officers Meeting
& Grange Foundation Meeting
5:30 p.m. Welcome Reception
7:30 p.m. Committee meetings

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

8:00 a.m. Committee Meetings
9:00 a.m. Delegate Group Photo & Headshots
10:00 a.m. Opening of the 158th Annual Convention
10:30 a.m. Admission of Fourth Degree Members
11:00 a.m. President's Address
12:00 p.m. Session Recesses
12:15 p.m. Advocacy Luncheon
1:00 p.m. Showcase & Grange Store Opens
2:00 p.m. Session Reconvenes
5:30 p.m. Session Closes
7:30 p.m. Committee Meetings
8:00 p.m. National Grange Story Slam

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

8:30 a.m. Session Opens
12:00 p.m. Session Recesses
12:15 p.m. Salute to Agriculture Luncheon
2:00 p.m. Session Reconvenes
5:00 p.m. Youth Check-in & Orientation
5:30 p.m. Session Recesses
7:30 p.m. Session Reconvenes –
Quilts of Valor Presentation
Celebration of Remembrance
Grange Hall of Fame Presentation
9:30 p.m. Session Closes
9:30 p.m. Committee Meetings
9:30 p.m. Youth Hang Out

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

8:30 a.m. Session Opens
Election of Officers
12:00 p.m. Session Recesses
12:15 p.m. Buffet Lunch
2:00 p.m. Session Reconvenes
5:00 p.m. Session Closes
5:00 p.m. Assembly of Demeter Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. Youth Party / Gathering
9:30 p.m. Youth Hang Out

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

8:30 a.m. Session Opens by Youth Officers
12:00 p.m. Session Recesses
12:15 p.m. Past Voting Delegates Lunch
2:00 p.m. Session Reconvenes
2:00 p.m. Sign-a-Song & Public Speaking Judging
3:00 p.m. Installation of Officers
5:00 p.m. Session Closes
5:30 p.m. G.R.O.W. Club Social & Meeting
7:30 p.m. National Grange Recognition Night
9:30 p.m. Ice Cream Social

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

8:00 a.m. Grange Foundation Board meeting
10:00 a.m. Sixth Degree Conferral
11:00 a.m. Junior Activities Day
1:00 p.m. Seventh Degree Conferral
3:15 p.m. Convocation of the Assembly of Demeter
6 p.m. Grange Strong Celebration Banquet
& Foundation Auction
7:45 p.m. Grange Trivia Contest

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 158th ANNUAL NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION

PRE-CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

158th National Grange Convention

Monday, November 11, 2024

Isle Casino Hotel / Quad Cities Convention Center – Bettendorf, Iowa

The Host Banquet was aboard the *Celebration Belle* riverboat.

A Convention Overview and Budget meeting for Officers and Delegates was held at 2:15 p.m.

Vice President John Benedik (NJ) introduced the new Delegates along with their mentors. They are —

<u>New Delegate</u>	<u>Mentor</u>
Susan Hanks (CA)	Barbara Foster (WV)
Stephen Seuberth & Anna Seuberth (DE)	Tricia Taylor (NH)
Sara Strawder (KS)	Debbie Vine (WI)
Mike Griffin (ME)	Billy Shufeldt (OK)
Melvin Phillips (NY)	Jay Sexton (OR)
Crystal Allen (NC)	Karen Overstreet (TX)
Sonny Hays-Eberts (OR)	Wayne Campbell (PA)
Kendal Holden (VT)	Jimmy Taylor (VA)
Brittney Pittman (WA)	Ann Bercher (MN)

The convention schedule was reviewed. Worthy President Christine Hamp (WA) talked about the sale of the building. Brother John Benedik (NJ), Chair of the Audit & Budget Committee gave a report of the Investment committee. The proposed budget was presented by Brother Buddy Overstreet, (TX), Executive Committee member. There was discussion on the budget with the Executive Committee and Worthy President Hamp answering questions.

Worthy President Hamp talked about the grants that the National Grange had available.

Grange Advocacy report was given by Brother Leroy Watson (NH), Chair of the Grange Advocacy Board of Directors.

Foundation Meeting Annual Meeting – The Grange Foundation is a Trust and is not Incorporated. Because it is a Trust, it will consist of an Advisory Board who will report to the Board of Trustees, which consists of the Executive Committee.

A Grange Foundation meeting followed with Sister Joan Smith (NJ), Chair, presenting the annual report. The Grange Foundation supports Youth Development, promotes Agricultural education and research, improves communities, and fosters culture, heritage, citizenship, and charitable activities. There was an election for two Board members for the Foundation. The newly elected Board members are Brother Marty Billquist (MT) and Brother Mark Gibbons (DC).

The Welcome Reception began at 5:30 p.m. Speakers included Christine Hamp, President of the National Grange, Doug Baldwin (IA) and Kathy Baldwin (IA) as Co-Chairs of the Midwest Host Committee, Bettendorf Mayor Robert S. Gallagher, Dave Herrell, President and CEO of Visit Quad Cities. The hosting states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

FIRST DAY

158th National Grange Convention

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Isle Casino Hotel / Quad Cities Convention Center – Bettendorf, Iowa

The 158th Annual Convention of the National Grange was called to order in the Seventh Degree at 10:00 a.m. by High Priest, Roger Bostwick (KS) in the Isle Casino Hotel and Convention Center, Bettendorf, Iowa.

The National officers marched in and formed an altar circle, before going to their stations. The soloists for the opening were Brother Gene Edelen (IA) and Emma Edelen (IA), the pianist was Mark Naylor (OH). National President Christine Hamp (WA) opened the Grange in the Seventh Degree, followed by the High Priest Roger Bostwick (KS) leading the salutation of the Seven Degrees.

The American Flag was presented with the singing of the National Anthem followed by the presentation of the Grange flag by Steward Chris Johnston (MI).

There being no further business to come before the Grange in the Seventh Degree at this time, High Priest Roger Bostwick (KS) and Priestess Annalist Martha Stefanoni (CA) were escorted from the hall to prepare for the conferral of the Seventh Degree.

The Grange was then lowered to the Fourth Degree and Fourth Degree members were admitted to the hall. Each of the flags from the Midwest Region states were presented by members from each state as follows:

Iowa – Samantha Hanson	Michigan – Sharen Popler
Illinois – Lynette Schaeffer	Minnesota – Ann Bercher
Indiana – Paula Lohrman	Ohio – Kevin Evans

Roll call of officers and Assembly officers found all present with the exception of National Flora, Welina Shufeldt (OK), with Donna Keeton (OK) serving pro-tem. Roll call of Delegates showed all states represented. Honorary Delegate was Potomac #1. A roll call of National staff members followed.

Brother John Benedik (NJ), Chair of Audit and Budget committee, gave a credentials report, which was adopted. President Hamp announced that there was a quorum present.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the printed convention schedule with an amendment of moving the President's Internal Address to 4:00 today; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the Standing Rules for the 158th annual session; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded that the Budget will be voted on Thursday at 10:00 a.m.; motion carried.

Brother Walter Hartley (RI), Chair of the Grange Law Committee, gave a partial report —

Transferred —

701 (IA) "Support for National Grange Host Committee to Grange Growth and Development

702 (IL) "Electronic Links for Online National Grange Policy Book" to Grange Growth and Development

704 (OR) "Disposition of Resolutions by National Grange Committee to Grange Growth and Development

708 (IL) "Search Features for On-line National Grange Policy Book to Grange Growth and Development

All were accepted.

Brother David Allen (NC), Chair of the Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee gave a partial report—

Transferred — 814 (MD) Reforming SNAP Program Eligibility for Children and Families to the AG Committee and was accepted

Withdrawn — 820 (NY) "Providing Child Care for Police Officers.

Brother Allen reported that their Consent Calendar is on SharePoint and can be adopted after 10:40 a.m. tomorrow.

Brother Christopher Johnston, (MI), Chair of the Citizenship and Taxation Committee gave a partial report.

Transferred — 306 WA "Supporting All Veterans Returning to Civilian Life to Education and Health and was accepted.

Withdrawn — 314 (NH) "Retroactive Recognition of Disability by The Social Security Administration.

Consent Calendar — is on SharePoint and can be adopted after 10:42 a.m. tomorrow.

Brother Richard Stonebraker (MD), Chair of the Grange Growth Committee gave a partial report.

Transferred —

608 (NY) "Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange to Education and Health

610 (NY) "National Grange Headquarters" to Audit and Budget, both were accepted.

Withdrawn — 603 (CT) "Changes to Recognition of 80 Year Grange Members.

Brother Kevin Cooksley (NE), Chair of the Agricultural Committee gave a partial report.

Withdrawn —

105 (TX) "Right to Retain Crop Seed

116 (MA) Support for Full Funding for the National AG in the Classroom

121 (MD) "Livestock Indemnity Program".

Transferred — 110 (WA) "U.S. Dietary Guidelines Classification of Potatoes" to Education & Health and was accepted.

Sister Barbara Foster (WV), Chair of the Conservation Committee gave a partial report.

Transferred —

404 (MD) "Creating a New USDA Forest Conservation Easement Program"

405 (MD) "Opposing the Use of USDA Funds or Authority to Convert Private Agricultural or Forestland to Ground Mounted Solar Installations" to AG Committee and they were accepted.

Withdrawn — 406 (OH) "Curb Production of Electric Vehicles".

Consent Calendar — is on SharePoint and can be adopted at 10:48 a.m. tomorrow

Brother John Benedik (NJ), Chair of the Audit & Budget Committee gave a partial report.

Withdrawn —

201 (CO) "National Grange Expenses"

202 (TX) "Pertaining to National Grange Building"

203 (MT) "Pertaining to National Grange Building".

Brother Mark Gibbons (DC), Chair of the Education & Health Committee gave a partial report.

Withdrawn —

505 (TX) "Education and Debt Responsibility"

515 (MD) "Prescription Drug Co-Pays".

President Hamp (WA) called for a short recess.

Vice President, John Benedik (NJ) assumed the President's station and called the Grange back to order. Brother Benedik introduced Worthy National President Christine Hamp (WA). President Hamp (WA) gave her external address.

Vice President Benedik (NJ) assigned sections of the National Grange President's Address to various committees.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the Worthy National Grange President's external address in its entirety and will appear in the *Journal of Proceedings* as ordered by the delegate body; motion carried.

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess until 2:00 p.m.

The Advocacy Luncheon was held at noon with guest speaker Phil Lehmkuhler from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange to back to order in the Fourth Degree at 2:00 p.m.

A motion was made and seconded that we release President Hamp's external address to the public; motion carried.

Sister Betsy Huber (PA), Past National President was the honored guest and was presented to the President's station. Worthy President Hamp presented Sister Huber with a portrait of her as the 23rd President of the National Grange.

Brother Christopher Johnston, (MI), Chair of the Citizenship Committee gave a partial report.

- CIT-301 (OR) – "National Government Office Age Limits" – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution CIT 302 (OR) "Support for Pacific Standard Time" to the Committee's report; motion defeated.

- CIT-302 (OR) "Support for Pacific Standard Time" – Rejected
- CIT-303 (TX) "Congress to Designate Election Day as a Federal Holiday" – Rejected
- CIT-304 (TX) "Congressional Term Limits" – Rejected due to Present Policy
- CIT-305 (TX) "Create an Age Limit for the President of the United States" – Rejected – it is covered by CIT-301

A motion was made and seconded to amend to strike the first Resolve and eliminate the word "these" from the 2nd Resolve for Resolution 307 (CA) Establish Guardrails in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI); motion defeated.

A motion was made and seconded to send Resolution 307 (CA) Establish Guardrails in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) back to the Committee; motion defeated.

- CIT-307 (CA) "Establish Guardrails in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)" – Adopted
- CIT-308 (CA) "Prohibit Corporate Stock Buybacks" – Rejected
- CIT-309 (VA) "Recognize and Support the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or Similar Program as Essential Infrastructure for Equitable Access to Resources" – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution #310 (PA) United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution #310 (PA) United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains; motion carried.

- CIT-310 (PA) "United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains" – Adopted
- CIT-311 (PA) "Student debt forgiveness tax credit for agribusinesses" – Adopted
- CIT-312 (KS) "Making Election Day a Federal Holiday" – Rejected
- CT-313 (MD) "Robo Calls" – Present Policy
- CIT-314 (NH) "Retroactive Recognition of Disability by The Social Security Administration" – Withdrawn

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess until 4:25 p.m. to get ready for the President's Internal Address.

Vice President Benedik (NJ) called the Grange to back to order in the Fourth Degree. He introduced President Hamp for her Internal Address. Vice President Benedik (NJ) then assigned sections of this report to several committees for review.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the Worthy National President's internal address in its entirety and will appear in the *Journal of Proceedings* as ordered by the delegate body; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to release this address to local communications; motion carried.

Closing Song was "Good Night Grangers".

President Hamp closed the Grange.

Pianist for today was Mark Naylor (OH).

The evening program was a workshop by the Communication Fellows called National Grange Story Slam.

SECOND DAY

158th National Grange Convention

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

Isle Casino Hotel / Quad Cities Convention Center – Bettendorf, Iowa

President Christine Hamp (WA) opened the second day of the 158th Annual Convention of the National Grange in the Fourth Degree at 8:30 a.m. following an entrance march by the National officers.

Opening song was "It's a Good Thing to be a Granger".

All Officers and Delegates were present, with the exception of Ann Bercher, Minnesota Delegate.

The minutes from the first day of the session are on SharePoint for your review. Any corrections should be given to the National Secretary by noon today.

Brother Kevin Cooksley (NE), Chair of the Agricultural Committee gave a partial report. The Consent Calendar is available on SharePoint and change recommendations have been posted in SharePoint for review and can be adopted after 8:56 a.m. tomorrow.

- AG-114 (CA) – "Solar Family Farms" – Rejected - State Issue
- AG-115 (IA) – "Supporting Local Control of Small Scale of Food and Farm Products" – Rejected – State Issue
- AG-128 (CA) – "Protection of California's Agricultural Farmland Which Promotes Food Security For The Nation" – Rejected – State Issue
- AG-104 (TX) – "Foreign Country Agriculture and Business Property Purchases" – Present Policy
- AG-106 (TX) – "Right to Self Repair Farm Equipment" – Present Policy
- AG-108 (WA) – "Labeling of Naturally Produced Meat" – Present Policy
- AG-109 (WA) – "Support for Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling for Beef" – Present Policy
- AG-111 (CA) – "Agriculture Under Attack" – Present Policy

- AG-117 (MD) – “Enhancing Efforts to Collect, Track, and Share Information Regarding National Security Risks Arising from Foreign Investments” – Present Policy
- AG-130 (NY) – Processing Revival and Intrastate Exemption (PRIME) Act” – Present Policy
- AG-131 (OH) – Stop Foreign Entities from Buying Land in the United States” – Present Policy

Brother Mark Gibbons (DC), Chair of the Education & Health Committee gave the 2nd partial report – it is available on SharePoint for review, can be adopted after 9:11 a.m. tomorrow.

Brother Kevin Cooksley (NE), Chair of the Agricultural Committee gave a partial report.

- AG-101 (NC) – “Oppose Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Disclosures for Farmers” – Adopted
- AG-102 (NE) – “Mandatory Electronic Identification (EID) for Cattle” – Adopted
- AG-103 (TX) – “Establishing a USDA Program to Support Farmers with Disabilities” – Adopted
- AG-119 (MD) – “Expanded Use of Trained Dogs to Safeguard Domestic Agriculture” – Adopted
- AG-118 (MD) – “Establishing a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee under the USDA Crop Insurance Program” – Adopted
- AG-120 (MD) – “Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Schools” – Adopted
- AG-122 (MD) – “Reallocating USDA Conservation Funding Authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act” – Adopted
- AG-124 (MD) – “Support for Adding Food Hubs to Farmers Markets and Expanding the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture” – Adopted
- AG-125 (MD) – “Support Passage of the Federal EATS Act” – Adopted
- AG-126 (MD) – “Tree Assistance Program” – Adopted
- AG-127 (MD) – “Utilizing Livestock Grazing to Reduce the Risks of Wildfires on Federal Lands” – Adopted
- AG-129 (NY) – “All-Electric Vehicles in Agriculture” – Adopted
- AG-107 (WA) – “Halt Ongoing Injury to the U.S. Sheep Industry” – Adopted
- LJT-814 (MD) – “Reforming SNAP Program Eligibility for Children and Families” – Adopted
- CON-404 (MD) – “Creating a New USDA Forest Conservation Easement Program” – Adopted
- CON-405 (MD) – “Opposing the Use of USDA Funds or Authority to Convert Private Agricultural or Forestland to Ground Mounted Solar Installations” – Adopted as Amended

Brother David Allen (NC), Chair of the Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee gave a partial report.

- LJT-801 (IL) – “United States Postal Service” – Rejection – Present Policy
- LJT-802 (OR) – “Age Limits for U.S Supreme Court” – Rejection
- LJT-803 (OR) – “National Legalization of Marijuana for Controlled Recreational and Medical Use” – Rejected
- LJT-804 (OR) – “Opposition to Local Transportation Optimization by USPS” – Rejected
- LJT-805 (TX) – “1944 Water Treaty Between Mexico and the United States” – Rejected – Present Policy
- LJT-806 (TX) – “Support for the Legalization of Medical Use of Marijuana” – Rejected – State Issue
- LJT-807 (WA) – “Consumer Choice to Opt In or Opt Out” – Adopted
- LJT-808 (CA) – “Create National Wildfire Insurance Program” – Adopted
- LJT-809 (CA) – “De-schedule Cannabis From Federal Drug Scheduling” – Rejected
- LJT-810 (CA) – “Regulation of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles aka Drones” – Rejected – State Issue
- LJT-811 (MN) – “Federal Funding to Support Research on Gun Violence And Mitigation” – Rejected
- LJT-812 (NJ) – “Cannabis Law Improvement” – Rejected – Present Policy
- LJT-813 (MD) – “Foster Care” – Rejected – State Issue
- LJT-815 (MI) – “Balloon Releases and Chinese Lanterns” – Rejected – State Issue
- LJT-816 (NH) – “Establishing Credentials for Individuals with Communication Disabilities” – Rejection – State issue
- LJT-817 (NY) – “Combating Illicit Xylazine” – Adopted
- LJT-818 (NY) – “Opposition to Kill Switch in Automobiles” – Adopted
- LJT-819 (NY) – “Protecting Workers from Excessive Heat in Workplace” – Rejected - Present Policy
- LJT-821 (OH) – “Additional Legal Parking Spaces for Long Haul Trucks” – Rejected
- LJT-822 (OH) – “Reopening Ashtabula U.S. Coast Guard Station” – Rejected

Brother David Allen (NC), Chair of the Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee's 2nd partial report was accepted. Sister Barbara Foster (WV), Chair of the Conservation Committee gave a partial report.

- CON-401 (OR) – “Opposition to Removal of Dams on the Snake River” – Rejected – Present Policy
- CON-402 (CA) – “United State Forest Service Funding” – Adopted
- CON-407 (OH) – “Extreme Environmentalism” – Rejected - Present Policy
- CON-403 (ID) – “Delisting Grizzly Bears from the Endangered Species Act of 1973” – Adopted

Brother Christopher Johnston, (MI), Chair of the Citizenship and Taxation Committee gave a partial report.

- CIT-315 (NY) “Expediting Broadband Services” – Rejected – Present Policy

A motion and second to amend the Resolved in Resolution CIT-316 (NY) “Social Security Expansion Act” by adding at the end of the sentence “or similar legislation”, motion carried.

- CIT-316 (NY) “Social Security Expansion Act” – Adopted as Amended

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution CIT-317 (NY) “TRUST Act”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution CIT-317 (NY) “TRUST Act”; motion carried.

- CIT-317 (NY) TRUST Act – Adopted
- CIT-318 (OH) Term-Limits – Rejected – Present Policy

Brother Christopher Johnston, (MI), Chair of the Citizenship & Taxation Committee 2nd Partial – Consent Calendar – adopted with corrections on Page two of Present Policy. That portion of the Present Policy will go back to the original form. 2nd Partial of the Consent Calendar was adopted.

- CIT-501 (IA) – “Rights of People Regarding Choices Affecting their Bodies” – Rejected – Covered by CIT-511-CA
A motion was made and seconded to send Resolution CIT-511 (CA/IA) back to the committee; motion carried.
- CIT-511 (CA/IA) – “The Right for Families to Choose Their Family Planning” – Sent back to Committee
- CIT-502 (OR) – “Health Care and Health Care Providers Policy” – Adopted
- CIT-510 (CA) – “Medicaid Estate Recovery Program” – Rejected – Covered by CIT-503 (OR)
- CIT-503/(OR)/(CA) – “Limit Medicaid’s Estate Recovery Program” – Adopted
- CIT-504 (OR) – “Medicare and Dementia” – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX”; motion carried

A motion was made and second to remove NCAA from the 2nd Resolve of Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to remove the first Resolve for Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the amendment to the amendment for Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to amend by removing “female athletes from Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX”; motion carried.

Resolution CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX” now reads:
RESOLVED: that The National Grange encourage the US Government to enforce Title IX.

- CIT-506 (TX) – “Female Sports Participation Under Title IX” – Rejected
- CIT-507 (WA) – “Gluten in Food” – Rejected – Present Policy
- CIT-508 (CA) – “Healthy Family Planning Via Early Vasectomies” – Rejected

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution CIT-509 (CA) “Labeling of Food Products That Contain Gluten”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution CIT-509 (CA) “Labeling of Food Products That Contain Gluten”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to remove the second Resolve of Resolution CIT-509 (CA) “Labeling of Food Products That Contain Gluten”; motion carried.

- CIT-509 (CA) – “Labeling of Food Products” – Adopted as Amended
- CIT-512 (PA) – “FAFSA Farm and Small Business Asset Exemption” – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to amend Resolution CIT-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High Risk Occupations” by replacing the word “companies” with the words “provider entities”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to send Resolution CIT-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High Risk Occupations” back to the committee; motion carried.

- CIT-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High Risk Occupations” – Sent back to Committee
- CIT-514 (CT) – “Controlling Interest Rates for College Loans” – Adopted

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess until 2:00 p.m.

The Salute to Agriculture Luncheon was held at 12:15 p.m. with speaker Halei Heinzel, the 77th Alice in Dairyland.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order in the Fourth Degree at 2:00 p.m.

Closing the Grange in the Fourth Degree today after the evening activities will be the winner from the Foundation Fundraiser “Sashes up for Grabs.” The following will be filling the National Officer chairs:

President – Scott Lyle (WA)	Gatekeeper – Gloria Paddock (MT)
Vice-President – Victor Stevens (WA)	Ceres – Charlene Shupp Espenshade (PA)
Lecturer – Nettie Hartley (RI)	Pomona – Sarah Strawder (KS)
Steward – Corey Spence (MA)	Flora – Melissa Kudsk (WA)
Assistant Steward – Garrett Phelps (NY)	EC – Theresa Kenney (MA)
Lady Assistant Steward – Katie Squire (CA)	EC – Richard Javaux (ID)
Chaplain – Suzy Ramm (OR)	EC – Mark Noah (OR)
Treasurer – Christina Webster (CA)	EC – Marisa O'Dell (IL)
Secretary – Naomi Fletcher (CA)	

The National Secretary reported that there were no substantial corrections to the minutes. President Hamp stated the Pre-Session minutes and the minutes of the First Day stand approved as read.

Brother Mark Gibbons (DC), Chair of the Education & Health Committee gave a partial report.

- EH-516 (MD)– “Whole Milk in Schools” – Rejected – Present Policy
- EH-517 (NY) – “Unhealthy Use of Social Media and Internet”, Rejected – State Issue
- EH-518 (NY) – “Use of Zyn Nicotine Pouches by Youth”, Rejected

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution EH-520 (PA) – “Uniform Time of Exemption from Federal Price Negotiations for New Biologic and Small Molecule Pharmaceuticals to the original Resolve”, motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution EH-520 (PA) – “Uniform Time of Exemption from Federal Price Negotiations for New Biologic and Small Molecule Pharmaceuticals”; motion carried.

- EH-520 (PA) – “Uniform Time of Exemption from Federal Price Negotiations for New Biologic and Small Molecule Pharmaceuticals” – Adopted
- CIT-306 WA – “Supporting All Veterans Returning to Civilian Life” – Adopted
- AG-110 WA – “U.S. Dietary Guidelines Classification of Potatoes” – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to amend Resolution GGD-608 (NY) “Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange to remove all the words after the word Degree”; motion failed.

A motion was made and seconded to amend Resolution GGD-608 (NY) “Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange” to read **RESOLVED**: that the National Grange research the use of closed captioning features for National Grange convention; motion carried.

- GGD-608 (NY) – “Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange” – Adopted as Amended
- EH-519 (PA) – “Mental Health Absences from School”, Rejected – State Issue

Brother Mark Gibbons (DC), Chair of the Education & Health Committee’s 2nd Partial of the Consent Calendar was adopted.

Brother Richard Stonebraker (MD), Chair of the Grange Growth Committee gave a partial report.

- GGD-601 (IA) – “Censoring Grange Mail” – Rejected
- GGD-602 (NJ) – “Use of Electronic Payment Systems to National Grange” – Rejected

A motion was made and seconded to send GGD-604 (DE) “Suicide and Crisis Lifeline” back to committee; motion carried.

- GGD-604 (DE) – “Suicide and Crisis Lifeline” – Returned to Committee
- GGD-605 (MI) – “National Grange Website” – Adopted
- GGD-607 (NH) – “Youth Age at the National Level” – Rejected
- GGD-611 (OH) – “125th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign War” – Adopted
- GGD-612 (OH) – “Food Insecurity” – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to change Resolution GGD-614-VT “ASL Sign for “Grange” to as Listed below; motion carried.

RESOLVED: that the National Grange work with the National Association of the Deaf to create and promote the American Sign Language (ASL) sign for “Grange”.

- GGD-614 (VT) – “ASL Sign for “Grange” – Adopted as Amended
- GGD-615 (VT) – “Grange Presence at Oliver Kelley Farm” – Adopted
- GGD-617 (VT) – “Public Service Award Certificate” – Rejected

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess.

President Hamp called the Grange to back to order in the Fourth Degree.

Brother Richard Stonebraker (MD), Chair of the Grange Growth Committee gave a partial report.

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution GGD-616 (VT) – “National Grange Convention”, motion defeated.

- GGD-616-VT – “National Grange Convention” – Rejected
- GGD-606 (NH) – “Location of National Grange Session” – Rejected
- GGD-609 (NY) – “National Grange Convention” – Rejected – Covered by 616 (VT)
- GGD-613 (OH) – “National Grange Convention” – Rejected – Covered by 616 (VT)
- GGD-701 (IA) – “Support for National Grange Host Committees” – Rejected
- GGD-702 (IL) – “Electronic Links for Online National Grange Policy Book” – Rejected
- GGD-704 (OR) – “Disposition of Resolutions by National Grange Committees” – Adopted
- GGD-708 (IL) – “Search Features for On-Line National Grange Policy Book” – Rejected

Brother Walter Hartley (RI) – Chair of the Grange Law Committee gave a partial report.

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution GL-703 (NE) “Subordinate Grange Membership Requirements”; motion defeated.

- GL-703 (NE) – “Subordinate Grange Membership Requirements” – Rejected
- GL-706 (WA) – “Opposition to the Collection of National Dues for Junior Grange Members” – Rejected
- GL-709 (CA) – “Amend 10.14.1 of The National Grange Digest of Laws” – Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:35 p.m.
- GL-711 (CA) – “Amend the National Grange Digest – Officer Titles”, Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:35 p.m.
- GL-713 (DC) – “Strike Requirement to Wear Pin or Regalia at Grange Meeting” – Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:35 p.m.
- GL-712 (DC) – “Counting Granges with Fewer than 13 Members in Total Delegates”, Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:38 p.m.
- GL-718 (NJ) – “Junior Grange Membership Continuous Membership”, Rejected.
- GL-710 (CA) – “Amend the National Grange Digest of Laws, Chapter 12”, Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:46 p.m.
- GL-722-MD – “Adjust the Frequency of Membership Reports Submitted to the National Grange” – Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:49 p.m.
- GL-715 (ID) – “Required Times a Pomona Must Meet”, Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:51 p.m.
- GL-716 (MA) – “Distribution of National Grange Mailing List”, Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:53 p.m.
- GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation”, Can be acted on tomorrow after 4:54 p.m.

Withdrawn — GL-720 (KS) – “Membership for Active-Duty Service Membership”
GL-723 (MD) – “Changes to Fraternal Membership Number in Grange”

Brother Walter Hartley (RI), Chair of the Grange Law Committee’s 2nd Partial Report of the Grange Law Committee was adopted.

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess for dinner until 7:30 p.m.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order in the Fourth Degree. A roll call of states was read by the Secretary with everyone from that state rising and showing their support when their state was called.

Brother Pete Pompper (NJ) was recognized for his 8 years of service (2015-2023) as Community Service Director.

Evening activities consisted of the **Quilts of Valor** presentation to 11 Veterans– with four not present who will get their quilt at a later date. Introductions were given by Kathy Baldwin (IA) with a bio of their military service.

Mark D. Zellman (IL), U.S. Army
David A. Hildebrandt (IA), U.S. Army
Michael Chitwood Sr. (IA), U.S. Army
Cameron Jon Farmer (IA), U.S. Air Force
Joseph E. Edelen (IA), U.S. Air Force
Brian Robert Edelen (IA), U.S. Air Force
Scott C. Chitwood (IA), U.S. Navy
Terrance Kronfelt (IA), U.S. Army

James Craig (IA), U.S. Army
Myron C. Peterson (IL), U.S. Navy
Anthony Neal Hartman (IA), U.S. Navy
Ross John Hendricks (IA), U.S. Army
Charles Anthony MacDonald (IA), U.S. Army
William Wesley Tuman (IA), U.S. Army
Joshua John Gilliam (IA), U.S. Marine Corps

All military and Quilts of Valor recipients were recognized.

The veterans were escorted by three Junior and Youth members – Gayle Reyburn (PA), Jaiden McDougald (NC), and Rachel Edelen (IA)

Celebration of Remembrance of National Chaplain Kay Stiles

The Grange memorial service was conducted by National Grange Chaplain Kay Stiles (MD), assisted by President Christine Hamp (WA), Pomona Barbara Foster (WV), Ceres Cindy Greer (CO), Flora pro-tem Donna Keeton (OK), Secretary Debra Campbell (PA), Sister Lillian Booth (CA), Sister Barbara Borderieux (FL), Sister Nettie Hartley (RI), Sister Joan Smith (FL), and Sister Karen Overstreet (TX) and Pianist was Brother Mark Naylor (OH).

Chaplain Stiles’ theme for the Memorial Service was “I Can Only Imagine”.

“I Can Only Imagine” by MercyMe was performed in sign language by Sister Kathy Gibson (MA).

As the roll was called, State Presidents representing the states of the deceased members read information about them as flowers were placed on the altar for each of them.

Those honored in the Memorial Service were:

1. William “Bill” Rolf Booth (CA), past President of California State Grange; past National Delegate (1989-1993)
2. Wayne Arthur Miller (WA), past National Junior Director (1988-1991)
3. Francis Grove Miller (MD), past President of Maryland State Grange; past National Delegate (1966-1969)
4. Myrtle “Jeanne” Kendrick Clouse (CA), past First Lady of California State Grange; past National Delegate (1993-1996)
5. Wilfred “Bill” Ray Johnson (MT), past First Gentleman of the Montana State Grange; past National Delegate (1995-2001, 2015-2021)
6. Roland Glenn Winter (MI), past President of the Michigan State Grange; past National Grange Executive Committee (1987-1991)
7. Phyllis A. Tooker (NE), past First Lady of Nebraska State Grange

Grange Hall of Fame presentation – Ethen Edwards, Grange Hall of Fame Committee. There were five Grangers inducted into the Grange Hall of Fame.

1. Sister Dosia Eckert (IL)
2. Brother Andrew Failor (IA)
3. Brother Eben Thompson (VT)
4. Brother Woodrow “Woody” Tucker (RI)
5. Sister Clara Waldo (OR)

Roll Call was called for the National Officers pro-tem “Sashes up for Grabs” winners as listed below—

President – Scott Lyle (WA)
Vice-President – Victor Stevens (WA)
Lecturer – Nettie Hartley (RI)
Steward – Corey Spence (MA)
Assistant Steward – Garrett Phelps (NY)
Lady Assistant Steward – Katie Squire (CA)
Chaplain – Suzy Ramm (OR)
Treasurer – Christina Webster (CA)
Secretary – Naomi Fletcher (CA)

Gatekeeper – Gloria Paddock (MT)
Ceres – Charlene Shupp Espenshade (PA)
Pomona – Sarah Strawder (KS)
Flora – Melissa Kudsk (WA)
EC – Theresa Kenney (MA)
EC – Richard Javaux (ID)
EC – Mark Noah (OR)
EC – Marisa O’Dell (IL)

President pro-tem Scott Lyle (WA) closed the Grange in the Fourth Degree after a roll call given by pro-tem Secretary Naomi Fletcher (CA).

Closing Song was “Good Grange Spirit”.

More information on the evening activities will appear in the Journal of Proceedings.

Pianist for today was Brother Mark Naylor (OH).

THIRD DAY

158th National Grange Convention

Thursday, November 14, 2024

The third day of the 158th Annual Convention of the National Grange opened in the Fourth Degree at 8:30 a.m. y President Christine Hamp (WA) following an entrance march by the National officers and their spouses or partners.

Opening Song – “Home on the Range”

Roll call – All Officers and Delegates were found present.

The minutes for the second day of the session are on SharePoint for your review. Any major corrections should be given to the National Secretary before noon today.

Worthy President Christine Hamp (WA) called for the election of office of two Executive Committee members for the National Grange. The election process will allow suggestions from any member in good standing. She gave rules for this process.

President Hamp (WA) appointed the Assembly officers to serve as tellers for the voting. There are 50 voting Delegates.

IT Director Stephanie Wilkins gave her annual report, the full report will be printed in the Journal of Proceedings.

Results of ballot for Executive Committee. Leroy Watson (NH) 21, Joseph Stefenoni (CA) 29. The majority of votes were for Joseph Stefenoni.

Brother Joseph Stefenoni (CA) was elected to the National Grange Executive Committee.

Communications Director Philip Vonada gave his annual report, the full report will be printed in the Journal of Proceedings.

Results of ballot for Executive Committee. Susan Noah (OR) 27, Richard Stonebraker (MD) 23. The majority of votes were for Susan Noah.

Sister Susan Noah (OR) was re-elected to the National Grange Executive Committee.

Membership and Leadership Development Director Amanda Brozana, gave her annual report, the full report will be printed in the Journal of Proceedings.

Sales, Benefits, Program, and Membership Recognition Director Loretta Washington gave her annual report, the full report will be printed in the Journal of Proceedings.

Legislative Director Burton Eller gave his annual report, the full report will be printed in the Journal of Proceedings.

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order in the Fourth Degree.

A motion was made and seconded to release the results of the election to the public, motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded that we accept the reports of staff and have them printed in the Journal of Proceedings. Motion carried.

Brother John Benedik (NJ), Chair of the Audit & Budget Committee gave a partial report.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the budget for 2025 as presented on Monday afternoon, motion carried.

Brother David Allen (NC), Chair of the Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee – Brother Allen stated no one approached him to have anything removed from their Consent Calendar. Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee Consent Calendar was adopted.

Sister Barbara Foster (WV), Chair of the Conservation Committee gave a partial report – The Conservation Committee’s Consent Calendar was adopted.

Brother Kevin Cooksley stated no one approached him to have anything removed from their Consent Calendar. The Ag Committee Consent Calendar was adopted.

- AG-123 (MD) – “State Block Grants for USDA Ad Hoc Disaster Assistance Programs” - Withdrawn
- AG-112 (CA) – “Food Security and Farmland Protection Through Agriculture Literacy” – Rejected – Present Policy
- AG-113 (CA) – “Recognition of Cannabis as Agriculture for Insurance Purposes” – Adopted
- AG 132 (OH) – “USDA Livestock and Crop Surveys” – Adopted

Brother Mark Gibbons (DC), Chair of the Education & Health Committee gave a partial report – The Education & Health Committee’s Consent Calendar was adopted.

A motion was made and seconded to amend by adding back in “all” and add “medications and/or” after medically appropriate to Resolution EH-511 (CA) – “The Right for Family To Choose Their Family Planning”; motion carried.

- EH-511 (CA) – “The Right for Families To Choose Their Family Planning” – Rejected

A motion was made and seconded to add the words “companies/payors” strike “entities” prior to retirement age” in Resolution EH-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High-Risk Occupations”, motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to add “for cancer” after the word high-risk in Resolution EH-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High-Risk Occupations”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to remove the word “age” in Resolution EH-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High-Risk Occupations”, from the Resolved; motion carried.

Resolution now reads—

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support national legislation that will require health insurance companies/payors to cover cancer testing, including multi-cancer screening for high-risk for cancer occupations prior to retirement.

- EH-513 (NJ) – “Cancer Testing for High-Risk Occupations” – Adopted as Amended

Brother Richard Stonebraker (MD), Chair of the Grange Growth Committee gave a partial report.

A motion was made and seconded to add the word “staff” after the second National Grange in Resolution GG-604 (DE) “Suicide and Crisis Lifeline”; motion carried.

- GG-604 (DE) “Suicide and Crisis Lifeline” – Adopted as Amended

Brother Kevin Cooksley (NE), Chair of the Agricultural Committee, stated no one had approached him with questions on their Policy Statement. Brother Cooksley (NE) presented the committee’s Policy Statement, which was accepted. The final report of the Agricultural Committee was accepted in its entirety.

Brother David Allen (NC), Chair of the Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee, stated no one had approached him with questions on their Policy Statement. Brother Allen (NC) presented the committee’s Policy Statement, which was accepted. The final report of the Labor, Judiciary & Transportation Committee was accepted in its entirety.

Sister Barbara Foster (WV), Chair of the Conservation Committee, presented their committee’s Policy Statement, which was accepted. The final report of the Conservation Committee was accepted in its entirety.

Brother Mark Gibbons (DC), Chair of the Education & Health Committee stated no one had approached him with questions on their Policy Statement. Brother Gibbons (DC) presented the committee’s Policy Statement, which was accepted. The final report of the Education & Health Committee was accepted in its entirety.

Brother Christopher Johnston (MI), Chair of the Citizenship & Taxation Committee, presented the Policy Statement, which was accepted. The final report of the Citizenship & Taxation Committee was accepted in its entirety.

Brother Richard Stonebraker (MD), Chair of the Grange Growth Committee stated no one had approached him with questions on their Policy report. Brother Stonebraker (MD) presented the committee’s Policy Statement, which was accepted. The final report of the Grange Growth Committee as amended was accepted in its entirety.

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess until 2:00 p.m.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order.

The National Secretary reported that there was one correction to the minutes. President Hamp stated the minutes of the Second Day stand approved with corrections.

Brother John Benedik (NJ), Chair of the Audit & Budget Committee, gave a partial report.

- GG-610 (NY) “National Grange Headquarters” was withdrawn.
- AB-204 (Committee) – Feasibility Study for National Grange Headquarters – Adopted
- AB-205 (Committee) – Covered Expenses for Officers & Delegates – Adopted

A motion was made and seconded to amend Resolution AB-206 “Committee” – “Streamlining the Dues Paying Process” adding the words “proposed to” after the first National Grange in the first Resolve; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the Resolution AB-206 “Committee” – “Streamlining the Dues Paying Process” by striking the first Resolve; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the Resolve as follows “that the National Grange investigate dues paying solutions in regards to becoming the collector of National Grange Dues for all members”; motion carried.

- AB-206 (Committee) – Streamlining the Dues Paying Process – Rejected

Brother John Benedik (NJ), Chair of the Audit & Budget Committee presented the committee’s Policy Statement which was accepted. The final report of the Audit & Budget Committee was accepted in its entirety.

A motion was made and seconded to reconsider the Policy Statement for the Audit and Budget Committee as amended; motion defeated.

Brother Walter Hartley (RI), Chair of the Grange Law Committee presented resolutions that require 24 hours before they can be brought before the Delegate body for action.

- GL-705 (TX) – “National Dues Increase” Rejected – covered with Committee Resolution
- GL-707 (WA) – “The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships” – Rejected

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order in the Fourth Degree.

A motion was made and seconded to amend Resolution GL 726 Committee – “National Grange Dues Increase” to change \$20.00 to \$30.00 and \$28.00 to \$60.00 dollars; \$46.00 - \$60.00; \$48.00 - \$60.00; \$5.00 - \$7.50 a member; motion failed.

- GL 726 “Committee” – “National Grange Dues Increase” – Adopted – Year 1

Note – A two-year vote is required for Resolution GL 726 “Committee” – “National Grange Dues Increase”

A motion was made and seconded to reconsider Resolution 707 (WA) – “The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships”; motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution 707 (WA) – “The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships”.

A motion was made and seconded to amend in the Resolve of Resolution 707 (WA) – “The Effect of Junior Grange Dues (2023 Resolution 713-MD) on Family Memberships” to striking the words “that the Washington State Grange request” and after the words National Grange insert the words “delay the second vote” and delete “to reject”; motion carried.

RESOLVED now reads – the National Grange delay the second vote on the resolution on collecting Junior Grange Dues (2023 resolution 713-MD) at the National level until such time as a full discussion on the issues surrounding how Junior Grange dues affects Family Memberships can be held and satisfactorily addressed.

- GL-707 (WA) – “The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships” – Adopted as Amended

- GL-721-(MA) – “Regarding Family Membership” – Rejected

A reminder was made that the meet and greet with the Youth Officers will be at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Closing song – “Take Me Out To The Ball Game.”

The Grange closed at 4:30 p.m.

Pianist for today was Mark Naylor (OH).

The Assembly of Demeter business meeting was held at 5:00 p.m.

FOURTH DAY

158th National Grange Convention

Friday, November 15, 2024

The fourth day of the 158th Annual Convention of the National Grange opened in the Fourth Degree at 8:30 a.m. following an outstanding entrance march by the Youth Officer Team to “I Ain’t Worried” by OneRepublic.

The following Youth served as officers:

President – Rachel Edelen (IA)
Vice President – Bryce Danko (PA)
Lecturer – Caroline Barber (NC)
Steward – Jaiden McDougald (NC)
Asst. Steward – Jordyn Loiselle (IA)
Lady Asst. Steward – Nettie Hartley (RI)
Chaplain – Harvey Reyburn (PA)
Treasurer – Brayden Eudy (NC)
Secretary – Peyton Musser (NC)

Gatekeeper – Cade Howerton (NC)
Ceres – Kayla Laws (NC)
Pomona – Sarah Jacoby (IA)
Flora – Shae Smith (PA)
Executive Committee – Carter Settle (NC)
Executive Committee – Taylor Rogers (NC)
Executive Committee – Melissa Kudsk (WA)
Musician – Brother Mark Naylor (OH)

Roll call completed by Youth Secretary of the Youth Team members. The opening song was “My Country Tis of Thee”.

Brother Ken Danko (PA) and Brother John Hartsell (NC), wearing costumes dressed as red tennis shoes, brought all Junior members who participated in activities during this session in and marched around the session room.

Honored Guest were National Junior Grange Team and Youth and Young Adults Team, National Outstanding Young Patron Ashley Holloman (NC), Youth Ambassadors Garrett Phelps (NY) and Asheton Medlin (NC) and National Junior Ambassador Gayle Reyburn (PA) were conducted to the Worthy President’s Station. Each spoke about their year as Ambassadors.

National Grange Youth Leadership Team –

Jennie Gentry (NC)
Samantha Hanson (IA)

Matthew and Lynn Clark (NH)
Ken and Jennifer Danko (PA)

President Hamp (WA) then presented a gavel to Youth President, Rachel Edelen (IA).

The Grange was declared at ease for the departure of the Youth Officer Team. The National Officers formed a line and as they met the Youth Officers in the middle, the National Officers passed a baton to the Youth officer. The Youth Officers then exited the session with another excellent retiring drill. Youth and Junior activities will be going on throughout the day.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order in the Fourth Degree.

Roll call – All Officers and Delegates were found present.

The minutes for the third day of the session are on SharePoint for your review. Any major corrections should be given to the National Secretary before noon today.

Brother Walter Hartley (RI), Chair of the Grange Law Committee gave a partial report.

- GL-716 (MA) – “Distribution of National Grange Mailing List” – Rejected
- GL-719 (MA) – “Location of National Grange Session” – Rejected
- GL-709 (CA) – “Amend 10.14.1 of The National Grange Digest of Laws” – Rejected
- GL-710 (CA) – “Amend National Grange Digest of Laws Chapter 12” – Adopted with a 2/3 vote
- GL-711-CA – “Amend National Grange Digest-Officer Titles” – Rejected
- GL-712 (DC) – “Counting Granges with Fewer Than 13 Members in Total for Delegate Representation to National Grange” – Adopted with a 2/3 vote
- GL-713-(DC) – “Strike Requirement to Wear Pin or Regalia at Grange Meeting” – Rejected
- GL-714-(ID) – “Member Intervention” – Rejected
- GL-715-(ID) – “Required Times a Pomona Grange Must Meet” – Rejected
- GL-717-(MA) – “The Bible Upon the Altar” – Rejected
- GL-722 (MD) – “Adjust the Frequency of Membership Reports Submitted to the National Grange” – Rejected

A motion was made and seconded to substitute Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation”, motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation”.

A motion was made and seconded to amend by striking both Resolves in Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation, and replace with, “The National Grange form a study/panel to review this issue on the number of Delegate Representations and report back to the Delegate Body in 2025”.

A motion was made and seconded to refer Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation” back to the committee; motion carried.

- GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation” – Rejected by Committee

Brother Walter Hartley (RI), Chair of the Grange Law Committee stated no one had approached him with questions on their Policy Statement. Brother Hartley (RI) presented the committee’s Policy Statement which was accepted as amended.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the Policy Statement to add the word “partisan” before political activities on the 2nd line of the 2nd paragraph; motion carried.

The Annual Word was distributed by Worthy National President Christine Hamp (WA).

President Hamp (WA) called for a recess until 2:00 p.m.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange back to order in the Fourth Degree.

The National Secretary reported that there were no major corrections to the minutes. President Hamp stated the minutes of the Third Day stand approved as presented.

National Grange President Hamp (WA) recognized all past Delegates and past National Officers in attendance.

Brother Walter Hartley (RI), Chair of the Grange Law Committee gave a partial report.

- Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation” – that was sent back to Committee – the committee changed the Resolve to the following and recommended adoption of the Resolution –

Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation” be referred to a committee appointed by the National Grange President of seven (7) members comprised of representatives of each of the following—

1 from large State Grange

1 from medium State Grange

2 from a small State Grange

1 from a state without a State Grange

1 member of the Executive Committee

National Grange Membership & Leadership Director

To report back to the Delegate body with recommendation(s) at the 2025 Session of the National Grange.

- Resolution GL-724 (WV) – “Grange Representation” – Adopted as Amended.

Brother Hartley (RI) presented his final report. The final report of the Grange Law Committee was accepted in its entirety.

A motion was made and seconded to release all business results from our 158th National Grange Convention to the public, motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to allow the Executive Committee to approve the meeting minutes of the Fourth Day of the Annual session, motion carried.

President Hamp (WA) called the Grange at ease until 3:00 p.m. for the Installation of Officers.

Installing Officer High Priest Roger Bostwick (KS) installed officers of the National Grange. Installing Officers included Chaplain - Kay Stiles (MD); Marshall - Martha Stefenoni (CA); Regalia Bearer - Molly Newman (KS); and Emblem Bearer - Mandy Bostwick (KS); Pianist - Mark Naylor (OH).

2024-2026 new officers—

Executive Committee - Joseph Stefenoni (CA))

Executive Committee - Susan Noah (OR)

National Officers—

President - Christine Hamp (WA)

Vice President - John Benedik (NJ)

Executive Committee - Lynette Schaeffer (IL)

Executive Committee - Buddy Overstreet (TX)

Executive Committee - Joseph Stefenoni (CA))

Executive Committee - Susan Noah (OR)

Lecturer - Tom Gwin (WA)

Steward - Chris Johnston (MI)

Assistant Steward - Walter Hartley (RI)

Lady Assistant Steward - Kathy Gibson (MA)

Chaplain - Kay Stiles (MD)

Treasurer - Joseph Goodrich (VT)

Secretary - Debra Campbell (PA)

Gatekeeper - David Allen (NC)

Ceres - Cindy Greer (CO)

Pomona - Barbara Foster (WV)

Flora - Welina Shufeldt (OK)

Roll call of officers and assembly officers found all present with the exception of National Flora, Welina Shufeldt, Donna Keeton serving pro-tem.

The following past National Officers were presented Past National Officer pins—

Leroy Watson (NH)

The 158th Session of the National Grange was closed in the Fourth Degree at 3:47 p.m.

Everyone present formed a circle and joined hands as we sang “God Be With You Till We Meet Again”.

Pianist for today was Brother Mark Naylor (OH).

NATIONAL GRANGE RECOGNITION NIGHT

158th National Grange Convention

Friday, November 15, 2024

At 7:30 p.m. in Quad Cities Conference Room, Bettendorf, Iowa, National Grange Recognition Night was held, emceed by Philip Vonada, Communications Director and Amanda Brozana, National Membership & Leadership Development Director. Sister Connie Johnston (MI), Distinguished Grange Administrator, recognized the local Distinguished Granges and Distinguished State Granges. Worthy President Christine Hamp presented the awards.

Brother Tom Gwin (WA), of the Junior Grange Team announced Best of Show Winners for the various contests. He also announced the following State Junior Granges that submitted reports, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Brother Tom Gwin (WA), of the Junior Grange Team announced the 2025 National Junior Grange Ambassadors – Laci Liles (NC) and Justin Dusko (PA).

Communications Director Philip Vonada – recognized the Communications Fellows—Samatha Wilkins, Senior Fellow (TX), Diana Echavarria (TX), Molly Newman (KS) and Makayla Piers (RI). Brother Vonada presented many awards for the Communications Department.

National Lecturer Tom Gwin (WA) announced the Best of Show winners for the Lecturer's Department contest.

Sister Bonnie Mitson, National Grange Community Service Team announced the winners of the following—

Teacher of the Year – Jeanne DeMelim (RI)

Firefighter/EMT of the Year – Stephen Sandstorm (WA)

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – Rick Ferguson (WA).

National Membership & Leadership Development Director Amanda Brozana recognized the 2024 SHIPmates Class II. Sister Brozana also recognized members for their work in membership growth.

Sister Loretta Washington, National Grange Sales, Benefits & Program Director, recognized the Grange Legacy Families as having five or more generations of Grangers. Those recognized were with seven generations – Smith (IN); six generations – Hilpert (WA) with five generations – Ritchie (NC); Smith (IN); Walker (NY); and Worley (WA). Worthy President Christine Hamp presented the awards.

National Grange Legislative Director, Burton Eller presented the Grange Advocacy in Action Awards. He announced the winner of the individual award was Dan Keeley from Maplewood Grange #662 (OR); and Grange Awards were Clackamas County Pomona Grange #1 (OR) and Eagle #1 (PA).

Sister Jennie Gentry (NC), National Grange Youth & Young Adults Team announced the Youth awards:

Public Speaking – 1st Place – Cade Howerton (NC); 2nd Place – Nettie Hartley (RI).

Junior Mentor Award – Ashlan Smith (PA) and Wib & June Justi Community Service Award – Daniel Wilkins (TX)

Sister Jennie Gentry also announced the 2025 Youth Officer team, Youth Ambassadors Shae Smith (PA) and Taylor Rogers (NC) and Outstanding Young Patron Ashley Smith (PA).

POST-CONVENTION

158th National Grange Convention

Saturday, November 16, 2024

Various workshops were held throughout the day.

The Sixth Degree was conferred by a team comprised of members from the host region prior to the Seventh Degree.

Seventh Degree Conferral was held Saturday afternoon with 36 candidates, followed by the Convocation of the Assembly of Demeter.

The Grange Celebration Banquet began at 6:00 p.m. Welcome followed by the Pledge to the U.S. Flag, and the invocation by Chaplain Kay Stiles (MD).

An auction was held for the Grange Foundation, with auctioneers Marty Billquist (MT) and Lyle Lee (IL).

The evening's events continued with a Grange Trivia Contest hosted by Brother Tom Cullen (WA) and Sister Karen Jackson (WA).

The 159th National Grange Convention sets sail aboard the Carnival Horizon from Miami through the Caribbean to Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao from November 8-16, 2025. This Convention will be hosted by the Eastern Region which includes the following states – Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Virginia, as well as Potomac Grange #1 in the District of Columbia.

Fraternally submitted,

Debra Campbell (PA), Secretary

OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF DEMETER

Annual Business Meeting

158th National Grange Convention

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Bettendorf, Iowa

The meeting was called to order at 5:01pm by Worthy High Priest of Demeter, Roger Bostwick. Present were:

High Priest – Roger Bostwick (KS)

Priest Archon – William “Chip” Narvel (MD)

Priestess Annalist – Martha Stefenoni (CA)

Priest Treasurer – Joe Goodrich (VT)

Priest Herald – Kevin Klenklen (KS)

Priest Guardian – Walter Hartley (RI)

Priestess Ceres – Cindy Greer (CO)

Priestess Pomona – Barbara Foster (WV)

Priestess Flora – Donna Keeton (OK)

National Grange President – Christine “Chris” Hamp (WA)

Minutes of the November 16, 2023 meeting were read by Priestess Annalist Stefenoni (CA).

High Priest Bostwick had spoken with High Priest Emeritus Bruce Croucher (NY), who sent his and Priestess Sharon’s thanks for the cards and good wishes after their house fire. He had also spoken with High Priest Emeritus John Valentine (IN), who said (and I quote) “tell everyone at the Session that the old man in Indiana wishes them a Happy Thanksgiving, and Merry Christmas and sends Best Wishes.”

High Priest Bostwick reported that High Priest Emeritus Woody Tucker (RI) had been induced into the Grange Hall of Fame.

High Priest Bostwick reported the committee to review the cost of the 7th Degree presentation, himself, Priest and Priestess Edelen (IA), Priestess Annalist Stefenoni, Priestess Ceres Greer (CO), Priestess Pomona Foster (WV), and Priestess Flora Keeton (OK). After this Session, the Seventh Degree costumes and props will go to the Boone County Fair in Illinois to get stored in a climate-controlled building in anticipation of the filming for archival and historical purposes in the Spring of 2025. There will be two videos created, one in full costume and on the floor using the collars. The goal is that the premier of the video will be in the IMAX theater at the 2025 Conferral.

High Priest Bostwick introduced Seventh Degree Directors Priest Gene and Priestess Maria Edelen. Priestess Edelen remarked how much she has enjoyed working on the Seventh Degree over the last 7 years and how much they appreciate the flexibility of those they work with. Presenting the Degree from the floor as originally written has substantially reduced the cost of presentation since there isn’t as much technical assistance required.

Priest Edelen said they strive to go with the flow and make it work. The costumes are well over 80 years old and the trunks that house them even older. Once the stage play was completed, the costumes were handmade by Ruth Ester Shorthill and have been used ever since.

High Priest Bostwick acknowledged Priestess Betsy Huber (PA), Past President of the National Grange.

High Priest Bostwick asked Priestess Annalist Stefenoni for a report on the upcoming Seventh Degree presentation. Priestess Stefenoni reported that, currently, there are 36 candidates for the Seventh Degree. Tickets will remain on sale up to the time for the Degree. During the Convocation, the new initiates will be presented with their Certificate and a Seventh Degree pin.

The National Grange was thanked by the High Priest for coordinating the Zoom workshops on the Degrees. He also thanked Priestess Donna Keeton for reprising her role as Priestess Flora in the absence of Priestess Shufeldt.

National Grange President and Priestess Christine Hamp (WA) moved, seconded by Priest Joseph Stefenoni (CA) that once completed in the Spring of 2025 be made available for the States to use to confer the Degrees closer to home. Her reasoning was that it would allow more Grange members to receive the Seventh Degree without long-distance travel. It would be proctored by an authorized Seventh Degree representative. Much discussion ensued. The apprehension that it would not be kept secret but rather show up on the internet, which has been raised previously, was voiced by Priestess Huber (PA), who felt this needs more consideration before adoption.

The High Priest said this is an issue for the voting members of the Assembly. Voting members are the past voting delegates and current voting delegates. A vote was taken using the voting sign of the order. The chair was in doubt and a standing vote was taken. **Results: Ayes – 25 / Nays 35. Motion failed.** The Assembly was reminded by the High Priest that the purpose of this video was for archival and historical purposes.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 5:55pm.

Fraternally submitted,
Martha Stefenoni
Priestess Annalist

Convocation of the Assembly

158th National Grange Convention

Saturday, November 16, 2024

Bettendorf, Iowa

Following the presentation of the Seventh Degree, High Priest of Demeter Roger Bostwick (KS) called the meeting to order at 2:45pm. High Priest Bostwick presented the history of Duc d'Ascoli, Don Sebastian d'Ascoli whose family originated in Sicily and southern Italy. In 1859, Francis McDowell, one of the Seven Founders of the Grange, was initiated as High Priest of Demeter by the Duc d'Ascoli's family.

High Priest Bostwick commented on the Degree presentation where the appropriate stations were used, as in the Granges. The marble gavel and block came from the ruins of the Temple of Demeter in Greece. These were obtained by High Priest Herschel Newsom.

There were 36 candidates from 14 states receiving the Seventh Degree. This year as their names were called by the Priestess Annalist Martha Stefenoni, the Seventh Degree Candidates were presented their Seventh Degree Certificate by High Priest Bostwick, a Seventh Degree pin by Priest Archon Chip Narvel, and welcomed by National Grange President, Priestess Christine Hamp.

The new Priests and Priestesses are:

(alphabetical by state)

Stephanie Cooperman (CT)	Taylor Nicole Smith (IN)	Ned Campbell (OH)
Stephen Seuberth (DE)	Rebekah Hodgson (ME)	Theresa Hass (OH)
Sharon Koser (ID)	Kathleen Meade (ME)	Doris Hoffman (PA)
Kevin Brubach (IL)	Eric Borgeson (MA)	Makayla Piers (RI)
Marty Brubach (IL)	Scott Herbert (MA)	Diana Echavarria (TX)
Manuel Fabela (IL)	James Jencks (MN)	Bernie Games (WA)
Hilda Koluch (IL)	Jane Beaman (NC)	Duane Johnson (WA)
Stephen Koluch (IL)	Joseph Beaman, Jr. (NC)	Melissa Kudsk (WA)
Brian O'Dell (IL)	Anna Liles (NC)	Trisha Lovgren (WA)
Marisa O'Dell (IL)	Edward Beeler (OH)	Victoree Jamiel Stevens (WA)
Joseph Ryan (IL)	Rosemary Beeler (OH)	Jennifer North Herden (WI)
Marilyn Ryan (IL)	Kira Burns (OH)	
Morgan Smith (IN)	Timothy Burns (OH)	

The High Priest thanked the cast and those that step up to fill in when needed:

Priest Interpreter - Priest Joe Goodrich (VT)	Musician - Priestess Ethan Edwards (IL)
Priest Second Mystagogue - Priest Robert Buck (CT)	Voice of the 7th Degree - Priest Joseph Stefenoni (CA)
Scepter Bearer - Priestess Rachel Edelen (IA)	Degree Directors - Priest Gene and Priestess Maria Edelen (IA)
Soloist - Priestess Renee O'Dell (IL)	

Marching Candidates:

Manual Fabela (IL)	Marissa O'Dell (IL)
Brian O'Dell (IL)	Morgan Smith (IN)

CONVENTION AWARDS

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Publicity Contest

In-House

- 1st - Oregon State Grange
- 2nd - VilleWorth #1300 (NC)
- 3rd - Five Mile Prairie #905 (WA)
- 4th - Five Mile Prairie #905 (WA)

Professional

- 1st - Washington State Grange
- 2nd - Massachusetts State Grange
- 3rd - Washington State Grange
- 4th - Washington State Grange

TikTok/Reels Contest

Youth

- 1st - Counselors of Wooten Junior Grange Camp, Members of Moses Lake #1151 (WA)

Young Adult

- 1st - California State Grange

Adult

- 1st - Chris Hamp, Five Mile Prairie #905 (WA)*
- 2nd - Jessica Horton, VilleWorth #1300 (NC)
- *Best in Show

National Grange Connector Awards

- North Carolina State Grange
- North Fork Grange #763 (CA)
- Scholls Grange #338 (OR)
- Terri Fassio (CT)

COMMUNITY SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Community Service Books

- 1st – Gardner #68 (KS)
- 2nd – Blue Spruce #574 (VT)
- 3rd – Butternut Valley #1533 (NY)
- 4th – Monroe #2570 (OH)
- Honorable Mention – Goodwill #959 (VA)

Firefighter/EMT of the Year – Stephen Sandstrom, nominated by Humptulips Grange #730 (WA)

Teacher of the Year – Jeanne DeMelim, nominated by Perryville Grange #14 (RI)

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – Rick Ferguson, nominated by Waitsburg Grange #1 (WA)

DISTINGUISHED GRANGES

State Granges

- 15 years - Maryland State Grange
- 13 years - Pennsylvania State Grange^

- 7 years - Oregon State Grange
- 6 years - North Carolina State Grange

Community Granges

- 15 Years
- Five Mile Prairie #905 (WA)^
- Redland #796 (OR)
- Stanford #808 (NY)

- 12 Years
- Prairie #1832 (IL)
- Turkey Hill #1370 (IL)
- Valley #1360 (PA)

- 9 Years
- Bethlehem #136 (NY)^
- Russellville #91 (PA)^
- Springwater #263 (OR)
- St. John's #729 (NC)
- Upton #125 (MA)

- 14 Years
- Burns #160 (MI)
- Grantham #968 (NC)^

- 11 Years
- Harveys-Aleppo #1444 (PA)

- 8 Years
- Hookstown #1980 (PA)^
- Linganore #410 (MD)

- 13 Years
- Gratiot #1898 (MI)

7 Years
Central Union #559 (CA)^
Goldendale #49 (WA)^
Marys River #685 (OR)

6 Years
Creswell #496 (OR)^

5 Years
Hamburg #2103 (PA)
Sterling #53 (MA)

4 Years
Eagle #1 (PA)
Gardner #68 (KS)
New Market #362 (MD)

2 Years
County Line #1751 (IL)
Rio Linda #403 (CA)^
St. Joseph/Cass/Kalamazoo
Pomona #4 (MI)
Thurmont #409 (MD)

1 Year
Bennett Valley #16 (CA)
Big Knob #2008 (PA)^
Clackamas County Pomona #1
(OR)
Columbus #58 (NJ)
Fairview #2177 (IN)
Lorane #54 (OR)
Prices Fork #786 (VA)^
Progress #96 (PA)

^Golden Distinguished Grange

GRANGE IN ACTION

CALIFORNIA

Anderson Mt. Lassen #418
High Desert #593
Riverdale Rural Community
#868*

COLORADO

Marvel #479

CONNECTICUT

Ekonk Community Junior #101
Riverton #169*
Vernon #52
Wallingford #33

FLORIDA

Manatee #179

IDAHO

Mica Flats #436
Pleasant Ridge #135

KANSAS

Cherryvale #221

MASSACHUSETTS

Central Community #22
Easton #196
Sunrise Pomona #9

MICHIGAN

Studley #1174

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey State Grange
Montague #140
Moravian #187
Pioneer #1*
Stanton #148
Stewartville #121
Warren Pomona #10

OHIO

Ohio State Grange
Collinsville #2264
Mile Branch #933
Morgan #829
Painter Creek Community #1923
Unity #1761
Wayne #262
Williamsport #1815

OKLAHOMA

Bayneville #1810

OREGON

Clarkes #261
Siletz Valley #558

PENNSYLVANIA

Hartslog Valley #375
Penns Valley #158
Plumsteadville #1738*

RHODE ISLAND

Kickemuit-Portsmouth #24

WASHINGTON

*Washington State Grange**
Addy #603
Addy Junior #396
Adna #417
Barberton #571
Baw Faw #34
Bee Hive #385
Broadway #647
Buena #836
Burbank #630
Calispel #500
Camas Valley #842
Camden #687
Camp Mayfield Junior #403

Camp Morehead Junior #401
Camp Wooten Junior #400
Cedar Valley #306
Centerville #81
Chimacum #681
Clallam County Junior #408
Clallam County Pomona #31
Clark County Pomona #1
Clayton #456
Collins #893
Columbia #87
Cowlitz Prairie #737
Crescent #1123
Deer Lagoon #846
Dry Creek #646
East Oakville #902
East Wenatchee #1012
Elma #26
Fargher Lake #853
Fargher Lake Junior #49
Fern Prairie #866
Fertile Valley #1094
Fords Prairie #33
Fort Colville #533
Freedom #1152
Fruitland #999
Granville #857
Grays Harbor/Pacific Pomona
#28
Grays River #124
Green Bluff #300
Green Bluff Junior #373
Greenwood Park #590
Happy Valley #322
Haynie #169
Hope 3155
Horseshoe #965
Humptulips #730
Humptulips Junior #376
Inland #780
Issaquah Valley #581

Kallogg Marsh #136
 Kennewick Valley #731
 Kettle River #1120
 Kettle River Junior #413
 Klickitat County Pomona #5
 Lewis County Pomona #3
 Lincoln Creek #407
 Long Beach #667
 Lopez Island #1060
 Malo #679
 Mansford #710
 Manson #796
 Marion #276
 Matlock #357
 McLane #383
 McMillin #848
 Menastash #1054
 Molson #1069
 Moses Lake #1151
 Mossyrock #355
 Mountain Valley #79
 Mountain View #98
 North River #946
 Oakview #311

Ohop #812
 Orcas Island #964
 Oroville #985
 Pierce County Pomona #16
 Prospect Point #1067
 Quimper #720
 Ralston #943
 Rose Valley #953
 Roy #702
 Saint Andrews #832
 Sallal #955
 Sammamish Valley #286
 San Juan Island #966
 Selah Heights #608
 Sequim Prairie #1108
 Sharon #800
 Silver Lake #105
 Skamokawa #425
 Skookumchuk #584
 Snohomish County Pomona #12
 South Bay #250
 South Camano #930
 South Lake Stevens #690
 South Union #860

Stevenson #121
 Stillaguamish #1058
 Stranger Creek #374
 Swauk Teanaway #984
 Ten Mile #399
 Terrace Heights #586
 The Valley #1048
 Thurston County Pomona #8
 Tunk Valley #1019
 Twisp Valley #484
 Tyler #610
 Violet Prairie #996
 Waller Road #1111
 Washington Grange #82
 White Trail Grange #1143
 Yakima Valley Pomona Grange #11

WEST VIRGINIA

Rainbow #527

**Golden Grange In Action*

JUNIOR GRANGE

Creative Art

Age 8-10:

1st - Jax Berry (WA)
 2nd - Gracyn Payne (WA)
 3rd - Jessica Start (WA)

Age 11-14:

1st - Paige Kurkjiah (WA)
 2nd - Zachary Heater (WA)
 3rd - David Gimenez (WA)

Ag Awareness

Tessa Ryan (NY)

Creative Writing

Age 5-7:

1st - Kendall Gotauco (RI)
 2nd - Paige Darling (NY)
 3rd - Tobias Darling (NY)

Age 8-10:

1st - Scarlet Gotauco (RI)

Cape of Honor Awards

Gabriel Anzueto Estrada (PA)
 Grace Coderre (CT)
 Hunter Coderre (CT)
 Riley Coderre (CT)

White Level

Makani Delovio (CT)
 Brianna Keen (PA)
 William Keen (PA)
 Bryce Vecoli (CT)

Red Level

Sarah Scharf (PA)

Recognition of Junior Director Reports

Miriam Caldwell - Massachusetts State Junior Grange
 Emily Hartsell - North Carolina State Junior Grange
 Philip Vonada - Pennsylvania State Junior Grange
 Rebecca Gervais - Ekonk Community Junior Grange, Connecticut

Junior Grange Community Service
Humptulips Junior Grange (WA)

2024-2025 Junior Grange Ambassadors
Justin Dusko (PA)
Laci Liles (NC)

LECTURER'S DEPARTMENT

Photography

Adult

ABANDONED BUILDINGS

1st - Susan Hanks (CA)
2nd - Heather Ferguson (WA)
3rd - Lindsay Haggerty (PA)
HM - Holly Fens (VA)
HM - Lois Barber (KS)
HM - Suzy Ramm (OR)

CLOUDS

1st - Marci Schlegel (PA)
2nd - Cathy Stark (NY)
3rd - Dakota Bodie (CA)
HM - Kristin Paulson (MA)
HM - Mandy Bostwick (KS)
HM - Seanna Ault (ID)
HM - Rachel Watson (DC)

Juniors

NATURE

1st - Kamryn Cable (WA)
2nd - Michaela Martin (PA)
3rd - Laci Liles (NC)
HM - Kamryn Cable (WA)

PETS

1st - Kennedy Hodgson (ME)
2nd - Emma Mason (CA)
3rd - Kennedy Hodgson (ME)

Quilt Block Contest

1st - Cathy Stark (NY)
2nd - Cheryl Rhoad (OH)
3rd - Nancy Lyford (IL)

Garden Design Contest

GROUND SPACE GARDENS

1st - Cheryl Rhoad (OH)
2nd - Richard & Eileen Javaux (ID)
3rd - Betsy Huber (PA)

MONUMENTS

1st - Seanna Ault (ID)
2nd - Paul Hanks (CA)
3rd - Barbara Schroeder (PA)
HM - Lindsay Haggerty (PA)
HM - Dave Roberts (CT)
HM - Philip Vonada (PA)

STATE/COUNTY/COMMUNITY FAIRS

1st - Suzy Ramm (OR)
2nd - Dave Roberts (CT)
3rd - Rebekah Hodgson (ME)
HM - Lindsay Haggerty (PA)
HM - Daria D'Arienzo (MA)
HM - Julie Durand (KS)

SUMMER FUN

1st - Emma Mason (CA)
2nd - Christopher Anzueto Estrada (PA)
3rd - Laci Liles (ME)

SCENIC

1st - Jacob Smith (WA)
2nd - Jacob Smith (WA)
3rd - Kate Horton (NC)
HM - Levi Liles (NC)

HM - Theresa Dussler (NY)
HM - Kathryn Hartley (WA)
HM - Dorothy Rathburn (NY)

RAISED BED GARDENS

1st - Suzy Ramm (OR)
2nd - Jessica Horton (NC)
3rd - Doris J. Thayer (NY)

CONTAINER GARDENS

1st - Joyce E. Parker (OR)
2nd - Jessica Horton (NC)
3rd - Dr. Marie Miczak (NJ)

Design-a-Program Contest

PROGRAM FOR ADULTS - INTERNAL

1st - Michele Gumm (ID)

2nd - Nettie Hartley (RI)

PROGRAM FOR ADULTS - EXTERNAL

1st - Dave Roberts (CT)

2nd - Susan Hanks (CA)

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

1st - Alexandria Tarbell (NY)

Weather Watcher Challenge

1st - Doris J. Thayer (NY)

2nd - Robert Buck (CT)

LEGACY FAMILIES

7 GENERATIONS

Smith (IN)

6 GENERATIONS

Hilpert (WA)

5 GENERATIONS

Ritchie (NC)

Smith (IN)

Walker (NC)

Worley (WA)

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

Grange Advocacy in Action

Clackamas County Pomona #1 (OR)

Eagle Grange #1 (PA)

Dan Keeley – Maplewood Grange #662 (OR)

MEMBERSHIP & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Cultivators of the Year

Northeast: The MA State Grange Agriculture Expo planning committee

East: North Carolina State Grange

Midwest: Sara Ellwanger (IL)

Great Plains: The Wilkins family (TX)

West: Susan and Paul Hanks (CA)

Additional given to: Edgar Hicks (NE) posthumously

Heirloom Program

Category 1: Summer – 1st – Amber Obert (ID)

Category 1: Spring – 1st – Eileen Javaux (ID)

Best in Show – Amber Obert (ID)

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Public Speaking

1st – Cade Howerton (NC)

2nd – Nettie Hartley (RI)

Distinguished Youth Programs

North Carolina State Grange

Pennsylvania State Grange

Junior Mentor Award

Ashlan Smith (PA)

State Youth Reports

North Carolina State Grange

Pennsylvania State Grange

Wib & June Justi Community Service Award

Daniel Wilkins (TX)

2024-2025 Youth Ambassadors

Taylor Rogers (NC) & Shae Smith (PA)

2024-2025 Young Adult Ambassador

Ashlan Smith (PA)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S ADDRESSES

PRESIDENT'S EXTERNAL ADDRESS

Delivered by Christine E. Hamp, National Grange President
Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024 – 11:00am.

Officers and Members of the National Grange, state and local Grange members across the country, and all committed to strengthening rural America and our hometowns,

As I stand before you today, speaking as president of the nation's oldest farm and rural advocacy organization, I am filled with a profound sense of pride and purpose. Like the 23 presidents who have come before me, I stand with a duty to provide you with a look at some of the most pressing and urgent issues of the day for those living in America's hometowns, and how the Grange can be a driving force in improving conditions in communities nationwide and for those involved in agriculture as producers and consumers.

The Grange teaches us that "to love the country is to take interest in all that belongs to it – its occupations, its sports, its culture, and its improvement," and for this reason, our policy interests and service activities are as broad as our commitment to the "greatest good for the greatest number" is deep. Regardless of where we hail from, what we do for a living, or how deeply connected we are to the land or to the food system, everyone in this room and from every corner of the Grange is striving for one thing – the vitality and increased vibrancy of our hometowns.

Elections

First, let us start with love of country and our unity as a people; of democracy and our guarantee of personal liberties; and of decency and charity necessary to advance this nation and our world for generations to come.

This past week, for the 60th time in our nation's history, we, as citizens of the United States of America, the greatest country in the world, went to the polls and expressed our values and our views through our vote. It is concerning that of the eligible population, so few took seriously this amazing responsibility of citizenship and cast their ballot.

From this election we now have a new President and Congress selected, and regardless of our personal preference, we must come together and work cooperatively as a nation for ourselves, our communities, our future generations, and our world. We must afford others charity in our dealings. We must act with civility and with common sense. We must be united in these United States.

To President Biden, we say thank you for your more than 50 years of public service to our nation, and to those who worked as part of your administration, we thank you, too.

To President Trump, on behalf of every Grange member across the country, I extend to you our desire to work together for the common good, for the best interest of every American, and ask you to make good on your promise, made many times on the campaign trail this year, to "bring back the American Dream."¹

We cannot move forward in factions, unwilling to work across the aisle and across the land for the good of our nation and its people. Compromise and collaboration must be viewed as a strength, not as weakness.

At no time since the Civil War has our country seemed so divided. From that tumultuous period, the Grange was born, envisioned as a unifier, a peacemaker, a beacon of hope. Our founders believed, and I do still today, that a fraternal organization – originally built for farm families and today for all of good moral character interested in food, agriculture, family, and community – would then and can now – bring together a fractured nation. No organization is better situated than the Grange to bring together people whose personal beliefs are not always aligned, to work together for the betterment of their community, by tamping down the heated rhetoric and demanding civil discourse, and by calling on policymakers and the powerful for "proper equality and fairness, protection for the weak; restraint upon the strong; in short, justly distributed power." The early members of our Order called these "American ideals, the very essence of American independence," and said that "to advocate the contrary is unworthy of the sons and daughters of our Republic."

The power in those words is palpable and resonates these many years later. Now, we must embody it – not just as Grange members, but as Americans – and stand as role models for the rest of our neighbors and countrymen. In the Grange, we do that not by talking politics, but by talking issues; not by taking up partisan platforms, but by committing to nonpartisan advocacy. We do this with eyes forward, focused on a prosperous future for our nation, through a commonsense lens.

Federal Debt and Taxes

Common sense, though, seems uncommon today, especially as we see our country drowning in federal debt which as of a week ago was \$35,953,937,000,000 [35 trillion, 953 billion, 937 million dollars] an almost incomprehensible number, and increasing every second.²

While in 2024 federal income was projected at about \$4.4 trillion, we were budgeted to spend \$8.7 trillion. To break it down: every person living in the United States today, every single person – babies, great-grandmothers, undocumented immigrants, migrant workers, the disabled, the homeless – every single living person would receive a bill for more than \$13,000 to make up the difference between our revenue and our spending in 2024. This would only ensure no further debt was added to the nearly \$36 trillion we have already. To pay off this nearly \$36 trillion debt would cost each person in America an additional \$110,000.

¹ See clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EPkrQ5WZ2g>

² Information from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation website, accessed at <https://www.pgpf.org/national-debt-clock#the-national-debt>

Raising taxes on the general population will not be popular and not many people are equipped to pay an unexpected \$13,000, let alone \$110,000, because our spending has far exceeded our means.

The challenge is this: how do we use common sense to identify where and how we cut our federal spending to live within our means? So many of our neighbors in rural America – which has consistently been sicker, poorer, and older than their urban and suburban counterparts – are the people most likely to suffer from a pull-back in federal services and assistance programs.

Our seniors would be especially affected since one-third of all federal spending in 2024 will go to Social Security (16%) and Medicare (17%). Twelve percent (12%) goes to Medicaid and the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Nearly 8% percent of our spending goes to a category labeled “Income Security,” which consists of programs like general retirement and disability insurance, federal employee retirement and disability including military retirement, unemployment compensation, housing assistance, nutrition assistance, foster care, Supplemental Security Income, and the earned income and child tax credits. Now add 16% for “National Defense” and 4% for veterans’ benefits.

Agriculture, some community and regional development, and conservation programs that fall under the USDA together make up only about 3% of all federal spending. Education, training, student financial assistance, research, transportation, and the administration of justice, the postal service, small business administration and many other programs essential to allowing people to establish themselves and chase their American dream come in just shy of 8%. Less than 1% goes to international affairs, and about 4.5% to general government administration. Another 12% of the federal budget goes to debt services – that’s \$2.4 billion dollars a day in interest.

We have a spending problem folks, but we also have a problem of need by our people, our small businesses, and our communities; and we have a problem of a “get everything you’re entitled to” mentality – without concern for what is best for the generations coming next.

I get it. It’s hard to see a need and not advocate for a fix. The Grange has long advocated that there should be no cuts to Social Security, and as the average age of Americans increases, more funding will be needed to support these programs, as well as retirement and disability services for both our military and civil servants. In the last several years, at the urging of our members and with our understanding of the needs of our communities and citizens, the Grange has asked for Congress to ensure several new medical technologies and pharmaceutical drugs are covered by Medicare. We want the best for our people – but we need to think in terms of us now as well as our future generations.

Reality is common sense and the common good are not always inextricably intertwined. We must move, though, in a common direction – must urge our leaders to have real and tough conversations and make some serious changes so we can ensure the America we love, and the American dream we cherish, is alive for generations to come.

What of the American Dream?

The American dream at the time of the Grange’s founding was to be self-made, to chase opportunity, and to conquer new frontiers. It was independence and rugged individualism. Today, that dream may mean home ownership or career and economic advancement to ensure general prosperity. Whatever it has come to mean, it is under threat. I challenge each of us to ask and to answer, “What am I doing to ensure the American dream remains alive?”

Our nation has always had, as part of its allure, a better way of life for the next generation, but young people are struggling to find their footing. They are living at home longer than any generation before them. Housing has become unaffordable. College tuition is soaring – nearly 1,500% since the early 1970s, when working through college meant a steady part-time job with income to spare. The debt burdens our young adults are under are increasing.

These same young adults are hitting milestones later in life. Many wanted, but have chosen not, to have children because of financial constraints, housing instability, and other challenges. For nearly 90 years, Social Security has been a bright beacon, a birthright, for Americans as they age. Our declining birth rate puts this and other social programs like Medicare in jeopardy. If we care about the economic vitality of our seniors and rural communities, we must care about what it takes to make parenthood attractive and feasible for our young adults. We must live and speak in a world that is, not that once was. If we are to continue to fund Social Security, we must have a sensible conversation about immigration and a path to citizenship. We must also have as one of our foremost concerns what it takes to make rural life attractive – something the Grange has been concerned with since its earliest days.

So, what is it that we propose? How do we make America self-sustaining? Today we ask for the creation of a Presidential Blue-Ribbon Commission on the Preservation of the American Dream. As we prepare for the United States’ semiquincentennial, its 250th birthday, in 2026, it is a fitting tribute to our nation – its history and its future – that such a commission be formed and work to ensure, like we are for the Grange, that our country is stronger tomorrow than it is today.

Farm Bill is a ‘Must Pass’

Our country, a land of opportunity and enormous potential, with some of the world’s most fertile soil from which we grow and feed a vast multitude of crops and livestock, is truly the breadbasket of the world. Modern technology has helped us increase the production of food and fiber to levels the world has never known, allowing our farmers and ranchers to produce enough food to feed our people and a large portion of the world’s population. Our infrastructure supply chain allows us to rapidly move inputs for production to our farms and ranches and the food we produce to our fellow citizens.

We are blessed most of all with farmers and ranchers who don’t just work a job, but who have created a coveted lifestyle over many generations. These icons of American legacy, living out the American dream, are proud of and deeply engaged in the good stewardship of the soil, water, air, vegetation, animals, and environment they love; you might say they are the stewards of rural America’s heart and soul.

These hard-working food producers are not satisfied with the status quo. Just like the Grange, they are looking forward to the next generation building on the legacy they and their forefathers have built. If they could look 50, 100 years into the future,

they'd want to see higher production, more fertile soils, cleaner water and air, a better return on their investment, the freedom to use their expertise and experience to manage their resources properly without undue regulatory interference, and the family farm tradition going strong.

Today, like the American dream, the family farm is threatened by many forces. Not the least of which is an ever-growing world population out of touch with what it takes to bring food from the farm to the forks of more than 8 billion people, and a body of political leaders unwilling or unable to prioritize the most basic of human necessities – food – and the needs of those who produce it. For this reason, and in what is becoming customary, the farm bill has expired and is stuck in political limbo.

Since the end of 2023, there has been a season of planting, of harvest, of drought, of floods, of farmers working every day to feed the American population and much of the world. But in Congress, the season to pass a new piece of critical omnibus legislation has not yet come. Instead, a one-year extension was passed last November that expired again at the end of September without extension. Just as farmers are planning out their 2025 operations, the uncertainty of farm loans, crop insurance, dairy subsidies, various programs to improve health and safety of farmers, and incentives for stewardship methods are hanging precariously.

The provisions of the farm bill have some impact on how and what food is grown and where it is sold, what risks producers are willing to take, and what rewards or at least safety net they may be provided based on the priorities of the legislation. Farm bill provisions also impact who may be part of production with farm ownership loans and various other programs to help veterans, young and first-time farmers through finance, education and more.

It is not just producers to whom the farm bill is important, or to the worldwide consumers of American agricultural goods. It is fishers and hunters who look to the farm bill to secure access and preservation of land through conservation titles. It is universities and researchers working to improve the science of agriculture, the methods of conservation, and the facilities and thereby, education at land-grant colleges. It is the local school and the regional food bank that rely on funds for lunches and food boxes. It is consumers – low-income women, infants and children enrolled in WIC and families whose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars help them meet their nutritional needs. It is communities, our rural communities, who see dollars flowing in through funded USDA programs to expand credit for all sorts of various things; for creating public-private partnerships and advancing economic well-being; for supporting and creating local jobs; for opening or improving healthcare and childcare facilities and services; for expanding broadband to the last mile; and for fixing crumbling infrastructure such as water systems and wastewater facilities. In general, the farm bill supports a prosperous rural America, so the Grange supports the farm bill.

We also support bold and committed leaders, willing to work hard, listen harder, cross the aisle, sit down at the table, and find common ground to get the work done that they were sent to Capitol Hill to do. We commit to working with members of Congress on the farm bill and other legislation, regulatory proposals, or administrative action where the grassroots voice of America's hometowns and agricultural producers should be present. We welcome you to our halls and our meetings, to read our policy book and visit with our members, to work toward progress while enjoying a potluck with individuals committed to a better nation and world.

Farm Labor and Immigration

As an organization interested in agriculture, we cannot talk about farming without talking about foreign-born workers, migrant laborers, and immigration. The agriculture industry and foreign labor are inextricably tied. Today, almost 70% of all farmworkers in the U.S. are foreign-born and according to the American Immigration Council, nearly half are undocumented with no work permit.

Approximately ten percent of all farmworkers hold H-2A visas that allow them to work legally in the country for six months. However, the H-2A program is expensive. The paperwork is so cumbersome many farmers and ranchers cannot complete the requirements. The workers are often in limbo and by the time they are cleared to work, the season for which they were needed is half over. Imagine going through mounds of paperwork, paying lawyers, constructing housing, and preparing to host a workforce that will likely require training and interpretation services, just to find out the workers you need have been approved but are delayed in processing and much of the work to bring in help legally has been done in vain. That is the current reality for many farms and ranches, which in much of the country have needed to "get big" or "get out." While 97% of all farms are family-owned, it's understandable, with the size required for many to make a living in today's market, that they cannot be all-family operated.

Over and over, we have called for it, and we will continue to do so in the hope that there is someone listening in Congress who has the conviction and perseverance to make it happen: we need a simpler, legal route to employing guest workers, which will permit them to enter the country, work for a specific time in a specific location, and then return home. This is essential for our farms and our entire food system.

Food Security and Nutrition

From farm to fork – sometimes it sounds simple. We, of course, know it is not. And while we have often focused on farm issues, Grange has also been active in the sphere of food security for nearly its entire existence. Most often when we think of food security, we think of hunger. And this is certainly a good place to start, especially considering annual reports from the USDA show that food insecurity among Americans hovers between 10 and 15% and one in six children in America live in environments where food security is a challenge.

Food security has several dimensions – the obvious being the physical availability or access to food, and secondly, the affordability of food. Rolled in is nutrition – the types of food one consumes and how it is prepared – and the stability of one's

food supply. With higher poverty rates in rural communities, food insecurity is widespread – 9 out of 10 counties with the highest food insecurity rates are rural³.

Why is this the case? Many people assume that rural communities, nearby or where our food is grown, have abundant options for food access. This is untrue. In 2020, a report showed that 20% of rural communities are classified as food deserts – places where food markets, food pantries or food-sharing places are more than 10 miles from home.⁴ As grocery stores and food retailers leave small communities, the problem is worsening.

People make decisions based on many factors, but a great number of them are economic. People must be able to access healthy food within a reasonable distance from their home, and at a reasonable price. This is where SNAP and WIC programs – provisions under that expired farm bill – come in.

So, too, does the school lunch program, which Grange was an early proponent of establishing. As needs have risen, the program has expanded to include other meals as well to ensure children can focus on learning, not their hunger. While this is doing much good, it is also reinforcing a culture of fast food made outside the home rather than encouraging families to come together for meals, to teach children cooking skills, to share family recipes, to have conversations, and enjoy all the other wonderful things that can happen in a home kitchen.

Additionally, as the school lunch program has been regulated, there have been some changes that we believe do not serve these children well, such as the removal of whole milk and the limitation of nutritional calories on the plate. Students need balanced diets that include some very specific nutrients only found easily and affordably in certain products, like whole milk, and they need enough calories to meet the demands of their bodies that can vary by age, gender, and activity levels. While there are valid concerns about the childhood obesity epidemic, we believe nutrition mandates should align with expert guidance on healthy diets. The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023 passed the House last December but was never taken up by the Senate. Today we urge Congress to get the job done – the children of our nation are counting on you.

We also ask the USDA to reevaluate the income threshold for free and reduced lunches, and we remind decision-makers that many students' only meals come from school cafeterias.

It is a good reminder for us, too, that deeds matter more than words, like those we say to close each Grange meeting when we promise to help feed those in need. We must remember that as we may enjoy abundance, our neighbors young and old may not. Backpack programs and food pantries are part of many Granges' outreach and service portfolios, but each and every Grange should be looking to make food security and nutrition priority areas. Additionally, it is imperative that individuals are empowered to chase down, capture, and live their American dream. To do this, they must have the skills and knowledge that makes them more self-sufficient and increases their personal sustainability. These are two areas where Granges can make the most meaningful impact on individuals, families, communities, and our nation. Work in these areas is a common sense approach to weaving and reinforcing the personal safety nets that will be necessary if we indeed see a Congress and administration dedicated to the nation living within its means.

To act on the issue of food security and nutrition, the Grange will launch Project Sustenance – a focused effort for which we will be seeking partners nationally and preparing programming and resources that can be used by our members for the benefit of all. We are uniquely positioned to make a significant difference because we are an organization where each member, upon joining, agrees they are concerned about agriculture, food, personal growth, and sharing our talents within our fraternal circle and beyond. We are strong because of the nearly 1,400 local chapters across the country, many with the amazing resource of a Grange hall in which programs, activities, and services may be found. We are the right fit because for nearly 160 years we have been in the game as a trusted voice both in our hometowns and on Capitol Hill. We are agile in our grassroots approach to solving problems. We are situated for growth.

Healthcare

Food and nutrition are significant parts of a person's overall health. But so, too, is access to healthcare – something we find a challenge in nearly every way in our rural and remote communities.

The Grange strongly advocates for the availability of new and lifesaving treatment options, such as diagnostic tests and vaccines. We must also find ways to encourage practicing medicine in smaller communities because as we look at statistics, we know just how challenging it can be to live and maintain our health or to treat our ailments in rural America. The list of healthcare inequities faced by rural Americans is startling and growing.

- More than 40% of rural counties have no cardiologist⁵, while rural residents are 40% more likely to develop heart disease⁶.
- Almost half of rural Americans suffer from obesity, which is a leading cause of Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Multiple studies have shown that common environmental exposures rural Americans have with road dust, herbicides, and fossil fuel combustion, to name a few, contribute to higher rates of chronic illness, including kidney disease.
- Cancer deaths are 14% higher among rural residents and increasing, while the survival rate of all cancers is 8% lower overall in rural communities. This makes the approval, rollout, and coverage by private insurers and Medicare of multi-cancer early detection screening tests, regardless of age, even more important.

³ From Feeding America. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/rural-hunger-facts>

⁴ From PolicyLink. <https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/FINALGroceryGap.pdf>

⁵ According to a recent study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/nearly-half-us-counties-dont-single-cardiologist-rcna160229>

⁶ According to a 2016 study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5015359/>

- Our friends, the National Farmers Union and American Farm Bureau Federation, have released a report suggesting that nearly 3 out of 4 farmers have been directly impacted by the opioid crisis that is gripping our nation, and is particularly wreaking havoc on rural communities. Advances in non-opioid pain medicine cannot come soon enough, and policymakers must ensure opioid medications are not incentivized through insurance coverage and reimbursement over non-opioid pain management options.
- Rural communities are 80% less likely to have a single neurologist practicing in their county⁷. For Alzheimer's patients, who are required to participate in clinical studies carried out by neurologists to gain treatment coverage, this poses an immense challenge. It has meant that people living in rural areas are twice as likely to die from Alzheimer's disease as those in urban and suburban settings.
- All the while, in the past 15 years, nearly 200 rural hospitals have closed.

Health is essential, and there is a health crisis in rural America that cannot be ignored.

The Grange has been a leading voice in raising awareness about these disparities and inequities for rural residents related to healthcare access, affordability, and more. Alongside our partner organizations, we have worked, and we will continue to work, to educate our members and the public about ways in which this gap can be closed.

Our work has included providing healthcare information and options. As an example, for a second year, the Grange hosted a vaccine clinic at the Eastern States Exposition, the Big E, to provide no-cost flu and COVID shots to those interested. While more than 4,000 vaccinations were delivered at this pop-up clinic this year, there were some who expressed their disinterest in vaccines as they passed by our booth.

To those people we say: we stand firmly with you, too. It is your right to choose your own course of care, and it is not essential that we all make the same decisions. In this land of the free, liberty is guaranteed and charity toward those whose choices diverge from our own is paramount for a civil society.

We call on all interested in improving the healthcare system, in making it more equitable, to join with us in our work on this issue. From legislators to drug manufacturers, healthcare system executives to healthcare practitioners, to ensure high-quality healthcare is accessible and affordable for all Americans, we must be well-informed and united.

Build Out of Broadband Continues; Services Still Needed

To be well-informed today, to access quality healthcare in some of America's most rural places, broadband is not just a desirable thing, not just a leg up – it, too, is essential. It is a lifeline and a way forward. It is the way in which we do business, the way we connect with others, how children and adults access information, learn, and go to school, and the way each of us plays an active part in our world.

Approximately \$100 billion has been allocated from government funding sources to deploy high-speed broadband to unserved and underserved areas across the country. This includes a congressional mandate and a commitment by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to stretch that connectivity to the last mile of country road. This has been more than a two-decade-long priority for the National Grange. Our continuing challenge will be to scrutinize the accuracy of broadband coverage maps, to monitor coordination and cooperation among broadband-funding agencies, to advocate for decisions that break down barriers to build out, and to encourage efficient deployment of broadband infrastructure.

While many new areas and individuals are getting online, there are still large portions of this country without adequate – or any – cell phone service. How many of you now only have a cell phone – no landline at home? In many rural spaces, this is simply not an option and puts rural residents at a disadvantage, paying for both a home phone and cell phone, many of whom do not have the financial means to do both.

We urge the FCC to continue robust efforts to ensure every American household has adequate access to basic cellular service and that they work to act quickly when local jurisdictions have failed to provide reasonable evidence that a permit should not be issued for new towers. Broadband and cellular connectivity must be priorities – marching forward together to ensure every American equitable connectivity so they may best chase and capture their American dream.

Rural Forward

From our inception to our current advocacy on equity and access issues, time and time again, the Grange is where solutions start. In 2024, we launched a pilot program to provide Granges with grants to complete projects that would be transformative to the lives of their neighbors and to the sustainability and resilience of their communities. The Rural Life Initiative, and the dozens of projects in seven states that have been a part of this pilot, is living proof that even small groups can make great change; that small projects can make a huge difference; that small communities can thrive if DO-ers are there with resources to see their efforts become reality.

The start-up dollars for the Rural Life Initiative came from Pfizer, which is celebrating its 175th anniversary in business. Their choice to give back as part of that celebration has led to many unique and successful local events and programs: from providing resources for an archery team in rural Montana, to zucchini races in suburban California; from an increased presence at community events in Colorado, Illinois, and Ohio to youth programs in Pennsylvania; and to disaster relief in North Carolina. The Rural Life Initiative has effectively addressed the real needs of these communities, truly combining key elements that Granges across the country embody – fellowship, community support and service, and a focus on the values and strengths of rural America.

⁷ According to a Cleveland Clinic study, <https://consultqd.clevelandclinic.org/u-s-suffers-significant-geographic-disparities-in-access-to-neurologists-and-multiple-sclerosis-care>

We are grateful for Pfizer's generosity in providing start-up funding for this initiative, and we want to expand our reach and partner circle to ensure that every local Grange can bring valuable programs, projects, and resources to their community, not just this year but in the future as well.

Returning Home

When I started, I told you that across the nation, Granges and our members are striving for one thing: the vitality and increased vibrancy of our hometowns. But why? Why fight for rural towns struggling to survive? Why is it we fight so hard to ensure their future?

Let me tell you something I know to be true – there is a power that lives in rural America, and it burns within each and every one of us. It's a power born of hard work, of integrity, of community. It's the power of generations who have tilled the soil, raised their families, and built their futures with their own hands. It's the power of people who understand that nothing is given, but everything is earned – and that the strength of one is multiplied when we stand together – in essentials, unity.

The future belongs to those who understand the land, who cherish their community, who rise every morning with purpose and integrity – this is where the real power lies. While we most often talk about the values and the work ethic that live in rural America, the needs and challenges of our rural communities – because that is where we cut our teeth and what we know best – we also, as is the Grange way, stand with those who call home to suburban and urban America. A stronger rural America does not mean a less stable urban America; indeed, they work hand-in-hand – strengthening one sector of our population strengthens us all.

We do not believe there must be haves and have-nots. Instead, we believe in strengthening rural communities and improving the quality of life for producers. We know the American agriculture industry strengthens the nation and benefits every consumer across the globe. Grange members across the nation are stepping up to create spaces where people from all backgrounds can come together, share experiences, and solve problems that benefit everyone. Let us use these connections to reduce the divide and remind our nation that rural and urban communities are not adversaries but partners. A nation that is united cannot fail.

At this convention, in our community Grange halls and meetings, or as small groups of members joined for fellowship, each and every time we gather, we come together not just as members of an organization, but as a movement – a movement bound by the shared belief that strength comes from unity, that progress is forged through community, and that the values we hold dear are more relevant today than ever before.

Today, the Grange is more than just a gathering place; it is a force for good, a platform for advocacy, and a community where every voice matters. We stand Grange Strong – not because of any one person, but because of all of us. Every member, every Grange. Each of us contributes to this incredible legacy.

In the Grange, there is work for all, and every American I know believes there is work to be done to secure and improve our nation. Why not do that work with us? For those of you not yet a member, find your local Grange and tell them you're ready to join. Or contact us and bring the Grange to your hometown or revive one of the more than 40,000 chapters that have been established over our long history. Now is the time to bring Grange values to every community and every home. Now is the time to meet together, talk together, work together, and in general, act together for our mutual advancement as neighbors and as a nation. To restore and strengthen the American dream. Our American dream.

Fraternally submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine E. Hamp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christine" and last name "Hamp" clearly legible.

Christine E. Hamp, President
National Grange

APPENDIX

You are viewing FY 2024 spending by Budget Function

FY 2024 OBLIGATED AMOUNT

\$8.7 Trillion

Data as of August 30, 2024

Choose a budget function below to start your exploration.

See the breakdown by: 📊 Budget Function ▼			📊	📊
Name ↕	Obligated Amount ↕	Percent of Total ↕		
Medicare	\$1,516,886,936,828	17.34%		
Social Security	\$1,415,668,834,806	16.18%		
National Defense	\$1,396,332,365,087	15.96%		
Net Interest	\$1,065,207,106,615	12.17%		
Health	\$1,032,945,978,896	11.81%		
Income Security	\$677,028,421,398	7.74%		
General Government	\$400,911,110,897	4.58%		
Veterans Benefits and Services	\$331,679,583,355	3.79%		
Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services	\$228,844,915,664	2.62%		
Commerce and Housing Credit	\$149,582,383,661	1.71%		
Transportation	\$132,843,571,785	1.52%		
Natural Resources and Environment	\$121,098,478,951	1.38%		
Community and Regional Development	\$98,365,588,922	1.12%		
Administration of Justice	\$92,389,181,479	1.06%		
International Affairs	\$75,084,758,841	0.86%		
Agriculture	\$47,205,388,370	0.54%		
General Science, Space, and Technology	\$39,492,756,679	0.45%		
Energy	\$28,957,052,914	0.33%		
Governmental Receipts	\$0	Less than 0.01%		
Unreported Data*	-\$101,143,518,927	-1.16%		

All dollar amounts shown here represent agency reported obligated amounts

Unreported Data*: Unreported amounts are calculated using the difference in the total obligated amount from the [Report on Budget Execution and Budgetary Resources](#) (excluding financing accounts) and the total obligated amount reported by agencies to USAspending.gov in 'Account Breakdown by Program Activity & Object Class' data (also called 'File B' data).

PRESIDENT'S INTERNAL ADDRESS

Delivered by Christine E. Hamp, National Grange President

4:00 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024

Officers, Delegates, and Members of the National Grange,

I am humbled to stand before you as the 24th President of the National Grange.

As I prepared to address our membership, I found myself considering the many calls to action, reports of activities, and important bits of wisdom shared in the previous addresses given from this station.

There is power in the words of the past, but we cannot dwell there. We must look forward, through the windshield, this is the way we are going. Every single message. Every single action. Every single day – to ensure the Grange is stronger tomorrow than it is today.

This Grange is all of ours – the collective us – every, single member. Grange, in every sense, must be dynamic, not static. Our actions today - to help build the capacity within and to strengthen our communities, or to create opportunities for our members to learn and to grow - drive us to build and achieve the Grange we see and want tomorrow.

Deficit Mindset and Our Richness

Too often we talk in terms of what we lack. This deficit mindset that has set in must be shifted. We cannot focus on not enough members, not enough money, no one with the skill set, no one with the capacity, a failing hall. Instead, and repeat after me: We are rich beyond comparison.

We are rich beyond comparison.

Yes, we are.

We are rich beyond comparison with countless traditions started, the impact made on communities, fraternal bonds that have been built, and the identities shaped by this organization.

We are rich because of our good name. We are rich because of the legacy built by generations of members and leaders. We are rich because of untold partnerships and concerted efforts to make bad things good and good things better. We are rich because our structure empowers each individual member.

We are rich because of a groundswell of interest in the great promise of the Grange. Yes, today! Right now! In every corner of the country, people are searching for a place where they can belong, where their voices matter, where they can make a difference, where they can connect with others who share their values – values like integrity, hard work, and the importance of community – and where they can be a part of something bigger than themselves. In all these things, created and passed onto us, the Grange is rich.

1616 H Street NW

While we know, or have been told, that the Grange is not a building, that the Grange “does not live at 1616 H Street,” it does not lessen the attachment for many of us who collected pennies during our Junior Grange years or sold bicentennial cookbooks to pay off the mortgage. Like our own halls, most of us felt invested in the location and in the pride of ownership. The previously unimaginable decision made in 2021 to sell, because we were unable to continue stewardship of the building that had been our home base for the better part of 64 years, was tough.

Our National Grange headquarters was built for us as a physical place of business, a visual representation of our power, and an asset on which we could secure our future as an organization. Even as our building became outdated in comparison to other office spaces in the downtown D.C. area, as it started to truly show its age and its infrastructure began to fail, it continued to generate a large portion of our revenue, and we happily used the profits to offset our organizational costs and keep our dues low, rather than reinvesting in the structure that had been built as a long-term investment. For years, we balanced our budget with rental income while our membership numbers fell.

In fact, under the administrations of my last two predecessors, we as members were asked to make donations for our building. Very few individual members, community Granges, or State Granges stepped forward with contributions, and in total less than the cost to renovate a single floor for a new tenant was donated. Some Granges made loan offers, which were accepted – but loans require payback whether to our Granges or the bank, and payback requires income. Grants are hard to capture in a perfect scenario, but for a private business to do repairs on a private, revenue-generating building, finding one is next to impossible.

I say this to give you context. On February 6, 2024, I, with the approval of the Executive Committee, and on behalf of the National Grange, signed a purchase and sale agreement for \$10.3 million. The purchaser first approached us on December 13, 2023. I shared with you yesterday the complete finances of the sale and what we have invested. Thanks to our Investment Committee for all their hard work creating an investment policy, sending out RFPs, and ultimately selecting Stifel Investment Services, a company that has been around since 1890, to manage the proceeds from the building sale.

Dues Discussion is Long-Past Due

Now that we no longer have building income to rely on to supplement our budget, we must look at our dues structure, at our organizational structure, at everything the Grange is and does and make decisions that are best for the longevity of our beloved organization. Pennies add up, folks, and we need more of them to ensure the Grange is here tomorrow, stronger than it is today, here for your children and grandchildren and their children and grandchildren. Here with purpose, united and vibrant, relevant and ready to take on the challenges of the day, just like the Grange has done for the last nearly 160 years.

We must talk about the operations of a national organization of prominence and pride to each of us, which is built on a revenue stream based on a dues structure of \$1.17 per member per month. What is it that you can buy for less than a dollar and a quarter each month? This organization has amazing worth and impact – surely, we place more value on our membership than a can of beans?

It's also time we look at this thing we call "the grassroots structure." No, I'm not talking about our policy and advocacy – that truly is where the grassroots part of this process lies. I'm talking about things like pooling resources or offering greater assistance to Granges completely at a loss for what to do when the IRS comes calling after they've just added you to the auto-revocation list and your tax-exempt status is no longer valid. Or when you are facing too many administrative burdens to make having a local Grange look attractive, such as quarterly reporting and local dues collection. Nearly every other membership organization with chapters in today's modern era is collecting dues nationally and distributing down the chain. This allows these organizations to know their members, offer better benefits, and communicate immediately. By doing this, they not only serve them in a way they have come to expect, but in a way they are comparing us to.

Engagement isn't Desired, it's Required

Many of our leaders and members would be better able to answer the question of "what the National Grange," State Grange, or even local Grange "does" or "does for them" if they would simply engage with our communications. Our email list includes fewer than 15% of our membership. We do not have a *national* membership database – we have a membership database. Thanks to all of you who work hard to keep your membership data accurate and up to date.

Our open rate for newsletters, special reminders, or even my monthly Frontline Flash newsletter just to the delegates and officers, the leaders of our Order, is miniscule. Many of our members, many of you, fail to engage with the information we provide, and even more of you fail to pass it on. That kind of gatekeeping and negligence needs to stop.

While our external communications game is strong and growing, we continue to find roadblocks in reaching members within our ranks. Whether it is an unwillingness to share email addresses, State Grange Presidents and local leaders not passing information on, or a willful negligence to the work of the National Grange, we find that our message and programming is not reaching most Grange members and Grange households.

Many members, especially new members, believe that when they apply for membership and are welcomed, their information is shared with the State and National Granges and that they will receive communications directly that allow them to take full advantage of their membership – to get what they paid for. They expect that they alone will be the one to determine if a benefit, program, opportunity, or news item is of relevance to them, not a Secretary, a President, a state director or officer. They express deep frustration when they realize there is more information out there – they have just been expected to know to go find it on their own. This sometimes happens after they have already left the Grange. No other successful organization works like this, so why do we?

In order to be Grange Strong, we need to remember that the Grange, our Grange, any Grange is successful only when we all work together. If the National Grange cannot directly reach our members, and if you find that the information is not reaching your Grange, maybe **YOU** can be the conduit to ensure the Grange's message and voice is being received and heard.

The Communications Work Group was assembled in December 2023 to examine the National Grange's efforts in communication and dissemination of information and to make recommendations on innovative paths forward. Led by Communications Director Philip Vonada, this group includes seven members from around the country, who were handpicked for their desire to improve and build the National Grange's communication efforts.

With the input of this group, the previous Patrons Chain newsletter was phased out in May and "Grange Today!" was introduced in June. The current newsletter focuses more on the work happening in community, Pomona, and State Granges across the country, with ideas for programming, events, recognition, and more. This newsletter relies on you, our local Grange members, to be a part of the process and to "brag on yourselves" more, by sharing your ideas, successes, and stories. This is not new. We have asked for these same stories over and over for our publications like *Good Day!* magazine and our social media, but we have struggled to get more than a handful of Granges, mostly the same ones over and over, to contribute. We hope this time is different but hope alone isn't enough. We need your help.

Good Day! magazine continues to be a source of pride for the National Grange. This quarterly magazine, which costs only \$16 a year, is a fantastic resource for all Grangers. Philip continues to work hard to find unique, engaging stories and content for the magazine, including columns by Grange members and non-members. New features are rolled out regularly and feedback is always welcomed.

If you're not a subscriber, why? Consider also purchasing a subscription for your Grange, for your newest member, or one to place at a community center or library with their permission. This is an acceptable use of Grange funds – a way to introduce the Grange to your community and to new members seeking to find out what opportunities they have before them in their Grange journey. If you don't want mail "clutter," the magazine can also be purchased as a digital subscription.

Additionally, the Grange Hall Podcast, launched in April, focuses directly on our community Grange members across the country, highlighting their Grange stories and the work happening at the grassroots level. The podcast is available to listen to on most streaming platforms, the National Grange YouTube channel, and the National Grange website. This is an example of ways we are embracing new technology and mediums, creating resources available 24/7 at the fingertips of every member and anyone interested in learning more about the Grange. We would love to do this more – to embrace what aren't even considered new methods to connect with our members and celebrate our Order. An example is a Grange app with push notifications of our news and events, sign-ups and reminders for things like Zooms and conventions, and various resources available on demand directly to members who wish to receive updates. An app would bypass the gatekeepers and make us more like other modern organizations – but an app is not free. A Grange app should also have local event, meeting, and chapter information – but we can't even get most Granges to update their free Grange.org websites or regularly post to social

channels. Folks, we cannot keep operating like we are in the 1890's or 1940's or as if we are still a secret organization, we cannot move forward without funds, expertise, and your support.

The Grange Experience

Every member should know what is available to them – what they are getting for their dues, what opportunities they can take, and what is available for their families and children. My Grange journey, like many of yours, began in Junior Grange. Let's take a moment to reflect on what many of us learned in the Junior Degree – timeless lessons still applicable today.

The Installing Officer tells us what to expect from our Grange experience when they say: "The Junior Grange impresses upon its members the beauty of pure, honest and upright life, the necessity of kindness to others, and the importance of working for the improvement of its members and the welfare of the Order."

Later, when installing the Lecturer, the Installing Officer says, "You should always try to have every member take a part in our work, remembering that the chief object of our Order is to help each member and to promote the good of all."

In the Junior Degree, Ceres tells the candidates: "I welcome you because your presence here will benefit us, and we can do you good as well. Together, we can strive to do good to others and to live pure and wholesome lives. Behold this golden grain and remember that as we sow, so also shall we reap."

Reflecting on the Junior Degree, what value is there in Grange membership if we are not embracing new members as family and offering them as many opportunities to learn and grow as we were? Isn't that what was done for us? Isn't that why we are here with love for our Order. And if we expect the Grange to maintain its identity and secure a place in the hearts and lives of future generations, we must accept, inspire, and empower each new member who walks through our doors. Only through this engagement can we truly remain rooted, resilient, and united – and remain Grange Strong.

What is Grange Strong?

But what is Grange Strong? Grange Strong is ensuring that every action we take, at every level of our organization, builds on our previous good works, our reputation for being DO-ers, and our resilience to reach new heights of appeal, of recognition, and of engagement. It is committing to the future of our Order as a tribute to those who created and built this organization – their time, their talents, in most cases, their sweat, and in some cases, their blood and tears. Grange Strong is using Grange as a verb, as an action verb. Oxford says that any English noun "can be verbed," and that "verbs can indicate physical or mental actions, occurrences, and states of being." I cannot think of another noun more deserving of also being a verb.

We are so rich, standing on this rock-solid foundation. Let us, Grange!

To keep the momentum rolling through 2025, the National Grange will do everything possible to provide the resources and assistance you need to meet the needs and wants of your members and future members. We will do all we can to improve upon the value we provide and increase the value of each member's experience every time they walk through the doors of a Grange hall or attend a Grange event.

Do members, especially those young or new to the order, have the opportunity to lead? Are they being well-led? Is their time respected? Do their opinions matter? Can they practice and learn new skills? These are questions each Grange must ask and answer, and you as the leaders must see to it that the answer is a resounding "Yes!" If your members are not answering in the affirmative, then there is a disconnect that must be identified and resolved.

Our members are our Grange. By actively seeking their input, listening to their concerns, and tailoring our offerings to meet their expectations, we not only demonstrate our commitment to their success but also strengthen the bond between our organization and each member.

By empowering each member to reach their full potential, we lay the foundation for a thriving, prosperous, and relevant Grange. Value creation leads to increased engagement and loyalty, which in turn helps build a robust network of connections, collaborations, and partnerships. Imagine the impact the Grange can make when we prioritize and actively work toward enhancing the experience and value we provide to each member.

Our Behavior Matters

As many of you know, I retired last year after an almost 30-year career in the fire service – which is very much built on a structure that follows a chain of command. Since taking office, I've briefed the staff and communicated with many, if not each of you that the National office and the National President cannot, should not, and will not ignore the fact that the Grange also has a chain of command in our grassroots structure. Members should first seek local solutions to local problems, consulting with trusted mentors or elected leaders in their state. Just like passing on information to your members, this responsibility to lead is yours, placed on your shoulders when you said you'd "be delighted" to don the pink or gold sash.

To be honest, I was unprepared for the number of times that I or one of our staff heard from a local member that the State Grange had been contacted but did not respond, didn't offer guidance, or otherwise failed our members and our Order. Folks, no one joins the Grange to be treated poorly or to be a part of dysfunction. What are we doing and why would we think this would build and strengthen the Grange?

When members, especially new members, look to established and respected peers in the room or turn to the next level of leadership for help, they are seeking guidance. That can come in the form of managing their expectations or teaching them about Grange values, processes, and laws. Or it may be to investigate the situation or evaluate if we are living up to those values or within those laws and calling out bad behavior or the missteps in procedure quietly and supportively. It requires we know our stuff – and that we have others within our states and Granges who know it too. It requires that we use that knowledge to further the Grange, not dampen the spirit of new or prospective members.

We Need Leaders to Lead

We need leaders at every level to put their foot to the pedal; to drop into a lower gear and not now, not ever, let off the throttle. We cannot continue to move this organization forward as though we have no worries in the world and we're out for a

leisurely Sunday drive. As leaders, each one of us must strap in and – eyes on the road – charge ahead to catch the pack and position ourselves to capture the checkered flag.

Our founders and early members believed it was the Grange that was necessary not just to be part of the race but to chart the course for those who follow. Yet, for the past few decades, it seems we've been satisfied with chasing the pack. Many of the projects and issues we take on are the work of others. We have no recognizable signature.

As you heard earlier, I am proposing that each Grange, in their own way, take part in an initiative we are launching called Project Sustenance. This signature initiative will allow many Granges to build on already established programs, allow members to showcase skills and knowledge, all the while taking aim at the issues of food security and enhancing the personal sustainability of people in our communities. In addition to making strides to eliminate food insecurity in our hometowns, I feel it's important that we also offer members, and our neighbors who have not yet joined us, the opportunity to invest in themselves, the tools to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, and the knowledge and skills to chase, capture, and live out their American dream.

In 2025, we will be building and begin releasing a series of resources and a toolkit for Granges to use, complete with recipes for success – descriptions of programs, outreach, services and projects Granges have taken on to improve food security or personal sustainability. Granges across the country are doing amazing things, and we must ensure our good work is not siloed – we must share among our Granges so one of our most precious resources – volunteer time – is not squandered.

Nationally, we will work to establish partnerships, seek grants and sponsor dollars, and promote our deep connection with personal sustainability and food from farm to fork for every American. I ask you to commit and unite to take part in **Project Sustenance**.

Nonpartisanship is Our Bread and Butter

As I mentioned in my External Address, we will seek and engage with partners and sponsors, like Pfizer who funded the Rural Life Initiative, to help fund this new effort to increase food security and personal sustainability. We can do this because we are unique in the national landscape, well-respected, and untethered to outside interests because of our grassroots policy structure. We are also well-sought after because we were built on and continue to stand on the principle of nonpartisanship. Engaged in the political process while focusing on issues rather than parties or individuals, the Grange is an outlier in a society where political rhetoric often becomes heated and worse. In our policy and our advocacy, we remain fair-minded and a reasonable, common-sense voice. In these polarized times, the Grange's commitment to civility and collaboration is more important than ever – and both must start and be reinforced within our halls and meetings.

We are the place where individuals can express opinions that may differ from one another, yet we'll remain friends, intermingled in our seating at the evening's potluck. But we must take this climate of civility to the people. Granges can actively contribute to the democratic process by organizing town hall meetings, hosting debates, and facilitating public forums. These events offer a platform for respectful dialogue and give our community a space to express their views in a civil and constructive manner. Whether discussing local concerns or national issues, Grangers have the unique opportunity to lead by example – promoting respectful discourse and solutions-focused conversations that prioritize the common good. By doing so, Granges reinforce their role as trusted community hubs, where diverse perspectives are welcomed, and unity is fostered, even in disagreement.

The recent election shows how few of our neighbors are taking their citizenship responsibility seriously and voting. Therefore, I also urge each of our Granges to consider how we can better promote engaged citizenship and participation in the democratic process. This, too, is a part of personal resilience and sustainability – involvement in the democratic process to voice one's opinion, choose one's leaders, and have a hand in building a better tomorrow for oneself and the generations to follow.

To Elevate and Educate

You've heard a lot about the next generation in both of my addresses today. That's because what we do today and everyday matters. Our actions affect the Grange, its members, and the communities we serve.

If you listen to country radio, you may have heard a song sung by Matt Stell about a family selling their farm and the way it completely transformed the life of the character. There's a line in the chorus that resonated with me, "My life got rough when my hands got smooth."

I thought about the Grange, about the "heyday" or "good old days" some of us refer to, that many of our parents and grandparents lived through. I think about National Grange President Herschel D. Newsom standing before the delegate body in 1951 in Atlantic City, New Jersey – a delegate body just like this one but larger – speaking about his vision to see a Million Member Grange, something he saw as a memorial tribute to the recently deceased National Grange President Albert S. Goss.

The following year and the next and for the rest of his term, Newsom reported membership losses. We never hit the mark of a million members.

I imagine him sitting at his desk at 744 Jackson Place, thinking how easy it once had been to grow membership on the name and reputation of the Grange alone – I have thought it sitting at my desks in Washington DC and Washington State.

Instead, Newsome was seeing real-time that as more and more social clubs and community groups entered the picture, as people continued to stream out of rural communities, as technology meant that make our lives easier seemed to give us anything but more time, as we turned on the television and found entertainment could be had at home, our metaphorical hands got smooth. We lost the callouses from working to attain prestige and gain respect. We rested on our laurels and expected others to just storm the doors, eager to join. And what of the life of the Grange? Its vibrance and relevance, the magnetism and impact, the things that make people stop, listen, and desire to be like us – the life of the Grange got rough.

In the 1950s we were chasing the mark of a million members. Today we sit at fewer than 50,000 fraternal members. We no longer have time to ignore the challenges we face. Perseverance requires effort. And it is only through effort – a collective action to pull together toward a goal – that we can expect results different from those we have had for the past several decades.

It's callous-forming hard work, folks – and the work is not just about asking people to join. The work begins when we truly, honestly, deeply inspect, reflect, and respond to a few questions:

- Is the program we're offering something the nation, its hometowns, and its people still need? If so, how can we make it more widely known and appealing? If not, what is it that we can offer based on our stated, shared values, and our current resources?
- What's in it for them – for the people we are asking to join the Grange today? For what reason should someone join? Are we telling them what they want to hear but not what they will find when they join and truly get engaged in our Order?
- Are we willing to appreciate that what was relevant and desirable in one era may not follow into another?
 - That hard work may include shifting priorities, doing things in new ways, empowering people whose familial ties aren't generations deep, learning new skills and technologies, and maybe – probably – making financial investments in the future of the Grange for the next generations of members who have already entered our ranks or who are yet to come.
- Finally, are we giving members reasons to stay at every stage of life? This one is huge because we know retention is so much harder in many ways than recruitment.

Today is a different world, and the lives we all lead are drastically different from those of our founders or our fathers. However, one thing holds true from our very founding as a fraternal order – the purpose to elevate and educate our members. Fraternities like ours are built around the idea that they benefit the members; we must remember that fostering and encouraging the growth of each member to their greatest potential is the primary mission of the Grange.

To put it another way, when speaking to someone about membership, the rule of thumb we must all embrace is this: do not ask what they can do for the Grange or ask them to join to save the Grange, instead, tell them what the Grange can do for them – build their skills, improve their quality of life, give them a sense of pride and purpose, and deepen their connection with their neighbors, with nature, and with all mankind. This is our charge. This is what will make the Grange strong into the future.

The Future Cannot be Guaranteed Without New Members

Throughout this address and earlier today, I have talked about the importance of Grange-ing – and I do believe our nation is better because of and with the Grange. But years ago, we were told that a national organization with less than 250,000 members has very little influence and very little relevance with lawmakers, or the press, to name a few. Today we sit at less than 20% of that critical value. I believe that we defy that statement – we do still have influence, our name and reputation remain of value. But I also know that with fewer and fewer members, our voice is getting weaker.

After two consecutive years of membership growth, I had hoped we had turned a corner. Instead, our overall numbers show a loss of 2% of individual, family, and associate members.

I'll tell you; the lack of a membership gain sucks. It is a gut-punch, and I take it personally. How am I worthy to lead, if our members don't see the vision I see so clearly? Why do I love this organization so much if others won't take the action needed for it to survive, and thrive? Is the Grange not worth pulling out all the stops? Is it not worth doing everything possible to make it grow?

I am a glass overflowing type of person, so talking about these not-so-glowing numbers is hard. But the alternative is even harder. We MUST build our membership in Every. Single. State. Everyone needs to be sitting in the same boat, rowing hard in the same direction to make this work. Every one of us here. Everyone one at home.

There are states that have found some recipe for success. Over the past four years, California has added more than three dozen Granges back to its rolls and gained more than 1,500 members. Oregon has remained steady with Granges but has grown by several hundred members. Montana had this year's biggest percentage net gain with a jump of more than 11%. What are they doing, and what can we glean from them?

What will you do with the answer?

I, alongside the Executive Committee and staff, am working on developing a Performance Improvement Plan for every State Grange – a plan with benchmarks and accountability. Why? Because a roadmap to strengthen and grow the Grange is something every state should have. Because progress without measurable, definable successes can feel like you've gone nowhere at all. And because leadership requires more.

Teams and Work Groups

My leadership style revolves around this collaborative approach. The Communications Work Group mentioned earlier is just one of 11 teams and work groups created and launched to address issues or manage departments this year. This move to change how we do things is not only a reflection of my leadership style: to get as many hands in to do the heavy lifting as possible, to empower individuals and help them grow personally and within the organization, to acknowledge the breadth of experience and abilities within our membership, to make sure we are building leaders for the future with every act of service and opportunity they get today. These changes are also a reflection on our current financial and staff constraints and an acknowledgment that what we've been doing hasn't been working. We need more than just a small core of people to bring ideas and effort to the table, and while our resources are few, our collective spirit is mighty.

Not every team or work group knocked it out of the park, but success is in each of these members knowing their voice is valued, and that we are doing everything we can to make the member experience one of excellence and enthusiasm.

In addition, 14 people enrolled in the SHIPmates Program, sponsored by Potomac Grange #1, focused on leadership, membership, fellowship and mentorship, as well as project management training, are also at work. They have been meeting several times a month, developing plans to address some issues identified related to the orientation of new members, the organization and reorganization of Granges and the concerns both of these groups face as they enter our fraternity. They are creating Solution Pods, seeking voices of optimism, enthusiasm, knowledge, and curiosity to find innovative and strategic approaches to some of the challenges of our Order. I look forward to the work of each of the SHIPmates, their Solution Pods, volunteers and experts they recruit to assist in the creation of resources.

But again, these resources are only useful if they are used or taken advantage of, and they can only be used if people know they exist. We cannot expect anyone to care more about this organization than we do, so that puts squarely on each of our shoulders the weight of carrying this proud and storied organization forward to successfully pass the baton to the next generation for them to take us to new heights.

Our Archives

I've spent a great deal of time on the future because, to me, it is clear: windshields are larger than rear-view mirrors for a reason. But for a moment, let's talk about the past, or more accurately, about the amazing legacy of the Grange of which we are now the keepers.

We see evidence over and over again of our core value of nonpartisan action – documented in the collection of speeches, articles, policy books, sample letters, and programs distributed to Granges, and so much more. This collection, the National Grange archives, is mostly physical, though Sister Betsy Huber and others helped to digitize quite a bit over the past few years.

Our archive of tens of thousands of physical artifacts currently lives in the basement of New Market Grange in Maryland. While in a secure, climate-controlled environment, which is a better habitat than was had in the sub-basement of 1616 H Street, it is not a permanent solution. Stories contained within that room are incredible and, without question, are of importance far beyond the Grange. Historians, researchers, writers – so many people could look to these primary source documents and first versions of history to learn just how rural America developed since the Reconstruction era. The Grange was not just there, but in so many communities, on so many issues, and in so many instances, it was the Grange, or a group of members, or an individual Granger with assistance or inspiration from the Grange, that answered the call or took up a cause and saw it through.

The stories contained in these archives tell of giants on whose shoulders we stand. Some, our grandparents and great-grandparents. Some, strangers who made the word Grange matter and have meaning far beyond their lifetime or their geographic reach.

Are we adding to that rich history with our own stories of success and service? What kind of legacy are our Granges building and leaving to the next generation? Are we concerned about the future of our Order, and as such the future of our hometowns, or are we focused on getting all we “deserve” with little regard for what is left for the next keepers of the keys? Are the stories of today worthy of inclusion in the archives? Again, these hard questions deserve honest answers and action if necessary so we can truly make our predecessors proud and hand to our successors something strong, Grange Strong.

I am seeking volunteers to serve on a task force, co-hosted by the National Grange and the Grange Foundation, assigned to assess the viability of a Grange Museum or some other strategy – to ensure these priceless documents and artifacts are preserved and accessible and that our stories are told. I envision bringing together experts in history, museum studies and curation, publicity, fundraising, and more to serve and bring back well-researched information and recommendations from which we can begin to act on in 2025.

Action is Key

Action. It's at the heart of everything.

Throughout this address I have said it, but I will say it again clearly: **I am imploring you to act.** The next generation of members and the people who will be changed for the good because of the actions of the Grange, are imploring you to act. Go home and set a tone – not maybe, not at some point, not after Christmas or by Grange Month. Now.

Write a column. Open your email, read, and forward the information. Take the phone call from the member with concerns. Visit Granges and celebrate with them. Volunteer with them. Hear their stories and learn about the issues they face. Be proactive, not reactive. The Grange needs each of us to choose tomorrow. Be leaders with servant hearts, honest, just, and fearless.

Be bold in your vision and resolute in your purpose.

Be sure that you are ready for the challenges, that you are leading well, and that you have the passion and the courage to wear the sash. Be humble, knowing you are only its temporary custodian. Be a mentor to those who you feel may one day wear it. Be leaders who would make proud those who wore it before, whose names and accomplishments are a part of our archives, who embraced challenge and change and charged ahead, bettering their communities and our organization alike.

Leadership requires us to not only look and see from our present vantage point, but to look and see from a much broader view. The view from 30,000 feet is different. It can be lonely at 30,000 feet. It is also exhilarating.

Today I challenge you, each of you, to make *Esto Perpetua* your motto as you serve as a Grange leader. The opening of the Seventh Degree refers to our labors this week as our “eminent responsibility” – by wearing a gold sash, we are vested with the authority to shape the future of this organization through our actions. Grassroots members from your states elected you to leadership, and scores of individuals seeking an organization like ours, for a family and a vehicle for service, are dependent upon your actions.

Am I the Last One?

Know that our success cannot rest on a select few holding all the power or knowledge. Our strength comes from every single one of us being connected, engaged, and sharing what we know with one another. When everyone is part of the conversation, when everyone has a seat at the table, that's when we're unstoppable!

No one in this room should ever think that they will be, nor should they want to be, the last one – this is not your decision to make. People in communities across the country are sitting in meetings or small groups, in their living rooms, or at their kitchen tables, asking this same question: am I the last one? Will it end with me? Will the next generation take up the torch, plan the parade, put on the carnival, hold the annual tree lighting, gather and make memories, and grow together? Or will they fail to see that each of these things takes effort, coordination, and organization? Will they fail to join and execute and continue a legacy; and grow apart? Or will they choose to follow in our footsteps and become the DO-ers?

The Grange was built by DO-ers, and we are fortunate to have many still among us in our ranks. The Grange was also built on the principles of collaboration, service, and mutual support. Today when new people come to us, application in hand, we must not just welcome them through ceremony. We must do so through word and deed, warmly, and with trust that they, too, are DO-ers, eager to make a difference and engage their unique talents and skills. We are a fraternity where there is work for all, and when we work together and encourage each other to lift up each other's talents, we build not only ourselves but also our entire community.

Allowing and encouraging the next generation of members to “do” allows us to evolve, to be a living movement that grows through collective strength and shared purpose, building relevance and longevity. Empowering and imparting our values – not just in words but in deeds – will help us fulfill that leadership motto: *Esto Perpetua*.

But this is not just about welcoming new members, allowing them to be part of activities and projects – this is also about knowing when to step aside to allow others to lead. By making this choice, we are able, as mentors, to shape the way the Grange moves forward, and able to fulfill a promise we make to all new members: to be able to grow to their greatest potential. Not one of us owns this sash – the dark red, the national blue, the dark green, the pink, or the gold. We are all, each of us, its temporary custodians. This goes for every officer at every level of every Grange.

The institutional knowledge that leaders can impart and pass on only happens if you relinquish your power and allow a new generation of leadership to rise before it is too late; otherwise, those left behind will flounder in your absence, and the Grange may soon cease to exist because you held on too long.

A New Dawn: Rise with Me

That and a hundred other challenges to conquer and opportunities to explore, is what keeps me up at night. But in the morning, I see a new dawn breaking and hear those words: the work of another day demands our attention.

Will you rise with me, rise and take on this new day?

Will you rise to take on the challenges and chase down the opportunities, make our predecessors proud, and secure our future?

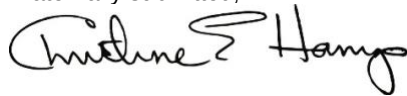
The road to success is not without obstacles. Challenges will come and setbacks will occur, but it is during these moments that our true strength shines through. When we embrace adversity, we realize it is the catalyst for growth.

So, let's make a pact today – a pact to push ourselves beyond our limits, to set audacious goals that seem impossible, and then reach for them with unwavering focus. Let's promise each other that we will learn, unlearn, and relearn, continuously honing our skills to stay relevant and ahead of the curve. Let us lift one another up, celebrate each other's achievements, and embrace the collective power of our diverse perspectives. Let us ignite the fire within ourselves, knowing that together, we can honor the past, engage the present, and build a brighter future that exceeds our wildest imaginations.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of leading this amazing organization that has shaped my life and the lives of many of us in this room, and scores of members since 1867. Thank you for your attention, and in advance for your action. But most of all, thank you for being my Sisters and Brothers, who I can walk side-by-side with to advance the Grange into the future.

Esto Perpetua!

Fraternally submitted,



Christine E. Hamp, President
National Grange

STATE PRESIDENTS' REPORTS

CALIFORNIA

Submitted by State President Joseph B. Stefenoni

Worthy President, National Officers, Delegates, Brothers and Sisters,

The last year has been another one of productive growth and expansion for the Grange in California. The legislative and regulatory activities at the local, State, and Federal levels continue to illuminate the need for both relevant Grange policy and active and aggressive advocacy to elected officials and policymakers.

Insurance

Insurance continues to be one of the most challenging subjects to find adequate and equitable solutions to the problems at hand. Over the last year, more insurance carriers announced their intent to cease writing new policies in California, putting further strain on the already stressed insurance market. Within policy circles, a new approach to indemnity against wildfire is being discussed to model a national wildfire insurance program after the National Flood Insurance Program. A resolution endorsing this idea was adopted by the California Delegates and is presented here to the National Grange.

Water

Water and water policy have been inextricably linked to the progress of the California State Grange. The first resolution ever adopted by a California State Grange Delegate body was related to water policy. After 150 years, a special committee of members with subject matter expertise reviewed and proposed revisions to the State Grange's water policy.

Legislation

The California State Grange continues to advocate that agriculture is a key and critical component of California achieving net zero by 2045. We have advocated that livestock grazing should be returned as a management practice to the California State Parks management plan. We have also supported the continuation of funding for on-farm sustainability projects.

The Legislature also spent much time determining appropriate guardrails to place on the use of artificial intelligence (AI). AI technologies are making their way into every aspect of daily life with both positive and negative consequences. This year the California State Grange adopted a policy calling for a comprehensive framework to be placed on the use of AI technology.

Agriculture Under Attack

In the last year, agriculture in California has faced new and increased attacks on its continued existence. Billionaire tech investors are buying thousands of acres of prime farmland with the goal of building "California Forever" a new development and self-described "utopia" city for up to 400,000. While more housing is needed in California, we cannot allow productive working lands to be bullied out of the control of multi-generation family farmers and ranchers. We know that well-managed working lands are necessary to feed a growing population and are one of the best tools for slowing and reversing the effect of global climate change.

Beyond the loss of farmland, farmers and ranchers in Sonoma County, CA are fighting tooth and nail against a county ballot measure that, if passed, would eliminate any operation with 700 or more mature dairy cows, 125,000 meat birds, or 82,000 egg-laying hens. Proponents chose these limits based on regulatory definitions from the US Environmental Protection Agency, and not because of any management style or practice. Proponents claim, without any basis in fact, that on these farms, solely because of their size, there are rampant animal welfare issues, not taking into account that these farms already comply with independent animal welfare inspections and certifications and comply with California's Proposition 12, the nation's most stringent animal welfare law.

An independent study estimated that if passed, this measure would create an estimated \$500 million in economic loss per year coupled with a loss of one job in the general economy for every one job lost in agriculture. In short, it would devastate the economy of Sonoma County.

This illustrates a new need to enshrine in law the rights of farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists to exist and continue production without outside interference from radicals with militant tactics and ignorant ideologies. Our ritual teaches us that "History proves that where agriculture has been fostered, that nation has prospered and reached a high degree of perfection; but where it has been neglected degeneracy began."

Grange Growth

It has been another successful year with seven reorganizations and a brand-new Grange joining our fold. Since September of 2022, we have organized three Community Granges and reorganized 16 Community Granges representing a 700-member growth, just from the initial organization, not counting the members they have added since starting. We heartily welcome the new members into the fraternal circle and look forward to helping them along their Grange journey. Efforts to reorganize Granges in 10 new communities are progressing toward a hopeful conclusion with more people joining the ranks of our Brothers and Sisters.

Grange Youth Fair Program

The Grange Youth Fair program is the Grange program that allows Junior and youth members to participate in fairs and exhibitions in California under the Grange banner. This program is one of the biggest drivers of membership growth and is one of the most visible touchpoints for our organization across the State. As laws and regulations have changed, the Grange Youth Fair Program is now also a major liability to the State Grange. In order to make the Grange Youth Fair Programs, its participants, its leaders, the Community Granges, and the State Grange secure, a number of steps have been taken this last

year related to reporting and documentation. Our ultimate goal is to provide a program that develops youth into the next generation of leadership, not only in the Grange but in our society as well.

Down Life's Pathway, Ever Facing the Light

This year, the California State Grange is forming a task force to review, evaluate, and dissect all aspects of the California State Grange. This task force will be broken into teams focusing on communications, financials, administration, engagement & outreach, member experience, and advocacy. At our 150th Session next year, these individual teams and the larger task force will present their findings and recommendations to the delegate body.

The State Grange Executive Committee and the delegate body continue to develop a plan for the headquarters property that has been home to the business operations of the State Grange since 1946. Ultimately, the State Grange needs a clear path defining what its needs are for a headquarters property.

The State Grange has approved a contract for a new website that will lead us into the next chapter of our organization's history. A main feature of our new website will be a focus on the people and places that make the rich experiences of the Grange. Over the next year, the State Grange will be gathering photos, videos, and member testimonials to show the world who we are and why they should join. We are eager to hear your story and why you are asking someone new to be a Grange member!

Conclusion

In July 2014, a small group gathered to clearly say, "We are the California State Grange!" Over that time, we have brought back over 100 Granges into our fraternal circle after a bitter and divisive split a few years before. Earlier this year, the California State Grange closed the last original lawsuit against a community group that attempted to abscond with those things that rightly belong to the Grange. This journey has not been an easy one and we would not be at this point today without the dedicated work and passion of Ed Kowski, Bob Clouse, Bill Booth, and Lillian Booth. Our organization owes them more than we will ever be able to return.

The progress of the last two years has laid a strong foundation for us to accomplish large goals over the next two years and we are relying on the support, ideas, and faithful service of all members to move the California State Grange down life's pathway preparing the Grange to enter a new generation of history.

COLORADO

Submitted by State President Gary Wardle

The Colorado State Grange celebrated our 150th anniversary in 2024. Many celebrations were held in many Granges around the state, and we had a birthday party at the 2023 State Grange convention.

The Colorado State Grange participated in two grants from National Grange. First, members of the Colorado State Grange assisted in the development of a video for the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute or PCORI. The second grant is the Rural Life Initiative. We received a \$7,000 grant to fund a booth at the Colorado State Fair. We received funding to purchase monitors to show the PCORI video and a video promoting Pfizer and Grange membership. The funding was also to provide lodging to stay at the fair for 8 days. The fair was well attended, and we had Grange in front of many people.

The Colorado State Grange has 39 Granges with 934 members. We maintained all of our Granges in 2024.

We held our 2024 State Grange convention at the Masonic Lodge in Durango, Colorado, from September 25 to 28. Sixty members attended the convention, and everyone had fun.

CONNECTICUT

Submitted by State President Robert Buck

Membership in Connecticut has dropped to about 1,370 over the last year.

Several of our Granges including the reorganized Wallingford #33 and Redding #15 are doing well. Wallingford has done major repairs to their building with ARPA grant funds.

A number of Granges are struggling, and it seems our membership committee can't keep up with requests for help. I expect to lose a couple of our struggling Granges. Many others keep functioning, holding meetings, fundraising events, some have fairs, and doing great community service; Ekonk #89, Beacon Valley #103, Greenfield Hill #133, and Cannon #152, Riverton #169 are a few of these.

About eleven Granges hold fairs with two being of good size, Cheshire #23 and North Stonington #138. Our three Pomona Granges continue to deal with low attendance and for that reason, PR Co-Chair Terri Fassio arranged for two Pomona Round Table discussions to be held, one in July and a second in December, to share ideas and gather information on how we might deal with this problem. National Grange Vice President John Benedik of New Jersey joined us.

Our Leadership Academy program was put on hold due to injuries sustained by State Treasurer Jody Cameron in a fall at work. Eastern Connecticut Pomona #14 organized a Light House Cruise open to all Grangers and guests as well as a social outing to bring people together. It was attended by 55, and I hope to see more such events.

This year, Connecticut hosted the Northeast Lecturers' Conference. Our State Chaplain Charles Dimmick lead the New England Chaplain's Worship Service at Grange Weekend in Brookfield, Vermont.

We look forward to hosting Roger and Melanie Bostwick as the National Grange representatives to our Annual State Session in October. In spite of the struggles, Grange spirit runs high among our Grangers.

DELAWARE

Submitted by State President James Correll

The Delaware State Grange held its annual session on December 2, 2023. National Secretary Debbie Campbell and past President of Pennsylvania State Grange Wayne Campbell were our honored guests and everyone enjoyed the time spent with them.

The Annual Banquet was held on the night of December 2, 2023. Our honored guests included National Grange Secretary Debbie Campbell and Wayne Campbell, Delaware FFA President Noah Dixon and Vice President Hannah Haig. Bud Clark, President of Delaware Grange Mutual Insurance, presented a Proclamation from the Delaware State Senate to Bill O'Day for his 38 years of service as a Board Member of the Delaware Grange Mutual Insurance Company.

Delaware State Grange presented the Farm Family of the Year award to Paul Cartanza and family of Dover.

Delaware State Granger of the Year award went to State Secretary Debbie Edwards.

We had a leaders' meeting in February that was well attended.

The Annual Worship Together Service was held on the first Sunday of May.

The next big event was the Food Booth at the Delaware State Fair in July. We were honored to have help from the National Grange and other local State Granges assist during the Fair. National Grange President Chris Hamp and her husband came to help at the food booth. Also, from the National Grange Chaplain Kay Stiles and her husband, past President of Maryland State Grange Allen Stiles, came and spent time helping. Coming in from Pennsylvania, we had past National Grange President Betsy Huber helping us out. We'd like to thank all those who traveled from near or far to help us in our major fund raiser. It takes a village to make this a success and we were glad to have the National and State Granges join our village for another successful year.

We held the Delaware State Grange Picnic at the Nutter Marvel Museum in August hosted by the Sussex County Pomona.

We conferred the Fifth and Sixth Degrees in October and also held our annual Hayride in October.

IDAHO

Submitted by State President Eileen Javaux

Greetings from the Idaho State Grange

This was a busy year with travel for the Idaho State Grange. Richard and I celebrated our 50th Wedding anniversary on September 7th. All four of our daughters (the 4 A's), Amanda, Amber, Anna, and Alissa, were home. It was a great weekend with family and seeing friends, we don't see very often. I was reelected to a fourth term as President in October, an excellent time to implement a secession plan.

In May, Amanda Brozana and Scott Lyle came to Idaho; we had a great time visiting the Portneuf Grange in Pocatello. We drove north, attended a meeting at the Paradise Valley Grange, and heard about exciting hall improvements and plans. State officers and SHIPmate Scott Lyle attended a Mt. Home Grange meeting (Potlatch, Idaho), where we enjoyed seeing how the community has come together since its reorganization. On returning from Moscow, Richard and I stopped by the Clearwater Grange; they were having a bunco party. We enjoyed a tour of the museum housed in their hall, led by Carole Bonanno, highlighting the area's mining history. Later, we traveled 100 miles east to King Hill Grange, where we presented a check for achieving three out of four reorganization goals and celebrated with a wonderful Bingo night!

On July 4th, we attended the Upper Big Wood River Grange 100-year celebration. I was honored to ride in a carriage with Mary Ann Knight and Grace Eakin representing the Upper Big Wood River Grange as Grand Marshalls. Their 4th of July Parade fills the streets of Hailey, Idaho

During our visit to the Granges, we discussed the challenges of maintaining our Grange Halls, retaining current members, and attracting new ones. However, we also acknowledged our successes along the way, no matter how big or small. It's important to celebrate these successes as they outweigh our challenges.

When you put in writing what Idaho has done in 2024, it makes me very proud. Last year, at the 157th National Convention, I accepted the National Grange Teacher of the Year Award for Yvonne Golden from the Notus School District. This was extra special as I worked with her for many years and saw firsthand her dedication to her students; I love that we celebrate teachers across our state. In October 2024, Idaho delegates passed a resolution supporting Diaper Bank legislation. In the July 2024 issue of National Grange's *Good Day!* magazine, Amanda Brozana highlighted Idaho's efforts to address diaper needs. Diaper needs are increasing across the nation as the costs of rent and everyday essentials rise. Idaho is committed to supporting families facing diaper needs in our communities.

On the last weekend of April, Richard and I went to the Western Regional Conference in Yakima, Washington, with Allan, Sue Laird, and Chris Crawford. The Yakima Valley grows crops similar to those in our own Canyon County. We picked asparagus, toured a winery and brewery, learned about preserving Grange archives and creating partnerships with community businesses and citizens. It was a great weekend!

In 2023, we established the Super Secretary award for secretaries who submit their reports by the 10th of the month following the end of the quarter. The award recipients receive \$25, which goes directly to the secretary. I believe that implementing this program has been successful. Granges that had a net gain for the year are Blanchard, Harrison, Mica Flats, and Pleasant Ridge Granges.

The first Idaho State Grange matching grant was awarded to four Granges for the total amount of \$6400.00 of the \$8000.00 budgeted. Granges that received the grants were Paradise Valley, Edgemere, Pleasant Ridge, and Kuna Granges.

To improve our communications with our members we have begun using Mailerlite. This program is for members with email only, we hope that focused subjects will keep Grangers in the loop of the happenings in the State and National Grange.

This year, I started "Eileen's Soap Box". I've discovered many by-laws we ignore until a specific question arises. It's been interesting to explore these overlooked regulations. At each board meeting, I try to have something new we need to discuss to clarify, or a resolution needs to be written to change the bylaw.

The definition of **Faith** is defined as complete trust or confidence in someone or something. **Hope** is described as a feeling of trust, while **Charity** is defined as kindness and tolerance in judging others. **Fidelity**, on the other hand, refers to faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support. Remember, a good patron places faith in God, nurtures Hope, dispenses Charity, and is known for Fidelity.

Most of all I thank my family for just being who you are!

ILLINOIS

Submitted by State President Lynette Schaeffer

Worthy National President Chris and First Dude Duane, National Grange Staff, National Officers and Delegates of the 158th National Session; it is with jubilation we greet you to the Midwest. Illinois is proud to be one of your host states and hope you enjoy yourselves in the area.

The Illinois Grange Resources Information and Training – GRIT was held on October 22, 2023 at Hopewell Grange Hall, 474 Grange Road, Washington, Illinois. The meeting started at 11:30 with a potluck lunch and presentations starting at 12:30pm. All Grangers were invited to attend to learn about the contests and programs for the upcoming year, about 60 Grangers attended the event. Presentations were made by Brian O'Dell (Agriculture), Heather Ellwanger (Community Service), Ruth Blasingame (Communication/Editor), Angie Dickerson (Family Activities), Mindy Schiefer (Junior), Ethan Edwards (Lecturer), Robin Kindberg (Secretary) Karie Blasingame and Marisa O'Dell (Youth) and myself as Master/President. I was glad that many Grangers were able to participate in the presentations.

Don and I attended the 157th National Grange Session, November 14- 18, 2023 in Niagara Falls, NY. Don served on as Chair of the Conservation committee, and I served as Secretary of the Agriculture committee. Karie Blasingame was a Communication Fellow. Congratulations to County Line Grange, The Prairie Grange, Turkey Hill Grange all were selected as the Distinguished Granges from Illinois. I am immensely proud of these Granges and Grangers in them. I was grateful for the vote of confidence from the Delegate body to be re-elected to the Executive Committee of the National Grange and was proud to serve as Chair of the EC. County Line Grange's Community Service book did not win but represented Illinois well. I was thrilled to accept several awards for Granges and Grangers in Illinois.

Don and I went to Washington, DC before the Grange Leaders' Conference to assist with moving everything from the 11th floor, basement, and sub-basement of the Headquarters. The whole team worked hard, the days were long, and we slept well each night.

Over President's Day weekend, Don and I were in Myrtle Beach for a great Grange Leaders Conference. Christine Hamp, National Grange President, and her team planned an excellent diversified training event, it was well received by those who attended.

Don and I attended the 150th Anniversary celebrations at Turkey Hill and at BelAir Bowl for the dinner on April 20. National Grange President and First Dude, Chris & Duane Hamp, National Grange Membership Director Amanda Brozana-Rios, Past Rhode Island State Grange President and past National Grange Ceres, Steve and Clare Logan, Past Connecticut State Grange President, and National Grange Session Coordinators Jody and JodiAnn Cameron attend the events. It was great seeing and chatting with some Grangers I have not seen in a long while. Illinois now has several 150+ year old Granges; Guilford Hope, Union, Harmony, and Turkey Hill congratulations to all.

The Illinois State Grange picnic, May 4, 2024, eating started at 1:00 pm at Boone County Fairgrounds – burgers and dogs were provided by the Youth, other potluck items were shared by attendees. All IL State Grange Scholarships [9] were awarded that day. Congratulations to all the scholarship awardees. IL State Grange is proud of you all. I do wish more people would attend this event, it is a well-planned and there is tasty food, good fellowship and good fun.

The 153rd annual Illinois State Grange Session at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Collinsville, IL September 13 – 15, 2024. Phil Vonada, National Grange Communications Director, and Pennsylvania Junior Director, was our National Representative. Illinois State Representative Charlie Meier was the speaker on Friday evening. St Clair County has invited several other agricultural groups. Past National Grange Junior Director Emalee Colver, past President David Donley, past National Grange Secretary and past President Henrietta Keller, past National Grange Flora and First Lady Patti Lee, past President and past Executive Committee member Lyle Lee were presented to start the session.

I appreciate the State Officers and Committee Chairs and Directors for their complete work to make the session experience positive. The contest - display room had Junior crafts, Family Activity: baked goods, needlework and crafts, Community Service books, and donations for Hoyleton Family Services, Lecturer's virtual photography and writings, Agriculture: vegetables, flowers, field crops, Youth – artwork. It was great to see how extraordinary Illinois Grangers are. According to Heather Ellwanger, Community Service Director, Grangers and friends in Illinois are busy raising funds for many various community projects and concerns. We had many volunteer hours, more than 80,000+ for community service projects and efforts. The Grange communities in IL greatly benefit from having a Grange in their area. All our committee chairs, directors, and officers organized a outstanding program this past year and I thank them for their efforts. The drill work of the Youth, Juniors and several older "Youth" was once again outstanding. The auction of agricultural and family activity items was fun and of benefit to the Grangers who purchased items. One Granger donated a decorative marker which was purchased by

the family of a Granger who had recently passed away. Our Chaplain Mehrtens had an inspiring thoughtful memorial/worship service to remember past Ag Committee Chairs, past Family Activities Chairs and a legislative director. An Illinois State Grange Bylaws Committee was appointed, and because of their work the 2015 ISG Bylaws were revised, and new Bylaws were adopted at this convention.

Don and I were thrilled to attend Wisconsin, Kansas, and Indiana state sessions representing Illinois and National Grange. Illinois Grangers have been planning National Session in Bettendorf Iowa, Nov 12 -16, 2024. Illinois State Grange is part of the host group. If any Granger is wanting to help, please let us know. Emalee Colver was appointed as Registration host. Ruth Blasingame and Lana Korte have been appointed as IL Hospitality hosts for Wed, 13th and IL will assist WI on Saturday. Karie Blasingame is working on Transportation and workshops for the convention., Robin Kindberg responsible for flowers.

Don and I have attended many different meals, picnics, and regular meetings of several Granges this past year. I plan on continuing this and hope to increase the number of Granges we visit.

Illinois State Grange is a pilot for Rural Life Initiative – Grange Advocacy. The plan is to have health workshops incorporating Reaching Surgical Seniors, Cancer, Rural Minds for a four-workshop series we will be sharing information with the public. After the initial set, it will be promoted in Illinois.

I am proud of the Illinois Grangers who are serving the National Grange Task Force support groups, and of Marilyn Blasingame for her work for the National Grange.

Don and I are thrilled and honored to once again be delegates for Illinois at the 158th National Grange session in Bettendorf, Iowa. We look forward to the committee work, session efforts, making new friends, and making memories with Grangers from across the country.

INDIANA

Submitted by State President Jason Smith

I want to take this opportunity to thank Gene and Paula Lohrman for attending National Session in New York last year in my absence due to my work commitments. Taylor, Dad, and I made it out for the end of National Session in New York. I did get to sit with Gene and Paula during session and got to learn a lot while I was there.

My family has kept me busy this past year with school events for the kids, my job, Junior Grange events, Lions Club, and having the whole neighborhood over to our house all summer. I can't complain, at least I know where the kids are at and what they are doing. I also want to thank my parents for their support. They are always willing to help so I can get my duties done as your president. I also welcomed the birth of my first grandchild, Maverick Hayes Martin in August of this year.

I was able to attend the National Leaders' Conference, formerly known as Masters' Conference, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I want to thank John Plank for taking the time to come up from Florida to attend with me. We had a lot of fun, fellowship, and learned a lot. I encourage anyone wanting to attend next year to go or at least attend virtually through Zoom.

I want to thank the Lohrman and John Plank family for helping take out the State Grange Trailer out to a few events this year. These events did not go as expected, but it is a start for our State. We need more teamwork this year getting our state trailer out to more weekend festivals, which have proven to be very beneficial compared to weeklong fairs. If you have a festival in your area and would like to do a co-op fundraiser with the State Grange, please reach out to the State Executive Committee.

Dad, Bailey, David, and I got a chance to attend Colon Granges' 150th Anniversary celebration. They also honored community members as well. Meribeth, Jasper, Taylor, Morgan, Dad, and I attended Michigan's Degree Day on Aug 4th, 2024. They had a great day of Degrees, and a wonderful pulled pork and corn on the cob. I appreciate the willingness of all the Indiana Grangers who stepped up to be officers and candidates during the event.

I am looking forward to attending more meetings this year and encourage each Grange to let me know when you're having a special event or want a visit from your state president and his family; we love to travel. I appreciate all the Grangers who took my phone calls this year to talk Grange. Each and every single Grange is important to me, and I look forward to help each and every single one of you this coming year.

Agriculture

The Farm Bill continues to be argued on the congressional Floor. This is a crucial piece of legislation that is designed to continue supporting America's Farmers, Ranchers, and forestry stewards through a variety of programs such as safety nets, farm loans, conservation concerns and disaster assistance. Since they have not passed a new Farm Bill or passed another 1-year extension of the 2018 Farm Bill otherwise we would see farmers facing some pretty steep challenges in the coming year.

Indiana continues to be a leader in Agriculture in the US. We ranked 5th in overall production. We continue to be #1 in Duck production selling roughly 13 million ducks yearly. We are 2nd in pumpkins, 4th in both soybeans and Peppermint and 5th in corn and Hog Production. Indiana has also seen an increase in the number of younger people getting into the farming business with roughly 26,000 new young farmers joining the industry.

Indiana continues to lose prime farm ground yearly, mostly to residential use and some to commercial. We have lost roughly 328,000 acreages in the past 10 years yet continue to increase the production of the amount of cash crops being produced. Where do we draw the line on the outward expansion into the prime agricultural land. Some fight over prime agricultural land goes to new solar farms being put up. Some of these farms take the place of some prime agricultural land and are only used as solar farms. There are some solar farms that are being used as multiple use areas. Mostly grazing sheep, who are not as hard on the solar panels as other livestock.

We are still on the front of the conversation about lab-cultivated meat. There are arguments on both sides about the use of lab grown meat. I don't know if I would be able to bring myself to eat cultivated meat. One side state that would need less animals, have less methane released into the atmosphere, and ethical treatment of animals. The other side argues about the

cost to make lab grown meat, the process of obtaining stem cells from live animals to start the culture and hurting modern ranchers because the market being flooded with cultured meat. Although, this process has been approved by the USDA, but some states have already passed bills to ban the manufacturing of cultivated meat for sale or distribution, but it is already being challenged in the court system.

Education

The educational system today has definitely changed in the last 25 years since I was in school. Students are getting pushed into learning how to take the test and not what they need to survive in life. It is time to take school back to basics. Classes such as shop, home economics, life skills, FFA are not being taught as often as they used to be. All skills that need to be taught to help people with day-to-day activities. There is too much emphasis on pushing kids to go to college than preparing them for the real world. Not saying that college is a bad thing, if you want a job that requires a degree. But there are so many other lucrative career opportunities for people to get that have other avenues other than college. There are Journeyman and apprenticeships out there for careers that are in desperate need of people. I read in an article that for every 5 trade job employees that retire, there are only 2 people to replace them. It's not that hard to do the math, but we will soon have an extreme shortage of qualified tradesmen if this trend continues.

We have seen a decline in the number of teachers that we have available. The National Education Association states that we are lacking about 300,000 teachers nationwide. We are especially lacking teachers in rural school systems and lacking Special Education and STEM teachers. Here are just a few of the longstanding problems plaguing American education: an inability to recruit enough qualified college graduates into the teaching profession; a lack of trained and able substitutes to fill teacher shortages; unequal access to educational resources; inadequate funding for schools; stagnant compensation for teachers; heavier workloads; declining prestige; and deteriorating faculty morale. Until these issues are addressed, we might not see the end to the teacher shortage.

Safety in our schools is another major concern in America. It seems that we are always hearing about another school shooting or a horrible bullying case, but then we yell and scream when the school system puts in extra measures to protect our students. Our local high school has installed metal detectors at the doors, Vap Detectors in all the bathrooms and locker rooms, increased the presence of resource officers, and still perform random drug tests for extracurricular activities. Additional training for teachers and administration would be very effective in dealing with the new issues that schools have to deal with today to keep our kids safe.

America could also go back to the basics through bipartisan journalism. It used to be that the newsrooms reported the news, told us what happened and let us create our own opinions on the facts presented. Now it seems that most newsrooms carry their own agenda and want to tell you how to feel and react to an event instead of telling us plainly what happened. Has America lost its ability to decide for ourselves how we feel about something?

Energy

Everyone should do their part in conserving energy use. We should properly help maintain our houses, watch electricity and gas consumption. Whether that means waiting a few extra days to turn on the heat or the air conditioning or watching what temperatures we set our houses at. We could look into investing in solar units for our houses, which has surprisingly gotten more affordable over the last 10 years. The output of most solar units now are 3 times what they use to be 10 years ago. Our initial investment still might be a bit on the expensive side, but the over gains on creating our own power will definitely be offset during the lifetime of the solar units. They now make solar tiles, developed in Germany, that are integrated with a heat pump system to help provide power and heat to houses.

People fight about the big solar and wind farms being set up in rural areas, taking prime agricultural land. I read about a wind farm that was set up off the coast of Maryland, creating enough electricity to power 2,200 homes along the coastline. The local fishermen are upset, saying that the construction of wind turbines has disrupted the local fishing in that area. Although, the owners of the wind farms rebut by saying that the bases of these wind turbines will eventually create new reefs and places for sea life to live.

Finding dual-purpose locations for solar and wind turbines quite possibly could be the answer we are looking for. I read about a Solar farm that was built over the parking lot at a local mall. These Solar farms are close to where the power is needed, provide shade for the cars below, could be used to charge cars, and are built over already cleared land that is not prime agricultural land. It is said that an average Walmart parking lot, if covered in solar panels could create enough power for 100 electric charging stations.

Health & Welfare

Many Americans already face trouble getting health insurance coverage. The threat of the Affordable Care Act credits for Americans that were extended by the Inflation Reduction Act set to expire at the end of 2025 could leave millions of Americans facing high costs on premiums or struggling to find insurance period. With the details for seniors with the Inflation Reduction Act limiting the out-of-pocket expenses to \$2,000, some insurers are looking to increase premiums in 2026 anywhere between 7% and 10%.

Technology is going to influence healthcare going forward, allowing us to do more with less. The use of telehealth has grown 13% in the last 8 years and should be a 19.5-billion-dollar industry by the end of 2025. Telehealth technologies allow people living in remote areas or people who can't travel to see doctors more often. It also will cut down in the cost of health coverage through less hospitalizations, ER visits to patients. 3D printing technology will allow us to create models, design custom devices and tools and help enhance precision medication. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will help improve diagnostic methods, analysis of test results, and streamlining administrative tasks.

Virtual and Augmented reality devices are being used to simulate medical procedures, helping to ease pain and symptoms, and used to treat Dementia and Alzheimer's patients. We are using more wearable health monitors, allowing doctors to collect more data in a timely to quickly diagnosis and improve patient engagement. Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) will help improve the evolution of precise medicine. Genetic testing will help identify at risk populations, targeting therapy to patient responses, and direct to consumer DNA testing.

The National Grange has partnered with Rural Minds to bring light to mental health. This is an ongoing epidemic, causing stress among people in both rural and urban areas. Although suicide rates are roughly 60-64% higher in rural areas. This is largely to blame as mental health facilities are not as readily available in the rural areas. The big reminder that we should stress to everyone is that we are not alone in our fight for good mental health and there are places and people available to help us along the way. It is not weak or shameful to ask for help! Depression is no laughing matter. If you or someone you know is in emotional distress, 988 is the hotline number for 24/7 support.

Legislation

First and foremost, I encourage each and every single one of you to get out and vote. It is not my job to tell you who to vote for or why you should vote a certain way, but to take into consideration all the issues, weigh your options, and vote your conscious.

America needs to create uniformity for voting rules and security in our elections. I have to present my ID to buy alcohol, enter any government building, to the policeman when I get pulled over; why not when I have to vote? By requiring a photo ID at the voting poles, we can help create a safe and fair elections. Making sure that all registered voters are US citizens also helps strengthen the elections. I wouldn't get to vote in another country if I was not a legal citizen of that country, so why should any illegal person have the right to vote in an American election?

America also needs to urge or keep fighting for term limits for our House of Representatives and Senators. No person needs to have a permanent career out of being a congressman.

We also need to better address the border crisis in America. We need to push for the legal crossing of immigrants into this country. On the Statue of Liberty, it says "Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free". I can't imagine what our founding fathers would think about the amount of people that cross into our country every year illegally. It's not that we don't want you anymore, it's the fact that we want you to enter this country legally.

Like the past two State Presidents, I have been working with the lobbying group in Indianapolis. We have remained a member of the coalition again this year, allowing them to send letters to our congressmen in support of legislation that the State Grange is in line with. We have again been approved this year for another \$2500 unrestricted grant which we have already received this year. We look forward to meeting with them again after National Session and confirming our stances with the lobbying group.

Transportation

The push towards all electric cars still seems to be the topic of conversations among politicians. Is this really the answer to our environmental problems. We must explore the pros and cons to see if this is actually the answer. We will cut down on the use of fossil fuels and harmful emissions, but can we afford an increase in the amount of money it takes to buy and maintain an electric car? Are they really more economical once you take into consideration what it takes to make the batteries for these cars and the maintenance cost associated with them. Can we afford to build expensive charging stations along our roadways and in our own homes? Can the power grid provide enough electricity to go entirely electric?

By going all electric, how will this affect the gas tax, which fund our transportation department? This tax funds is used repair to our roadways, bridges, tunnels, etc. How will they replace this form of tax collection to help offset the decrease in taxes collected by the gas tax.

Grange Law & Good of the Order

The Grange is evolving, changing, and adapting to a new generation. We are utilizing more online and digital means of transmitting our message. Is your Grange willing to change and adjust? Our Traditions and Values are very important to the organization and should always be taught, but there is nothing saying that we can't teach them in a different way. We should always be telling people what the Grange stands for.

We as Grange members must know when it is time to increase the influence of our members for the benefit of the Grange. Each and every single one of us has something to offer this organization. Some of us are leaders, some are helpers, some are advisors, some are mentors, others are out proposing new ideas and programs, some are encouragers, and some are here to help keep us grounded. You can always wear more than one hat in this transition into the future of the Grange, keeping in mind that we are all here to benefit the fraternity. Encourage your members to travel life's pathway, ever facing the light into a brighter and brighter day

It will be my goal in the coming year to do whatever is possible to strengthen the State Grange. We will be coming up with new ideas and programs to help gain members, retain current members, and start new Granges. I encourage each and every single one of you to give me input, join us on this journey towards strengthening our organization, and increasing our influence as Grangers in this great state of Indiana.

Conclusion

I want to thank everyone for their support this past year as I am learning what it takes to lead our state to the next generation. I know there are lots of people who I should be thanking for their help. I have enjoyed getting to know about the position, and learning from past presidents: John Plank, Gene Lohrman, Ross Smith, and John Valentine. These gentlemen have been at my disposal this past year, always willing to give it to me straight when I ask a question. It has been a truly uplifting experience and really shows the teamwork that we can have here in Indiana. I am looking forward to another great

year here in Indiana. We have great things on the horizon, and I am hoping that we can get more Grangers involved, create new Granges, strengthen our current Granges and grow our Indiana Grange family.

IOWA

No report received

KANSAS

Submitted by State President Roger Bostwick

Worthy Officers, Delegates, and Guests of the 158th National Grange Session, greetings from the Sunflower State!

I enjoyed meeting with several Kansas Grangers in Burlington on February 24th for the Membership/Leadership Roundtable and again on March 2nd for Quilting Day. This has become a beloved activity for many Grangers over the years, as members worked on National Quilt blocks and blocks for Quilts of Valor, which we present at our State Grange Session.

In April, I attended the Oklahoma Degree Day, and in July, several Kansans returned to Oklahoma for the Great Plains Regional Leadership Conference. The following weekend, on July 20th, the Kansas Pomona Granges hosted our own Degree Day, where several new members received the first five Degrees and attended the State Session to receive the Sixth.

Since partnering with Rural Minds, this initiative has become one of the most talked-about programs in the Grange. The Kansas State Grange is committed to developing a program to train Grange members as presenters throughout the state. Audrey Trowbridge has been leading this effort. In August, we met via Zoom with Chuck Strand, Executive Director, and Patrick Fannon, Communications Manager of Rural Minds. Chuck announced that Kansas is the first State Grange to fully engage with this initiative, joining a few local Granges nationwide that are already involved. Audrey and I presented our Rural Minds program to members during an afternoon session at the State Grange.

By meeting together, talking together, working together, and in general, acting together, and focusing on education and community needs, we can reignite interest in the Grange and demonstrate our value as a vital organization.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Molly Newman for her selection as a Communication Fellow, and to Audrey Trowbridge for being chosen as a SHIPmate for the National Grange Membership Department at the 158th National Grange Convention. A special shoutout to Nathan Strawder and Sarah Mader Strawder for continuing their journey in the SHIPmate program for a second year!

As we reflect on the past year, *let us treasure up the lessons we have learned, both by successes and failures, plan wisely and hopefully for the future, and strive to make our lives as harmoniously beautiful and bountiful as are the works of Nature's God.*

MAINE

Submitted by State President Sherry A. Harriman

Worthy President, Officers, Delegates and Members of the National Grange,

Hello from "Vacationland". It is an honor to present the 2024 Maine State Grange Annual Report at the end of our year long 150th anniversary as a State Grange. Several Granges around the State held their Sesquicentennial Celebrations, also. The Maine State Grange 150th Anniversary Celebration was a success with about 55 Grangers and 10 Juniors attending. Thank you, Juniors for weeding and sprucing up the memorial garden as a Community Service activity. It was a very casual afternoon with lots of visiting, reminiscing, hugs and big variety of yummy sweets & snacks! Everything was done downstairs throughout our State Grange headquarters building and office (the chairlift was out of order to the auditorium). Souvenir 150th booklets were printed for our guests to take, listing all 593 Maine Granges, when they were organized & closure dates; all State Officers & dates they served; Annual State Sessions dates & places; National Sessions in Maine; and Maine Grangers who served as National Grange Officers; and assorted moments in State Grange history. Special 150th pads of paper were also passed out to all. Several Subordinate Granges also celebrated their Sesquicentennial this year, also.

There were posters, memorabilia, assorted photo albums, and other unique items to look at. The attendees participated in a "Meet the Officers scavenger hunt" to fill in a questionnaire with the name of a different officer for each question. Richard and I were very disappointed we couldn't be there because we had been exposed to Covid on the Wednesday before the party. Mike G. was MC for the program which consisted of Welcome by Darrell H., Moments in Maine State Grange History by Missy B., membership information by Sharon M., Jim O. talked about the officers history albums he has custody of, the Juniors performed a couple of songs, the officer questionnaire was reviewed with much laughter, several folks gave some of their Grange experiences, door prizes were drawn and "It's A Good Thing To Be A Granger" was sung by all. Thanks for making the day a success.

I have communicated directly with the Subordinate & Pomona Masters/Presidents answering questions, calls & emails, creating, printing & sending assorted information, if one person asks a question I share the answer and info with all. I have continued to update the membership database, update paperwork describing ritual floor work and 'how-to' information in more detail and making it easier to understand, answering questions and providing copies of materials to anyone who requested it. I have sent letters to the Granges on a variety of subjects, to State people and others, and attending meetings when required, traveled to closure or consolidation meetings when required or was invited, presented certificates, signed paperwork for deeds and contracts for the sales of buildings, etc. Our State Committees and Departments have continued to work very hard promoting programs and events.

Most of our 80 Granges are doing well, some of these Granges are large and some are the smaller ones which are doing great things, large and small projects, in their communities. We still have other Granges that are struggling. The biggest

concerns continue to be membership, attendance at meetings, participation in projects and activities, internal fighting & scabbling, no one to take over or someone won't let go and financial concerns.

Several successful degree days were held throughout the state at different times during the year and many more Granges conferred the Obligation Ceremony. We had several Granges with Net Gains in Membership. However, we did not have a net gain overall. Maybe next time. Many public events were held, where we had a manned booth and some unmanned, an ag trade show, fairs, and other events where we publicized Grange.

Our Annual State Session is Oct 18 and 19. Sister Barbara Foster, National Pomona, will be our Representative and speaker. We are looking forward to visiting with her; this is her first time in Maine. Our 150th celebration will conclude, we will recognize our Former State Officers, our Juniors will entertain us, we will present Community Service, Family Health & Hearing, Granger of the Year, Membership, Teacher, First Responder, Policeman of the Year Awards, Educational Aid & Howe's Nurses Scholarships, donate a mountain of "pennies" and checks to a Veteran's Program here in Maine (House In The Woods Military and Family Retreat), donate money and gift items to Home for Little Wanderers. We'll haggle out the budget, work on resolutions, hold elections for an Executive Committee member, have reports of Officers and Department heads, Memorial Service, Art & Photo contests, department fundraising tables, and carry out the business of the Grange. We will Confer the 6th Degree on Saturday afternoon, which folks like that timeframe, to get home sooner.

I am looking forward to another successful year in the Maine State Grange. Our Granges continue to carry out the principles of our Order and we will persevere in our endeavors.

MARYLAND

Submitted by State President Richard Stonebraker

To the Officers and Delegates of the National Grange:

On behalf of the Maryland State Grange, I am pleased to submit my first report as Maryland State Grange President detailing our activities, programs, and accomplishments over the past year. Despite facing challenges, our Granges throughout Maryland have remained steadfast in their commitment to promoting agriculture, supporting our communities, and fostering the ideals of the Grange.

Membership and Leadership Development

This year, I challenged the Granges in Maryland to take a deep dive into their respective Granges and look at the overall health and workings of their chapter. At our annual Maryland Granger Academy, I let the Granges know that I was okay if none of them took in a single new member this year. That I wanted them to make sure their Grange "house" was in order. I believe my line was "if the theoretical roof and foundation are leaking, it does not matter what is between them." I have always had this thought. As a Grange, we can have as many members on the books as we want, but if our Granges are not functioning to the best of their abilities-then why. This coming year we will be focusing on implementing membership drives and outreach campaigns, encouraging younger generations to join and become active participants in our organization. Congratulations to Liganore Grange #410 for their net gain in membership.

The Maryland State Grange strives to cultivate future leaders. We held numerous leadership development workshops that focused on strengthening communication skills, building organizational strategies, and nurturing leadership potential in our members.

Advocacy

As an organization rooted in agriculture, the Maryland State Grange remains committed to supporting our rural communities and advocating for agricultural policies. We have worked closely with our state legislators, Maryland Department of Agriculture and other partners to support local agricultural initiatives, such as farm-to-school programs and agritourism promotion. Our members actively participated in legislative efforts, ensuring the voices of our communities were heard. Over the last several years, we have had to make the realization that there is less use of the word "rural" in our vocabulary. Many of our Granges are located in urban and suburban areas. We have been diligently working to ensure that the needs of these communities are met and that the Grange stays relevant in their view.

Community Service:

Service to the community continues to be a cornerstone of our mission. Over the past year, Granges throughout Maryland have engaged in numerous community service projects. From food drives to support local food banks to delivering holiday wreaths to shut-ins, our members have remained actively involved in improving their communities.

Our Junior Granges have continued to participate in community service projects, learning the value of giving back and becoming active citizens. We are proud to see a growing number of our youth learning this valuable lesson at an early age.

State Grange Session and Events:

The Maryland State Grange held its annual State Session in October, which served as a time for reflection, planning, and celebration. As we celebrated our 150th State Session, delegates from across the state gathered to discuss important issues facing our Grange and adopt resolutions aimed at improving our organization and the broader community. During the session, we also honored the hard work and dedication of our members and recognized outstanding achievements.

Partnerships and Collaborations:

The Maryland State Grange values partnerships with other agricultural and community organizations. We collaborated with local schools, 4-H clubs, and FFA chapters to foster a deeper connection between our members and the next generation of agricultural leaders. Working with the Maryland General Assembly, we ensured that the Maryland State Grange retained its

seat on several boards and commissions where we were able to offer valuable input and feedback. We continue to support the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation as well as several county fairs and community shows.

As we look to the future, the Maryland State Grange remains committed to strengthening our communities. We plan to continue advocating for policies that benefit Marylanders and we aim to foster even stronger relationships with other organizations to broaden our outreach efforts. Together, we will continue to uphold the values and principles of the Grange as we serve our members and our communities.

MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted by State President Corey Spence

In the year since I was installed President, I have gotten to know so many more of the Grangers of Massachusetts. As we have connected over the last year, I have seen Granges at their happiest and lowest moments. Many Grangers have taken to heart the saying, "You may encounter difficulties, overcome them, knowing that difficulties are but opportunities to prove our abilities." Your State Grange Deputies and I are here to be a listening ear and a resource to help you overcome your difficulties and cheerleaders to celebrate your successes.

We have been busy Cultivating Connections. From the 40th anniversary of our Library/Museum, the magical evening of our 150th Gala, to degree days, bowling competitions, Extravaganzas, Fun Days, and the first annual Agriculture in Action Expo - we have been busy.

Values, Vision By-Laws, and Mentoring

Core values create a north star and provide a lens to view all your Grange's programs and connections. Our shared values of Relevancy, Inclusion, Teamwork, and Accountability that the delegates adopted lead our discussions as your Executive Committee.

A Vision Statement speaks to your goals and aspirations as a movement. Where do you see your Grange heading in the next few years? What can you and your Grange do to live up to your vision?

Even the dry by-laws that your Grange adopted over the years speak to who your Grange is and how you want to order your meetings and elections. How long has it been since your Grange checked your by-laws and revised them to fit current practice?

I thank each Grange that accepted the challenge to send resolutions to the session this year. You really took me up on my challenge we went from 2 or 3 resolutions to 17!

You spoke through the survey of members we conducted, and we listened. We are creating the Grange mentor program that will help you and your Grange create a path forward. If you feel you may be a good fit for this program as a mentor or your Grange wants a mentor assigned, reach out to our Mentor Committee and see how you can connect through the program.

Using Technology and Connecting to the Wider Community

Let us continue to use 21st-century technology to spread our message. Thanks to our Communications Committee, we have worked to spread the message of the Grange everywhere. If you want to spread your message through our State Grange News, website, and social media, reach out and our committee will help you.

I encourage your Grange to explore the connections we have through our partnerships outside the Grange. Invite your local 4-H or FFA chapter to speak. Ask any of our connections at UMass to present a program. Invite local Envirothon or Sustainathon team to practice their presentation at your meeting.

Is there a school near you that needs help creating a school garden? Is there a senior center in your town where you could volunteer to put on programs? A farmers' market you can help sponsor with money or volunteers? Can you put on a public event in your hall? Connecting with those outside the gates is the only way to reach possible new members.

A New Generation of Grange Leadership

Mr. Rogers, one of my childhood icons, reminds us that, "As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has- or ever will have- something inside that is unique to all time. It is our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression." Or, as we say in Grange ritual, "encourage the young...to become writers, readers, and speakers at Grange meetings."

I would like to take a moment to thank the current Youth Advisors and the Junior Committee for their work this year. Your heart for the Grange is undeniable and your love for the Youth and Juniors is so apparent. We are embarking on an exciting new path and combining our Junior and Youth Committees. We have dedicated new leadership that is ready to hit the ground running after Session to plan and devise new and exciting programs to foster our future leadership. They hope to combine their work with the Agriculture and the Environment Committee to bring the 4H and FFA bridge into reality.

How is your Grange working to attract younger members and their families? Can you host a program that will encourage families and younger people to visit your hall?

Ritual Matters

Thank you to the Deputies and members who took part in Degree Day 2024. Those taking roles in the degree did an excellent job and those attending were excited to learn more about who and what the Grange is through our ritualistic work. The ritual does not make us the Grange, it separates us from other organizations and reminds us at each meeting who and what we are as Grangers.

Grange Highlights

Our 150th celebration lasted an amazing year.

We rededicated and renamed our Library/Museum in honor of Albert J. Thomas who founded the Library/Museum and Amber and Randy Vaill, our current Historians that have guided the institution for many years. I am glad that many Granges have reached out to them for historical programs and tours of the building.

I was honored to be the host and emcee for the magical event that concluded our celebration. Many thanks to my fellow committee members—the year, and the event at the Publick House would not have been so moving and magical without all your work. What a way to start my term as President.

A pleasure I have shared with my fellow officers is the presentation of 150-year plaques to each Grange as they reach that incredible milestone. Let us all work together to ensure that we are around in another 150 years!

Our Big E Committee worked long and hard and during the session will tell you about the results of all that work at this year's fair that broke all attendance records. They deserve a round of applause and hearty thanks for their dedication to the lobster roll and clam chowder booth. Join in the work and the fun at the booth. The 2025 Big E runs September 12-28 and we will need all the help we can get every day of the fair.

Over five hundred people attended our first annual Agriculture in Action Expo at Holy Cross in Worcester this past April. I extend my heartiest thanks to the Expo Committee that put in a multitude of hours making this event a reality. We had booths from Granges, Farm Bureau, farms, and many other organizations. Workshops by Master Gardeners, Meteorologist Eric Fisher, Mass Ag in the Classroom, and others stimulated the mind.

Mark your calendars now for April 26, 2025, at Mount Wachusett Community College. They are overjoyed to invite us to hold the Expo on their campus this year with their newly created agriculture department. With the lessons learned from our first Expo, next year's will be even more exciting.

MICHIGAN

Submitted by State President Christopher D. Johnston

Worthy Officers, Delegates, Brothers and Sisters,

What a year it has been. As you know, during the 2023 National Convention, a new National President was elected. And since Christine Hamp was elected National Grange President, there has been a whirlwind of changes made at the National Grange level. Given her background in emergency services, it has been easy for me to follow her line of thinking.

A few big changes were the elimination of department directors. We now have teams for the various departments. Then at the Leaders' Conference in February, we learned that the 2025 National Grange Convention instead of being in Charlotte, North Carolina, will now be an 8-day Carnival cruise in the Southern Caribbean. The four days of the cruise while we are at sea will be our working days. As the National Grange Steward, I am concerned about the set up and tear down of the session room each day. Along with getting all of the regalia onboard and offboard of the ship.

The next big change is that the National Grange headquarters has been sold. The staff and volunteers managed to consolidate and move the offices to the 1st and 2nd floors in a week's time. They also cleared out the basement and sub-basement of the office building at the same time. We are now on a three-year lease in the building only occupying one floor. Where we will go from there is yet to be determined.

This past summer, another Grange unfortunately had to surrender their charter. Mosherville Grange decided there were not enough of them left to continue and their age was most prohibitive to advancing the interest. When I went to visit Sister Doris Buher to receive the property of Mosherville Grange, I also had the privilege of presenting her with her 80-year membership award. It was a happy sad kind of event. For the last few years, there has been discussion in the Michigan State Grange Foundation of moving a Grange Hall into Greenfield Village in Dearborn. I believe that the upper level of the Mosherville Grange hall would be an ideal fit to the village. I will be working with the foundation and making the connection with Greenfield Village and seeing what needs to happen to bring this to fruition.

Unfortunately, the 2024 Farm Bill was neither passed or extended. The Farm Bill addresses more than just mainstay agriculture. The elected members of Congress on both sides of the aisle are doing a great injustice to the constituents that elected them. On a side note, we wish Senator Debbie Stabenow a happy and enjoyable retirement as she prepares to leave public office. Senator Stabenow has been a fantastic individual to work with over the years and has always been a strong advocate for the Farm Bill, having served as the ranking member of the Senate Ag committee for many years.

The Michigan State Grange By-Laws need some updating. I would like to appoint an intersession By-Laws Committee to go through the Michigan State Grange By-Laws and address the items pertaining to the convention.

The 2024 National Grange Convention is right around the corner. Connie and I have been serving on the host committee. One of the many parts of the National Convention is the annual community service project. Many times, the committee finds a place local to the convention site where we could collect needed items and donate them after the session. Connie mentioned Wreaths Across America for the annual community service project and it was accepted. Since then, it has exploded to something larger than either of us had imagined. We have already been receiving wreath sponsorships from across the country. Connie will also be presenting a workshop during the National Session to help grow awareness and sponsors of the program.

MINNESOTA

Submitted by State President Ann Olson Bercher

Worthy National President, National Officers, and Delegates of the 158th National Grange Session, I bring greetings from Minnesota!

This has been a busy year for Minnesota Granges.

We had a great 2-day GRIT meeting virtually in March where we worked on creating Mission and Vision Statements for our Granges. This was the result of the Leadership Workshop I attended in February in Myrtle Beach, NC. I recommend that we also work on Smart Goals, which everyone did.

We had a lovely State Picnic in July hosted by Lake Hubert. They served up a fabulous baked potato bar, and they offered entertainment and BINGO. It was a great gathering. Thank you, Lake Hubert for hosting!

At our state convention in October, we raised over \$200 for AFTD and over \$350 for hurricane relief in North Carolina.

Once again, I have been notified that the Minnesota Grange is still growing, one member at a time, but still growing. I believe that is three years in a row.

Unfortunately, with only four subordinate Granges, we are still a State Grange only by the grace of our new National President, Chris Hamp. We are on the brink of losing our state Grange designation.

We also still lack a good communication system. I have asked for help in re-creating a newsletter or other monthly communication and I have not received any help yet. Our quarterly "Gleaner" used to contain articles from each Grange celebrating the activities they had accomplished. There was a calendar so we knew what was going on in each Grange in advance so we could attend each other's activities if we wanted to. Granted, sometimes it was a little like pulling teeth to get those articles submitted, but the result was always welcome. I am now going to put that responsibility on the subordinate Granges of Minnesota.

When I was elected, I came to the president's position, and I said, out loud, that I was taking on this challenge, but the Grange is about WE, NOT ME! I truly believed that we could work together, and that people would step up and focus some energy on growth.

Each year, we have held virtual meetings for GRIT Day and Executive Committee meetings, and I was hoping that more people would be interested and able to attend. I have tried inviting National reps to attend virtually as well as in person. I tried getting our state involved in a statewide community service project, starting with the RALI drug disposal bags in 2022, the ACP program in 2023, and, recently, the AFTD outreach.

I hoped that by trying new things, I might get our members' interest peaked so that we would encourage more members to attend our state functions, and to also generate interest in growing additional local Granges.

Instead, we became more and more removed from one another, we became more centric in our focus. And while that is necessary in our communities that we serve so well, it is not conducive to growth on our state level.

Meanwhile, our Granges stayed involved in their communities. Lake Hubert Grange #735 focused energy in getting to know their community better and getting the community to know the Grange. Zumbro Valley Grange #765 cited the importance of community service is the people that they do it for. Clear Lake Grange #692 celebrates the many organizations they partner with. Sunbeam Grange #2 celebrates membership from seven counties across the state. The State Grange of Minnesota really is quite remarkable. It has a history of being Oliver Kelley's home Grange. It had the first woman State Grange President in the country before women could vote for the US president. And the State Grange of Minnesota is still clinging on to life. I am so proud of our active Granges.

To quote an 80-year-old former co-worker from the Kelley Farm, "We will certainly wear out rather than rust out."

MONTANA

Submitted by State President Joyce Billquist

Worthy National President, Officers, Delegates, and Guests,

Greetings from the Big Sky State of Montana.

The past year and a half have been challenging for me and Marty. It started with the passing of my mother in June 2023. We lost Marty's Mom, Avalon, a few months later, shortly after our State Convention last October. We have struggled with some personal complications in purchasing Avalon's real estate and residence and with the settling of her estate. Our daughter Jessie was involved in a very serious auto accident in April of this year that was stressful and traumatic for the entire family. She has a traumatic brain injury because of the accident, but she is a strong determined woman who is now doing much better and improving constantly. Marty has been dealing with some health issues since the beginning of the summer, but we are hopeful that they have been resolved. All these family issues came first, and the Grange had to take a back burner for me since I was installed as Montana State Grange President last October. Thank you for all the kind words and support from our Grange Family as we dealt with all of this.

I am proud of the many activities that the Montana Granges have participated in and accomplished during the 2023-24 Grange year. I have consistently seen social media posts on the many and varied community service projects and fundraising efforts of all Montana Community Granges. Kudos to each Grange in Montana for the positive impact they have had on their local communities.

I am sad to report that Thompson Falls Grange was struggling to survive for several years. The Montana State Grange Executive Committee worked with the Thompson Falls Grange membership and, ultimately, Thompson Falls Grange consolidated with Whitepine Grange during the 1st quarter of 2024. The bright side of this decision is that most of the

Thompson Falls Grange members were retained as members in either Whitepine Grange or Avon Grange. At the same time, Sanders Pomona Grange made the decision to surrender their Charter, so we now have one active Pomona Grange.

I owe a huge THANK YOU to every Montana Community Grange President and Secretary for helping me get the Montana membership data current and accurate. I know that this took a lot of time and effort from these individuals. I personally spent many hours getting the membership database updated. I feel confident in stating that Montana now has very accurate membership contact information and counts. This is extremely important so that the State Grange and National Grange can communicate with our members and advocate on behalf of our members. My challenge is to keep this information current and up to date. I have compared the membership numbers reported in April to those reported last year. I am confident that Montana will show an overall membership increase, which can be attributed to all the hard work the Community Granges are doing and the value they are adding in their local communities.

Montana State Grange is employing electronic communication methods whenever possible. We did not get off to a very strong start as far as sending out a State Newsletter, but hope to improve that in the upcoming Grange year.

Montana State Grange Communications Director Jaycee Jette revamped the Montana State Grange website. While it is still a work in progress, she has added quite a bit of content. The Roster, Officer Guidelines, and Objective & Policy documents are all available through the website. There is a "Contact Us" form and links to National Grange information.

One accomplishment that I am very proud of is Montana State Grange's participation in the Rural Life Initiative pilot program, made possible through a partnership between the National Grange and Pfizer. This program provides an opportunity to develop educational and service programs in rural America with an emphasis on health and wellness. All the Montana Community Granges were given the opportunity to submit grant proposals. Five proposals were submitted from 3 Granges, and all were awarded grants. In total, those 3 Granges received a little over \$17,400. That is a significant amount for our small Grange state.

The Montana membership numbers, and many community activities pay testament to the dedication and involvement of the Montana Community Granges. I am hoping that life will be a little kinder in the coming year so that I can give the Montana Granges the attention that they deserve.

NEBRASKA

Submitted by State President Kevin Cooksley

Greetings from the Nebraska State Grange to National President Hamp and the officers and delegates to the 158th annual National Session, taking place in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Nebraska State Grange held its 136th Annual Session in Grand Island, Nebraska from September 13-15, 2024. Our "business-session" was a one-day event (on Saturday). We had a local tour and Executive Committee meeting on Friday afternoon/evening, and we used Sunday morning to hold church services and conduct our annual memorial service. We concluded our activities by 11 AM on Sunday. We plan to move the location of our 2025 annual session to Blair, Nebraska, and follow the same scenario. In spite of our continued decline in membership, three of our six Community Granges submitted Community Service Reports. We may be small, but we are active Grangers! I am proud of how much our members do, with so few to do it!

In 2022, due to the the experience we gained trying to meet the membership and gender requirements set forth in the Digest of Laws, Nebraska State Grange adopted a resolution calling for a revision to the Digest of Laws and sent it on to the 2022 National Grange session for consideration. This resolution called for dropping the minimum number of subordinate Grange members from 13 to 8 and dropping (altogether) the stipulation that a Grange have (at least) 4 members from each gender. That resolution failed to gain adoption at the 2022 National Session. At our 2024 session, we approved this resolution (again) and have submitted it to the 2024 National Session for another try. While this goal may be a steep hill to climb, our past research found that 15% of all current subordinate Granges in the U.S. fall into the category of 12 or fewer members.

If this resolution fails for a second time to gain approval, we call on the leadership of National Grange to create a working group tasked with finding ways to "revise" the Digest of Laws to reflect the reduced membership and more "diverse" membership of Community Granges that are nonetheless very active.

It has been my honor to serve as the chair of the National Grange's Ag Committee during 2024, as our fine group of committee members rose to President Hamp's challenge to reduce the 2023 Ag Committee Policy Statement from 4 pages to 1 page, and yet retain the essence of what is important to the Grange. I am proud to say that we met that challenge! My sincere thanks go out to the members of the Ag Committee for their efforts and expertise in attaining our goal.

I am looking forward to re-joining my fellow Grange delegates in Iowa in November and taking up the "labors of the day".

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Submitted by State President Tricia Taylor

After a successful 2023 Session, many of us traveled to Niagara Falls for the National Convention. We had several candidates for the 7th Degree, which made us proud. We had 20+ members there, with a good representation of State Officers and Directors, youth, and others.

In December, members of the Executive Committee helped decorate the New Hampshire State Grange Building in Hooksett, New Hampshire, for Hooksett's annual "Light up the Village." It was our second year participating in this event. It has helped the community become more aware of our building and what it represents. This was followed by our annual Deputy School; we met again at the New Hampshire State Grange Building, and our Committees were busy planning events, determining ways Committees could work together, and doing a lot of networking.

In January, we hosted the first Northeast Leader's Conference since 2019. We were excited to have this back and worked hard to put together a conference that would benefit all of our members. The Northeast Connection was very supportive and suggested the type of workshops they would like to have, which gave us a good starting place. There were three workshops during the weekend emphasizing leadership, communication, and engaging the community. Around these workshops, there was plenty of time to reconnect and network, as we haven't since 2019. The Directors from the seven states worked hard to bring back versions of the Northeast events but with definite changes. We had 93 members present and were very pleased with the Conference.

February saw another fun Youth Day for all those present, and later in the month, everyone was invited to the home of Mark and Diane Collins for an old favorite – the Moon Stomp. There were bonfires, lots of food, and the Moon Stomp itself, which is traveling through the woods on foot by moonlight. There were many good reports from those who attended.

March was fairly quiet until the annual Bowling Day at Lakeside Lanes. The Juniors always join the teens and adults for this fun day. April saw another fun Grange Day put on by our State Lecturer and his wife, followed by a supper for all interested. Our Officers and Directors do a good job hosting a variety of events throughout the year. There is always a fun event nearly every month.

Come May, the Membership and Agriculture Committees, plus the Junior Director, participated in the annual Farm and Forest Expo. They are an ongoing participant in the Expo and usually earn a free booth most years. Agriculture Director Norman Brandt does a marvelous job coming up with activities that anyone interested can participate in. These activities have ranged from hatching eggs to milking fish to get the eggs, plus many other activities over the years. This year, they also participated in the Old Barn and Home Expo. This was a first but we are planning to become regulars there as well. Both give us a chance to spread the word about the Grange and what we represent.

June saw those attending Youth Day visiting a nearby farm with its robotic dairy. The adults all commented on how interesting it was to see and watch it work. Especially interesting was just how much the cows are trained to do and how well it works. Those in attendance for the afternoon were introduced to several different board games, which were a blast. After a pizza party for supper, we were then off to Boutwell Lanes for Glo-Bowling. We had two lanes participating, and there was a great deal of laughter. A good time was definitely had by all! The Northeast Lecturer's Conference was also held in June. We definitely have to do a better job getting the word out and encouraging people to attend the Northeast events. Hopefully, New Hampshire will have a better representation at the next Conference.

In July, there were three events going on. One was the New Hampshire State Grange Family Weekend, which is a Camping weekend for all those interested. Another was the Chaplain's Weekend in Vermont, which was replacing what used to be our Go To Church Sunday, which was always held at the Chapel of Pines but is now moving among the states and is a weekend rather than a day trip on Sunday. The Youth Weekend was held in New York and was a good time. They had interesting events and workshops, plus plenty of fun. We met in a Grange Hall, and most of us had blowup mattresses to sleep on. It was definitely a good time.

Unfortunately, during the winter, one of our most active members discovered her cancer had metastasized, and she was unable to continue with her Grange work. As a result, I closed Baker's River Grange. They had enough members, but getting people to come to meetings had been undoable for some time despite the best efforts of Ida Hutchins and the four members who supported her. At one point, it looked like the Pomona Grange was also going to close for the same reason. Luckily, Wicwas Lake Grange members stepped up, and the Pomona Grange is still alive.

Throughout the spring and summer, the Committee appointed to review and update the State Grange By-Laws met twice a month to complete this task in time to get the changes to the Worthy Secretary by September 1st. We succeeded in this task, and these changes were brought to the State Session, which, with a few changes, was accepted. As preparations for State Session took place, we also had a number of resolutions come in this year. We actually had 13 resolutions this year, and it was an election year, so the Session was very busy.

Our State Session was very busy, but everything seemed to go smoothly. While I still don't seem to be able to memorize anymore, we successfully conferred the Sixth Degree to one candidate. The Election only changed a few officers, and I was re-elected. I am looking forward to our Deputy School this year to encourage more networking and creative ideas for our events this year.

NEW JERSEY

Submitted by State President John M. Benedik, III

Our theme for 2024 was "Building the Grange for the Future". We continue to stress the importance of being visible and relevant in our communities. We continue to see growth in our Granges and a new energy being shared with members across the state.

We reorganized Montague Junior Grange #25, which had not been active since the 1960s. We have a lead on another Junior Grange reorganization as well as reorganizing a community Grange in the southern part of the state.

We sponsored our fifth Day of Learning in April. This is a statewide, daylong session filled with workshops intended to give our Granges the tools to grow and be visible in their communities. Our special guest was Philip Vonada, who presented a workshop on Connecting with our Communities.

We continue to host quarterly virtual gatherings in an effort to stay connected with our members. The main purpose of these meetings is for members to just get together and chat but also to share ideas for projects and fund raisers.

Our theme for 2025 is "Cultivating Partnerships." There are many other organizations with similar goals and values as the Grange. Our hope is that bringing awareness of these organizations to our Granges and working together will increase the visibility of the Grange and bring in new members on all levels.

I am excited about the new energy in the Granges across New Jersey and can't wait to share our success.

NEW YORK

Submitted by State President Sandra M. Green

My fellow Grangers:

This last year has been one of altered circumstances for the New York State Grange. For the first time in many years, there is a new President. And, for the first time ever, there is a female President. Additionally, many of the other State Grange Officers, Directors and Committees have changed. These circumstances have given numerous members the opportunity to test our abilities.

Being New York State Grange President includes being a member of and/or attending events of various other entities. A partial list includes the New York State Grange Executive Committee, the New York State Grange Museum Board, the New York State Ag Society, the New York State CAO, the New York State Resources Fair, the New York State FFA Convention, the Grange's North East Connection, and the Big E New England Grange Building Trustee Board. Most of these include some travel.

One of the events that was very beneficial was the National Leaders' Conference, where National and State Grange leaders really got to share ideas.

New York State Grange has been assigned to the North East Connection for several years. The Presidents and Vice Presidents in these states serve as members of the Board. This year, the North East Connection reinstated the Leadership Conferences. It was really great to visit with other Grange leaders from the region at the North East Leaders Conference.

The New York State Grange Executive Committee has felt the need to close several Granges. Each time, it is a very sad experience. Unfortunately, many members, when the local Grange is doing okay, do not reach out enough to share the Grange experience. Then, membership slips, and reaching out becomes more difficult, and often, it is not possible to recover.

One of the changes we are working on at the State Grange level is revamping the Membership/Leadership Department. (I say "Membership/Leadership" rather than "Leadership/Membership" because, without members, we don't need leaders.) We have Grangers from across the State who are willing to travel to assist with festivals, open houses, etc. This help can be anything from offering advice to setting up displays to being there to help interact with folks. New York State Grange would also like to create a list of Festivals, Community Days, and the like for a base of opportunities to share the Grange message. Additionally, we are looking at holding code reading classes, workshops for officers, and Regional Leadership Training Sessions or Leadership Schools. I would love to have every Grange member have the opportunity to learn as much about Grange ritual and procedures as possible.

Youth Weekends are revving up again, and our Youth are getting excited. We hope to have the GROW Club in New York State active as a group.

We held our first Health Fair at our headquarters. The vendors were very excited, and I hope we hold this event annually. Our State Grange family is holding quarterly meetings to keep everyone "in the loop" about all activities.

This past year has been filled with new experiences. I have made many mistakes. I have done the best I could. With the steepest learning curve behind me, I hope I shall be able to help Grange grow. I do hope I will get to sign the paperwork for a new Grange. I did get to sign the paperwork for a Jr. Grange revitalization! I truly believe the country needs the Grange now, as the country did when the Grange was formed. Let us work together to show people that differences in opinion do not need to create enemies. As the charge in the Sixth Degree opening states, "I rely upon your calmness in deliberation, your forbearance toward those who differ from you, and your charity toward their motives." Let us reach out to non-members with this code of conduct. Perhaps we can help heal our land by teaching people the truths we have all embraced as Grange members.

NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted by State President Jimmy Gentry

This report begins with the National Convention held in Niagara Falls, where Asheton Medlin was named Youth Ambassador and Ashley Holloman was named Young Patron. Both are outstanding individuals for whom we are very proud. David Allen, Vice President of NC Grange was elected as Gaekeeper of the National Grange. Both Grantham and St. John's were named as Distinguished Granges, and the NC Grange Youth Program was named as a Distinguished program. Four of our youth, Taylor Rogers, Carter Settle, Kayla Laws, and Ryleigh Hartsell served as Youth Officers. NC Grange was also recognized for having growth in membership for the year.

We were pleased that one of our members, Kenny Barnwell from Edneyville Grange, was honored by the American Fruit Growers Magazine as the National Apple Grower of the Year. Kenny is a very successful producer and is active in legislative affairs.

The annual Family Conference was held in Atlantic Beach. Speakers included a Forest Ranger, a Medical Doctor, a representative from the Patents and Trademarks office, as well as the Farm Service Director for North Carolina. Plenty of free time was built into the schedule for touring the area. A community service activity was held in which members donated items for Martha's Mission, a charitable organization in Atlantic Beach. A highlight for Saturday evening of the conference took place at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores. NC Grange rented the facility and a catered meal was enjoyed by the participants.

During the year, NC Grange became a partner with the Modern Ag Alliance, which is a group of agricultural organizations that advocate for the availability of pesticides for farm use based on sound science.

We organized two new Granges during the year. WCC Grange is made up of students and an instructor from Wilkes Community College enrolled in the agriculture program. This is a new venture for NC Grange, and these members are quite excited. The second Grange is JoCo, which is located in Johnston County. They have hit the ground running and have already had some great successes.

NC Grange has been named by the NC General Assembly as the lead organization to organize a Farmer Appreciation Day for the state. This occurred after we approached the General Assembly about the possibility of establishing such a day to be an annual event. Legislation was approved and funds were allotted to the State Grange for planning an event in Raleigh on November 14, 2024. Local Granges in NC have been encouraged to conduct local events as part of this celebration. Laurie Barnhart, Legislative Director for NC Grange has been spearheading the event.

Several NC Granges won grants as part of the National Grange Rural Life Initiative, which is helping to conduct activities in communities across the state. We are very appreciative of Pfizer in their support of this program.

Finally, mere words cannot adequately express the appreciation that I have toward those Granges and members from across the nation who have contributed to helping North Carolinians following Hurricane Helene. The response has been amazing, and it shows the caring nature of Grangers when others need help. Thank you so much.

OHIO

Submitted by State President Mike Russell

Worthy National President, Officers, Delegates & guests of the 158th annual convention of the National Grange. It is an honor & privilege to bring you greetings from Ohio the Buckeye State.

Following last year's 157th National Grange Convention in Niagara Falls, New York, Granges in Ohio enjoyed a wonderful holiday season.

In January, our youth held a camp-in at our Ohio State Grange office. A weekend of fun, games, learning new things about the Grange & just hanging out.

In March, we held our Lecturer/Community Service workshop. This was held at our state office & was very well attended.

In April, we held our state dart ball tournament in Fredericktown. This is always a well-attended event & gets quite competitive. Teams around the state prepare for this weekend all year. The Juniors held a lock-in at the state office. They did crafts, learning about the Grange, baking, games & many other activities. Always a fun time.

The Family Activities Committee held two Spring Fling events in April. Both were very well attended. The day was filled with interesting speakers & craft time. Also, just getting together with Grangers around the state to have fun.

In May, we held our Deputies, Directors & State Officers conference. We also had our state baking contest at the conference. The next day was our Rural Life Sunday service. This began with lunch & service to follow.

In June, we had summer youth camp. This was held in Hocking Hills at the Lone Star Lodge in Logan, Ohio. This was well attended & the youth had a fun-filled week. We also had our statewide talent contest at the state office.

Ohio hosted the Midwest Grange Leaders conference at Bowling Green State University. This was well-attended by several states in the Midwest Region.

In July, we held our Junior Grange Camp at YMCA Camp Wilson, with lots of activities for Juniors to do. It was a very full, fun-filled week.

In September, the Ohio State Grange took part in the Farm Science Review. This 3-day event was conducted by The Ohio State University Department of Agriculture. There were many informative booths. Farming demonstrations & anything pertaining to agriculture. We also had a display on the Rural Life Initiative. Thanks to National Grange for this program.

At our state session in October, our youth opened the Saturday morning session. This hasn't been done for several years. Our Junior & Youth Departments crowned new Ambassadors. The Juniors also put on the Junior Degree. The Sixth Degree was also conferred. We also had the National Grange Pomona Barbara Foster as our guest.

We are looking forward to a prosperous Grange year in 2025.

OKLAHOMA

Submitted by State President Billy D. Shufeldt

Greetings from the Oklahoma State Grange to the 158th National Grange Convention.

Welina and I have looked forward to coming to the National Convention here in Bettendorf, IA. Unfortunately, Welina was not able to attend this year due to a family emergency, but we were able to persuade past National Flora Donna Keeton to fill in for her.

Oklahoma has had a good year overall.

This year's Oklahoma State Grange Degree Day was held on April 6th in South Coffeyville, Oklahoma, with over 50 members attending and six members taking the first Four Degrees.

I am happy to announce that we were able to award four Oklahoma State Grange Scholarships for the Fall 2024 - Spring 2025 school year. The Scholarship recipients this year are Christopher Thomsen and Halie Thomsen – Thompson # 352 and Bailey Miranda and Hayden Bailey – South Coffeyville # 351. Bailey Miranda received the Brad Keeton Memorial Scholarship for 2023.

The Oklahoma State Grange hosted the 2024 Great Plains Regional Conference in South Coffeyville, Oklahoma in July 2024, with 40 Grangers attending it was a great success.

This year, our 109th Oklahoma State Grange Convention was held on the weekend of October 11th, 12th & 13th, 2024. We had 85 + Grangers in attendance in Claremore, Oklahoma. Our National Grange Representatives High Priest of Demeter Roger Bostwick and wife Melanie Bostwick also attend our State Session. They both assisted in several things during the convention, including helping with the Fifth and Sixth Degree work.

The Oklahoma State Grange Youth Department had a fundraiser of their own again during the State Session. They served at our Celebration Banquet and the Saturday luncheon, worked for tips, and raised \$3,731.00. Our Youth Department continues to grow and get stronger each year.

The Youth put on the Fifth Degree, with six taking the Degree, they all did a great job. High Priest of Demeter Roger Bostwick led the Oklahoma State Officers in the Sixth Degree work, again with 6 candidates taking the Degree.

Oklahoma State Grange Community Service and Activities Director Lisa Evans received the Granger of the Year award during the Celebration Banquet. Lisa is a member of the Ketchum # 357 Grange; Lisa is a very dedicated, long-time member who works hard to keep her Grange active and serving their community.

Donna and I are both looking forward to seeing and visiting everyone at the National Grange Convention, and we wish you all well and safe travels.

OREGON

Submitted by State President Sonny Hays-Eberts

Worthy National President, Officers and Delegates of the 158th Annual Convention of the National Grange assembled in Bettendorf, Iowa –

I bring you greetings from the emerald State of Oregon, on behalf of all our members. Worthy past President Jay Sexton and I will be representing Oregon this year, and I look forward to meeting all of you.

It has been a challenging yet productive year for our State Grange. Despite the COVID pandemic being in the past, some of our Granges and even State programs are still suffering from the period of prolonged inactivity. This year, we also saw the loss of several members who were driving forces in Community Granges and the State Grange. This has led to three dormant Granges, with another potential one looming, and one consolidation. The effect was felt most strongly this year at our annual Convention, where the position of President had no pre-Convention nominations and few contested nominations for each office.

Challenges are put before us to overcome through Perseverance. After much soul-searching, and inspiration from members who gave their lives serving our State Grange, I decided to seek the office of President, and was elected in Tillamook, Oregon as the 31st President of the Oregon State Grange. There is much work to do, but I already see signs of Hope. Brother Jay has reorganized three Community Granges, including one an hour away from being salvaged and then sold after eight years of dormancy. We are very proud to welcome Upper Applegate Grange back to our Grange family. In addition, Western Star and Dixie Mountain Granges have both been re-organized, and with mentors in place, are on the path to assuming their central places in their communities.

Our Youth program continues to be strong, and involved in the State Convention. Brother Alex Coe was elected National Youth Assistant Steward this year. While we have no Junior Granges, Junior +1s participate in the State Convention. We held one Junior Camp this year, and are looking to build upon that next year.

We are striving to build connections with organizations such as Three Arches, which advocates for cancer screening, and Ag in the Classroom, which supports education and agriculture. These partnerships have paid dividends for all parties involved. It promotes both our messages, advances our missions, and this year, resulted in a \$2,000 GRAIL grant for the Oregon State Grange.

I am encouraging Community Granges to visit each other, and using a little Grange R&D (ripoff and duplication, thanks to Brother Joe Stefanoni) we are exploring implementing a Geo-Grange program to encourage this. Our State Directors are being encouraged to create activities within the State that promote the Grange message and bring Grangers together. We are promoting our 150th book across the State and providing copies to libraries across the state.

Our membership continues to grow, although the declared dormancies have taken a bite out of those numbers. We currently stand at 4,736 members, a gain of 79 members, with 66 Granges having gained members, and each quarter sees some growth. While membership gain is important, engagement is vital, and that will be an increased area of interest moving forward.

Our matching grant program continues to be a much-needed aid for our aging halls. To date, we have awarded over \$600,000 across 11 years in over 160 grants. We are very proud to see that California has embraced a similar program with a similar effect.

Our own Log Cabin, used for outreach at the State Fair, was found to have structural problems this year. Thanks to two hardworking members of Maplewood and Western Star Granges, those issues have been addressed.

We still have not been able to hold our Legislative Luncheon since 2020, now due to construction and not the pandemic. However, our annual Ag-Fest and State Fair outreach programs and presence at Oregon State University Small Farms Conference have served to promote our Granges.

Since being elected in late June, I have been consumed with learning the duties of my position. Perhaps seeking an office with no preparation is not the smartest track to take? However, I am now beginning to feel less overwhelmed, and so I finally was able to attend the California State Convention this year. It was enlightening, and I was uplifted to hear the success stories of Community Granges that had rebuilt from the divisive split, or worse, ravaged by fire. In particular, the work of Ono Grange rebuilding after the town was destroyed by fire, illustrates how much of a difference a few committed individuals can make. I hope to represent Oregon at additional State Grange conventions next year, as this Convention provided inspiration and energy not only to California Grange members, but to the Oregon members who attended as well. The Oregon GROW club also provided an ice cream social to the session, generously donated by Brother Phil van Buren.

In the upcoming year, our State Grange plans to work to improve and strengthen Community Grange leadership. We have new generations of Grangers, many with no past history, and that can be a challenge, which the State Grange can address. I look forward to networking at this convention and taking back ideas that can help strengthen our Granges.

With wishes for a successful Convention and a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season to all.

PENNSYLVANIA

Submitted by State President Matthew D. Espenshade

Brothers and Sisters:

Greetings from The Keystone State. It is my honor to present this summary of the activities of the Pennsylvania State Grange. After celebrating our 150th anniversary last year, I am pleased to report that our members have maintained their enthusiasm and commitment to the ideals of our Order, first established many years ago. Together, we have expanded our areas of Grange influence, strengthened our civic bonds through community service, and worked on every level for the betterment of our farmers and rural communities.

During the past year, 22 local Subordinate Granges reached the 150th anniversary of receiving their charter. These Granges are a testament to the enduring spirit and commitment that has been the hallmark of our organization since its beginning. Each of us, whether a member for a month or 80+ years, are entrusted with an unmatched legacy as the stewards of this noble Fraternity, and we continue to seek opportunities to improve and elevate the rural way of life.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR GRANGE HALLS

Of all our legislative victories during the past year, the most notable is the inclusion of verbiage in the Pennsylvania fiscal code, which will classify Grange Halls as exempt from property taxes. The law grants this exemption to fraternal organizations more than a century old that have never filed for a liquor license. Grange Halls have always been the social hubs of the local community they serve. They open their doors to the local 4-H and other clubs, serve as polling places, and even as shelters in times of emergency. Today, the costs associated with maintaining these wonderful structures are significant and are a financial drain on the resources. With this new status, Granges with halls will be able to reinvest directly into their community, bringing aid and comfort to those most in need.

As all counties have unique procedures for enacting tax exemptions, we continue to offer guidance and support as local Subordinates navigate the legal process. We have also contacted the statewide county commissioner's association regarding this new status for Grange Halls to help expedite the matter, but some challenges remain.

LEGISLATIVE WORK & KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH

During the past year, this issue has quickly risen to a priority among members. The issue has been the topic of several State Grange opinion pieces sent to the media during the past year. In the most recent, the Grange called on the administration of Governor Josh Shapiro to make much needed adjustments to statewide behavioral health funding levels, which would also open the door to more federal dollars. This letter to the editor led to the State Grange being contacted by the Governor's Office. We highlighted the inadequacy of funding, critical to address this scourge. In doing so, the Pennsylvania State Grange has been offered a seat at the table in discussions about how the current administration can better serve the people of the Commonwealth.

BROADBAND

Reliable and competitive broadband access remains a priority. The PA State Grange insists that state and federal funds designated to help expand service should FIRST be dedicated to areas with limited or no service. We also continue to support the work of the PA Broadband Development Authority. PA State Grange was selected to serve on the Education and Advisory Subcommittee.

SOLAR

Since 2021, this issue has been a priority. PA State Grange has a seat on the Center for Rural PA Agri-Solar Committee. Supports legislation prohibiting utility-scale solar factories on Class 1 and Class 2 farmland. Supports solar facility bonding to pay for decommissioning.

OTHER AGRICULTURAL TOPICS

In the state budget, The State Grange supported necessary funding increases for Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State Extension, and the Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. While Penn State did not receive increased funding, UPenn funding was restored to FY 2022-23 level.

At the 2024 Farm Show, PA State Grange offered a free class where attendees could earn necessary credits towards renewal or the acquisition of their pesticide applicator's license. This new initiative was well received by the Farm Show staff, Penn State Extension, and the PA Department of Agriculture.

Lobbied for increased funding to the PA Department of Agriculture, which saw a significant rise in operational funding.

Testified for the continuance of Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board over-order premium.

Supports Dairy Farmer Tax Credit for dairy producers based on Massachusetts law. Working with Senate sponsor on future introduction of a bill.

PA State Grange President Matt Espenshade was invited to be part of a panel discussion at the annual Ag Summit, hosted by Congressman Glenn "GT" Thompson.

Worked with the PA Newspapers Association in opposition to allowing municipalities to post legal notices online instead of in print media.

State Legislative Director Carrie Nace continues to hold monthly legislative meetings on Zoom to update members on notable activities in Harrisburg.

PEOPLE, PROGRAMS & EVENTS

The Junior and Youth programs continue to be a source of pride for our Pennsylvania membership. Many of our state leadership team members grew up going to these same activities, where they developed life-long friendships and lasting memories. I am grateful to our Junior Director, Phil Vonada, for his years of dedicated service to the department. As he steps down from the leadership role, we welcome Jen Beamon as our new director. Having served on the Junior Committee, she will surround herself with devoted members who want to help cultivate the Grange leaders of tomorrow. Our PA State Junior Ambassadors Justin Dusko and Samantha Davis have already been busy over the summer months attending activities like Ag Progress Days and fairs. In November, their predecessor, Gayle Reyburn, will end her time of service as the National Junior Grange Ambassador. We are proud of all of you!

Youth co-directors Lindsay Schroeder and Jennifer Danko, as well as their dedicated committee members, continue to elevate the department, making it a welcoming environment for all youth and young adults. The investment they are placing in our young members will ensure the future growth of the Grange in Pennsylvania. We extend our best wishes to Outstanding Young Patron Autumn Tworkoski and Youth Ambassadors Harvey Reyburn and Sadie Johnson for a wonderful year as you represent the Grange and the youth department.

Pennsylvania's Family Festival event was held in mid-July. Many members look forward to this annual gathering where they can participate in workshops, watch Juniors compete in water games, paint a decorative quilt block, tour local attractions, or just kick back and relax. We have seen a decline in attendance over the years, and we will look to new opportunities for the upcoming year.

Our department chairs continue to develop programs and contests that encourage local participation and engagement. They are wonderful ways to showcase the talents of our Grange members of all ages.

152nd PA STATE GRANGE SESSION

Members gathered in Cranberry Township, Butler County, for our annual PA State Grange Session from October 17-20 at Pittsburgh Marriott North Hotel. In addition to deliberating resolutions and policy, Junior Jamboree, and other traditional events, a pre-session tour highlighted local attractions. We welcomed Brother John Benedik, President of the New Jersey State Grange and National Grange Vice-President, as our National Grange representative. We appreciate his inspiring keynote address during the All-Granger Banquet and his involvement over the weekend.

The 2024 Pennsylvania State Grange's "Granger of the Year" award was presented to Bonnie Casselberry of Liberty Grange #1780. Sister Bonnie is known for her selfless dedication to her family and the Grange. She has been an advocate for solar factory issues and their impact on agriculture in western Pennsylvania.

Indeed, we face challenges, both today and in years to come. We have seen decreases in membership, which led to the adoption of a statewide dues increase. However, we are also seeing new growth. We have new opportunities for membership, as society discovers that while being electronically connected to everywhere and everyone, they've never felt more alone. Personal interactions and connections within the Grange are the greatest gift we can share with one another. The Pennsylvania State Grange continues to be where people of all walks of life, in all stages of life, can come together to work for the betterment of their rural communities... and beyond.

RHODE ISLAND

Submitted by State President Walter J. Hartley

I'm honored to report on the activities of the Rhode Island State Grange for the 2023/2024 Grange year.

With this being an "odd" year, there were no changes in our slate of State Officers, Deputies, or Department Directors. I'm so grateful for the team that helps me conduct the business of the Rhode Island State Grange for their hard work and dedication to our Order. Our honored guests at our State Session were Joe (National Treasurer) and Lisa Goodrich of Vermont. This was their first time in Rhode Island - I'm sure we made a memorable impression.

Just after the State Session, we were very saddened by the passing of Leo Guertin of Kickemuit Grange. Along with his wife, Shirley, they were both Youth Directors during my time as a Youth member many, many years ago. Their dedication has helped shape many youth members over the years, and he will be missed.

Our Grange year started on a high note for me personally as I was elected to the office of Assistant Steward at National Session that was hosted by our Northeast Region. This is an office I've dreamed about since I was the Assistant Steward at my own Junior Grange meetings. I knew I'd have some big shoes to fill with my predecessors, and I thank them for their time in this position.

We officially kicked off our year with our Statewide Information Day on the 3rd of December, where our Department Directors pass out all their information packets of events, contests and activities to all of our Pomona/Subordinate Masters/Presidents and Secretaries. This is a great opportunity for us to go through everything and get direct questions answered or specific things explained. This day also allows me to give a report on the events and activities of National Grange Session. If they hadn't already heard the news, it also let me play show and tell with my new GOLD sash! The rest of December brought different Grange Christmas parties that also led to a slow and quiet January.

February hit like a ton of bricks with the passing of Joyce Rush Chase after her battle with cancer; she was a fighter until the very end. We were all saddened by her death, but to me this hit hard. Joyce had been my big sister my entire life and was always there to support me, both in and outside of the Grange. She's been my sounding board for so many things and one of my biggest supporters. Whether in person or over the phone, we could talk for hours and cover just about everything. I will miss those visits and conversations, but I'll always know that she's right there saying, "Cleave, are you sure you want to do it that way, what do you think of this?" or just saying, "Cleave, you got this". She will be missed

April brought many different Community Service/Award nights that were all very well attended. I will give high fives to all of our Community Service Chairpersons as well as our State C.S. Director, Marie Robidoux. They all do a great job recognizing all of their recipients. Marie continues to host events to raise funds for her Words for Thirds projects as well as collecting food and many items for both pets and people, to include our local Veterans and homeless.

Membership Director, Kelly Riley, has played an active role in National Grange's SHIPmate program as well as her work here at home. She continues to travel throughout the state to visit the Junior, Subordinate, and Pomona Granges to work with them to build their membership, retaining the ones they have or with their members in any way she can.

Kathy Stedman, Director of Women's/Family Activities is doing a fabulous job with contests, crafts, and support of many local organizations, including the Seafarer's Mission, the Ronald McDonald House, and Meeting Street School (a school for both physical and intellectual special needs). She also schedules a food packing event that has truly become one of our favorites. After all, we're Grangers; we like to feed people!

Our Agriculture Director, Joyce Bastien, continues to sit on state-level agriculture boards and committees and represents our agricultural roots on many levels. This year, I've challenged her to find the path to connect the Grange with our local FFA and 4-H programs. These two organizations have been around for a long time and I'd love to see what we can do to get them involved with the Grange and want to join one in their area.

In our Deaf and Health Department, led by Jen Lawson, who continues to bring in meaningful speakers during the year and her work with the Rhode Island School for the Deaf and Meeting Street School is outstanding!!

Last year, our State Chaplain was challenged to work with the other regional Chaplains to bring back our traditional Northeast Chaplain's Worship Service. Vermont hosted this event at their State Grange Camp, and our Chaplains did a great job with this event.

While I mention our Regional Chaplain's Service, I'm also proud to say that our entire region has truly brought back our traditions with our Northeast Leaders, Lecturers, and Youth Conferences! It was great to see these conferences return and get back to our regional roots.

Our population in both our Youth and Junior Programs still concerns me very much as I see the numbers in both decline. Our different events are still very well attended by our "youth-at-heart" and our Honorary Junior Members, but they continue to be a work in progress that I'm looking forward to seeing their growth this coming Grange Year. Directors Judi White & Eileen Hebert continue to plan events and activities for both and have started to join some together to make these a state-wide, well-attended day. This past year, Moosup Valley Junior Grange #27 celebrated its 80th Anniversary!! With their recent retirement, we can't thank Junior Leaders Paul and Barbara enough for their 55 years of continued dedication to the children that have passed through that Grange Hall, myself and my daughter included.

The Rhode Island State Grange Corn Dog Booth had another successful year down at the Washington County Fair. Mrs. Corndog and I thank the volunteers who made this week-long event happen. Once again, the Northeast Region teamed up with National Grange to host vaccinations for flu, COVID, and other seasonal injections at the New England Grange Building at the Big E Fair.

We celebrated the consolidation of Kickemuit #24 and Portsmouth #29 to make up the NEW and STRONG Kickemuit-Portsmouth Grange #24, with a presentation of their new Charter and Grange Seal at our 2024 State Session.

I would like to thank the Officers and Members of the Rhode Island State Grange for their continued support, words of encouragement, and council, and to wish them and the Officers of the National Grange a prosperous upcoming year.

TENNESSEE

Submitted by State President Judy Sherrod

Greetings from the Volunteer State.

Historically, there were Granges in Tennessee as early as 1870, although there was no official State organization until July 2, 1873. The first State session was held in February 1874. Grange membership declined, and in 1907, there was no official State Grange until reorganization in 1934. Membership increased rapidly, so much so that in 1937, Tennessee ranked among the top 6 states in the U.S. in organizing community Granges. If our State Grange had not been inactive for 27 years before the reorganization, we would be celebrating 150 years of Granges in Tennessee as so many Granges across the country are now celebrating. Tennessee has had a total of 1,264 Granges organized in the State.

Each of our Granges has a small number of members, but all have been busy throughout the year. Five Granges entered the State Community Service contest, each report showing hundreds of hours of service in their respective communities. I have continued to encourage all our community Granges to fill out a Community Service report form, because when you put everything that you have done during the year on paper, it's easy to see, reminds you of your service projects, and makes you proud of your accomplishments. No one can then say, "we didn't do much this year".

We met for the 116th annual session in September in Greene County at the home of one of our State Officers. She, her husband, and her sister had all recently had hospital stays, so in order to allow them to participate we met there. Although we had no floor work, we opened and conducted business as usual with delegates from all but one Grange represented. Our guests were the Greene County Mayor and the attorney for Greene County.

Although a little different this year, we had a good one-day session, but who would have ever guessed that one weekend later that our brothers and sisters in Greene County in upper East Tennessee would be in crisis mode. Thousands of people in upper East Tennessee in 5 counties were overcome by the wrath of Hurricane Helene, with many loss of lives. Several counties were hard hit with unimaginable and unprecedented damage from floods. Bridges, county roads, major interstate highways, and railways were washed away, stranding people from escape as their houses, barns, autos, churches, schools, businesses, were completely washed away. Dozens of people had to be rescued from two hospitals by helicopter from the

building rooftop one at a time by rope. Rescue personnel and volunteers had to back-pack supplies walking into areas that were inaccessible by any other means. Buildings that are still standing have 4-5 feet of mud in them. Everything is lost.

The wonderful news is that communities across Tennessee came together to help first with donations of food and water, and blankets, sleeping bags for shelters. Workers from all parts of Tennessee came to the area to help in any way they could – rescue, shoveling mud, trying to salvage anything from homes, removal of a multitude of debris, plus a caravan of more than 50 farmers from other counties bringing trucks and trailers of hay for livestock. Our members helped with donations in both Greene and Cocke counties. These needs will continue for many, many years in these effected counties in East Tennessee – and in Northwest North Carolina as well.

Thank you to Grange members and friends from across the country that contacted me to inquire about the wellbeing of my family and other Grange members and also thank you to those Granges from other states that called to see what their local Grange could do to help. Grange is truly a family, and I am humbled and honored to be a part of this great organization.

TEXAS

Submitted by State President Karen Overstreet

National Officers, Delegates, Members and Guests of the 158th National Grange Convention: I bring you greetings from the great state of Texas!

Texas celebrated its 90-year anniversary this year!

Our Texas Grangers have taken the National Grange theme: “Grange Strong: Rooted. Resilient. United.” and have supported each other, lifted the spirits of one another, and worked together to achieve common goals throughout their communities.

At the beginning of this year, a Texas State Youth Committee was organized. This committee is unique as it not only has youth members but also has those individuals who are young at heart and want to support the young Grangers of Texas. The committee's goals are to develop statewide activities to encourage youth/young adult participation, build excitement among these individuals, and support them as they grow in the Grange. We know that in today's society, the Grange is one of the safest places to sponsor fun activities, develop leadership skills, and instill in our young people a passion for community. This team has had several meetings and is working together to plan and implement activities for the young people of the Texas State Grange.

Our Texas State Grange Leaders' Day was held in March this year. Information was distributed to Presidents, Secretaries, Youth and Juniors, Agriculture/Legislative, Community Service, and Membership. Our Family Activities Director and Texas State Grange Lecturer shared the fun projects and contests that everyone can participate in for our State Grange Session and the National Grange Session. Members present participated in the SWOT analysis to help identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats within our local Granges. The data collected was shared in the Texas newsletter. From this data we learned that not only is it important to reach out to the community, it is also extremely important to meet the needs of our own members.

Some strengths and opportunities that were mentioned during the SWOT Analysis were:

- The Grange is multi-generational, it has diverse knowledge among our people, there's dedication, provides assistance to the community, joins other organizations to sponsor community activities, and it is helpful.

Our members also felt that although the Grange has many strengths and opportunities, there were some weaknesses and threats to our organization and its members.

- Poor communication, reluctance to change, negativity among members, not setting up the Grange Hall, lack of publicity, lack of parliamentary procedures, were some of the concerns that were mentioned.

As we take a good look at our own Grange, let us ask ourselves, “How can we turn these concerns into opportunities that can make our Grange the best it can be and help our members feel valued and their time valued?”. A positive environment leads to members working together for the betterment of the Grange as a whole and opens the pathway to new members coming in and joining our organization. We will not always agree, but we can be respectful and work together for what is best for our members, future members, and the communities we serve. I urge us all to be courteous and gracious to one another, no matter what our differences may be.

Buddy and I, along with several other Texas Grangers, were able to attend the Great Plains Regional Conference in Oklahoma. Workshops on Code Reading, Artificial Intelligence assistance in writing resolutions, Line Dancing and Basket Weaving as ways to de-stress, and Trivia encouraged team building and cooperation from all states.

The first year of the Booster Program has been very successful. During the visits, I heard a variety of programs were shared...Pictionary, building towers of paper, giving speeches, singing songs, naming that Tune game, and smashing the Valentine balloon... So many different opportunities to add fun to our meetings and 'boost' our Grangers' spirits. Whether you were the Grange that took a program or the Grange that received a program, all enjoyed the visit. We will continue this program for this year. If your Grange did not have the opportunity to visit this past year, I urge you to coordinate with the partnering Grange and try to make that happen this year. It will be a wonderful experience for all.

As social media has become a tool to publicize our Grange activities for our members and those learning about the Grange, let us also remember our private social media accounts can affect the local Grange and its members. Let us be mindful of what we write. Not only is it a reflection of ourselves, it is a reflection of the Grange as a whole.

As I was re-elected to the office of State President of the Texas State Grange for another 2-year term, I will do my best to represent the members of the Texas State Grange and I count my blessings to be able to work with a wonderful group of people not only at the state level but at the national level as well.

VERMONT

Submitted by State President Kendal Holden

Greetings from the Green Mountain State.

This year has been anything but dull! We are still trying to sell a building in an area where heirs are given the first right of refusal. There are thirty of them! Another Grange sold its Hall with the provision that they could still meet there. The organization that bought it is fixing it up, and some members have joined that Grange.

Despite setbacks with our insurance company and our Grange Center in Brookfield, we held a Junior Camp, a Youth Weekend, a Family Camp, and a Fall Festival. Work on the Center includes a new range hood and fire suppression system, electrical upgrades as well as a water upgrade. We were not allowed to use the kitchen, but the directors made do with griddles and roasters, but it was a Herculean challenge. We will not open the Center next year if the improvements haven't been met.

We held at least one GRIT presentation, which was well-attended. One of our Granges, Middle Branch #463, suffered a devastating fire not long after a lift was installed to make the hall more accessible. The members are working very hard to raise enough money to either repair the existing building or raze it and start anew. We applaud their indomitable spirit as they move forward.

One of our members, past National Lady Assistant Steward Brenda Rousselle, put together a quilt to be raffled off at the Eastern State Exposition held in Springfield, Massachusetts. The proceeds of that raffle went to Josh's House in the amount of \$6,003.00. Josh's House serves veterans and service members.

We were delighted to have National President Chris Hamp and her husband as our National representatives at our state session this year. We were also privileged to have them install our new officers.

I am in my second term and determined to strive to do well.

VIRGINIA

No report received

WASHINGTON

Submitted by State President Tom Gwin

Greetings from the Evergreen State of Washington! It is indeed a pleasure to represent our beautiful and diversified state at the 158th Annual Session of the National Grange.

We began the year with 14 leadership conferences across the state in the late winter and early spring, working to increase communication, develop leadership skills, promote our Grange programs, and receive feedback as to the direction we were heading as an organization. Some of the conferences were held in conjunction with Pomona Grange meetings, while others were stand-alone events. Packets of information were distributed to each Grange, putting pertinent information in the hands of each Grange in our state. In addition, all Grange department directors held a series of Zoom meetings on their programs. All meetings were designed to assist in increasing communications between the State Grange and our Pomona and Subordinate Granges.

Legislative activities continue to remain a priority for the Washington State Grange. With the state legislature back to a regular in-person session, we held our State Grange Legislative Day in February. There were 45 Grange members in attendance at the event. Speakers included representatives from the Department of Agriculture, the Washington Farm Bureau, the NRA, and the Association for Washington Business. We also had visits from State Senator Judy Warnick (member of Moses Lake Grange) and State Representative Peter Abbarno of Centralia.

With the work of our lobbyist and State Grange staff, we are starting a campaign for Capital Budget Funds Requests from the State Legislature for capital improvements to Grange Halls. Twenty Granges followed through with their request by meeting with the state legislators to discuss their request and to demonstrate the positive impact our Granges are making in their communities. Our State Grange lobbyist and staff continued working to lobby for these funds. As the legislative session wound down, 13 Granges were approved for funding by the state legislature. The total amount received by these Granges was \$990,000. Projects included for funding included roof repairs, septic system replacement, new heating system, HVA repairs, ADA compliance, parking area paving, window replacement, electrical wiring replacement, and complete hall renovations.

We are continuing this program and working on requests for 2025. Nearly 80 Granges have applied for the program. Now that state government elections have been completed; we will be working with these Grange to contact their legislators to move the requests forward. The projects are as varied as much as our Granges.

Our 135th Annual Session was held in June at the Northeast Washington Fairgrounds in Colville. Despite being in the northeast corner of the state (75 miles north of Spokane near the Canadian border), we had the same number of delegates as we had in 2023. Our delegates considered 45 resolutions and eight Standing Committee Reports. Over 100 changes were made to the State Grange Legislative Policy Handbook. Despite being an off year, we still elected three officers, with two fresh faces joining our State Officer team. The departments held their annual contests and all regular convention activities were conducted.

We added an additional day to our State Session and rearranged the schedule. This allowed for an increase in social and educational activities to entice young families to attend. We held our Grange Livestock Judging Contest on Saturday morning with 65 participants this year. There were 46 candidates for the Sixth Degree, held on Saturday afternoon. Our memorial service was moved to Sunday morning and combined with a worship service. With an open Friday evening, the State Grange Officers hosted a barbecue for all present. All enjoyed the new activities. Our 2025 session is slated for June 25-29 at the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds in Chehalis.

The summer months featured an almost full complement of four full weeks of summer residence camps for Junior Grangers across the state, plus one three-day Day Camp. As this is only our second year after the pandemic, we are seeing the number of campers return to pre-pandemic levels. Each camp is sponsored by the State Grange but is operated by a volunteer Grange Board of Directors. We expect to return to our full complement of six camps in 2025.

The Grange Youth Fairs Program continues to grow and expand. We went from nine fairs in 2022, to 14 fairs in 2023, to 16 in 2024. There were nearly 700 youth participants exhibiting at fairs in 2024. In October, we organized Selkirk Valley Grange #1153, primarily to allow the youth and juniors in the Selkirk Valley to participate in the program. We are using the program as a membership tool, providing an opportunity for the kids and their parents to participate in Grange activities as a family.

Our Youth Fairs Program leaders hold a monthly Zoom meeting to discuss issues of concern. Our major project this year was a revision to the record books required for the program. A few Granges did a test run this year, tweaked what the committee developed, and are now presenting it to the State Grange Executive Committee for approval. The State Grange supports the program by designing brochures, certificates, informational sheets, and whatever other tasks are requested. We expect to continue increasing participation in this program as we have additional fairs wanting to include our Grange Youth members in their fairs.

The membership in our state is stabilizing. We took in 893 new subordinate members in 2023, but that was offset by major losses in a few Granges. Through October 2024, we have another 750 new Subordinate members. We are continuing the cleanup of our membership roles in several Granges, especially Golden Sheaf members. More importantly, the average age of membership has decreased, primarily due to our implementation of the Grange Youth Fairs Programs, which has increased the number of teen members and their parents. As this program continues to grow, we will continue to see the average age of membership decrease across the state.

The educational arm of the state organization, the Washington State Grange Foundation, experienced tremendous support this year. We returned that generosity by awarding 23 college scholarships, totaling over \$24,000, to Grange members from across our state.

Throughout the State of Washington, we are working to revitalize Granges and experiencing a resurgence of Grange activity. Granges and Grangers are working together to make their communities stronger. Our leadership team will continue to provide a diversified program and a wide range of tools that will allow our Granges to flourish in their communities.

Best wishes for a successful convention. We hope for an exciting year of progress for all Granges across the nation!

WEST VIRGINIA

Submitted by State President Barbara Foster

I bring everyone well wishes from the wild and wonderful. This has been a very busy year for the West Virginia State Grange. Exciting things have been happening.

First, I made Membership one of my top goals for this year. We have gained 17 new members and one new Junior member. This occurred in 3 of our Subordinate Granges. The members have become active and are enjoying their new affiliation.

We also started a Scholarship program for graduating seniors. We gave out 6 \$500.00 scholarships to a senior from each of our 6 Granges. The scholarships were available to seniors from the high schools in our respective Grange counties.

We held our quarterly meetings, which were well attended. We participated in the PCORI (Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors) and Affordable Connectivity Program grants. Tables for the Grange were at the Capitol during session for Ag Day and Conservation Day at the Legislature.

On a personal note, I attended Star Grange in Ohio for their 150th anniversary as National Pomona, representing National Grange at their event. I enjoyed visiting and representing National Grange at the Maine State Grange and the Ohio State Grange. The fellowship was great, and I met so many nice and friendly Grangers.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Bettendorf and participating in a great session. See everyone soon.

WISCONSIN

Submitted by State President Debbie Vine

Worthy National President, State Delegates, National Officers:

I am honored to bring greetings from America's Dairyland, the great state of Wisconsin. We recently completed our 153rd annual session held at LaPrairie Grange Hall. A delegate from each community Grange was present. They reported about activities and service projects they completed throughout the year. In addition to our Annual State meeting, we held a state winter meeting around the Grange's birthday and another one during Grange month as well as a summer picnic. We also had youth attend Midwest Leaders Conference.

Grangers across Wisconsin continue to sponsor community service projects and educational activities to support their communities and members. They've worked at food pantries, collected school supplies, collected items for the Humane Society, had a pancake breakfast supporting the local food pantry and collected items for children in foster care. They held paint nights and cookie classes, fundraisers and a community Halloween party.

For next year, Milton Grange plans to meet at the LaPrairie Grange Hall. The two Granges are working together on monthly activities and events to bring the hall to life. It's brought new excitement to the members and the community to see the lights on and cars in the parking lot. This next year promises to be great as we work to grow membership in our state through these activities. It's great to see multi generations working together towards a goal.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SECRETARY

Fees

July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

Silver Star certificates & folders = \$648.00
30-year seals = \$250.00
35-year seals = \$230.00
40-year seals = \$285.00
45-year seals = \$170.00
Golden Sheaf certificates & folders = \$2,076.00
55-year seals = \$265.00
60-year seals = \$700.00
65-year seals = \$375.00
70-year seals = \$320.00
75-year Award certificates & folders = \$660.00
80 Year letter, certificate & folder = \$180.00
85-year letter, certificate & folder = \$60.00
100-year Grange Hall Plaques = \$20.00
125 -year Grange Hall Plaque = \$80.00
150-year Grange Hall Plaque = \$220.00

Membership Recognition

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Silver Star certificate & folder: 54
30-year seals: 50
35-year seals: 46
40-year seals: 57
45-year seals: 34
Golden Sheaf certificates & folder: 173
55-year seals: 53
60-year seals: 140
65-year seals: 75
70-year seals: 64
75 years award certificates & folder: 55
80-year letter, certificate & folder: 15
85-year letter, certificate & folder: 5
100-year Grange Hall Award Plaque: 1
125-year Grange Hall Plaque: 4
150-year Grange Hall Plaque: 11

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

November 12, 2023

Niagara Falls, NY

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 EST by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also present were National President Betsy Huber, Vice President Chris Hamp and Executive Committee members Buddy Overstreet, Leroy Watson and Susan Noah.

Opening prayer was offered by Lynette Schaeffer.

Minutes from 9/23, 10/8, 10/16, 10/17 and 10/30 were approved by email prior to this meeting.

Betsy reported on the building: Elevator needs to be repaired and Mujo will make sure that the inspection certificate is received for this year. It was discovered that we had not received the inspection certification for this year. Two things needed to be repaired for a total of \$46,000. They are working currently and Betsy will follow up with Mujo to make sure that the certificate is received this year. The boilers are another issue with a mix-up. Inspector could not come out as they said we did not have insurance coverage on the boilers. The insurance company has now added the boiler and the inspector was sent the paperwork. They have put us off several times, but apparently they are coming on Tuesday. Difference between Mujo and the inspector about whether the boiler needs to be running or apart to be inspected. All this should culminate on Tuesday of next week.

Hand Therapy – Consensus was to rent to them, nothing more, and they would be allowed the same privileges regarding the conference room as the other tenants. Suggestion to ask them for their license and for proof of liability insurance.

Presidents Report – Betsy asked about the Presidents conference – Do we want in person? She has a very good price for rooms and dining. At the Sun and Sand resort. Closer to the airport than last time. Leroy suggested talking to Grange Advocacy about a small grant to help with the National Grange costs. Chris requested that Betsy ask the group tomorrow about the conference – where they want to go, how it can be hosted, etc.

National is planning an in-person Fly-in combined with Ag-Day. Will also have the youth come in for the DC experience with some combined conferences. Sunday to Wednesday 17th – 20th of March. Time for the trademarks renewal. Quite involved, at least for the “Grange” trademark since it covers many areas of commerce. Phillip Vonada will be helping to gather the information. Grange Hall was found in Arkansas by Amanda, and apparently we may have ownership of it.

Leroy moved, Chris seconded to go into Executive Session at 8:35 pm EST. Motion was carried.

Leroy moved and Buddy seconded to leave Executive Session at 9:10 EST, motion carried.

Leroy moved that California be allowed to send in two late resolutions that they missed, Chris seconded and motion was carried.

Unfinished Business:

Convention 2023. Lots of room issues this year, but seemed to be getting ironed out. Two delegates are not coming due to ill health, so others will be filling in as delegates. Lots of visitors this year, special guests coming in. Betsy would like to have a couple of the board to introduce speakers. Lynette will help with Ag and Chris with Advocacy. The Board will help to take tickets for the meals. Tickets will be turned into Loretta.

Convention 2024 – they have been meeting. Lynette discussed some of their agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 9:56 pm EST for the evening.

Meeting was called to order at 9:07 am EST on Monday November 13, 2023 by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also present were President Betsy Huber, Vice President Chris Hamp and Executive Committee Members Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and Buddy Overstreet.

Department Reports:

Youth and Juniors – Leader Samatha Wilkins’ report was discussed. Question was asked as to who was on her advisory committees so that they can be included in the report. They did not have their fundraising event this last year, but will focus on this for the coming year. Contest guide has been changed including age limits for the youth, and a focus on helping the states with their programming. Leroy suggested a podcast program, using the youth/juniors to create content to post. Chris mentioned that the Communication Fellows are working on podcasts and could possibly work with this program.

IT Department – Stephanie’s report showed all the various items she has taken over this year, including working on a website for the PCORI (Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute) grant, and taking over some of the building duties formerly performed by Samantha. Discussion regarding the bank accounts and possibly setting up a separate account for deposits and payments – separate from the main account.

Membership/Leadership – Discussed Amanda’s report and her request for action items. Discussion on the unaffiliated Grange States. WA-AL; CA-NV; NC-FL; OR-HI. Liked her comments on promoting our values and working together to train our leaders, to make sure that all members are treated respectfully.

Convention Study Committee – Betsy reported that the entire report will come to the floor for each action item to be voted on. Chris reported on the committees work over this last year.

Lecturer’s report – Ann Bercher gave a concise report on her activities for this past year along with various contest winners.

Community Service – Pete Pompper reported on the activities of the various states and their volunteers.

Legislative – Burton Eller – Reported on Legislative affairs, Public Policy and Grange Advocacy. He noted that the National Grange is beginning to be referred to as “The trusted voice of rural America”. He reported on the various ways that we advocate for our issues and the work that he and the staff have accomplished. He has been working on another health-related grassroots grant for next year.

Sales – Loretta Washington reported on the last year’s convention wrap up, this year’s convention information, sales, and finally her duties with benefits and membership recognition.

Communications – Philip Vonada still looking for ways to get everyone engaged. Reported on his activities over the year and what is coming, including working with local Granges to highlight their efforts.

Next Meeting – 11/17 or 11/18 whenever finished, and then at the Presidents conference.

Buddy moved, Betsy seconded to adjourn at 11:57 am EST.

November 17, 2023

Niagara Falls, NY

Meeting was called to order at 6:15 EST by newly elected President Chris Hamp. Also present newly elected Vice President John Benedik. Executive Committee members, Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and newly re-elected Buddy Overstreet. Lynette Schaeffer was suggested as the chair, without objections so she was elected. Susan was suggested as secretary, and was elected without objection. Two members need to go to Advocacy. Leroy will continue and Susan Noah will go to Advocacy. Buddy, Lynette and John will go to the Foundation.

John was welcomed to the board. Lynette asked if the 4th Monday would work for the meetings going forward at 6:00 EST.

Next scheduled meeting January 22nd at 6:00 EST.

Chris will be asking each employee for an audit of their workload and what they see that could be improved.

Chris and John will work to get a meeting with Transwestern to go over the latest information on the building.

Leroy moved and Lynette seconded that we authorize President Hamp to negotiate a transition period and pay with former President Huber for a time period of not to exceed 60 days and amount NTE \$5,000. Motion was carried.

Lynette adjourned the meeting at 7:15 EST

November 27, 2023

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by Chair Lynette Schaeffer at 6:10 pm EST. Chris Hamp, National President was also present as well as Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Buddy Overstreet and Susan Noah. John Benedik was absent due to computer problems.

Lynette offered an opening prayer.

President's report:

Building: Chris related her conversations with Transwestern about sale price. She spoke with Michael who is expecting Whitney to meet with their client tomorrow and then get back to us. John joined us at 6:20 EST. Transwestern did put in a request to prior offeror for documents from their due diligence research, but Chris has not heard anything yet. Buddy has been speaking with a person with elevator knowledge, but needs more specific data regarding the type of elevator in the building, including past repairs and upgrades.

Chris is looking at getting a PO box, in case we have to move quickly, using a company that opens, scans and emails the mail.

Presidents Conference: Discussion about Myrtle Beach vs. any other area, but most discussions with State Presidents found them wanting to go back to Myrtle Beach. Chris will start the process with Myrtle Beach to get the conference set up. Our Board meeting will take place on February 16th, in the morning. Chris was discussing her thoughts for strategic planning and prioritizing goals. Susan suggested some teambuilding exercises to help the State Presidents within their own states. Lynette suggested work on translating the Digest, sort of a "Digest for Dummies." John suggested that perhaps the mentors at National could help their mentees throughout the year. Leroy proposed a workshop relating to the recent grants and how we can engage the local Granges. What kind of volunteer or physical resources could we expect.

Convention 2025: North Carolina does not want to be in Charlotte. Planning committee is having a tough time getting started. Chris wants to get out of the Charlotte convention and book a cruise instead. If we let them know by 12/31/23 the cancellation fee is \$10,000, past 12/31 and the fee doubles. North Carolina may agree to take over the contract and use for their state session, and may save us some money. This cruise would go out of Charleston South Carolina and travel around the Bahamas.

Theme: Chris has been thinking about a new theme for the coming year, and believes that Grange: Trusted Voice of Rural America, works better for Advocacy, but not as much for our Community Granges. She is proposing Grange Strong: Rooted. Resilient. United, and has Philip Vonada working on logo, colors, etc. Group liked and approved the new theme.

Unfinished Business:

Arkansas – A Grange Hall was found in Arkansas (Mulberry Valley Grange #852) that we possibly own. Amanda has been checking on the title, but so far hasn't been able to declare it free and clear. John asked if a Grange was still using, doesn't sound like it. There may be a person interested in organizing a Grange. Chris mentioned the lack of leadership close by making it difficult to actually develop a Grange. Leroy believes that we need to determine the ownership due to liability issues. Susan suggested a title search.

Nevada – We all received a letter from Joe Stefenoni, who has serious issues with California State Grange having oversight of the Nevada Granges, and he has withdrawn their support of this plan. Leroy suggested that we look at a different type of membership for those Nevada Granges who are only in the organization for the Grange Fair program, and work to revitalize the ones who want to be an actual Fraternal Grange.

Convention 2023 – Committees need more guidance in working the resolutions. Leroy also believes that the resolutions were not being managed for the best outcome. Also some discussion on staff being focused more on the convention. Susan

noted that we seemed to run out of time and were stressed to finish without intruding on other activities, although Leroy believes that the resolution management could also help the time issue.

Next meeting January 22nd. 6:00 EST, and then at the Presidents Conference in February. Other meetings as needed.
Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm EST.

December 6, 2023

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 EST by National President Chris Hamp; Vice President John Benedik was also present along with Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and Buddy Overstreet. Lynette Schaeffer was missing, but joined later in the meeting.

Chris moved that we go into Executive Session to discuss the building and finances, John seconded and the motion was carried.

Lynette joined the meeting during the Executive Session discussion.

Buddy moved, Leroy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 7:16 EST, motion carried.

Chris moved, and Leroy seconded, to accept the Transwestern proposed changes to the LOI, which included the price increase; the shortened due diligence period; and the clause for us to remain rent-free on the premises for up to one year and instruct Transwestern to return the redlined LOI to purchaser, motion was carried.

Buddy moved to separate the grant money out of the general checking into a money market account, Leroy seconded, and the motion was carried.

John moved that we appoint Chris Hamp to replace Betsy Huber as a signer on our financial accounts, Buddy seconded and the motion was carried.

Leroy moved to pay the total hotel bill from the convention fund, seconded by Buddy, motion was carried.

Buddy moved, Lynette seconded that we adjourn at 7:43 EST.

December 21, 2023

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm EST by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and Buddy Overstreet.

Leroy moved, John seconded to move into Executive Session at 2:04 pm EST, motion carried.

Leroy moved, Buddy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 2:15 pm EST, Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:16 pm EST.

January 9, 2024

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by Chair Lynette Schaeffer at 8:30 EST. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and Buddy Overstreet.

Lynette offered the opening prayer.

Leroy moved, Chris seconded to move into Executive Session at 8:31 pm EST for discussion of the building. Motion carried.

Leroy moved, Buddy seconded to come out of Executive Session as of 9:36 pm EST. Motion carried.

The Charter applications that were scanned and saved have been a problem, and we can't get ahold of the company that did the work. Some of the thumb drives we were provided seem to be missing. Chris will follow up to find more information.

Chris related some information on the American Income Life program; many envelopes being returned due to either bad addresses, deceased members, or dropped memberships.

The agenda is coming together for the Presidents conference. We are still planning on meeting Friday morning at 9:00.

Nevada – Chris is looking for ideas on the Nevada situation. California has withdrawn from oversight, so National is back to being the "State Grange" and collecting dues from the Nevada Granges.

Next meeting is scheduled for the 22nd at 6:00 pm EST

Meeting was adjourned at 10:20 pm EST.

January 13, 2024

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm EST by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson and Susan Noah.

Leroy moved that we accept the offer from New Market Grange in Maryland to rent their basement of approximately 1400 sq ft for \$500 per month for our storage needs. John seconded and the motion was carried.

Buddy Overstreet joined us at this point.

Some discussion about the timeline of closing on the building, including our move to the first and second floor, and the storage of items at New Market Grange.

Buddy moved that we move forward with the Purchase and Sale Agreement as accepted by Bungalow Ventures, LLC on 1/12/24, seconded by Chris. Leroy called for a Roll Call Vote to sell the building at 1616 H Street NW in Washington, DC. John Benedik, yes; Buddy Overstreet, yes; Susan Noah, yes; Leroy Watson, yes; Chris Hamp, yes; Lynette Schaeffer, yes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm EST

January 22, 2024

Via Zoom

David Watson of Park Avenue Securities joined us prior to the meeting to discuss the sale of the building and our options for the proceeds. His sense from talking with Chris is that our primary goal for our initial deposit is safety. One option is a series of laddered CDs or Treasury bonds. Another option is an enhanced cash strategy, treasury bonds and corporate bonds. With no or limited risk that we are looking for, he would look at only treasury bonds with 1-2 years in average maturity. CDs and Treasury bonds are about 1-1/2 and 2% apart with treasury doing better. The Custodian they use is Bank of NY Mellon. Through their program we could keep up to 2.5 million in FDIC insured accounts and the rest could immediately go into Treasury bonds.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lynette Schaeffer at 6:32 pm EST. Also Present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Buddy Overstreet and Susan Noah.

Opening prayer was offered by John Benedik.

Minutes of the 12/21/23, 1/9/24 and 1/13/24 meetings were presented for approval. Leroy moved to accept the three sets of minutes, Buddy seconded and the motion was carried.

The fourth quarter financial draft report was sent out for our review. We discussed briefly with Chris some ideas for revisions to the way the information is presented.

President's Report – Buddy moved, John seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:46 EST. Motion carried.

Chris moved, Buddy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 7:09 EST. Motion carried.

John moved that we allow Chris to establish an account with Park Avenue Securities to manage the funds from the sale of the building for the short term, Leroy seconded. Motion was carried.

Bonding has been sent in to Main Street America, 697 policies were paid for so Main Street's bill should be just over \$43,000 on which we will earn about \$2,600.

Renewal of trademark registration was due last week, and has been submitted and now we wait to make sure it is accepted.

Fifth degree manual changes, there were several changes that need to be made. Leroy suggested that we set up a page with Avery labels that each Pomona could use to print off the changes.

2024 Bettendorf team is making progress and things seem to be going well. Jody and Jodi Ann Cameron will be the liaison between the hotel and National Grange. They have met with the regional group. The hosting group is looking to open the host dinner up to anyone, with tickets to purchase. It will be a cruise on the Mississippi.

Chris would like to set up a per diem process for the staff rather than turning in costs of meals and incidentals for travel. This would be in effect anytime they are 50 miles from home. Executive Committee suggested we revisit this at a later date.

2025 convention – Chris stated that the costs will be a little higher than she was originally told. Cabins start at \$614, with taxes & gratuities being extra, bringing it to \$890.65. For two people this would be about \$500 higher than the hotel in North Carolina, but the cost of food would offset this. This was originally brought up to the Executive Committee for a vote via text with all voting for it except for Susan who voted no, due to weather concerns and her concerns about the meeting space available. The 2025 package with the Hilton hotel in North Carolina has been cancelled.

Communication report – Philip listed his duties at National and his plans for the year. We agreed to have him go forward with his RFP for sending postcards out to former subscribers of *Good Day!* magazine.

Last day minutes – Chris moved to accept with two corrections offered by Lynette and Susan.

Arkansas – It appears that we own the Grange building found in Arkansas and the Masons own some of the land around it. John will be reaching out to the Masonic Lodge to discuss plans for the building/land.

Presidents Conference – Chris has sent out an agenda.

Nevada – Chris is working on a letter, which she will share with us before moving forward.

Investment Policy – RFP – Buddy hasn't gotten his group together yet. He will try to get out this week.

New Business – John is checking on insurance for our rental with New Market Grange, and what we will need after the National Headquarters has sold. So far he has contacted Clouse Insurance in California for some information.

Chris and Duane are flying to DC on February 8th to start sorting out items to move to New Market Grange, or to the new offices or to discard. Maryland Grangers will help with the move to New Market, Lynette and Don will be coming out on the 10th to help with the move.

Next meeting will be 2/16/24 at 9:00 am Myrtle Beach.

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm EST.

February 16, 2024

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

The meeting was called to order at 9:01am EST by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson and Susan Noah with Buddy Overstreet joining via Zoom.

Opening prayer was offered by Susan Noah.

President's Report – Leroy moved, John seconded to go into Executive Session at 9:05. Motion was carried.

Leroy moved, Chris seconded to come out of Executive Session at 10:05. Motion carried.

2024 site visit has been set, Chris will be going along with the regional representatives.

Main Street has sent out a group of cancellation letters to Granges who applied for coverage last year, but not this year, but if they respond to the cancellation letters by March 31st, they could be covered back to Jan 1st, otherwise they will lose coverage for three years with Main Street.

Building sale has closed, and most items have been moved to our new offices on the first and second floors of the 'H' Street building or New Market Grange. Some furniture has been sent to Pennsylvania State Grange for them to sell and some furniture may be sold to the new owner. Leroy questioned where the monies from sale of office items will end up. General consensus is into the general fund, as this should be a very small amount. Proceeds from the building sale are in the Park Avenue Securities account. There will be some office equipment in suite 106, like copier, items for sale, etc. Conference room tables, chairs will be staying with the building. Grange historical items from the lobby will be going with us. Some of the Saunders collection from the basement were destroyed as they were full of mold.

Arkansas – Amanda knows of a person who is interested in reorganization. John is still checking on the property ownership with the Masonic.

Leader's conference is on track, agenda is set, technology has been updated to make it better for virtual attendees. Items labeled "Tool box series" will be available following the conference for each State President to use.

Nevada – Chris spoke with Gloria Montero and they have had a conversation regarding Nevada. Lynette was also present for the conversation. Nevada is down to five Granges. They will get back in touch and hopefully set up a Zoom to have representation from each Grange. We need to have a discussion about what we want from Nevada.

Investment work Group – John has sent out an email to the group to get together, as Buddy has too many work responsibilities at this time.

Chris and Lynette found undeposited checks from the former controller era. Unclaimed property for the National Grange has been discovered, and John is starting to pursue it.

Leroy moved and Lynette seconded that John be authorized to go after unclaimed funds for the National Grange or any dormant State Grange. Motion was carried.

John moved that we authorize Chris to make any final payments on the transfer tax issue from 1986, Buddy seconded and the motion was carried.

The next piece regarding the office: The new owner would like for us to stay, but it will depend on the price of the rental. We also need to assess the number of employees who will work from the office before we make any final decisions.

Next meeting will be March 25th at 6:00 pm EDT.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:11 pm EST.

March 25, 2024

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by Chair Lynette Schaeffer at 6:05 EDT. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Susan Noah, Buddy Overstreet and Leroy Watson.

Opening prayer was offered by Chris Hamp.

Leroy moved; John seconded to approve the 11/17 minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Leroy moved; Buddy seconded to approve the 11/12 minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Buddy moved; Leroy seconded to approve the 11/27 minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Leroy moved; John seconded to approve the 12/6 minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Leroy moved; Buddy seconded to approve the 1/22/24 minutes as amended. Motion carried.

John moved; Leroy seconded to approve the 2/16/24 minutes as amended. Motion carried.

President's report:

Budget for 2024: Budget from 2023 does not match up with the 2024 budget as far as the formatting. Chris is asking for a couple of us to help get the 2024 budget revised to include the sale of the building. John offered to help Chris make a start.

DC filing fee – Transfer fees from both 1986 and 2024 were paid in order to record the deed. The total was \$191,867.20 for both the transfer in 2024 and 1986.

Duane and Chris along with Jody and Jodi Ann Cameron, who will be the National Grange liaison with the 2024 convention hotel, met with the 2024 hosting committee at the Isle Casino in Bettendorf, Iowa. Chris reported that the hosting committee is moving along nicely and we seem to be on track for a great convention.

Foundation meeting – met on 3/13 and will be following with a meeting on 4/9 to prioritize goals. Foundation board requested Chris to provide her goals for the Grange.

Chris has also been reviewing our Trademark licensees, including fees and agreements. She wants us to be more transparent about the fees we collect and the fees we are spending on trademark attorneys.

Fly In – only 92 listened in via the Streamyard setup, although the number of YouTube watchers could not be counted.

Ag Day in Washington DC: Chris spent time getting to know individuals from many of the other groups present and sees a lot we could do to garner more name familiarity with other ag groups. She will work with the Ag Council that sponsors Ag Day to enhance our presence.

The chairs and secretaries of the session committees are meeting soon to start their work for the year. Chris's goal is to end up with a better and more well thought out product.

Community service team is going, the new Youth and Junior teams are also working.

Hall of Fame team is rebranded and they are off and running. Communications team has been working on combining the Facebook pages for the various groups. The SOS (Strengthen our States) team is also meeting with the goal to grow and build each state. Ultimate goal of each Grange state is having enough Granges to be entitled to two voting delegates.

John moved we go into Executive Session at 7:36 EDT to discuss state issues, Leroy seconded and motion carried.

Leroy moved, John seconded that we come out of Executive Session at 8:31 EDT. Motion carried.

Leroy moved that we accept the surrender of the Charter from Smith Valley Grange #26 in Nevada, John seconded. Motion was carried.

Leroy moved that we authorize Chris to write a letter to the University of Nevada and any other relevant livestock and show entities to inform them of the distinction between Grange and newly formed Keystone Agriculture Society. Lynette seconded and the motion was carried.

John moved, Leroy seconded that we allocate \$1,000 for the E-Membership survey, motion was carried.

Arkansas updates – John has given the information to his New Jersey Masonic contact, but has not heard anything back yet.

Chris has received positive comments regarding the Leaders' Conference. Also has heard that California and Indiana will be sending invites for next year.

Investment RFP – John was looking for us to authorize this before getting the committee together, however Susan expressed that perhaps we need to take some more time and get the committee together to vet this product prior to our authorization. John will get the group together hopefully next week.

Unclaimed funds – several states have unclaimed funds for the National Grange, and Lynette will be working towards collection.

Florida State Grange investment: Chris is working to make sure that this account is acknowledged and included in our overall investment strategy. She is in the process of getting the signers on the account changed to herself and John Benedik.

Grants – Chris will email the group on any updates. Leroy discussed that we need to make sure that we have some administrative help for this type of thing so that it doesn't fall to the National President.

New Business – Where do we go from here for office space - Reaching out to each State President that has property that we may find space in. She is also waiting to hear back from Bungalow regarding the H Street building as to the possibility of continuing to rent going forward, following our six months of free rent. Our space is currently 1339 sq feet and Bungalow has indicated the price may be around \$40/sq ft. for rent. Looks like we may need to vacate the first floor which means some changes to what we have, including store items for sale.

George Spies sent Chris and Leroy a letter saying that he is in contact with a family member of the person who conferred the Eleusis mysteries on McDowell. He is looking for permission to continue with this contact. The committee authorized Leroy to work with him and to bring in the Assembly officers.

Next meeting April 22nd 6:00 pm EDT. Will work on the budget, the administrative needs and the two director reports.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:58 EDT.

April 22, 2024

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by Chair, Lynette Schaeffer at 6:09 pm EDT. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Buddy Overstreet and Susan Noah.

Opening prayer was offered by Leroy Watson.

Minutes from 3/25/24 were discussed and approved with a couple of minor edits. **Buddy moved and Leroy seconded to approve as amended, motion was carried.**

President's report

American Income Life – 19,000 pieces were mailed, many came back. 2,639 of our members signed the card and sent in. We receive \$1.50 on each of those cards. From AIL, over the course of our involvement they have paid out over \$300,000 in claims. There seems to be a request that we send out another letter, but President Chris cannot find the agreement to send out a second letter in the contract. Leroy thinks we could do more with advertising such as *Good Day!* magazine, articles in State Grange papers, etc. rather than as a direct mail.

Communications work group – Patrons Chain will be updated from weekly to bi-weekly. Also changing the name to “Grange Today”. It will also be in a magazine format rather than one long document.

Budget – working on new format, wanting to set a couple of meetings for May. We need to get something together for the rest of 2024 and then what we want to present for 2025.

Leroy moved and John seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:53 EDT. Motion carried.

John Moved, Buddy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 8:48 pm EDT, motion carried.

Leroy moved that we accept the surrender of the Charters of Battle Born Stockton Wells #29; Western Nevada #28; Silver Sage #24; and Southern Nye #30 all from the state of Nevada, John seconded. Silver Sage and Southern Nye had actually closed prior to November 2023 but no action had been taken by the National Grange. Battle Born and Western notified us in March and April respectively of this year. Central Nevada #23, High Desert #22, and Smith Valley #26 are the only three Granges remaining in Nevada. Motion carried.

Legislative and IT reports were both discussed.

Foundation has formed some subcommittees and are currently in the process of updating by-laws and working on a budget.

Next Advocacy Board meeting will be May 20th.

Grants – Chris will send out the statement of activities of the three grants.

Next meeting will be May 28th at 6:00 EDT.

Buddy moved, John seconded to adjourn at 9:16 EDT.

May 28, 2024

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm EDT by Executive Committee Member and Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik, Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Buddy Overstreet and Susan Noah.

Opening prayer was offered by Buddy Overstreet.

Minutes of the April 24, 2024 meeting were approved as distributed. Motion by Leroy seconded by Buddy, motion carried.

Presidents Report:

Chris had a productive week in DC and kept many appointments to meet with other ag related organizations. Spoke with them about their memberships, and what they were seeing for the future. Also met with some of the Advocacy partners. Currently the National Grange requests hardcopies of all states JOPs. Chris would like to see this changed to electronic.

Update on the upcoming 158th (2024 convention) and 159th (2025). 11 rooms outside of the National Grange block for the 158th. So far 51 cabins booked for the 159th.

Chris wants to do a three-board retreat, so everyone is aware of what each entity is responsible for and can do under their by-laws. Everyone seems to be onboard.

Question has come up regarding the payment from National for the 2025 convention. Chris will address in her next Frontline Flash.

Charitable solicitation registration – apparently the Foundation has not registered, but some states require that. Chris is looking into this.

Lease options – Information on properties was received from Transwestern and Chris has had limited conversations with the current owners of the National Grange building. Still hoping to stay where we are if the price is feasible.

Budget – Buddy spent some time going over the budget he, Chris and John have worked on. Some discussion on our invested funds. Discussion about the documents to be provided to the Audit and Budget committee.

Foundation review – They have adopted a set of revised by-laws and are currently working on a budget. Will be having an online auction that starts at National.

Advocacy – Board meeting last week. Working on changes that will lead to more transparency of Grange Advocacy. Working on new financial formats that will give a more complete picture. Advocacy is continuing to support *Good Day!* Magazine and have voted to fund the Grange Fellows for this year. Paul Weller and Phil Prelli will both be working on a joint National Grange and Grange Advocacy Compensation and Governance committee. Leroy has also requested John Benedik to work on that committee. Advocacy has grown and Leroy feels that we have pretty much reached the end of what we can expect from our National Grange staff. Even with appropriate compensation they are being stretched too thin for the work involved.

Chris moved, Buddy seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:48 EDT. Motion carried.

Leroy moved, Buddy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 8:22 EDT. Motion carried.

Leroy moved that the National Executive Committee approve the formation of a joint committee between National Grange and Grange Advocacy to review governance and compensation issues between the two organizations and recommend improvements where needed, Buddy seconded. Motion carried.

Leroy moved that we nominate John Benedik as the National Grange Executive Committee voting member to serve on the Governance & Compensation committee to join Grange Advocacy committee members Paul Weller and Prelli and ex officio members Leroy Watson and Chris Hamp, Buddy seconded. Motion carried.

Northeast Connection – Final budget money coming from Convention Assessment. Buddy moved that we pay their bill of \$11,603.84 from the convention assessment, John seconded and the motion was carried.

Midwest budget – They provided a budget of \$20,957.38 and they may request some of the money prior to session to take care of upfront expenses. John moved that we authorize up to \$10,000 to be provided prior to National to cover their upfront expenses. Buddy seconded and the motion was carried.

John indicated that the Investment Group will meet this Thursday.

Next meeting will be June 24th at 6:00 EDT.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM EDT.

June 24, 2024

Via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 EDT by Executive Committee Member and Chair, Lynette Schaeffer. Also present: National President Chris Hamp; Vice President John Benedik; Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Buddy Overstreet and Susan Noah.

Opening prayer was offered by Lynette.

Buddy moved; John seconded to approve the 5/28/24 minutes as amended. Motion was carried.

Presidents Report: Chris reported that she, Susan Noah, and Lillian Booth met with the folks in Nevada regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the fair system.

Leroy moved; Chris seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:18 EDT. Motion carried.

Buddy moved; Leroy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 6:49 EDT. Motion carried.

Some discussion on the budget, still developing the format and getting all the current income/expenses into place.

Grange Advocacy – the study committee is all in place. Haven't had a meeting yet, but due soon. Currently looking for any documents that apply to the study group.

Unfinished business – update for 2024 National convention in Bettendorf, Iowa – Stephanie Wilkins sent out the registration and it seems low but still early.

No current updates on the 2025 session to be held on Carnival Cruises.

Investment work group. The RFPs went out around the 1st and are expected back by July 8th. John will be meeting with the Investment work group following the 8th and hopefully will have something to the Executive Committee by our July meeting.

Still waiting for information from the new building owners as to the price of their rental space. Once we receive their final price we will make a decision on staying in the building or looking for rental space elsewhere.

Current Grants – some updating has been done on our media. Rural Life Initiative is underway with seven states in the pilot program. Chris will be getting an update tomorrow.

Chris still thinking about a three-board retreat, believes that the time would be important to all of us to learn what each entity does. Shooting for late January depending on when the PhRMA headquarters may be available as they have offered their space if it is available when needed.

Next meeting will be Monday July 22nd at 6:00 pm EDT.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 EDT.

July 22, 2024

Via Zoom

David Watson of Park Avenue Securities joined us prior to the start of the meeting to discuss the investment of our building sale proceeds. Per our original discussion with David he has invested our funds in Treasury bills/notes, that have laddered maturity dates, over the next four years. Two parts of the return on investment is guaranteed one part is not. Interest payments are guaranteed as is the accrual on the fund payable at the maturity date. However, the third part is not guaranteed and is based on the change in interest rates set by the Federal Reserve, as interest rates go down the value of the bond goes up adding additional value. Following his presentation David answered a few questions and then left the Zoom.

Meeting was then called to order by Executive Committee member and Chair Lynette Schaeffer at 6:37 pm EDT . Also present were National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee members Leroy Watson, Buddy Overstreet and Susan Noah.

John offered the opening prayer.

The June 24th meeting minutes were considered and a few corrections or amendments were made. Leroy moved to approve the minutes as amended, Buddy seconded and the minutes were approved as amended.

John moved, Buddy seconded to go into Executive Session for the Presidents report at 6:44 pm, motion carried.

At 8:33 pm Buddy moved and John seconded to come out of Executive Session, motion carried.

Buddy moved that we initiate a three year lease for the front side of the third floor with Bunaglow Ventures at \$42 per sq. foot. Seconded by John, motion was carried.

Susan moved that we offer a trademark license to Monroe Classic Advertising for \$1000, and that we allow them to set up sales tables in Bettendorf with the appropriate fees, John seconded. Motion was carried.

Department reports:

Sales, Benefits – Loretta Washington reported they are working on a new 25 year pin as our stock of the prior pins is running out.

Communications – Phil Vonada addressed several points regarding items with the *Good Day!* magazine, and social media communications. He also indicated he is struggling to get applications for the Fellows program. Doesn't seem to be as much excitement around the program and may indicate that State Granges are not seeing as much benefit. There will be fewer this year and we may want to take next year off to retool the program.

An organization called Grouper has reached out to the National Grange. Grouper's mission is to encourage healthy living through activities that build meaningful social connections and shared experiences. They believe that staying active and having fun with friends is a winning combination. Joining and participating in clubs, associations and social groups has proven to have a positive impact on health and protect against social isolation and loneliness. Grouper is currently offered as a benefit by some Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans. For the members who qualify (about 30% of Medicare enrollees) you receive \$50 upon enrollment in the program and then going forward, if you are socially active you continue to collect \$20 each quarter. Health care providers are seeing a correlation between social interaction and your mental and/or physical health. Grouper does not receive our membership lists, but they will help us get the word out about this benefit. As individuals sign up for the program, they will receive an initial benefit and each quarter a communication will come that asks about their social activity. The National Grange will receive an annual fee of \$2,500 for signing up. **Leroy moved that we continue the inquiry on the Grouper benefit and if the National President is satisfied with the responses that we move forward with the program. Buddy seconded and the motion carried.** Having the information available for the upcoming State sessions would be beneficial.

National session updates – 2024 – so far 70 members 39 delegates are registered; 164 people and 75 cabins for 2025. 2026 will be in Tulsa and our agreement is signed and in place.

Investment work group – 5 RFP's were returned by potential investment advisors but our work group has not gotten back together to select their choice.

Midwest request for \$7,500 – need for the downpayment on the Host banquet river cruise. **John moved and Buddy seconded that we advance them the \$7,500. Motion was carried.**

25 year pins – **Leroy moved that we purchase 100 of the new style silver star pins, Buddy seconded and the motion was carried.** Chris will carry out the purchase.

Some discussion regarding the new Virtual Statewide Pomona Grange program. Start thinking about the program and come back with some individuals who are willing to offer time to help with this.

Grange trial meeting will be August 5th at 6:00 EDT.

Next meeting August 12th and then Tuesday September 3rd , both at 6:00 pm EDT.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm EDT.

August 12, 2024

Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm EDT by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also Present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik, Executive Committee Members Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and Buddy Overstreet.

Susan offered an opening prayer

Leroy moved, Chris seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:10 for Presidents report.

Leroy moved, Buddy seconded to come out of Executive Session at 6:51 EST.

Advocacy – the finance review committee did meet and Phil Prelli is working on a draft procedure. Burton has generated a budget for the Rural Life Initiative. Bigger projects will have a independent review and a separate budget from the normal quarterly budget. Next meeting will be in early September.

Investment work group, John is working on getting a date for his group to review the RFP's.

Monroe Advertising – Mike needs to catch up his payments for his trademark agreement for the year he skipped as he was engaged in selling Grange items.

New Business:

John moved we approve Philip Vonada's proposal to use Print Runner to send out postcards to past subscribers of Good Day! Magazine. Leroy seconded, motion carried.

Loretta Washington wants to order socks and phone wallets to sell at National. Leroy was uncomfortable with price point of the phone wallets, and none of the group thought they would sell well. **John moved to authorize Loretta to purchase 100 pair of socks and sell for the price she set in her report, Leroy seconded. Motion carried.**

Next meeting September 23rd or the call of the Chair. Grange Advocacy meeting on September 11th and Ag Round table – September 10th. Chris may be the featured speaker.

Lynette adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm EDT.

August 27, 2024

Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm EDT by Chair Lynette Schaeffer. Also Present: National President Chris Hamp, Vice President John Benedik, Executive Committee Members Leroy Watson and Buddy Overstreet.

Lynette offered an opening prayer.

Leroy moved, Buddy seconded to go into Executive Session at 6:07 for discussion of the proposed lease of office space in former National Grange building.

Leroy moved, Chris seconded to come out of Executive Session at 7:20 EST.

Motion by Buddy, seconded by Chris to authorize Chris to sign a lease with 1616 H Street NW LLC for the lease of office suites on the 3rd floor of the former National Grange Building. The lease duration will be 3 years. We will have 6 months free rent. The closet between the two office suites will be added to the lease.

Motion was approved unanimously.

Chris thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their guidance, support and teamwork.

Lynette adjourned the meeting at 7:24 pm EDT.

September 23, 2024

Via Zoom

David Watson joined us to discuss the current investments and what options we have. He set up a scenario with a portfolio that should generate more income. Some of this would be through dividend producing stocks. Would include various instruments that could produce an income stream of about 5%. Domestic Equity stocks, international Equity stocks, Fixed income of bonds and bank loans. This would be a little different from the current investment policy, both in terms of the bond ratings (some b ratings) and the percentage of the equity to fixed income. There would be a higher cost to manage this type of account. David left the Zoom after presenting these options for our consideration.

Meeting was called to order by Executive Committee Chair Lynette Schaeffer at 6:22 pm EDT. Also Present: National Grange President Chris Hamp; Vice President John Benedik and Executive Committee Members Leroy Watson, Susan Noah and Buddy Overstreet.

Opening prayer was offered by Chris Hamp.

Minutes of the August 12th meeting were read and considered with some amendments. **Buddy moved to accept the minutes as amended, Leroy seconded and the motion was carried**

Minutes of the August 27th meeting were considered with some minor spelling amendments. **Leroy moved and Buddy seconded to approve with the amendments. Motion carried.**

John moved to go into Executive Session at 6:37 EDT, Susan seconded. Motion carried.

John moved that we come out of Executive Session at 8:13 EDT, Leroy seconded and the motion carried.

Budget – working with the accountant and has all the detail for the first two quarters, should have the third soon. Game plan is to leave off the 2023 column, only presenting the actuals for 2024, and the 2025 proposed.

Foundation – Joan Smith and Marty Billquist's terms are up and Joan has indicated she will not run this year. Live online auction will open at National and closes on December 4th. Items can still be donated up to 15th of October. Looking for up to 50 items.

Advocacy – Met on September 11th. Leroy gave a short run down on the assets and income. Donations made to the National Grange this quarter include \$15,000 for project support and \$15,000 for overhead recovery as well as \$15,000 to Burton Eller for fundraising fees. They have also paid for Advocacy partner ads in the *Good Day!* magazine. Seven State Granges are participating in the Rural Life Initiative. Also conducting the vaccine program at the Big E again this year. Leroy and Chris indicated some positive feedback has been reported and that the vaccines are going well again this year. The goal is 5,000 vaccines and we are on track to meet that at the Big E alone. We will not be offering them at the National session this year. Leroy mentioned the Advocacy members whose seats up for election this year. Dick Weiss has indicated that he will not stand for re-election. Leroy is looking for names to submit. Beth Westbrook's term is also up but she is interested in remaining on the Board. She provided a webinar on fundraising and is interested in providing more. Chris has been meeting regularly with Beth and Nona Bear and indicated that they may both be traveling to Bettendorf for the convention.

Unfinished Business:

Updates on upcoming conventions. 2024 some registration are still trickling in. Still seeing some cabins booked for 2025 and she and Jody are reaching out to Tulsa for 2026. 2027 – Western states have been talking about places.

Investment Work Group – Will have something by the National Convention.

New Business:

Virtual Statewide Pomona Granges – draft has been circulated. John shared the draft again and we discussed any potential changes. Leroy suggest that we send names of potential members to work with this group to Chris or John. This was first discussed in regards to Nevada. We currently have High Desert, Central Nevada and Smith Valley still working in Nevada, although not all are caught up with dues.

E-Membership Report – Chris had distributed the report from the E-Membership work group. Susan would like to see the current structure kept, making sure that the operational aspect is being met. Leroy believes that we should not be suggesting any potential ending to the E-membership program as our body does not have the authority to make changes to the by-laws. Chris had set up the group to review the program to make sure we are getting the most out of it, not necessarily to make structural changes.

2025 Supportive Membership agreement between Grange Insurance Association in Washington State and the National Grange has been signed and the amount will remain at \$350,000 divided between the National Grange and the seven western states.

7th Degree – Chris is looking into ways to preserve the 7th Degree. Beth Westbook has a videographer that can travel to Bettendorf to give us an idea about what it would take to video. Chris and Connie Johnston will pick up the items for the 7th Degree. Filming will take place on the grounds of the Boone County Fair at Community Grange Hall. It will be filmed three times – once with the costumes, once in suits and the collars and once in business attire without the collars. Video will allow us to show on the ship in 2025.

America 250 – 250 workgroup will have a table at the convention. Lynette is wanting to see if we could participate in the commission America 250, Chris will check to see if we can afford.

Next meeting – October 30th (Wednesday) at 6:00 EDT.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:48 EDT.

NATIONAL GRANGE DIRECTORS AND STAFF REPORTS

COMMUNICATIONS

Prepared by Philip J Vonada, National Grange Communications Director

Worthy National Grange President, Officers, Delegates, and members - Brothers and Sisters all,

It has been another exciting, challenging year in the realm of National Grange Communications. Daily, I am simultaneously invigorated and frustrated, forging ahead despite roadblocks and member apathy.

I continue to work closely with the National Grange staff and leadership, Teams and committees, Officers, State Grange Presidents and Communications/PR Directors, as well as Grange Advocacy and the Grange Foundation. I am proud to continue working for the Grange, on behalf of our members nationwide.

This is not a one-person job, and I am thankful to those who have stepped up when called upon to help.

I continue to constantly adapt and vary my work, directly listening and responding to feedback from members across the country.

Since stepping into this job in 2022, I have continually reported that one of my biggest roadblocks and frustrations is a consistent lack of engagement from our own members and leaders. In some ways, it has become willful ignorance, with Grange leaders and members alike - at all levels - not utilizing, or even accessing, the resources readily available on the National Grange website, in our newsletters and emails, on social media, or in other locations online and in print, then claiming they are not available and the National Grange is not communicative.

I would like everyone to do better - for themselves and for the Good of the Grange.

As hard as I try to find new methods to connect members across the country to our work, I cannot do it alone in this one-person department. I call on our National Grange Officers, State Grange Presidents, and Communication Directors to take up the mantle, step up to the plate, and start working together to spread Grange news to all members. The number of State Granges who either do not have a newsletter, website, or e-news bulletin, or who release information on such an infrequent basis that the most readily available information online is more than 2 years old is, frankly, disappointing and discouraging. How are we to grow the organization if we cannot appropriately and adequately connect our members to information they sorely need to grow in the Grange? State Granges - if you are only putting information out in print to the members you currently have, how do you expect to grow and reach new people? I urge you to immediately make digital copies of your newsletters, papers, or magazines available and in a prominent position on your website and also linked from social media. Let your communities know what you're doing!

While we promote the Grange, we must make sure we are doing so safely and correctly - like correctly using Grange emblems (if the Grange emblem you're using doesn't have an ®, it's outdated!).

Communications Work Group

At the direction of President Hamp, this year we formed the Communications Work Group. I am thankful to those who signed on to offer direction and input into National Grange Communications efforts, including Ann Bercher (MN),Carolynn Chamlee (NV), Terri Fassio (CT), Jessica Horton (NC), Toni Hoyman (OR), Meagan McDonald (WA), and Elaine Smith (NY). It is with their help that we have streamlined some communication efforts, moved forward with new ideas, and improved some aspects of our department. We continue to work as an "idea hub" and hope to roll out some fun new enhancements to our website, social media, and other ways to connect to our members while connecting them to one other, too.

Zoom Fatigue

Throughout the past year, the National Grange has been holding Fellowship First Fridays and Membership Matters monthly, with the Lecturer's Forums and Communication Zoom-torials bimonthly, and the quarterly "Lessons of the Degrees."

I have noticed a distinct and alarming drop in engagement and attendance in our online programming. As such, I recommend dropping all of our current online programs and moving to a once-monthly Zoom event, which will rotate through departments and officers. For example, one month will be Communications, followed by Membership, followed by Youth/Young Adults, etc. This programming will be enhanced by occasional "pop-up" or quarterly Zooms from partners and internal groups, such as the Grange Foundation or GROW Club, and including the United States Patent and Trademark Office, who will start their quarterly Zoom series on issues in copyrights and trademarks for Granges in December.

Good Day! Magazine

I am disappointed to say that, despite my efforts to reach out to new audiences in addition to past subscribers, I did not reach my goal of having 1,000 active subscribers to *Good Day! Magazine*. Perhaps I shouldn't be disappointed in myself, but rather in our members who fail to see the value and worth in a magazine that highlights not just the work of our Granges, but what is happening across all of rural America. At just \$16 a year, each issue costs less than a takeout cup of coffee or a single scoop of ice cream. Is our work not worth that to you? If the work of the magazine is reaching less than 2% of our fraternal membership, again - how are we to reach your communities?

Thanks again to the work of Grange Advocacy, the magazine continues to be solvent with our advertising and issues partners, and it will continue on.

I am grateful to our continued contributing columnists and authors, including Chris Hamp, Ann Bercher, Amanda Brozana, Christopher Dean, Elizabeth Hiner, Norman Houser, Chea Parton, Cleo Stamatatos, and the Gerontological Society of America. Thank you to my primary editors John Benedik and Lynette Schaeffer for their quick responses and thorough review of the magazine - I know they enjoy the "sneak preview."

I also thank the additional contributing authors and editors, including past and current Communication Fellows, Department Directors, National Officers, and members who submit their #GrangeStory or Community Voices. Thank you to the

Presidents, Membership Directors, and Secretaries who send in their new member lists, and their membership recognition information.

This is your not-so-gentle reminder to subscribe. You can subscribe to the print edition (www.nationalGrange.org/goodday) or the e-edition (www.issuu.com/Grangegoodday). They also make great gifts, or you could consider buying a subscription for your Grange.

Grange Today!

This summer, with the guidance and input of the Communications Work Group, we moved away from the weekly Patrons Chain newsletter to *Grange Today!*, which is released on the 2nd and 4th Friday. The 2nd week focuses on our local Granges, while the 4th Friday is mostly National Grange-focused and includes the Legislative Department's "View from the Hill." Essentially, this new-and-improved newsletter is a miniature version of the magazine. A notification and preview of each issue are also posted on Facebook and LinkedIn to give access to as many members and yet-to-be-members as possible.

Please submit your Grange's news and information to me - either by email or by filling out the online form at <http://Grange.biz/Grangetodaysubmit>.

In addition to the online version, each issue can be downloaded, printed, and distributed to members in your Granges - please spread the word to those who should subscribe and those who don't have regular access to the internet.

This newsletter is the easiest way to ensure that your members receive the most up-to-date information from the National Grange. When Grange members say they aren't hearing from National Grange, have you encouraged them to subscribe?

Please encourage your Granges to subscribe their members to this free resource (www.nationalGrange.org/subscribe).

Grange Hall Podcast

On a brighter and more fun note, I am delighted to say that the National Grange successfully launched the Grange Hall Podcast in April. Every other week, Meagan McDonald and I interview a Grange member who is doing great things in their Grange, asking them about their successes, their struggles, and their hopes for the future of the Grange. Although it is produced by the National Grange, it is not meant to be an echo chamber of National programming, but rather really spotlighting our local Grangers and Granges acting as movers and shakers.

At this time, we have had just shy of 1,000 total downloads - which is a great trajectory for our humble beginnings. Please encourage members to listen, download, and share the podcast.

If you know a member from your Grange or state (or even across the country!) who should be featured, please let us know. The podcast can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeartRadio Podcasts, our host service at Podbean, and the National Grange website. If a visual medium is more your style, it can also be found on the National Grange YouTube Channel.

Social Media

Are you following National Grange on Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, or YouTube? We continue to utilize as many ways as possible to get our message out. We continue to grow in followers and interaction on the two major National Grange accounts (Facebook and LinkedIn), while our YouTube channel also grew in views. Thank you to the Granges and individuals who are sharing our posts and attempting to reach new audiences. I also aim to open a National Grange Threads account in the coming months.

This spring, I consolidated the multiple Facebook accounts to allow streamlined access to information, meaning that there is ONE voice of the National Grange accessible on Facebook. I continue to assess the various pages and communities that are arms of the National Grange and will be making more changes in the coming year to ensure members have correct information in a timely manner.

Is your Grange on Facebook? Instagram? TikTok? Are you reaching members and your community through new channels? Recent studies show that an active social media presence is growing to be a greater need and resource than even websites. If you are not on social media, I encourage you to bravely try something new. You might be surprised by the people in your Grange who are willing to step up if you give them the chance. And if you don't know where to begin - I encourage you to check out the September 2022 Communications Department Zoom-torial in the YouTube library. Find our full library of videos at <http://www.youtube.com/nationalGrange>.

Advocacy and Partnership Work

My portfolio of work with Grange Advocacy and other partner groups continues to grow, continuing our partnerships with the Champions for Vaccine Education, Equity + Progress (CVEEP) and Rural Minds, work with the PCORI-funded Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors program, the rollout of the Rural Life Initiative, and other projects.

This is all in addition to other Advocacy outreach through op-eds and working with our growing media list in the national agriculture and rural interest fields. We already have more in the pipeline for the coming year.

This work continues to foster strong connections with media contacts, forging new outreach possibilities and increasing the reach and influence of the Grange.

What's to Come?

I am not the voice of the Grange, I am simply its amplifier. I will continue working hard to get the word out about the great work that is being done in Granges nationwide, but I cannot do it without YOUR help.

I will continue to work with leaders at all levels of the Grange, to help connect them to their communities. I will continue to put countless hours into trying to elevate our brand and our mission. I will continue to listen to those who have been in my shoes, to those who are doing the work, to those who are positive, who have ideas that are actionable and out of the box. I refuse to listen to those who are constantly negative with no suggestions on how to "fix" things.

If you have an idea - suggest it. If you are missing a resource - suggest it. If you'd like to see more or less of something - let me know. As hard as I try, I am not a mindreader and cannot magically make something appear without knowing about it.

I encourage local Grange leaders to also work with State Grange leadership and communication directors. I encourage State Grange communication directors to be directors in working with your local Granges. Together, we can all be better.

There are so many ways we can be creative in spreading and increasing the message of the Grange. I wish I could do more, but there aren't enough hours in the day. I encourage our Granges to be creative.

There will be no publicity contest for 2025. Instead, I will soon open a submission portal for Granges to send their publicity efforts, which will also be viewable by Granges across the country. In this way, we can all work together to see ideas that work in California, Washington, Kansas, Maine, New York, Iowa, and everywhere in between.

Keep working. Keep sharing. Keep a spirit of collaboration. We are one team, working together - let's try it! Let's all be **Grange Strong!**

Respectfully submitted,

Philip J Vonada

National Grange Communications Director

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Prepared by Stephanie J. Wilkins, IT Director

ONLINE MEMBER DATABASE

A Zoom meeting with state secretaries provided valuable feedback from State Granges with suggestions on how to improve the function and ease of updating member details in the Online Membership Database. The suggestions have been forwarded to Blue Tahiti to be integrated into the system.

Database requests from the States

1. Is there a way to not see the closed Granges in the list. Include a toggle button to "Show Active Grange"
COMPLETED
2. Can the fields on the quick member info be moved so zip comes after state in the address in the quick edit for member info? (So that it shows City, State, Zip not City, Zip, State) **COMPLETED**
3. For adding family members: default to address being in each family member's profile unless it is changed so it doesn't have to be typed multiple times. **IN PROGRESS**
4. When viewing the database, every time you open a specific Grange and then go back to the full list of Granges, the quarter reverts back to Q1 of 2023 and does not stay in the quarter you were initially working in. **COMPLETED**
5. When you download the member list for a State, the headings on the database and the headings on the Excel downloaded aren't the same as what is on the screen in the database. **IN PROGRESS**
6. The archived and deceased people from a Grange are showing up on the download. Is there a way to make a selection when someone wants to download where it downloads "only active" or "all members associated (including active, deceased or archived)? **COMPLETED**
7. Make the phone number field so that once you put in 3 characters, for the area code that it auto tabs to the next three numbers and when those three numbers are entered, it auto tabs to the last four digits? Some states are not entering a 10-digit phone number. **IN PROGRESS**

Database Features that we would like to utilize.

1. Online registration and payment collection
2. Members can update their individual details.
3. Check and update payment details for auto-renewals and for subscriptions.
4. Automatic email marketing integration.
5. Membership directories to help members network and connect.
6. Recording quarterly dues and payments (when quarterly numbers are locked into the system it generates an invoice from Bill.com and link to pay so that we get the report, data and payment at the same time)
- 2) E-member integration with website, database, email and payment.

FINANCIAL DEPOSITS

Weekly deposits are made to various bank accounts. Checks are received, sorted by bank account, entered into a spreadsheet. Checks to Eagle Bank are scanned for remote deposit. Deposits to Truist are made in person. The ability to remotely deposit checks to Truist will be investigated. The Bank of America bank account was no longer needed and ultimately closed.

Payments from the following are recorded and processed:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| • Quarterly Dues | • Trademark Protection |
| • <i>Good Day!</i> Magazine Subscriptions | • Bonding |
| • Convention Assessments | • Grange Foundation Donations |
| • Convention Registrations | • Grange Store Orders |

A weekly deposit breakdown is submitted to the accountant immediately after the deposit(s) have been made. A monthly financial report is submitted to the accountant for reconciliation. Any questions and payment details by the accountant are resolved immediately. Grange Foundation Chairwoman, Joan Smith and Treasurer, John Benedik receive a monthly report of

all donations made to the foundation. A number of issues could not be easily resolved with Bank of America, nor did they offer any incentives on credit card purchases. Therefore, the necessary tax documents and other paperwork was obtained to apply for a Truist credit card. Upon approval, cards were assigned, and the Bank of America credit cards assigned to the National Grange staff were cancelled. The new Truist credit cards offer:

- No annual fee
- 0% into APR on purchases for 9 months
- 3% cash back on gas.
- 2% at restaurants and office supply stores, up to \$2,000 in combined spend in 2% and 3% categories per month.
- 1% cash back on all other eligible purchases.
- Cash rewards earned will expire at the end of the month, that is 5 years from the date of issuance.
- 10%, 25%, or 50% Loyalty Cash Bonus based on your Truist business deposit relationship when cash rewards are redeemed into a Truist business deposit account.

A Golden Medallion Signature Guarantee Stamp was needed to authorize access to the Delaware Funds by Macquarie investment account. A golden medallion signature guarantee is a stamp that confirms the authenticity of a signature on a document that transfers securities. It's a type of identity verification that helps prevent fraud and protects the financial institution and the people involved in the transaction. After months of unsuccessful attempts, we were finally able to obtain the necessary documents and information needed to obtain the Golden Medallion Signature Guarantee Stamp from EagleBank which is the main financial institution of the National Grange.

A new merchant account number was required with Sekure Merchant Solutions following the election of the new President, Christine Hamp. This merchant account is used to process credit card transactions using the handheld A920 Smart Terminal device and online Grange Store transactions.

BUILDING

With the sales of the National Grange building various accounts associated with the building operation were closed such as Aramark (water filtration for fountains), ThyssenKrupp (elevator service) etc.

The webpage to submit a reservation for the conference room was disabled and removed from the National Grange webpage.

A change of address was submitted to USPS changing the National Grange address to 1616 H Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006.

In August, a walkthrough of the new office space was done along with the Bungalow Ventures to determine and agree on the necessary upgrades needed for the new National Grange office space. Upgrades such as recess lights in all offices, glass office doors with keypad entry, replace door hardware, resurface and paint offices, remove old data lines that were running along the ceiling walls, new carpet and replace window blinds.

Various office supplies are ordered as needed to maintain the daily function of the National Grange office. Orders are placed using the National Grange Amazon Prime account.

WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS

Information on the National Grange website is updated regularly to include the latest National Grange News. The following information has also been added/updated:

Grange Month: Grange Month material such as the Proclamation, sample press release, calendar of events, posters, images for social media share, and more have been added to the website.

Journal of Proceedings: the latest issue of the National Grange Journal of Proceedings was added to the website to view, print or download.

National Grange Virtual Fly-In: The Legislative Fly-In was virtual. Information for this event such as registration, speakers, schedule was featured on the National Grange website. Those who attended were able to watch it LIVE from multiple locations including the website. The recorded event is available on the website for playback.

Newsletters: The weekly publication, Patrons Chain, now known as Grange Today, is distributed via email and available online. Members can download a compressed file that includes the newsletter in two versions (Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF) as well as all the images used in the issue, if they want to share the stories in their publications. The monthly publication, View from the Hill Policy Updates, is also distributed via email and available online.

National & State Officers: Updates have been made on the website to include the 2024 slate of National Officers with updated bios and photos taken at the 157th Annual National Grange Convention in Niagara Falls, NY. All individual state Grange webpages were updated to reflect the list of 2024 state Grange officers and their upcoming session, location and date.

2024 Programs & Contests: Updates have been made to all 2024 programs and contests from all departments (Lecturer, Communications, Membership, Youth, Juniors, Member Recognition). Winners from the 2023 programs and contests were announced.

News and Events: Various news, statements, press releases and events such as Grange Revival, webinars, reaching rural surgical seniors, etc. have been featured on the National Grange website to bring awareness, support and participation.

Grange Store – Changes to the Grange Store are made as needed to include new store products, removing items that are no longer available, increasing store prices for items affected by inflation and editing items for clearance.

Rural Life Initiative – Information related to the Rural Life Initiative (RLI) was added to the National Grange website. Metrics are being captured via Google Analytics to determine traffic to this webpage.

National Convention - Registration for the 158th Annual National Grange convention was finalized and added to the website in May 2024. Information about tours, travel details, meals, hotel reservations, community services project, convention schedule, speakers, and more have also been added.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE/HARDWARE

Symantec - The 1-year license subscription with Symantec was renewed for 10 licenses to avoid interruption in this service and maintain security. The 10 licenses will ensure that all National Grange laptops continue to receive Symantec Endpoint Protection (Version 14.3 RU6 build 9210.60000) which runs live updates to provide Virus Spyware Protection, Proactive Threat Protection and Network Threat Protection for all workstations. Virus definitions are updated daily.

Various computer issues are resolved via Quick Assist. Quick Assist is a Microsoft Windows feature that allows a user to view or control a Windows workstation remotely over an internet connection to resolve issues without directly touching the device.

Following the sale of the National Grange building, offices and equipment on the 11th floor were moved to the 1st floor while equipment and supplies from the basement were moved to the 2nd floor. With this move, data lines needed to be installed to provide internet and phone service to these floors. Three quotes were obtained before Calvary Communications LLC installed 18 drops in 9 different locations between these 2 floors. After the lines were installed, Comcast installed a new modem on the 2nd floor where the network hub was located which connected the 2 floors. The server, firewall, battery backup and other equipment were relocated to the 2nd floor and laptops, printers, VOIP phones, copiers, wi-fi and other National Grange equipment were networked.

In the coming months, the National Grange will relocate all of its offices and equipment to the 3rd floor office space. This requires data and phone lines for copiers, printers, server, mail machine, workstations and other equipment to be run to the appropriate locations. Calvary Communications LLC installed 18 drops and 9 locations on the 3rd floor. This will provide phone/network access in 4 offices, 1 copier room and 1 conference room. A 55" LG Smart TV and wall mount was purchased by Grange Advocacy to allow professionally held Zoom meetings. Comcast service as well as the modem, firewall and patch panel will all be relocated from the 2nd floor to the 3rd floor.

A Canon image CLASS MF652cw printer was purchased for Member Benefits & Sales Director, Loretta Washington after the transfer roller on her printer needed to be replaced. The cost to replace the transfer roller on a 4-year printer was equivalent to purchasing a new printer.

MAILING/SHIPPING/PRINTING/SECURITY

The 2024 National Grange Roster was completed, and large-print copies were made available for each state Grange and national officers at the 2024 Presidents Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC. The Patrons Chain newsletter included a link to download a printable copy as well as a digital spreadsheet which can be useful when doing mail merge documents, creating mailing labels, group emails, etc.

Priestess Annalist, Martha Stefenoni, submitted a list of Seventh Degree participants from the 2023 Annual National Grange Convention. A total of 110 certificates were printed and individually mailed to each recipient. Certificates for the 2024 National Grange session will be printed and distributed in person at the 158th Annual National Grange Seventh Degree Conferral.

On January 21, 2024, the USPS rate increase went into effect. The Pitney Bowes equipment successfully received these updates needed to process mail. Sales orders with a valid email address, receive shipping details so that members can track their package to determine the estimated date of delivery.

Following the sale of the National Grange building, the Pitney Bowes mailing equipment was relocated from the basement to the 1st floor office space. Moving this equipment and reconnecting the hardware individually avoided the \$971 relocation fee quoted by Pitney Bowes.

Brochures, Digest of Laws, Resource Binders, manuals, and various other printable items are supplied as needed to fulfill Grange Store orders.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Registrations – Delegate, General and Junior registrations are received via JotForm and reviewed. Corrections to registration are made as needed. Additional items are added/deleted upon request. Registration deadline emails have been sent out to increase participation.

Name Badges – Name badges will be printed for each individual participant of the 158th Annual National Grange Convention.

Tickets – Meal tickets are created, printed and cut. A list of purchased tickets is affixed to the back of each individual participants' name badge and stuffed inside the badge.

Resolutions - State Grange resolutions are formatted and uploaded into SharePoint. The original resolution from the state is saved into a PDF file created with a table of contents and bookmarks for easy searching.

SharePoint – Editable links to SharePoint have been provided to every committee Chair and Secretary while non-editable links have been provided to committee members.

Seventh Degree – Certificates for the 2024 National Grange session will be printed and distributed in person at the 158th Annual National Grange Seventh Degree Conferral.

IT SMART GOALS

A total of six Smart Goals were created for the Information Technology Department. Given the opportunity and time I would like to accomplish the following in the coming year:

Increase Automation - "I will work towards implementing automation tools and systems, in order to reduce manual data entry tasks by 20% within the next six months. I hope to eliminate manual processes, increase efficiency, and reduce errors."

Achieve Professional Certifications - "I will commit to achieving two professional certifications within the IT field by the end of this year. This certification process includes research and studying, passing tests, and demonstrating proficiency in a particular domain."

Develop Your IT Skills - "I will commit to developing my IT skills over the next 6 months. I would like to attend at least two conferences in order to stay on top of the latest industry developments." Optimize Software Performance - "I aim to optimize the performance of all software and subscriptions used by our company. That includes improving loading times, reducing errors and crashes, and improving user experience." Increase Website Traffic and Activity - "I aim to increase website traffic by 25% over the next 6 months by improving the quality of content, optimization of the search engines and improving overall visitor experience."

Grow Email Contacts and Accurate Member Data - "Over the course of 6 months, I will provide local Granges with login credentials to update individual member details to include valuable contact information to spread upcoming Grange news, activities, events, benefits etc."

Faternally Submitted,

Stephanie J. Wilkins

National Grange IT Director

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Prepared by Burton Eller, Legislative Director

Introduction

It is important to note this report is necessarily being drafted prior to Election Day. We will have much more to talk about by the time it is presented at the national session in Bettendorf, Iowa after the elections. It is also important to note that President Chris Hamp has requested these reports be brief and to the point. More details on the discussions in this report can be found in the View From The Hill monthly updates in the Grange Today newsletter. In addition, we've been able to get President Chris around Washington this year to meet many of the Capitol's movers and shakers and have her share her vision for the future direction of the Grange.

Washington Review

With Democrats narrowly in control of the Senate and Republicans narrowly in control of the House, the 118th Congress will be remembered for its lack of bipartisanship and inability to move on meaningful legislation. The words civility and respect seem to be a foreign language on the Hill and in Washington generally. Certainly, compromise is a fighting word, politically. The Senate, the House, Democrats, and Republicans could not agree on a budget for FY25 so we're operating the federal government on a continuing resolution until December. We have no farm bill, and the chances of getting one in the lame-duck session of Congress following elections may be slim. The Grange published what happens when a farm bill expires in the October Grange Today! newsletter. Debate on a new Farm Bill could chew up considerable legislative time in 2025.

2024 was an election year for the entire House, a third of the Senate, and the Presidency. Everything in the Nation's Capital has turned even more partisan and political, to the point of becoming ugly. Even bills with large bipartisan bicameral support turned political; if it was to someone's election year advantage to oppose them or hold them until after the elections.

The lame duck session will begin November 11 and last until possibly Christmas. Bills that enjoy considerable bipartisan support have a chance of moving through Congress, possibly as riders in larger pieces of must-pass legislation. The Grange supports several bills it hopes to have included in that process. The 118th Congress will officially end December 31.

Grange Grants Boost Profile

The National Grange and Grange Advocacy have again been successful in raising the Grange profile in Washington and around the country. Grange has long been recognized as a major public policy force in agricultural circles and more recently in the broadband deployment and connectivity space. Now, the Grange has entered the realm of health care advocacy for rural and small community residents at the national level in a major role. Rural America is now recognized as a healthcare desert. The Grange is looked to as a partner with patient advocacy groups, health care providers, and government agencies.

For the first time in the Grange's long history, Grange has a federal government grant from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to educate seniors about things to be aware of before and after major surgery. The PCORI grant is a prestigious accomplishment and spotlights the Grange as a major force in rural and small-town health care. Project manager Joan Smith was invited to address the PCORI annual meeting in October which was very well received by the PCORI audience.

A grant from USAging enabled the Grange to partner with McUlsky Health Force and provide flu, and COVID immunization shots to nearly 4,000 attendees to the Eastern States Exposition (BIG E) in West Springfield September 13-29, while exposing a million and a half fairgoers to the National and New England State Granges. The theme, "Grange: Protecting good health for our rural communities" was both appropriate and popular. A big thank you to the New England State Granges

and Noel Miller, New England Grange Building manager, for hosting this record-breaking event on the grounds of the New England Grange building at the Big E!

A large grant from Pfizer enables Grange Advocacy and National Grange to roll out the Rural Life Initiative pilot project to seven State Granges (California, Colorado, Illinois, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania). The states were provided project design assistance, funding to support the projects, and communication and media support to publicize the events. The objective is to focus on all aspects of rural life, emphasizing the resilience and vitality of rural America and the community focus of the Grange. A comprehensive report will be prepared at the end of the year.

A grant from Amgen enabled the Grange to prepare and disseminate the infographic “Cardiovascular Disparities in Rural America” which focuses on the higher rates of heart disease in rural areas and the need for cardiovascular screening to be included in annual checkups.

Advocacy in Action

Grange Advocacy continues as a strong force to enable National Grange to accomplish its public policy goals. Grange Advocacy Corporate Advisory Council members lend their experience, expertise, and finances to complicated issues and assist Grange staff in researching, writing, and placing opinion editorials, statements, petitions, and official letters by the Grange. Grange Advocacy supports the National Grange financially by reimbursing operational overhead, staff time, and management expenses.

2024 Grange public profile metrics

The National Grange is increasingly referred to as “The trusted voice of rural America”. Grange gained additional public profile in 2024 with the following:

- National opinion editorials - 4
- Statements, testimonies, briefs - 2
- Official letters regarding public policy issues- 504
- National media interviews - 5
- Policy related webinars - 6
- Total high profile hits - 521

Agriculture and food actions

- Amplified the need for Congress to pass a new farm bill
- Called on the Surface Transportation Board to prevent rail shipping problems at harvest time
- Supported legislation to limit adverse foreign ownership of U.S. ag and forest lands
- Called for more funding to promote U.S. farm exports
- Endorsed the voluntary “Product of the USA” label claim
- Pushed for more agricultural research funding, New and Beginning Farmers Program expansion, local food processing grants, accurate food labeling requirements
- Lobbied the House to pass the Rural Veterinary Workforce Act
- Called for additional changes to the administration’s revised WOTUS rule
- Endorsed several cattle pricing bills
- Provided statutory information to explain commodity checkoff programs

Health care actions

- Produced factsheets and infographics on cancer screening, rural cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer’s, obesity, and immunization
- Renewed calls to investigate the effect Pharmacy Benefit Managers have on prescription drug prices
- Petitioned the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to approve payment for medicines already approved by the FDA
- Successfully argued that Medicare should pay for breakthrough Alzheimer’s treatments and make treatments more available to rural patients
- Built rural and ag support for the Farm and Ranch Stress Network 24/7 hotline to receive additional farm bill funding and expand to all states
- Called on Congress to approve Multi-Cancer Early Detection screening test legislation for Medicare beneficiaries’ coverage
- Presented testimony to the FDA’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee and the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
- Called upon the CDC and FDA to approve flu, COVID, RSV, and pneumococcal vaccines well ahead of the 2024-25 fall respiratory disease season
- Partnered with Rural Minds on several webinars to raise rural awareness of mental health and suicide prevention concerns
- Partnered with McUISky Health Force and New England state Granges to sponsor a hugely successful vaccination clinic at the Eastern States Exposition (Big E).
- Assisted State Granges with health care op-eds.

Telecommunications actions

- Monitored broadband coverage maps and urged Grange members to check their location to certify high-speed connectivity
- Monitored the progress of state broadband rollout plans and oversight by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).
- Reminded broadband service providers of Congress's statutory priorities to serve the underserved first, the underserved next, then other connectivity service priorities
- Successfully petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide guidance to resolve the pole attachment and rights of way disputes so broadband deployment into rural America would not be delayed.
- Called upon Congress to reauthorize and extend funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in order to get broadband adoption to unserved rural populations
- Urged Congress to enact legislation to prevent the elimination of AM radio frequencies in new model vehicles

Other actions

- Worked to prevent another nationwide rail strike
- Worked to prevent dock worker strikes at major shipping ports

MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by Amanda Brozana, Membership and Leadership Development Director

Worthy Patrons,

From November 2023 through November 2024, the department has had three major priorities:

- 1) Assist State Granges as requested in Membership and Leadership Development;
- 2) Provide leadership training, mentorship and administrative guidance to various workgroups, to the individuals in Class I and Class II of the SHIPmates program, and to members across the country who have reached out with requests;
- 3) Work with the National Grange President on projects and streamline or improve various processes in our work.

State Grange Assistance & Future Outreach

Throughout the year, regular contact was made with many State Grange Presidents and leaders along with membership directors. I was able to host small or large group sessions with several states and attend the Western Regional Conference and Montana State Grange session to present workshops. In addition, I attended the Maryland 150th Convention and Gala as a guest.

Several State Granges have expressed an interest in holding online or in-person training sessions related to membership and/or leadership. I am working to schedule with States online or in-person workshops in 2025. I am also interested in working with State Granges to find ways to improve the relationship and break down barriers between local members and the National office while giving guidance and support to specific Granges they identify as most in need or with most potential.

Finally, in conjunction with the Communications Department, in 2025 I would like to identify events, organizations or entities, such as colleges or associations, who may be interested in creating an event or including President Hamp as a keynote speaker to discuss the importance of joining and becoming DO-ers. In addition to external speeches and press opportunities, this would allow us to place President Hamp in front of nearby Granges and members during her travel. Please contact me if you have any interest in discussing what such a tour or series of events might look like.

Leadership Training & Mentorship

A large area of focus this year has been on the training and work of the SHIPmates – individuals accepted to participate in a program with a four-prong focus: membership, leadership, fellowship and mentorship. Class I began training in late summer 2023 and remains on board in a structured fashion through 2026. Class II began training in summer of 2024 and are planned to remain onboard in a structured fashion through 2027.

As part of the training, SHIPmates have learned some basic improvement science principles and identified challenges in their specific area of interest; been introduced to project management best practices and will receive hands-on training; are getting a primer on the Strategic Doing method and putting it into practice with their own solution pods; and are creating proposals and products to meet a variety of needs of our Order. You will see mention of their work throughout this report.

The 14 SHIPmates have become subject matter experts in their specific area or areas of interest. They have each produced a workshop to be presented at the 158th Annual Convention and will modify it and create additional workshops they can offer in-person or virtually to interested Granges. Please contact the Membership and Leadership Development department to get more information, plan for assistance and schedule a meeting with a SHIPmate in your region or whose area of expertise is of importance to you. These dedicated and trained volunteer leaders will allow the department to expand its reach and impact, and strategically assess and offer solutions to some of the most pressing challenges we face.

A large thank you to Potomac Grange #1, DC, for sponsoring this program in its first two years. In 2025, we will seek alternative funding and the design of the program will change slightly.

President's Projects and Work Groups

All five members of the National Grange staff are well-tenured and have developed a robust portfolio of expertise and duties. However, there are many projects that have necessitated action that falls under no specific current staff member or department. In that absence, I have worked with President Hamp to assist in various ways on a wide range of projects or components thereof. As areas of pressing need have been identified, President Hamp has created several work groups and teams to brainstorm, review, research create proposals and more. I have been fortunate to work with several groups including an E-Member working group, a "Save our States" working group and a "Community Granges Focus(ed Forward) Group." From these we have had several great discussions and insights and members from each of the latter two groups have been identified as important voices to contribute to the solution pods led by SHIPmates in 2024-25.

The E-membership working group, which included IT Director Stephanie Wilkins, Potomac Grange member Cheri Watson, SHIPmate Dave Roberts, Washington State Grange member Kirk Van Gelder and group lead Alicia Buckles, produced a double-pronged proposal on how to improve the e-membership program of the National Grange and engage local Granges with individuals seeking a less traditional Grange experience. The working group is now creating processes for next steps and will continue to work in 2025. The project management documents and process brought to the group by Alicia Buckles are excellent and have been incorporated into the materials SHIPmates will use to prepare future proposals and document their solution pods' work.

New and Reorganized Granges

The membership year for 2023-24, which runs from July 1 to June 30, saw the organization of 4 new Granges and reorganization of 7 Granges. Since the close of the second quarter, 3 local Granges and 2 Junior Granges have reorganized. These are not reflected in the State Profile addendum, which only captures data from the membership year 2023-24.

Starting or restarting a Grange is not simple. Even with the requisite number of people, project ideas, clear leadership and individuals truly committed to learning and abiding by Grange values and laws, there are many more hoops to get off the ground that we have done little to address. State Granges, like California - which has organized or reorganized dozens of Granges in the past decade - have a fairly clear process through which they walk the leadership of a new Grange. This includes not just the business of Grange, but how to be a business (nonprofit, fraternal) in modern times. This includes how to get incorporated, bonded, insured, have background checks if there are children's programs, etc. The State has also committed resources to get an EIN for the local Grange and file the IRS 990 forms.

Some continued and significant process questions have boiled to the surface as each of these new Granges is formed or reorganized. It is also clear that State Granges are struggling to keep up with the current forms and prices, pulling from old files, which delays charters being issued. This in turn delays the work of a new or newly reorganized Grange in getting their bank account, and sometimes their insurance.

In 2025, I will work with two of the SHIPmates and their solution pods to have several resources available for State Granges and deputies or members interested in assisting with the organization or reorganization of a Grange. In addition, it is clear that materials should be readily available and made in a format that is easily digestible for individuals unfamiliar with the culture, values and process of the Grange.

Membership Numbers

The 2023-24 membership year was not a National banner year as have been the previous two. However, 12 State Granges and Potomac Grange #1 in DC saw a net gain in members. Two State Granges - Kansas and Tennessee - held the line with local and state reports that mirrored 2023. Also noteworthy, three State Granges (New York, Oklahoma and Rhode Island) posted less than 1% losses and Rhode Island State Grange would have had a net gain of 2 instead of a net loss of -3 without the passing of several Golden Sheaf Exempt members.

While the Annual Membership Data Review and State Profiles addendum to this report provides a very in-depth look at our distribution of members and various comparisons, I would like to offer a few topline data items and observations.

While we show a loss in all categories except Associates, where overall we added nearly 350 memberships, there are a few very large losses or gaps in reporting that are major contributors. The loss of several Granges in Nevada, no reports from two of the three Granges in Alaska, significant losses in Illinois in associate membership related to a local Grange's now-ended storage program, and in New Jersey as they began collecting local Grange quarterly reports for the first time since COVID, and the loss of Golden Sheaf Exempt members, which based on age of members in this category is not unexpected, made up nearly the entire difference in Unique Fraternal Membership (-977) and Historical Subordinate/State Membership totals (-1673).

Several Granges remain under the 13 member threshold and a few lie below the level to hold a legal meeting with a quorum. Several State Granges also are in a precarious place, with either just at or fewer than six Granges with 13 or more fraternal members. We are in great need of a plan to strengthen these local and State Granges. We need to use resources available and when desired, ask for help. A quick plug: Have RV, will travel. If your state is seeking assistance, please contact me. We can work on a plan that could include travel to your state for workshops, specific training, outreach, planned events or service projects that also include membership drives, tabling at major events or providing community assessments and working with you to hold informational or organization meetings. We must also think outside the box. Some suggestions include finding better methods to consolidate without losing members or created mentored, satellite Granges at the local level and at the State level consider plans that would allow Granges across borders to come together and organize into quasi-State Granges.

For two years we reported membership increases, however after speaking with dozens of new members over the past two years, it is clear that very little is being done in most local Granges to orient new members to Grange culture and mentor them, make them feel welcome and valued, and treat them with the respect and kindness they and we expect of the Grange. In the

next year, a great deal of emphasis will be put on creating new tools to orient and make new members feel welcome, however there are already tools available that are being greatly underutilized or not used at all. Some of these materials provide tips to current members on how to be a good mentor, or are great resources to orient new members to the Grange. These items, such as the Grange Today newsletter, *Good Day!* magazine, our social channels and website, should be promoted, made readily available, or provided so new members can enjoy the full experience of Grange with no filter.

Overall, the biggest take-away from the past few years is Grange is an attractive organization with much to offer people in today's society. Getting members isn't impossible – in some cases it's very easy. However, new members all come looking for some of the same things: fellowship, belonging, being treated with kindness and provided all the tools to become well-acclimated with the Order and a sense of usefulness: something to provide them a sense of purpose and to put their talents and skills to work. We cannot maintain our standing or grow without a plan to take interested individuals through a structured member onboarding process with a great personal touch that helps make them a true part of our fraternal family.

"Orphan Granges"

South Carolina's only Grange, Britton's Neck, and Florida's only Grange, Manatee, both report and send dues to the North Carolina State Grange. This arrangement has been the most efficient we have found to provide mentorship and support to orphan Granges and reduce staff time spent on chasing dues and reports for very little return. In November 2023, Granges in Alaska and Washington; Hawaii and Oregon; and Nevada and California were requested to begin a similar relationship. The three State Granges made contact but none of the orphan Granges have embraced the relationship, and we remain in the position where dozens of hours of staff time are spent between this department, IT and the National President tracking down payments and reports. Potomac Grange, which regularly pays and reports on time, was not included in the request to make connection with a neighboring or nearby State Grange.

The past year was a great challenge in regard to the Granges in the State of Nevada. Carl Clinger, a primary deputy for the state, passed away unexpectedly in December while several of the Granges in the state were grappling with the request from National Grange that they begin to work with California State Grange to report quarterly and pay dues as they had not made headway on starting their own State Grange after the minimum number of 6 Granges were active. Two Granges turned in their charters as of the start of 2025 – Battle Born Stockton Well and Western Nevada. Several others became unresponsive as did the other primary deputy for the state. At this time, only Central Nevada and Smith Valley have been in contact and are operating. We also know High Desert has had some activity in youth programming and some individuals and families are current on their dues to that Grange, but High Desert has not reported or paid dues to National Grange in Q4 2023 or at all in 2024. Based on the most recent reports and unofficial sourcing, we are listing 142 members for the state (Smith Valley 22; High Desert 80; and Central NV 40) and will adjust accordingly when reports and dues are received.

Hawaii's only Grange, Big Island #1, is struggling to find focus. While they participated in the Affordable Connectivity Program, there is little holding the group together and they have struggled to hold meetings or act. We are seeking an additional mentor for that Grange with some ties to Hawaii who can partner with Elizabeth Hiner, who has been serving as a mentor.

Two of Alaska's three Granges, North Pole and Northland Pioneer, have failed to report their membership numbers or pay dues since Q2 of 2023. We have made several attempts to gather the information and money, however none has been forthcoming. Two Rivers Grange has strong leadership and has been recovering and growing since their hall was destroyed by arson a few years ago. However, they have run into a problem not uncommon – struggling to remedy past lapses in reporting to the IRS that have left them on the auto-revocation list.

Currently we have no resources at the National level to assist Granges who have had their status revoked by the IRS. We have inquired with the Grange's general counsel and hope to turn around information and tools for Granges who find themselves in this situation. This is especially important for reorganized Granges whose new leadership finds themselves in a quagmire not of their own doing, unsure of the correct next steps in the expensive and unclear path forward. In addition, there is a SHIPmate solution pod looking at resources that can be created to assist local or State Granges in the management of annual reporting to ensure compliance and continued good standing for Granges.

With the current staffing levels and the strain on volunteers, it is an extraordinarily ineffective use of funds to track down or complete quarterly reports for single Granges that often do not change membership totals often. In these situations, I believe the National Grange could offer (and pilot) a real-time reporting system whereby the Granges where there are no State Grange would record members as they are welcomed and pay annual dues at that time or during that quarter. This would allow us to test a system that might be useful for other State Granges and local Granges and be better aligned with membership structures of most other organizations.

A Year of Cleaning the Books

It appears several State or local Granges have taken the opportunity this past year to address outdated member lists and clean their lists. This is, on the surface, an injury to the National Grange and State Grange. However, by cleaning books and ensuring that every member is accurate, we have a better understanding of who we represent, how to be in touch with them and how they engage with other activities and events of the Grange. I encourage all State and local Granges to continue to stay on top of your membership lists, removing those who no longer wish to be members or who have since passed away.

Some of the biggest losses of membership come from Illinois, which hinged on a Grange ending a program that had more than 200 associate members enrolled and New Jersey that had provided Granges great latitude in reporting through the COVID-19 pandemic era and recovery period.

More Data Sought

In early 2024, a new Quarterly Report and Dues Computation Form was provided to each State Grange president and secretary for use. About half of the states used this form at some point in 2024 for their reports. The form asks for Secretaries to report at least once a year information that the National Grange had previously sought but had not had, including a number

of active (chartered) Junior Granges and Pomona Granges in the State, number of owned halls/property and a listing of any Grange consolidations that occur.

These items are extremely helpful when we approach partners for potential projects and funding or seek grants, as we try to keep or maintain good records of the disposition of Granges and the general health and welfare of our order. It is not unreasonable for this information to be provided to the National "parent" organization, and could be of great use. I hope to see more Secretaries submit the current and complete report in the future.

In order to offer more and better matched benefits for our current membership and to make better projections about the needs or future of specific local or State Granges, it is so important to have some basic member profile data. This includes occupation, if they farm or own stake in a farm or if they are otherwise "involved in agriculture," year of birth, zip code and gender identity. Some of these items are collected locally or at the State level but are not consistently making it into our member database or we do not currently have a place for these items to be reported. I believe these are all necessary to enhance our member services, legislative activities and more.

Continued Concerns about Culture

President George Washington said, "It is better to be alone than to be in bad company." Are we good company?

Over the past several years, you've heard not just from several staff or leaders of the National Grange that some enclaves of Grange have become toxic in their culture. Local members frequently talk about the poor behavior and attitudes they encounter. This sometimes results in calls to the National office to help resolve issues. President Hamp has made clear the chain of command should be followed – local member concerns and complaints should go to the State Granges for resolution. However, this only works if State Grange leaders are responsive when approached and work to either resolve the issue or educate the concerned member on Grange values or practice. Avoidance is not a solution.

Many State Grange leaders – presidents, other officers and deputies – are busy. Some are uncomfortable with conflict or unfamiliar with best practices to handle claims and grievances. In 2025, based on the work of SHIPmates, I anticipate the release of resources for State leaders on how to evaluate claims and manage conflict, the judicial process and more. In the short term and thereafter, I hope each of us can make a strong effort to be positive, inclusive, warm and generally worthy of the moniker: Granger.

Member Experience in Focus

The department has embraced a broader call to enhance the member experience and find ways to answer "what does the National Grange do for me" and "what do I/would I get out of being a Grange member?" The member satisfaction survey indicated several areas for improvement, some of which can be made through various leader and member training and member resources and opportunities.

One such area of focus includes running better meetings and finding ways to improve committee work outside of business meetings to ensure power and decision making are distributed more broadly, meetings are more efficient and meaningful, and the Grange is more vibrant because it has a variety of activities, service projects, and personal development and fraternal/fellowship opportunities available to members. In 2025, new resources in new formats will become available focused on improving meetings and the use of committees based on the work of a SHIPmate and their solution pod.

Additionally, we see a specific age range where Grange Youth tend to separate from the organization. SHIPmates and their solution pods are examining the ways in which we can more effectively and directly connect with youth and young adults through digital platforms, enhance content and benefits available to them and generally more directly engage, empower and inspire individuals in this young adult age with the Grange.

The Grange has as part of its Declaration of Purposes the objective to "in general, [act] together for our mutual protection and advancement." Based on the Vision Statement, authored and adopted at the Leaders Conference early this year, SHIPmates began discussing what the National Grange could have as resources for local Granges and members to ensure mutual protection, advancement, and "rooted in agriculture... instill life lessons and relevance for all, promoting sustainability, life skills, and fraternal ties."

Three solution pods are working at the direction of SHIPmates on a variety of ideas related to personal sustainability, life skills and lessons and fraternal ties. In 2025, I expect to see several resources released for Granges to use for programs, activities and outreach, service and general member education. Not all learning must be done in a Grange meeting, so the resources we seek to create are meant to be available to members at any time they are seeking such information.

Affordable Connectivity Program

In 2023 we, in conjunction with the Oregon Institute for a Better Way, were able to capture a grant to support initiatives to take information about the newly launched FCC Affordable Connectivity Program to communities in which Granges are located and beyond. Our grant provided funds for Granges to receive programmatic support funds for their efforts and receive free marketing tools with information about ACP (and the Grange) to the grassroots. The total grant was more than a half-million dollars, and the Grange's portion for work to inform communities was \$50,000.

Unfortunately, due to the overwhelming success of ACP, which led to it running out of funds far before anticipated and to Congressional inaction, ACP ended early in 2024. Funds remaining were directed by the grant administrator to be used for capacity building, so we are prepared for future involvement in informative campaigns.

A Look Ahead

I anticipate a few changes in 2025 to department programming and services as I focus time on working with SHIPmates and the National President on various projects to improve onboarding and connecting with new members, processes for new and reorganized Granges, member enrichment and other solution implementation. Of note, you will see among the changes in the department's work:

- Membership Matters will take a pause as we create on-demand content in its place;
- Fellowship First Friday will be led by member volunteers, National officers and delegates;
- the Heirloom Contests will be cut due to lack of participation;
- and a monthly email will be sent to State Presidents and Directors with a variety of updates on new and revised resources, tips and other items that should be shared.

Closing Thoughts

Recently a member sent a well-worded white paper and expressed something I haven't quite been able to find the words to do. It is a very profound observation about the Grange in its current state. I want to share that for your reflection and ask where we go from here:

As society evolved, time for volunteering lessened, TV and internet replaced other forms of entertainment and cars made it easy to travel ... "Many local Granges shrank from a robust 50-100 members to just a few families who kept the local organization nominally active. And then in a strange twist, the incentive to repopulate the local Grange dissolved. Think about it. If you were part of a small family group that made all of the decisions, what would be your motivation to bring in 3 times or 10 times your number—people with no knowledge of your Grange culture or ways of working, allowing these newcomers to dictate new or different ideas and methods? Bringing in new members became an unacceptable risk."

Is that true? Has bringing in new members become an unacceptable risk? A headache? A hassle? Too much work to onboard new members or new Granges and too much disappointment when and if they leave? Are we trying and if we are, are we listening to what attracted individuals to the Grange, what new and seasoned members want from their experience (yes, "what's in it for them"), and how they feel when they are in our meetings and our presence?

The value of Grange is undeniable for me as it is for many of you. Grange is my family, my vehicle for service, and my support system especially as life has seen many expected and unexpected changes and challenges over the past year. I would love to share this same passion and deep connection for the organization with hundreds of thousands of worthy individuals seeking the warmth I feel from my Grange family and purpose I feel called to with the Grange. A great thank you to each of you who reached out just after last convention when my father passed away and for those of you who encouraged me as I confronted other life events and a journey of self-discovery toward a new happiness. This is what Grange truly means to me – a family that wraps its arms around you, flaws and all. Let's share this Grange value forever forward. *Esto perpetua.*

Fraternally,
Amanda Brozana
Director

Addendum A: Introduction to the SHIPmates Program

SHIPmates Mission Statement

The SHIPmates Program cultivates leaders who inspire change and service within the Grange community, championing integrity and collaboration to build a lasting, inclusive legacy.

SHIPmates Vision Statement

SHIPmates are committed to advancing the Grange's relevance in modern society through purposeful leadership, community engagement, and a shared vision of ensuring the Order's lasting impact. SHIPmates lead with honesty and transparency, fostering an environment of mutual respect and accountability. SHIPmates deeply appreciate the values of the Grange as expressed in our heritage documents – the Declaration of Purposes, the Obligation Ceremony, the Degrees, and the Installation Ceremony. Our appreciation, however, does not paralyze us to change but instead inspires us to be worthy of the gifts we've inherited as members of this Order.

SHIPmates are at the forefront in the creation of a vibrant and inclusive Grange environment where integrity, compassion, and collaboration drive progress. SHIPmates encourage growth of all members to their fullest potential and encourage all Patrons to embrace nature's motto: Onward.

Our work will result in a dynamic legacy that advances the mission and vision of the Grange, particularly focused on empowering individuals and positively impacting our communities, ensuring the enduring spirit of the Grange thrives across generations.

SHIPmates Credo

SHIPmates are united by our shared commitment to excellence in leadership and service. We are resolute in our purpose to lead with integrity, serve with dedication, and collaborate to secure a brighter future for our Order and the communities we serve. Together, we strive to build a legacy of leadership and service that reflects the enduring spirit of the Grange. Our credo embodies the values and principles that guide our work as together we make every effort to advance our Order. We embrace and pledge to uphold the following credo as our guiding framework for our actions and decisions.

- 1) Integrity: We lead with honesty and transparency, fostering trust and respect within our program, the Grange and the broader community. Our actions reflect our values, and we hold ourselves accountable to the highest ethical standards.

- 2) Service with Care: We are dedicated to serving others with compassion and empathy. Our leadership is grounded in the belief that our greatest achievements come from making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.
- 3) Collaboration: We value the strength of teamwork and the power of collective effort. By working together, we harness diverse perspectives and skills to achieve our shared goals and drive meaningful progress.
- 4) Excellence: We strive for excellence in all we do. Our commitment to high standards drives us to set and achieve ambitious goals, both personally and collectively.
- 5) Respect: We honor the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our fellow members. We listen actively, communicate openly, and value each individual's contributions, fostering an environment of mutual respect and inclusivity.
- 6) Empowerment: We are dedicated to empowering each other to reach our full potential. Through mentorship, support, and development opportunities, we cultivate leadership skills and confidence, enabling our members to lead with impact.
- 7) Community: We are committed to strengthening our Grange community through fellowship and harnessing the power of fraternalism. We also dedicate ourselves to enriching the wider society. Our leadership extends beyond our organization, as we engage in activities that support and uplift our communities and promote the values of the Grange.
- 8) Intellectual Curiosity: We value lifelong learning and believe it is essential for every leader and member to seek not only relevant new information from reputable sources but to commit to a personal journey of self-exploration and development.
- 9) Change-Making: We embrace a spirit of continuous innovation and fail to subscribe to the notion that we should "do it the way it's always been done." We believe challenging the status quo is necessary to continue forward, progressing our Order.
- 10) "Esto Perpetua": We frame our work on relevance – to our members, our communities and our world – making sure for each we meet this measure so we can ensure the need for the Grange to endure forever as the motto from our founders proscribed.

SHIPmates Program Motto

"Dream Big. Start Small. Act Now." (*Robin Sharma*)

SHIPmates Program Reflection

"It is only heavy because you are deciding over and over again to carry it. Embrace change, loosen up your sense of identity, let yourself walk a new path. You do not have to ignore or erase the past, you just have to wholeheartedly embrace the present and move on." (*Yung Pueblo*)

SALES, BENEFITS, PROGRAMS AND MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION REPORT

Prepared by Loretta Washington, Sales, Benefits, Programs and Membership Recognition Director

WOW! What a year, a new National Grange President, Christine Hamp (WA) , then the building was sold, and then came the fun part of having to pitch, throw out, and pack up for the move to the second floor for my office and the first floor for the Grange Supply Store. During the many changes, I continue to provide uninterrupted customer service to our Granges. This report is for the period of November 1, 2023, to October 31, 2024

The Grange Supply Store:

Things have been a little different since the sale of the building. The Grange jewelry is now stored in my office on the second floor while on the first floor are the various brochures and certificates along with a few books.

The Grange Strong t-shirt fundraiser had eighty-seven members across the county who purchased a total of 164 items for \$1,030.88.

Month	Sales
October 2023	\$4,044.75
November 2023	\$1,334.67
December 2023	\$1,523.50
January 2024	\$1,502.85
February 2024	\$2,661.16
Grange Strong T-Shirt Sale	\$1,030.88
March 2024	\$1,938.00
April 2024	\$1,692.85
May 2024	\$2,783.50
June 2024	\$1,150.00

Month	Sales
October 2022	\$1,095.00
November 2022	\$1,234.25
December 2022	\$896.90
January 2023	\$2,053.00
February 2023	\$3,061.00
T-Shirt Sale	\$1,100.00
March 2023	\$3,020.00
April 2023	\$1,853.00
May 2023	\$3,659.00
June 2023	\$1,499.50

July 2024	\$1,658.00
August 2024	\$1,007.00
September 2024	\$926.00
October 2024	\$1,756.25
	\$25,009.41

July 2023	\$2,198.85
August 2023	\$1,464.50
September 2023	\$1,557.27
October 2023	\$4,044.75
	\$28,737.02

As you can see, we are down dollar-wise compared to last year at this time, which unfortunately a trend nationally and The Grange was not exempt from that. I do a monthly inventory to see what is selling and what items need to be marketed more in the upcoming month. I also submit a quarterly report to the National Granges financial accounting company. The store was downsized (another cause for the slightly lower sales) due to the sale of the NG Building and not knowing, at the time, how much space the store would have available. This Department continues to market items we have in the store to the members, especially 4th Degree pins and the years of service pins. A new Silver Star (25-year pin) has been redesigned by our Communication Director, Phil Vonada. Based on my SMART goal, I am working on an E-commerce online Grange store of clothing, drinkware, etc., to be opened by the end of January 2025. The jewelry and paper products will continue to be stored at the National Headquarters.

Programs:

Distinguished Grange

A total of thirty-six Subordinate (community) Granges, 2 Pomona Granges, and 4 State Granges submitted applications for this year's program. Twelve of these Granges will be recognized as Golden Distinguished Granges because they held at least one program on mental health or suicide prevention. This will be my last year overseeing this program. Connie Johnson, MI will be handling this program for 2025-2026 and I wish her well and look forward to working with her during this transition.

Grange In Action

This year the National Grange will be recognizing 155 Granges to include 10 Junior Granges and 2 Pomona Granges. 3 States will be recognized as State Granges in Action while five will be recognized as Golden Grange in Action; because they held a program on mental health.

Grange Legacy Family

This year we received six applications: four- 5th generation, one -6th Generation, and one- 7th generation Grange Legacy family.

Patriot Program

Granges are continuing to request certificates for veterans who have and are presently serving our county. This is a wonderful way for a local Grange to honor veterans. Potomac Grange #1-DC continues to sponsor this program. If you would like more information, please see me. I would be delighted to discuss it with you.

Grange Today! and the Good Day! Magazine

I continue to identify Benefits and Sale/Store items to be featured in the biweekly editions of Grange Today. I continue to submit the Membership Recognition and Grange Hall 100,125- and 150-year anniversaries for the *Good Day!* Magazine

Membership Recognition and Award

25 Silver Award:51	30 Year Seals:72
35 Year Seals:69	40 Year Seals:53
45 Year Seals:45	Golden Sheaf Award:173
55 Year Seals:65	60 Year Seals:143
65 Year Seals:60	70 Year Seals:85
75 Year Award:65	Congratulatory Letter (80&85):19

I continue to process membership recognition applications on a daily basis as they arrive in my office. This allows for the checks from the Granges to be processed sooner and the recognition awards to be sent out in a timely manner.

Grange Charters (new/reorganized, duplicate and consolidated)

I continue to collaborate with Amanda Brozana, Leadership/Membership Director. During this year, a new policy was implemented when a Grange is consolidated to help keep track of the history of that Grange consolidation. We have put in place a new form along with a \$25.00 fee for new charter. Starting May 1, 2024, we now charge \$25.00 for duplicate charters. The cost covers the charter, shipping materials, and postage.

2024 National Convention Showcase

President Hamp asked me to oversee the Convention Showcase. I collaborated closely with President Hamp to make sure that all materials were correct and ready to be sent to our exhibitors, directors, and working groups during the month of July. We have several partners exhibiting in the showcase this year, many of which were with us at last year's convention. Please stop by and speak with them.

Benefits

President Hamp put together a working group for member benefits, it is being chaired by Mark Gibbon (Potomac Grange), along with fellow Grange members, Rachel Edelen, Claudine Lefever, Sarah Strawder, and Brian Ebersole their first meeting was Sept 24, 2024. I feel that this group will help guide the Benefit programs in a good direction. I have had the opportunity to sit in on a couple of these working group Zoom meetings. They have had a lot of good discussions and asked insightful questions.

I have always had a good working relationship with the different account managers through the years with Gallagher. We try our hardest to market the different benefits. However, on October 4, 2024, I received an email stating that our agreement with them would end on November 4, 2024. The reason they gave us was a lack of participation by the membership and marketing. We marketed the benefits the best way possible in utilizing the NG database, which shows another reason this database needs to be updated. However, after talking with the Benefits working group about what happened with Gallagher (which could turn out to be a good thing) and with their guidance they will explore new benefits packages that Grange members will be able to use.

In conclusion, I am a "Change Agent" and continue to collaborate with all my co-workers and the National Grange leadership and cheer them on and/or give words of encouragement. You will all see that we are a dedicated, loyal and hardworking staff/team at the National Grange that has great ideas to help move this organization into the future. I look forward to working with our NG President as we move forward into this new Grange year. I appreciate all the opportunities I have been given and my door is always open if you have questions and/or ideas on how we can help grow the Grange together.

REPORTS OF AFFILIATED ENTITIES

GRANGE ADVOCACY

Prepared by Leroy Watson, Grange Advocacy Board of Directors Chairperson

Worthy President Hamp, Officers, Delegates, Brothers and Sisters

I am honored to present the report for Grange Advocacy in 2024. Grange Advocacy is a 501(c)(4), non-profit organization closely affiliated with the National Grange. It was created as a voice for responsible stewardship of rural America. Several priority objectives define Grange Advocacy's role:

Promote legislative participation, economic opportunities and public concerns important to rural Americans and, particularly, Grange members, by building on the Grange's extensive history of grassroots activism, support for rural communities, and community service

Build capacity for national, state and local Granges to operate as a premier grass tops and grassroots network, by utilizing and engaging 1,500 local community Granges and 48,000 active Grange members in public policy.

Identify partners for issue campaigns centered around food, agriculture, health care, telecommunications, education, citizenship, rural economic development and cross-cutting rural stewardship challenges.

Grange Advocacy has continued its success in generating financial support from our growing group of issue partners to address public policy issues of mutual concern to our partners and Grange members. These relationships allow Grange Advocacy to provide additional financial support to the National Grange and many State Granges to compensate them for their time and effort to support the work of Grange Advocacy and the National Grange.

Our activities gave a tremendous lift to the reputation of the Grange as a leader in rural, public policy advocacy. I will not repeat the accomplishments outlined in President Hamp's outstanding External Address and Brother Eller's exceptional Annual Legislative Department Report, except to highlight how Grange Advocacy works, behind the scenes, to promote our shared missions:

As of 9/4/2024, Grange Advocacy has raised \$400,356 in grants and program support payments that have directly benefit Granges and Grange members at all levels that have resulted in payments of \$81,607 for direct support of the National Grange by Grange Advocacy.

Financial support for National Grange's successful application and award for a grant from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to conduct rural pre and post operation educational programs administered through local Grange chapters. Local Granges made presentations to their communities and gathered information over an extended period. Sister Joan Smith acts as Principal Investigator on this grant and administers the day-to-day activities.

Financial support for the National Grange's highly successful Rural Cancer Disparities Survey program.

Partnered with McUlsky Health Force, a healthcare focused public policy organization, PharMerica, a national leader in providing commercial pharmacy services, Families Fighting Flu, a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children, families, and communities against the flu, and Pfizer to implement a rural health public policy outreach effort that was financially sponsored by the USAging Organization, at the Grange Building at the 2024 Eastern States Exposition (Big E) that delivered 4200 vaccinations to fair goers. This was a 700 vaccination increase over 2023! Vaccinations were free to every participant and they all received official documentation and a \$10 Starbucks gift card! We also used an innovative, on-line registration process, utilizing personal cell phones, that was the key for processing the additional vaccinations and that eliminated cumbersome paper records. This 17 day event also exposed 1.5 million Big E fair goers to positive messages and information about the National Grange and the New England State Granges through a coordinated public relations outreach program. These programs generated multiple local and regional TV news interviews featuring the Grange. It also resulted in direct financial compensation of \$35,000 shared by participating State Granges and the Big E Grange Building Association. The National Grange also utilized two Grange branded tents, several Grange branded table skirts and a big screen TV that we inherited from last year's vaccination program for our use in future Grange grassroots programs.

Financial support for state and local Grange policy education outreach efforts totaling \$99,652, this year! (Rural Life Initiative grants, Big E Vaccination program, Grassroots policy initiatives)

Financial support for *Good Day!* Magazine by placing full page, paid advertisements for Grange Advocacy partners in Good Day Magazine.

Financial support for Grange Communications Fellows to participate at the 2023 National Grange Convention and the 2024 Convention.

Financial support to pay ½ the cost of a professional media monitoring firm for the National Grange and Grange Advocacy.

Financial support for memberships, subscriptions, dues and meeting registration fees for the National Grange and Grange Advocacy.

Financial support for State Granges participating in Grange Advocacy grassroots issue education activities.

Grange Advocacy continued to use best practices in the government relations industry in 2023 to increase the capacity of the National Grange, local Granges and Grange members to enhance grassroots public policy education and outreach.

Grange Advocacy continued our successful and growing Corporate Advisory Board in 2024, to act as a resource for sound public policy discussions on issues of concern to the National Grange and rural America. The Corporate Advisory Board also helps us deliver effective policy information in Washington DC and state capitols through public education programming and partnerships such as seminars, webinars, and focus groups to generate effective, fact based discussions of issues facing our communities.

As the success of Grange Advocacy has grown, new procedures are being adopted to address the increased complexity of dealing with multiple grants and project specific donations that were given to promote Grange Advocacy programs and the increased commitment of the National Grange to provide human resource and in-kind support to Grange Advocacy

As chairman of the board, I know our accomplishments would not be possible without strong commitment from our leadership team. Grange Advocacy is not a "chartered" Grange chapter that operates under the checks and balances of the Digest of Laws. Even so, Grange Advocacy's own by-laws bind us to follow the leadership principles of the National Grange. Grange Advocacy can not be used to circumvent prohibitions of the Digest against supporting candidates for office or any partisan political activities. Grange Advocacy has remained scrupulous with its issue-based advocacy activities. This commitment benefits Grange members, Grange chapters and thousands of rural communities across this country that look to the Grange for leadership and guidance on public policy.

Every member of our board embraces these principles without hesitation. Three members of our board serve as National Grange officers: myself, Sister Chris Hamp (who also ably serves as President of Grange Advocacy) and Sister Susan Noah. Brother Phil Prelli, one of our original board members, graciously serves as Vice Chairman. Brother Jimmy Gentry brings practical perspectives of a sitting State Grange President. Our other board members, Brother Dick Weiss, Paul Weller, Carolyn Weems and Beth Westover are distinguished public policy communications specialists who bring decades of policy experience to our discussions. They are an effective and professional, non-profit management team.

National Grange Legislative Director Burton Eller also deserves recognition for his efforts to grow Grange Advocacy. Grange Advocacy is an effective voice for rural America and Grange members because of his professionalism. His commitment to the Grange's 158-year-old tradition of nonpartisan, grassroots civic engagement on legislative issues, coupled with 21st Century technology and government relations best practices, is a large part of the success of Grange Advocacy.

Finally, I want to express my deep appreciation to Pfizer for their generous, unrestricted grant of \$315,000 to support our new Rural Life Initiative. This year, Pfizer is celebrating their 150th Anniversary as a leader in the U.S. health care industry. Partnerships and discussions between our organizations to find practical, mutual interests of concern between the pharmaceutical industry and rural America date back 30 years. It has been a long process to develop trust and understanding between our organizations regarding motives, objectives, concerns and capacity. The relationship experience we gained working with Pfizer was critical for the Grange to interface with other corporate and association allies to multiply our effectiveness to represent the public policy concerns of rural America. Pfizer paid us the highest compliment of trust that a U.S. public corporation could pay when they gave us a grant of \$315,000 of their shareholders' money, without restrictions or conditions! They only asked that we use these funds to continue to build our organization's grassroots capacity and further the National Grange's historic mission to address the issues facing the rural communities where Granges reside. That is what we have diligently attempted to do.

Fraternally Submitted,
Leroy Watson, Chairman
Grange Advocacy, Board of Directors

GRANGE FOUNDATION

Prepared by Joan C. Smith, Grange Foundation Chairperson

Greetings National Officers, Delegates and Fellow Grange Members: It has been a pleasure to serve as the Chair of your Grange Foundation for the past six years and on the Board for eight years. I hope I have served you well. Below, I share with you your 2024 Grange Foundation activities since our last Annual Meeting.

It has been a pleasure working with the GF Board members, National staff members and Grangers across this nation. I am not seeking to serve on your Board in 2024, as announced during our 2023 National Grange Convention. I believe that the board members should give 110% of their time and all the financial support they can afford as a board member. It is now time for fresh energy, ideas and involvement. I have learned much while serving about our great organization, the interrelationships of our three "branches" (Executive, Legislative/Advocacy and Foundation), Granges at all levels and our awesome membership. I hope that you will continue to support the Foundation, I will.

I want to personally thank our Headquarters Staff members for all their new ideas, their energy and enthusiasm, support and giving of themselves for our GF organization.

Your Board members give of their time as we all want the Foundation to be successful in its programs and financially sound.

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

We would like to thank all Grangers and Granges who contributed during these past 12 months to any of the Grange Foundation funds (Youth, Junior, Deaf, Community Leadership Development, GROW Club, Headquarters Building, American Arts and Culture, General Fund, Endowment, Lecturer, 1-in-1,000 Club, Communications Fellows, SHIPmates).

This certainly was a traumatic year for many Grange families who lost loved ones, suffered illness, many fires and hurricanes with evacuations and loss of Grangers homes, property and animals. Hurricane Helene in Florida/Georgia/Carolinas who brought its winds, rain, floods, mudslides and devastation to areas who never experienced the force of nature like this before. Then 10 days later, Milton sweeps across Florida, hitting some of the same areas again as well

as those areas destroyed in 2022 by Ian. All areas are in recover/repair after the loss of homes, schools, downtowns, farms, power down, infrastructure gone, it will be years to rebuild the homes, businesses, roads, dams and many of the lives traumatized by these events. Many in our Grange family have damaged homes and property but maintain the spirit to continue, as it says in the 5th Degree, Persevere.

The Grange Community has come together to help with the recovery. Granges/Grangers are and have assembled requested items, shipping them to North Carolina Grange Headquarters, and other charitable organization, sending items and funds to a multiple of relief agencies, gathering items in trailers and driving goods from Grange State to Grange State. We pray for all.

Thank you all, our prayers continue for everyone in the areas of weather/nature related problems and to those Grangers and their families with health needs.

Organization Structure – The Board took the action to review and revise its By-Laws primarily changed the terms of the Board Officers to one year, board member candidate nominations due 1 November of each year. as well as other updates. The “Grange Foundation Financial Policy, Procedure and Control” document was reviewed, page by page, in January, with few changes, our search for a corporate/industry person to serve on our Board of Directors (BoD) remains open and a budget developed. A new “Grange Foundation Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement Pack” was developed to better capture the request and approval process for those Granges seeking to use the GF 501(c)(3) status to collect charitable donations for qualified projects with an administration fee of 5%. Several requests were received this fiscal year and appropriate action taken. Directors & Officers, Bonding and Liability Insurance was again obtained. A Past Directors Pin has been designed and will provided to our past BoD members during the Evening of Honors event at the NGC.

Investment Portfolio - In October of 2019 we completed our analysis of our portfolio and moved the funds to Park Avenue Securities with Bastion Wealth Group (BWG) as our investment manager. The Portfolio has four investment accounts, Endowment Fund, Long Term, Medium Term and Cash Account. Since inception (October 2019) through 30 September 2024 we have realized a return of 5.54%. 1 Oct 2023 through 31 September 2024, the return is 12.68% or \$80,658. The total value of our Investment Portfolio is now \$443,812. We monitor your investment portfolio over a two-month timeframe and will continue to do so with hopes that the upturn will continue.

An independent audit is being conducted of the Grange Foundation financial documents and our IRS filings are current and no outstanding actions on either

Fundraising – Grange Foundation has the following individual fund areas in need of your support. Any contributions for the 7th Degrees Preservation are deposited into the American Arts & Heritage/Culture fund per the definition. The dollars received 1 Oct 2023 through 30 Sept 2024 are shown below:

FUND/INVESTMENTS	INCOME	EXPENSES	BALANCE
American Arts & Heritage/Culture	\$955.00	\$0	
Communication Fellows	\$1,484.00	\$0	
Deaf Awareness	\$30.00	\$0	
Youth GROW Club	\$2,524.00	\$1,000.00	
Junior Leadership Development	\$2,774.00	\$0	
Kelly Farm	\$185.00	\$0	
Leadership & Community Development	\$1,471.00	\$0	
National Lecturer	\$585.00	\$1,750	
1-in-1,000 Club	\$10,030.00	\$0	
Scholarship Fund	\$20,000.00	\$1,000.00	
SHIPmates	\$9,287.00	\$0	
Youth Leadership Development	\$3,263.00	\$5,772.00	
Grange Foundation – General	\$6,542.00	\$21,545.00	
Total	\$59,628.00	\$31,870.00	
Investment Portfolio Net Income	\$80,658.00		
Total			\$108,416.00

Auction – For 2024, the GF set a goal of \$20,000 funds received (outside of the Scholarship fund). Discussed options at two Board meetings and decided to go with an Auction using the “32Auctions” (used for the 150th Gala) as our tool to be managed by Amanda Brozana, GF Associate. Each Board member is to donate at least one item. The Auction will begin with the NGC and close on 4 December, our Grange Anniversary. To date, some examples, we have donated: one-week in Florida vacation home; tickets at a Spurs game (basketball in San Antonio, TX); Montana Silversmith jewelry; Waterford crystal Grange engraved vase; handicrafts; artwork; fishing collection, etc.

Kahoot – During 2023-2024, the GF developed KAHOOT, Grange History Quiz, which was launched and posted on the national KAHOOT Library in November 2023 has seen continued use across America in classrooms. The quiz is available for all Granges/Grangers/school students to use to learn about the Grange and have fun while doing. Students use this tool as a learning asset. We developed a Grange Version that asks questions about Grange that also requires some knowledge about

our country's history, mathematics, and some agriculture science areas. You can use it at a Grange meeting as a Lecturer's program. All you need is your cell phone.

Grange Foundation Scholarship – Many thanks to the Ernestine Keiser family for a second \$20,000 donation to the Grange Foundation Scholarship for Grange members. The \$39,000 has been invested in a 4.60% 10-month CD. The committee, under the leadership of Anna May Nauss, developed the criteria, application, and essay topics. The first \$1,000 award was made on 10 April 2024 to Asheton Medlin, NC. 19 applications were received from 11 different states.

The 2025 criteria, applications, checklist was revisited and modified to add a headshot photo, and essay topics revised. The information is located on the Grange Foundation and National Grange website.

Grange Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2024 - There are hundreds of ways to support GivingTuesday, often stylized as #GivingTuesday, it is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving in the United States. It is touted as a "global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world". A day that encourages people to do good. Over the past thirteen years, this idea has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

Why not get a project started in 2024/2025 in your community. Whether you give your voice, goods, your time, or your money, being generous is a way to fight for the causes you care about and help people in need. Pick any Tuesday and have your Grange Giving Tuesday event. Here are some ideas you might consider:

- Share kindness with your neighbors.
- Volunteer virtually or share your talents
- Give your voice to a cause that matters to you
- Show gratitude to healthcare workers, service providers, and other essential workers who are making sure we still have the services we rely on, even at risk to their own health.
- Give to your favorite cause or a fundraiser to help those in need.
- Talk about giving and generosity using the hashtag #GivingTuesday

"GivingTuesday" strives to build a world in which the catalytic power of generosity is at the heart of the society we build together, unlocking dignity, opportunity, and equity around the globe.

Revival – July 21-27, 2025 - Be part of this growing group of Grangers in 2025 in Torrey, Utah. This will be our fourth nationwide Grangers camping get-together. Many of you roll down the camp roads in mobile homes, RV, trailers, with U-Hauls and your vehicles full, some stay in tents, cabins, hotels, or sleep in their cars. Others join us via the airport or train and a rental car or one of us can pick you up at baggage claim to join the fun.

Whatever your pleasure, join us for relaxation, fun, games, competitions, singing, naps, great food, crafts, campfires, tournaments, food, sightseeing, National Parks, animals, flora, food, fauna, social times, chats, volleyball, cornhole, tetherball, ATV rides, horseshoes, hugs with friends, smores, etc. etc.

Bequests/Estate Planning – We hope that many of you have put the Grange Foundation in your estate planning/will or as a beneficiary on a 401k or a CD or IRA as a charity which you support. We are a charitable, tax deductible 501(c)(3) organization. Giving to the GF can help your own current personal IRS obligations and your inheritance tax burden and you are supporting the organization you love. Don't forget about the Grange in your Estate Planning, how about making the Grange Foundation a beneficiary on your life insurance policy or a percentage of your estate. Think of Grange when estate planning - you love it, preserve it.

Grange Grants - Looking for a Granger who is a Grant writing professional to help us prepare Grant proposals/packages.

Deaf Program – We had no applications in 2024 for our two \$1,000 Deaf Program Grants. See the criteria on www.Grangefoundation.org. We also have an Endowment with Gallaudet University, Washington, DC which continues to provide support to hearing impaired students.

1-in-1,000 Club – We invite you all to become a member of the 1-in-1,000 Club. This Club is maximized to 1,000 members and costs \$1,000 to join. A special project of its members was our history preservation. Documents were gathered at the Headquarters of original handwritten writings of our founders, the original Charter documents/signatures of Granges across the country, original ceremonial and ritualistic thoughts and guides, etc. These items have all been scanned and digitized and are currently in climate-controlled storage. Your Club is now determining its next activity.

We hope some of you can become a member of this Grange Club. The Club met twice this year, February and August.

Partnership in Agricultural Literacy (PAL) Award – This is the 15th year we have sponsored this award which is provided by the Grange Foundation as part of the National Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (NAITC) program. This award criteria includes individual volunteers, associations, Grangers/Granges, who support agricultural education of pre-K thru 12th grade.

The 2024 recipient is Carter Humphries, an Extension Agent with the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Carter is a 4-H Agent in Henrico County, a suburb of Richmond, Virginia. As this is a heavily suburban area, Carter's programming is often the students' first and only experience with agriculture. She strives to bring quality agricultural literacy education to youth through a variety of programs. To support these efforts, Virginia AITC has awarded Henrico 4-H multiple grants and in-kind donations for school-enrichment programs including Embryology, Winged Wonders, Agriculture Literacy Week Kits, and AGventure Days. All of these projects have centered around a common goal: to increase agricultural literacy through classroom lessons that consist of hands-on projects or ready-made educational kits.

Continue to follow what your Grange Foundation is doing through articles in *Good Day!*, Grange Today, Facebook, YouTube and our Website.

Publications - Continue to follow what your Grange Foundation is doing through articles in Good Day, Grange Today, Facebook, YouTube and our Website.

Published – *Good Day!* – "Basics of Grange Foundation" by John Benedik

Published – Facebook – Grange KAHOOT Tutorial

Published – Grange Today, 6 weeks, request for GF Board Candidates
Published – *Good Day!* –advertisement for new 1-in-1,000 Club members
Please remember Your National Grange Foundation projects. Do not forget about a long-term plan to support your Grange Foundation through your estate planning.

Fraternally,
Joan C. Smith, Chair
Grange Foundation

Board Members Nov 2022-Nov 2023

Joan C. Smith, DC/FL - Chair (expires 2024)
Chris Hamp - NG President (expires 2025)
Lynette Schaeffer, IL - Vice-Chair (expires 2025)
Anna May Nauss, PA - Secretary (expires 2025)
John Benedik, NJ (expires 2025)
Nathan Strawder, KS (expires 2025)
Marty Billquist, MT (expires 2024)
Richard Stonebraker, MD (expires 2025)
Buddy Overstreet, TX (expires 2024)
Vacant – Corporate/Industry

GRANGE FOUNDATION BOARD MINUTES

November 13, 2023

*157th Annual Convention of the National Grange
Niagara Falls, New York*

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

The Annual Meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Monday, November 13th at 3:30 p.m. Eastern, in Niagara Falls, New York during the 157th National Session and available via Zoom. In attendance were committee members: Joan C. Smith, board chair; Lynette Schaeffer, vice chair; Susan Noah, treasurer; Clay Snyder, Secretary; Melanie Bostwick, Marty Billquist, Anna May Nauss, Buddy Overstreet and Betsy Huber.
Regrets: Sharon Tutrone

Call to Order:

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was officially called to order at 3:35 p.m. by the Chair.

Welcome:

The Chair welcomed all to the annual meeting and shared an update on the National Grange Foundation to include the following items in the presentation:

- National Grange Foundation Mission Statement
- The accomplishments of 2023 by the GF
- National Grange Foundation Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship Announcement
- The Board Make-Up and Election Process
- Kahoot Game

Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship - Grange Foundation Scholarship Program

The Chair Introduced Anna May Nauss, Board member of the Grange Foundation and Chairperson on the Scholarship Committee. Anna May Introduced the new Grange Foundation Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship program and explained the requirements for applying and the application process. Questions were answered from the delegates.

Election of Board Members:

- Distribution of biographies of those that submitted to all attendees - Anna May Nauss (PA), Richard Stonebraker (MD), Claudine Lefever (WA), and Jesse Shands (VA).
- Distribution of the ballots to those eligible to vote.
- Asked for any further nominations from the floor – received none.
- Election commenced – results to be announced on Wednesday.

Financial Update:

The chair shared an updated on the financial position of the GF and a plea for contributions with a reminder that checks can be made payable to the National Grange Foundation.

2023 Happenings

The chair shared an overview of the programs for 2023 which included a February 1-in-1,000 meeting and April Zoom presentation, "Solving the Puzzle of Estate Planning and Long-Term Care". Also, Kahoot was deployed In October 2023.

Kahoot

Delegates and Guests were asked to use their cell phones and laptops and go to KAHOOT.IT In order to play. There was friendly competition to win prizes: 1st place \$10 Amazon Gift Card; 2nd place Surprise and 3rd place Surprise.

Good of the Order

The chair shared the contact information with all members in attendance.

Adjournment

Completing the Board's business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m. PT.

Fraternally submitted,
Clay Snyder, Secretary

November 18, 2023

8:00 a.m. ET

Niagara Falls, NY & via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Saturday, November 18th at 8:00 a.m. ET, in Niagara Falls, New York during the 157th National Session and available via Zoom. In attendance were committee members: Joan C. Smith, board chair; Lynette Schaeffer, vice chair; Anna May Nauss, Marty Billquist, Susan Noah, John Benedik, Richard Stonebraker, Betsy Huber, and Chris Hamp.

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was officially called to order at 8:05 a.m.

Board Chair Joan Smith offered congratulations to new National Grange President Chris Hamp and Vice President John Benedik

.READING OF THE MINUTES; RATIFICATION

The Chair directed the board to the approved minutes from the September meeting. The annual report and annual meeting minutes will now be part of the permanent record stored on the SharePoint site, part of the Journal of Proceedings, provided to the Delegates in their annual binder and posted on the website. The draft minutes from the November 13th, 2023, annual meeting with delegates will be approved by email.

TREASURER REPORT

The IRS Form 990 was submitted about one and one-half weeks ago.

At our next Board meeting on January 10, 2024, David Watson, our investment portfolio manager, will be present to review our financial position and answer any questions from the Board. Fees are now visible in our financial reports. There is an annual 0.9% fee in total.

During the 157th National Grange Convention, we received for the year 2023 to date, a total of \$10,500 in contributions from Grangers, comprised of a contribution of \$10,000, \$250 received from Rhode Island for the Youth Fund and \$250 from Rhode Island for the Junior Grange Fund. In addition, we received a contribution of \$50 from an individual. Per the Delegates' Christmas cards, there will be additional donations received.

Martha Stefanoni approached the Foundation about setting up a fund for 7th Degree preservation and presentation. This would be a new fund. Martha contributed \$773.76 to the new fund to preserve the 7th Degree. To establish a new fund, we will need to note the requirements for the fund. Joan will work with Martha to establish a mission statement for this new fund. Upon motion duly made and second, it was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED: Board Chair will work with Martha Stefanoni to establish requirements and mission statement for new fund.

Chris Hamp also shared that she has money from ringing cell phones from Chip Narvel.

The Foundation is now paying to have their financial work performed by the National Grange. The Foundation is paying \$500 per month for accounting activities.

Our portfolio lost 13.3% last year. This year it is up approximately 3%. Our net over the past four years is approximately 2%. We started using the investment manager in October 2019. We are utilizing a moderate risk for our investment portfolio.

The Foundation Board meetings are the second Wednesdays of every other month beginning at 8 p.m. eastern time. Meetings are held in January, March, May, July, September and two times at the National Grange convention.

OLD BUSINESS

1.) 2023-2024 Strategic Business Plan – The chair will adjust the business plan committee chairs based on new board members and where the board members would like to participate. To be reviewed at the January meeting.

2.) Digitization/Scanning of Grange History – the first 27 boxes have been completed and are in a climate-controlled environment. Next steps will be discussed.

3.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Marty Bilquist, Chair - The 1-in-1,000 Club meeting will be held via Zoom in February and will discuss the scanning and digitization report, the strategic plan status, the website and solicit new ideas. We currently have 60 members in the Club. Also, in April, the 1-in-1,000 Club will host a Zoom on Long Term Care and Estate Planning.

NEW BUSINESS

The chair welcomed the two Board members elected by the delegates - Richard Stonebraker and Anna May Nauss for 2024 - 2025. Richard was newly elected, and Anna May was re-elected to the GF Board. The chair congratulated them on their election.

There is an additional vacancy on the Board of Directors to be elected by the Board. Two candidates were presented to the delegates – Claudine LeFever, Washington and Jesse Shands, Virginia. An additional candidate was presented as Nathan Strawder, Kansas.

The Chair shared there are ten Board members.

Class 1 – voted on by the delegates – Joan Smith, Marty Billquist, Anna May Nauss, and Richard Stonebraker.

Class 2 – at large members selected by the GF Board – Sharon Tutrone and the current vacancy.

Class 3 – selected by the National Grange Board of Directors – Buddy Overstreet, Lynette Schaeffer, and John Benedik
National Grange President Chris Hamp

There was a motion to extend an invitation to Nathan Strawder to fill the open seat. Upon motion duly made and second, it was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED: To extend the National Grange Foundation at large member board seat to Nathan Strawder.

Chris Hamp suggested at a future meeting to discuss increasing the Board to 11 members.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – The chair reviewed the open positions of Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The election is for a two-year term according to the By-Laws.

Chair will remain as Joan Smith. Joan shared that she will be stepping down from the Board in November 2024.

RESOLVED: Joan Smith will be the Chair of the National Grange Foundation.

Nomination for Vice Chair: Lynette Schaeffer - Upon motion duly made and second it was unanimously approved:

RESOLVED: Lynette Schaeffer will be the Vice Chair of the National Grange Foundation.

Nomination for Secretary: Anna May Nauss – Upon motion duly made and second it was unanimously approved:

RESOLVED: Anna May Nauss will be the Secretary of the National Grange Foundation.

Nomination for Treasurer: John Benedik. The office of the Treasurer involves the review of accounting reports provided by the accountants and review of the Investment Portfolio reports. The National Grange office handles the paying of bills and donations. The Treasurer receives the reports relating to accounting and financial investments. – Upon motion duly made and second it was unanimously approved:

RESOLVED: John Benedik will be the Treasurer of the National Grange Foundation.

The GF was approached by the Keiser Family from Virginia with a request to establish a scholarship through the GF. Discussion around if this is something that the GF would be interested in taking on the management of a scholarship program as it would include work around the guidelines, criteria, applications, qualifications, managing the fund, dispersal amounts, establish a selection board, etc.

A motion was made to pursue the opportunity with the Keiser family to establish a scholarship program. Upon motion duly made and second it was unanimously approved:

RESOLVED: To pursue the opportunity with the Keiser family to establish a scholarship program.

Scholarship Fund Program

The first scholarship will be offered in April 2024. The chair thanked Anna May Nauss for chairing this program. Jimmy Taylor has shared that an additional \$20,000 will be contributed from the family before the end of the year, which will bring the total balance to \$40,000.

The Committee will be re-engaged to serve as the evaluators for this year's scholarship applications since this is our pilot year. The funds are currently invested in a CD at 5.2% and the new funds will be invested as soon as they are received.

There have been inquiries from individuals about adding to the scholarship fund. This is encouraged..

National Ag in the Classroom

The Chair shared that this is an expense of \$4,300 and will be addressed in January with the full Board.

January 2023 Board Meeting

Chris Hamp asked to add the increase to 11 members on the Board to the Agenda. She suggested that the 11th position would be a Class 2 member from the corporate sector.

Kahoot

The Chair thanked Lynette Schaeffer and Melanie Bostwick for their work in creating the questions for Kahoot. This was deployed at the National Session. Sharon Tutrone conducted a tutorial for the Board members and the Chair thanked Sharon for her assistance.

The question was raised how our Granges access the library to use the Kahoot library. There is an annual subscription of \$226 which will enable up to 126 participants at the same time. There is a fee for an individual user of \$49 per year. A credentialed teacher can access for free.

It was suggested that we could create two Kahoot games, one regarding US History and one regarding math. Richard Stonebraker will create a tutorial for using Kahoot for Good Day publication.

If anyone has additional questions, they may be submitted to Lynette Schaeffer.

Other

Marty Bilquist will prepare an article for Good Day magazine. We will also include ¼ page ad for the 1-in-1,000 Club. Also plan to include articles in each *Good Day!* magazine. There is a membership payment installment plan available for the 1-in-1,000 Club.

Monthly contributions are able to be accepted to the Grange Foundation via PayPal.

It was suggested that we include an article at the beginning of the year going back to basics, explaining what the Grange Foundation is, promoting the scholarship program, Kahoot and monthly contributions. We should also highlight the good things the Foundation does, such as Ag in the Classroom. We should create a document showing all the funds within the Foundation and a brief description of each fund.

The Board Chair is planning to discuss the scholarship program and the purpose of the Foundation at the National Grange Fly-In.

It was also discussed to include the Grange Foundation at the Regional Conferences to discuss the scholarship, PCORI and the medical program – R2S2 – Reaching Rural Surgical Seniors.

The Foundation is allotted four pages in each *Good Day!*. The January 2024 issue will contain information about the scholarship.

John Benedik volunteered to write an article – The Grange Foundation Back to Basics and talk about the different funds and various projects for the February issue.

Resolved: The Foundation will include articles in the Good Day magazine. January will include an article about the scholarship and the following issue will feature an article – Back to Basics.

There was discussion that the Board should set a goal to raise \$20,000 in 2024 for various funds. Upon motion duly made and second, the Board set a goal to raise \$20,000.

Resolved: The Board has set a goal to raise \$20,000 for the various funds held by the Foundation.

The Board Chair shared that we received a thank you from Nettie Hartley for our support of the Junior programs. The GF was recognized by the Communication Fellows at the 157th National Session with the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation. This certificate will be scanned and attached to the minutes, shared on our website, and retained as a permanent record.

There was further discussion about creating a short PowerPoint to present at the regional conferences. We would request 15 minutes at the regional conferences to share information about the Foundation. Richard Stonebraker will create a video.

Resolved: A short PowerPoint/video will be created to highlight the Foundation.

John Benedik volunteered to write an article – The Grange Foundation Back to Basics and talk about the different funds and various projects for the February issue.

The Board Chair shared that we include a trifold with every certificate/seal with information about “Planned Giving” preplanning and contributing from IRAs/RMD/Insurance Beneficiary/401K. The trifold will be reviewed at the January 2024 meeting.

Resolved: The Board will review the trifold at the January 2024 meeting.

The chair reviewed the 2024 meeting schedule and times. The current schedule will be on the following Wednesday evenings at 8:00pm Eastern time.

January – 10th

May – 8th

September – 11th

March – 13th

July – 10th

November – Session

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the Board’s business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. ET.

January 10, 2024

8:00 p.m. ET via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Wednesday, January 10th, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. ET, via Zoom virtual meeting. In attendance were Directors: Joan C. Smith, Board Chair; Lynette Schaeffer, Vice Chair; John Benedik, Treasurer; Anna May Nauss, Secretary; Marty Billquist, Richard Stonebraker, Nathan Strawder, and Chris Hamp.

Regrets: Sharon Tutrone and Buddy Overstreet. GF Chair Smith shared that Sharon left Coastal Carolina University and is now with Southern New Hampshire University.

Guests: Amanda Brozana Rios and David Watson, Investment Portfolio Manager

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by GF Chair Smith.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Chair Smith

GUEST SPEAKER

GF Chair Smith introduced David Watson, our Investment Portfolio Manager. David shared information about himself. He is with the Bastion Wealth Group, which is part of Park Avenue Securities. He has been working with the Grange Foundation since October 2019. His goal is to provide the best portfolio management and service and make sure the portfolio is best aligned with our overall objectives.

David reviewed the year-end report, which was prepared January 9, 2024. The overall portfolio totals \$393,936. In the 4th quarter 2023, the portfolio experienced an 8.48% return. The third quarter 2023 was rough and the portfolio experienced a loss of 3.46%. Volatility played a large role in the markets. Since inception, the portfolio has experienced a 3.19% return.

There are four accounts within our portfolio. They are as follows:

XXX019 – medium term – 30% global equity and 70% fixed income/bonds

XXX640 – long term – aggressive – endowment

XXX950 – long term – aggressive – 90% equities/10% fixed

XXX198 – cash account – no fee on this account. Invested in Vanguard funds.

The Foundation initially began with three distinct funds – one for just in case/cash available; the second was for the medium-term – accessible and liquid; the third was long-term and was designed to accept risk to earn greater returns. Subsequently, it was decided to split the endowment portion of the long-term bucket into a separate fund.

David explained that when the GF was building out their portfolio, they utilized the asset allocation model and determined their desired risk level. It was desired to invest to achieve the highest return in line with the desired risk. David monitors and ensures that we are within the parameters of our investment policy.

A question was asked about what are considered non-US Stocks. David explained that they are ETF (Exchange Traded Funds) which are index funds in Europe and the Pacific Rim. There is no direct exposure to Russia, no Russian companies.

David explained the fee structure. The rate of return is reflected net of fees. The Advisory Fee is .90% on an annual basis, which is .225% billed on a quarterly basis on our account balances. There is a .24% annual platform fee which covers custody, clearing and compliance. The total fee on an annual basis is 1.14%. There are no trading fees.

A question was asked if Bitcoin would be part of ETF investments. David responded that there are no plans in the near future to include Bitcoin.

A page-by-page review of the Investment Policy was performed by the GF Board. The 2022 audit was completed, and the report was sent out in December 2023. The Investment Committee will be determined and named later in the meeting. The Investment Policy provides limits for asset classes. A question was raised if we need to express limits for ETFs in our policy. David explained that the ETF is a vehicle used to access an asset class and is the lowest cost vehicle to access. It would increase the cost to the portfolio to limit ETFs. Upon motion duly made and second the Investment Policy was approved with no changes made.

RESOLVED: The Grange Foundation Investment Policy was reviewed and approved by the GF Board on January 10, 2024.

GF Chair Smith appointed the Financial/Investment Committee for a two-year term, consisting of John Benedik, Anna May Nauss and Nathan Strawder.

RESOLVED: The Financial/Investment Committee will consist of John Benedik, Anna May Nauss and Nathan Strawder for a two-year term.

GF Chair Smith reported on "Don't Drop the Ball" New Year's Eve fundraiser. She thanked Amanda for hosting the event. There was \$367 raised during the event. Every fund received a portion of the funds raised. There were a lot of attendees online. It was proposed that we continue the event in 2024. It was discussed that if we continue the event that we try to promote it more to raise more funds. Amanda is willing to host again in 2024.

RESOLVED: The GF Board decided to host the "Don't Drop the Ball" New Year's Eve fundraiser on December 31, 2024. The event will be hosted by Amanda Brozana-Rios, and it will be promoted more to encourage more participants and raise more funds.

GF Chair reported that at the National Session, the Foundation was asked about establishing a new fund in the Foundation for 7th Degree preservation. We received a donation of \$773 towards this initiative. We currently do not have an existing fund. The Foundation does not have a minimum dollar amount required for a new fund. Currently we have 12 funds within the Foundation. At the Board meeting on November 18, 2023, the Board agreed to pursue the fund. Anna May suggested that perhaps John could include this new initiative in his article for Good Day magazine, "Back to Basics." Chris shared that the Assembly is currently working on a plan for the preservation of the 7th Degree in 2024, but larger donations will be necessary.

Amanda shared that the Foundation currently has a fund, American Arts and Culture Fund already which could support such initiatives. This fund is to support initiatives related to "American handicraft and folk art, historical preservation and enactment, cultural displays and performances and other activities that showcase artistic talent, Grange heritage and American historical movements in rural areas." The GF Board decided that this fund could accept any donations for the Preservation of the 7th Degree.

RESOLVED: The GF Board approved the use of the American Arts and Culture Fund to accept donations for the preservation of the 7th Degree.

READING OF THE MINUTES; RATIFICATION

The GF Chair directed the board to the November 18, 2023, meeting minutes. Anna May shared that she sent out a second draft of the minutes reflecting changes she had received and subsequently corrected the spelling of Marty's last name to Billquist.

The minutes for November 18, 2023, were presented with the corrections made. The GF Chair asked for a motion to accept the minutes as final. Upon motion duly made and second, they were unanimously approved and adopted as final.

RESOLVED: To approve as amended the minutes of the November 18, 2023, meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1.) The 2024-2025 Strategic Business Plan – GF Chair Smith postponed review of the Plan. She asked Board members to review the goals as presented currently, and then the Board will review, discuss, and set new goals. GF Chair Smith asked each subcommittee to meet and report at the March Board meeting and present goals for 2024-2025.

Goal 1: Organization – Chair, Chris Hamp, and Joan Smith

Goal 2: Increase members, partners, participation – Chair, Marty Billquist, Anna May Nauss and Richard Stonebraker

Goal 3: Partnerships, Engage and Increase national partnerships – Chairs John Benedik, Buddy Overstreet, and Sharon Tutrone

Goal 4: Communications – Create timely flow of communications to internal and external entities. Public Relations Committee – Chairs Lynette Schaeffer, Nathan Strawder

2.) Digitization/Scanning of Grange History Status – GF Chair Smith reported that the first 24 boxes have been completed. The National Grange office was to receive two jump drives from the vendor, IMR of Pennsylvania, containing information from boxes 6 – 15 but they were either misplaced or never received. There have been several emails with the company IMR,

but it has not been resolved yet. The jump drives were received for boxes 1 and 2; boxes 3 – 5; and boxes 16 – 24. The cost for the digitization was approximately \$27,000.

The next steps are on hold until the issue of the missing jump drives for boxes 6 – 15 is resolved. Once resolved, this could be a doctoral project or for an interested group to take the scanned data and make it useful.

3.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Chair Marty Billquist.

February 21, 2024, will be the annual Zoom meeting for the 1-in-1,000 Club. Amanda noted that this will conflict with the National Grange membership Zoom meeting so the Zoom link for Potomac Grange will need to be used for the 1-in-1,000 Club meeting.

Marty will create an Agenda for the meeting to include:

- a. Scanning and Digitization Report
- b. Next Steps
- c. Strategic Plan Status
- d. Website – testimonies, hosts, interviews, pledges, sponsorships
- e. Solicit ideas for the Club.

4.) Scholarship – Chair Anna May Nauss

Anna May shared that the program was presented to the delegates at the National Grange session in November. The scholarship program was also presented to the youth and juniors at the National Session. Now that the holidays are over, she will send an email to the committee to remind them that they will be serving as the evaluators for the first year.

GF Chair Smith reported that she has written splashes for the Patrons Chain to begin on January 12 through March 1. The criteria and application are on the National Grange and Grange Foundation websites. There will be a full-page article in the January issue of *Good Day!* magazine.

5.) National Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (NAITC) annual request for \$4,300.

The Grange Foundation received a request to sponsor the Partnership in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) award for 2024. This award is presented at breakfast on the last day of the conference. The 2024 NAITC Conference will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah June 24 – 27, 2024. This award is for volunteers that help share agriculture with students. The application was changed two years ago to include groups, so Granges are eligible to apply. It is a \$500 award. The request is for \$4,300 for the following:

Honorarium	\$ 500
Video Production	\$ 800
Plaque	\$ 100
PAL Winner Conference Registration and Travel	\$ 2,100
Administration	\$ 800
Total	\$ 4,300

There was a motion duly made and second to support the Ag in the Classroom for 2024 for \$4,300. GF Chair Smith will notify the National Ag in the Classroom of our decision.

RESOLVED: The Grange Foundation Board will support the Ag in the Classroom Partnership in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) Award for 2024 with a grant of \$4,300.

6.) GF Chair Smith asked if checks received or invoices to be paid are being handled by the National Grange office. Chris Hamp responded that this would continue. Chris requested an invoice or information to support checks written.

7.) Planned Giving Pamphlet Review –

GF Chair Smith shared that we have exhausted our supply of these pamphlets and will need to reprint. They are currently mailed with certificates of membership for 25+ years. Chris suggested that we hold off reprinting the pamphlet until the building sale is finalized so the correct address can be included. It was suggested that we proceed with a refresh of the pamphlet and update the pamphlet, so it is ready to print when we have final information.

It was suggested that this could be included as a goal for 2024-2025 with Goal 4 of the Strategic Business Plan to create a marketing brochure or letter.

RESOLVED: The subcommittee for Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan – Communications – Create Timely Flow of communications to internal and external entities – for 2024-2025 to create a marketing brochure or letter for planned giving.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1.) Proposed establishment of “7th Degree Preservation Fund” – this item was discussed during the Treasurer’s Report.
- 2.) Relook at By-Laws to perhaps increase NGFB to a total of 11 members – this discussion was postponed.
- 3.) Kahoot Tutorial – Richard Stonebraker will write an article for Good Day magazine’s spring issue. The deadline is January 31.

RESOLVED: Richard Stonebraker will write an article for the Good Day! magazine’s spring issue.

4.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Marty Billquist is to write an article for *Good Day!* magazine. Marty reported that he is working on the article and will submit it to Phil Vonada by the end of the month.

5.) GF Back to Basic Article – John Benedik will write an article for the *Good Day!* magazine for the summer issue – July timeframe.

6.) The GF Board set a goal to raise \$20,000 in 2024. The GF Chair has talked with Samantha Wilkins, and they may be willing to conduct a telethon this year.

7.) GF Chair recognized Chris Hamp, National Grange President for her thoughts and comments. Chris will discuss her thoughts about the Foundation at our March meeting.

8.) GF Chair reported that we had received an email on December 6 requesting funds for improvements to a Grange Hall. The Foundation does not provide funds for improvements to buildings, but we will allow funds to run through the Foundation.

9.) Status on the Grange Foundation video – GF Chair reported that she received an email from Sharon Tutrone that she was going to use this project with her students, but we will need to provide the videos. Richard Stonebraker will talk with Sharon Tutrone about this project.

10.) GF Chair Smith shared that Amanda Brozana Rios supports the Foundation as an associate and the Foundation provides her \$25 per hour. She has submitted an invoice for 15 ¾ hours. There was a motion duly made and second to pay the invoice and purchase stamps for thank yous.

RESOLVED: The GF Board has approved the invoice from Amanda Brozana Rios for payment and to purchase postage stamps for thank yous.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The 2024 Schedule will continue to be the 2nd Wednesday every other month at 8:00 p.m. eastern on Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the board's business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:55p.m. ET.

March 13, 2024

8:00 p.m. ET via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Wednesday, March 13th, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. ET, via Zoom virtual meeting. In attendance were Directors: Joan C. Smith, Board Chair; Lynette Schaeffer, Vice Chair; John Benedik, Treasurer; Anna May Nauss, Secretary; Marty Billquist, Richard Stonebraker, Sharon Tutrone, Buddy Overstreet, Nathan Strawder, and Chris Hamp.

Regrets: None

Guests: Amanda Brozana Rios

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by GF Chair Smith.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by GF Chair Smith

TREASURER REPORT

The Board reviewed the 2023 end of year Accounting Report.

A question was raised about the amount of money held in the checking account and why it was not moved to the investment account. It was shared that in December we received the last piece of scholarship endowment, \$20,000 from the Keiser family for the Ernie Keiser Scholarship Fund. These dollars were deposited in the cash account. The first piece of the scholarship endowment was invested in a 5.1% one-year CD with Sun Bank. It was recommended that since the second check has been received, that it will also be invested in a high earning Certificate of Deposit.

A second question was raised whether we have a budget to work from. The Foundation Board does not currently have a budget, because we have not had a stream of funds. Historically, we have received less than \$10,000 per year.

The second piece of the scholarship endowment was deposited on January 10, 2024, in the Foundation Account at Truist Bank.

Treasurer John Benedik will research options to invest the scholarship funds – the \$20,000 currently in a certificate of deposit and the second piece just received in January.

Upon motion duly made and second to deposit the scholarship funds into a high earning certificate of deposit.

RESOLVED: The scholarship endowment funds are to be invested into a high earning certificate of deposit.

READING OF THE MINUTES; RATIFICATION

The GF Chair directed the board to the January 10, 2024, meeting minutes. There were two changes noted:

To change reference to committee members to Directors

Under New Business – The GF Board set a goal to raise \$20,000 in 2024 but not specifically for the Youth and Juniors, but for the Foundation as a whole.

PRESIDENT'S VIEW FOR GRANGE FOUNDATION

President Chris Hamp shared several ideas and presented views for the Grange Foundation as listed below. Chris believes the mantra – Stronger tomorrow than we are today.

Get Excited! Show Passion!

Deciding the Grange Foundation is important and doing more than showing up for Board meetings.

1. GROW

- Set Goals – what are we doing in 2024? Increase dollars in the Foundation and the number of donors.
- Ensure Foundation is attractive to outside givers (primarily private) – decide if we will continue to be a private foundation or work to secure more external donors.
- Legacy Gifts / Perpetual Gifts – how do we get folks to donate to the Foundation?
- Endowment Fund?
- Donors – work to find more donors. Find niches of donors – GROW Club and past delegates. Also work to secure outside donors.
- 1-in-1,000 Members – use as Ambassadors

- Add challenge/s to GIVE MONEY AWAY
 - Additional Levels of Giving?
 - Increase Recognition – be sure the donors feel thanked.
2. ASSIST
 - Requirements for other Grange 501c3 entities – reach out our hand as the National Grange Foundation to assist other 501c3 Grange organizations and possibly non-Grange entities.
 - Share Wins, Lessons Learned
 3. PARTNER
 - with other Foundations, Organizations
 - FFA
 - AITC (Ag in the Classroom)
 - GOTV (Get Out the Vote)
 - American Legion Girls State / Boys State
 4. RESET
 - Purpose (63 years old) – what is our purpose? Does it need updated?
 - Budget – we need to have a budget to understand what we are spending and why.
 - Annual Report – this should be prepared and sent to our current donors and also be provided to possible donors.
 - Website – look at the website and documents to be sure they are current. Also develop a uniform look for the National Grange Foundation.
 - On-Boarding Process
 - Policies – review our policies. Are there other policies needed? What are the best practices? We should have policies regarding pass-throughs and thank yous.
 - Bylaws
 - Board Membership (unlimited terms?)
 - Executive Director – once we have things rolling, possibly look at hiring an Executive Director. Currently, according to the By-Laws, the President of the National Grange serves as the Executive Director.

There was discussion that an attempt had been made to hire an Executive Director in the past, but it was very difficult as the Grange in total is broad based. It is difficult to hone in on donors. We do not have a central project.

John asked if Chris could send her notes out to the Directors and each Director prioritize the items. Results will then be compiled and discussed at another meeting, other than a regular Foundation Board meeting. It was decided that Chris will send the notes to the Directors, who will prioritize by April 1. Lynette Schaeffer volunteered to collect the responses. Responses should be sent to her at Ischaeffr@gmail.com. A meeting to review the priorities was set for April 9, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. eastern time.

***RESOLVED:** National Grange President Chris Hamp will send her notes to Directors, who will prioritize items and return their responses to Lynette Schaeffer by April 1, 2024. A follow-up meeting will be held on April 9, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. eastern.*

There was discussion about policies that currently exist. Richard Stonebraker will send the policies received as a new Director to Amanda Brozana-Rios.

***RESOLVED:** Director Richard Stonebraker will forward current GF policies to Amanda Brozana Rios.*

OLD BUSINESS

1.) Digitization/Scanning of Grange History Status –

Lynette Schaeffer provided an update that the missing drives have been found during the move of the National Grange office. But they also discovered that some items that were thought to have been digitized were not. The National Grange is currently in possession of everything that has been scanned.

2.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Chair Marty Billquist.

The annual zoom meeting for the 1-in-1,000 Club was held on February 21, 2024. At that meeting, they welcomed new members to the Club – Cindy and Harry Greer and Emily Culver. At the meeting they discussed what was to be digitized next and what had already been done.

Other items discussed were:

creating a brochure for the 1-in-1,000 Club that could be sent out electronically.

Marty asked National President Chris Hamp and Amanda Brozana Rios to provide a list of past delegates from the last 15 years and past GROW Club members from the last 15 years. Marty plans to write a personal invitation to these individuals to join the 1-in-1,000 Club. A challenge was issued to each 1-in-1,000 Club member to bring in two new members.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2024.

There was discussion about a procedural question – when a 1-in-1,000 member passes away, what is the policy regarding how long until we approach the surviving spouse about joining the Club? Currently, when a member passes away, their number remains assigned to that individual. The surviving spouse needs to pay \$1,000 and receive their own number. It was felt that once they reach the 1,000 members, then they may need to reassign numbers of members who have passed away. A question was raised if we should permit the surviving spouse of the deceased member to keep the number of the deceased member.

Chris Hamp noted that the website needs updated for the 1-in-1,000 Club.

The 1-in-1,000 Club is also sponsoring a Zoom meeting on long term care and estate planning on April 10 for Grange month at 8:30 p.m. by Griffin and Griffin law firm.

3.) Scholarship – Chair Anna May Nauss

Anna May shared that the committee is gearing up as the applications have been received. There were 18 scholarship applications received and completed in full. The applications have been placed in a Google drive for committee members to access. Each committee member will review and rank their top eight. We will meet as a committee to discuss and make our decision

As a post meeting note, applications were received from eleven states as follows:

California 2	Montana 1	Rhode Island 1
Delaware 1	New York 1	Virginia 1
Maryland 1	North Carolina 2	Washington 3
Massachusetts 1	Pennsylvania 4	

4.) National Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (NAITC) annual request for \$4,300.

This has been paid for in full. The 2024 NAITC Conference will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah June 24 – 27, 2024. The award presentation is Thursday, June 26 at the National Grange and Volunteer Breakfast. Mark Gibbons, President of Potomac Grange, is attending the Ag in the Classroom Conference in Texas. The NAITC Conference requires everyone to pay the registration fee of \$500.00. It was discussed that there are some Grange members attending this conference who would be willing to present the award. These members would be Chris Szkutak from Massachusetts and Willie Grenier from Maine. It was suggested that we clarify with NAITC that if we are only attending to present the award, must we pay the registration fee. There was a motion duly made and second that we ask Chris or Willie to present the Foundation award. GF Chair Smith has a meeting scheduled with Chris and Willie on April 23 and will ask them to present the award.

***RESOLVED:** The Grange Foundation Board will ask Chris Szkutak or Willie Grenier to represent the Grange Foundation Board and present the Partnership in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) Award for 2024.*

NEW BUSINESS

1.) Relook at By-Laws to perhaps increase NGFB to a total of 11 members – it was discussed to add this to the By-Laws update on the Reset section of President Chris Hamp's notes.

***RESOLVED:** The relook at the By-Laws to increase the NGFB to a total of 11 members will be added to the By-Laws update on the Reset section of President Chris Hamp's notes.*

2.) Kahoot Tutorial – per Amanda Brozana Rios, this article will need to be held as the *Good Day!* magazine issues are full. GF Chair Smith thanked Lynette Schaeffer and Melanie Bostwick for their work on compiling the questions for Kahoot.

3.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Marty Billquist is to write an article for *Good Day!* magazine. Marty reported that he is talking with Phil Vonada, and they are in discussion phase for possible placement in the Spring issue.

4.) GF Back to Basics Article – John Benedik will write an article for the *Good Day!* magazine for the summer issue. John will use the priorities we determine from our review of President Chris Hamp's notes as part of the article.

5.) The GF Board set a goal to raise \$20,000 in 2024 and the question posed to the Directors was how are we going to raise \$20,000? There was a suggestion for a possible Telethon. Amanda Brozana Rios noted that the directors who conducted the previous telethons are not currently in place. It was further discussed that our goal should be set to cover expenses. President Chris Hamp will review the expense the Foundation Board pays for accounting services.

A question was raised if any of the fees from the R2S2, ACP and Vaccination programs are passing to the Foundation.

6.) Status on the Grange Foundation video – Sharon Tutrone has volunteered to work with Richard Stonebraker to create a video about the Grange Foundation.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The 2024 Schedule will continue to be the 2nd Wednesday every other month at 8:00 p.m. eastern on Zoom.

Upcoming meetings

April 4 Scholarship Committee meeting

April 9 Priorities meeting

Chris will research the Ag on the Mall in Washington, D.C. to see if viable for 2025.

Amanda Brozana-Rios shared that there had been some discussion about a Grange Learning Center and Museum. John Benedik is the newest 1-in-1,000 Club member.

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the board's business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:05 p.m. ET.

April 30, 2024

8:00 p.m. ET via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A special meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Tuesday, April 30th, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. ET, via Zoom virtual meeting. In attendance were Directors: Joan C. Smith, Board Chair; Lynette Schaeffer, Vice Chair; John Benedik, Treasurer; Anna May Nauss, Secretary; Richard Stonebraker, Nathan Strawder, and Chris Hamp.

Regrets: Buddy Overstreet and Marty Billquist

Guests: Amanda Brozana Rios

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by GF Chair Smith.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by GF Chair Smith.

The purpose of this special meeting is to discuss the proposed changes to the By-Laws, the proposed budget, fundraising ideas, a general discussion about the Foundation – what's our why, what's our "elevator speech" to explain the foundation, and a vacancy on the Board as Sharon Tutrone has resigned effective immediately.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

1.) GF Chair Smith reported that Sharon Tutrone, a corporate representative, has resigned effective immediately.

2.) GF Chair Smith turned the meeting over to Lynette Schaeffer to facilitate the discussion.

3.) Richard Stonebraker, chairperson of the By-Laws subcommittee discussed the proposed by-laws. The subcommittee was Richard Stonebraker, Anna May Nauss and Lynette Schaeffer. They met on April 16. The proposed by-laws were sent via email to the Board. The subcommittee reviewed the October 22, 2021 document and proposed changes to move into 2024.

Chris Hamp asked about the change from Corporation to Foundation as all Foundations are Corporations but not all Corporations are Foundations.

A question was raised if we have filed the necessary paperwork in all states for the Foundation to operate and what states do we need to file paperwork? There is a universal registration service which will file in any states required for soliciting. Each state has different requirements. The National Grange is a 501(c)(5) organization, and the Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Any state we solicit in and because we do it online, we should be in all states. It was discussed to research the fee for the universal registration service.

The proposed changes to the by-laws were reviewed. It was suggested we have a legal review and since the Foundation uses the same attorney as the National Grange, Chris will check with him for his review.

It was discussed that to change the name from Grange Foundation to National Grange Foundation it would require a new filing as a 501(c)(3).

Article VII, Section 7 of the by-laws – Term of Office – proposed to change from two-year term to a one-year term.

Article XIII – Indemnification and Exculpation – it was discussed to add Directors and Officers insurance and bonding insurance to the following statement:

The Foundation shall have the power to purchase and maintain liability insurance, Directors and Officers insurance, bonding insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Foundation or who, while a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Foundation, is or was serving any entity at the request of the Foundation, against any liability asserted against and incurred by such person in any such capacity or arising out of such person's position, to the extent the Foundation would have the power to indemnify him or her against such liability under the Act.

4.) John Benedik reported for the Budget subcommittee. The members of the subcommittee were John Benedik, Nathan Strawder, Joan Smith, Buddy Overstreet, Chris Hamp, and Amanda Brozana. They met on April 18.

John reported that they are still collecting information for the budget, but the subcommittee pivoted from budget to fundraising.

The subcommittee had discussed if the Foundation could host the banquet on Saturday evening at National Grange session. It would revise the Celebration Banquet to banquet hosted by the Foundation. If the Foundation hosted the banquet, it would become a Foundation event with the ability to work towards donations to the Foundation and we could market the Foundation.

It was discussed that we need a way to build awareness of the Foundation. The Saturday evening banquet could be rebranded as the Foundation Celebration Banquet which would include an auction of items, have pledge cards at each seat, collect memberships in the 1-in-1,000 Club, sell candy in the hospitality room at 2024 session, create a QR code for donations directly to the Foundation, and generate a video highlighting the work of the Foundation. It was discussed that at this point for the 2024 session, information has already been printed and distributed, but that we would review for 2026.

It was then discussed that at the 2024 Celebration Banquet we would distribute 1-in-1,000 pamphlets and pledge cards. We will plan to have the Foundation auction at the banquet again this year.

***RESOLVED:** Review the possibility of rebranding the Saturday evening Celebration Banquet as the Foundation Celebration Banquet to highlight the Foundation.*

5.) The May 8 meeting was changed to May 15.

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the board's business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:20p.m. ET.

May 21, 2024

7:30 p.m. ET via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Tuesday, May 21st, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. ET, via Zoom virtual meeting. In attendance were Directors: Joan C. Smith, Board Chair; Lynette Schaeffer, Vice Chair; John Benedik, Treasurer; Anna May Nauss, Secretary; Marty Billquist, and Chris Hamp.

Regrets: Richard Stonebraker, Buddy Overstreet, Nathan Strawder

Guests: Amanda Brozana Rios

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by GF Chair Smith.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by GF Chair Smith

TREASURER REPORT

The Board reviewed the Grange Foundation Investment Report. It was shared that investments are improving. We received a second contribution to the Ernie Keiser Memorial Scholarship Fund in the amount of \$20,000. We have invested \$39,000 in a CD with Truist Bank earning 4.6% for 10 months.

The Grange Foundation's Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance policy is up for renewal. Chris Hamp sent a quote from our current vendor, Chubb, and a quote from another agency. Chris noted that we also pay for bonding to Main Street and questioned whether that is needed if we have Directors and Officers. There were several questions raised:

Is there a need for the Foundation to carry liability insurance?

What would the liability insurance cover?

Does the D&O insurance cover professional liability, in the event incorrect information is shared with someone?

READING OF THE MINUTES; RATIFICATION

The GF Chair directed the board to the January 10, 2024, meeting minutes. The minutes from January 10, 2024, are final and ready to be presented in the Journal of Proceedings.

The GF Chair directed the board to the March 13, 2024, draft minutes. Upon motion duly made and second to adopt the minutes, motion carried.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes from the January 10, 2024, meeting and the March 13, 2024, meetings as final.

The GF Chair noted the two special meetings held by the sub-committees for Budget and By-Laws. Upon motion duly made and second to adopt the minutes from the special committee meetings but not include them in the Journal of Proceedings; motion carried.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes from the special meetings of the Budget and By-Laws Committee and not include them in the Journal of Proceedings.

OLD BUSINESS

1.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Chair Marty Billquist.

Marty shared that he has been waiting on the list of past delegates and past officers. It was reported that Phil Vonada is working on compiling the list. Once Marty receives the list, he will send out personal letters. The second zoom meeting of the 1-in-1,000 Club is scheduled for August 28, 2024.

2.) Scholarship – Chair Anna May Nauss

Anna May reported that the Scholarship Committee received 18 complete application packages for the Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship by the deadline of March 1, 2024. Applications were received from 11 states – California (2), Delaware (1), Maryland (1), Massachusetts (1), Montana (1), New York (1), North Carolina (2), Pennsylvania (4), Rhode Island (1), Virginia (1), and Washington (3).

The Committee reviewed the applications and met on April 4, 2024, to select the recipient of the 2024 Scholarship. The applicant chosen was Asheton Medlin of North Carolina, a student at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill with a major in Biology.

A few notes about the applications:

11 states were represented; there was a good cross section of ages; there was a good cross section of courses of study; there was a good cross section of programs – certificate, vocational, undergraduate, and graduate.

At our meeting on April 4, 2024, we briefly discussed the program and decided to narrow the essay choices from five to three prompts:

How will the furtherance of my education help the Grange or my community?

What does Grange membership mean to you?

How has the Grange helped to develop me as a person/leader?

We also brainstormed how to grow the scholarship fund. Some suggestions were to contact the accounting firm where Ernie worked for possible donations.

The Committee met again on April 24, 2024, to review the requirements and application. No changes were made to the application other than the reduction in essay prompts.

A few changes to the requirements:

A. We maintained the deadline of March 1, but moved the decision date to April 30 to allow a little more time for the committee to review.

B. We added that to ensure the application package is complete that we will accept recommendation letters electronically in a PDF format, if the teacher/guidance counselor/mentor desires to send it separately. It must be received by the deadline of March 1.

C. Per a suggestion from Phil Vonada, we added to include a current headshot with the application for publicity purposes.

D. We set up a separate email address for the applicants to send their applications – NGFScholarship@Grange.org. This will allow the scholarship applications to come to a separate email.

E. Applications may be mailed to National Grange Foundation Board, Ernestine Keiser Memorial Scholarship, c/o Anna May Nauss, 10 W. Schoolside Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055.

We also discussed how many scholarships we wanted to award in 2025 and determined we would remain at one scholarship for \$1,000 to allow the fund to grow to be perpetual.

A special thank you to the friends and family of Ernie Keiser who sent an additional \$20,000 to the fund for a total of \$40,000.

It was suggested that the application include a release to use the photograph. Amanda offered to send the language to be included.

3.) National Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (NAITC) annual request for \$4,300.

The Grange Foundation is the sponsor of the "Partnership in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) Award. The 2024 NAITC Conference will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah June 24 – 27, 2024. The award will be presented on Thursday, June 27 by Chris Szkutak, Vice President of Massachusetts State Grange and Chair of the Eastern Region. Potomac Grange is currently reviewing their participation in the Ag in the Classroom program.

4.) Kahoot Tutorial – Richard has written the article, and it will be included in the new bi-monthly publication – Grange Today.

5.) 1-in-1,000 Club article – the article about Marty's family for the Good Day magazine is currently on hold.

6.) Back to Basics article – to be written by John Benedik – there is no update. John will try for the summer issue, which information is needed by May 30. Amanda volunteered to assist with the article.

7.) The goal of raising \$20,000 in 2024 – will be discussed with fundraising and budget.

8.) Grange Foundation video status – Richard Stonebraker and his ag class will work on this project.

NEW BUSINESS

1.) New Publication – Grange Today – this will replace the Patron's Chain. The first publication each month will focus on Local/State, and they will be looking for articles highlighting what Granges are doing and want to share more than calendar of events. The second publication each month will focus on National Grange.

2.) American National Standards Institute (ANSI) – GF Chair Smith has served as a member of the Institute on behalf of the National Grange. They would like to do an article in conjunction with Cleo Stamatatos, Consumer and Legislative Outreach Manager of ANSI on Chair Smith's/National Grange's participation on the development of the beach umbrella standard.

3.) Our next meeting will be July 10 beginning at 7:30 p.m. with Vice Chair Lynette Schaeffer leading the meeting.

4.) Fundraising – Amanda shared that there is a free webinar on Thursday, June 20 which reviews the registrations required by each state for our fundraising.

There was discussion about the online auction held in advance of the 150th anniversary through 32 Auctions which was quite successful.

There was a proposal by Amanda to hold an online auction to benefit the Grange Foundation this year. They have been able to secure several items already – a private tour and suites at a Spurs game, tours of wine country, Waterford crystal clock, a guided hunt, and a quilt. We would begin advertising beginning now with the state conventions, open the auction at the National Grange convention and close the auction on December 4, the birthday of the National Grange. Amanda is willing to orchestrate the auction. The auction company recommends up to 100 items. Text notifications are available and four images per item for a cost of \$150.00. Marty Billquist recommended an equal mix of large and small items and suggested a maximum of 50 items.

It was discussed and decided to proceed with the option of four images per item, no 3rd party ads and text notifications at a cost of \$150.00. Marty Billquist offered to pay the \$150 fee for the auction. Every Board member is to donate an item for the auction. President Chris Hamp asked Amanda to compile a list of potential items and send it to the Board. Amanda is volunteering her time to organize the auction.

Upon motion duly made and second to allow Amanda to organize an auction for 2024 to benefit the Grange Foundation; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The Grange Foundation Board authorized Amanda to organize an online auction for 2024 to benefit the Foundation.

RESOLVED: Each Grange Foundation Board member is to donate an item for the auction.

5.) Review of the Grange Foundation By-Laws – the revised By-Laws were sent to the Board for review after consideration at our meeting on April 30. There was a suggestion that under Officers, the language be consistent that officers should be Grange members and on the Board. Upon motion duly made and second to make the language consistent for the officers and state that they be a member of the Grange and on the Board to be an officer; motion carried.

RESOLVED: Article VII – Officers – that language be consistent and state that the Officer must be a member of the Grange and the Board to hold this office.

There was a question to validate that under Article VII – Officers – Section 7 – officers are elected for a term of one year.

There was a suggestion to change the Investment/Audit Committee to the Investment/Finance Committee and add an Audit Committee. The audit committee would be more involved in the front end of the audit and review the audit report in the Fall.

Upon motion duly made and second to the modify the list of Standing Committees (Article VIII, Section 2) to state Executive Committee, Compliance/Organization Committee, Investment/Finance Committee, Audit Committee and Scholarship Committee; motion carried.

RESOLVED: Anna May Nauss will notify Richard Stonebraker of the changes approved at tonight's meeting for incorporation in the By-Laws.

Upon motion duly made and second to accept the By-Laws as revised; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The ByLaws as proposed and revised were accepted by the GF Board.

6.) Budget Sub-Committee report presented by John Benedik. John reviewed the Summary of Income and Expenses. John will forecast a 2024 budget for our July Board meeting and then begin a forecast for 2025.

It was noted that the Kelley Farm fund is now closed.

The interest earned on the Scholarship Fund will be included with the Scholarship Fund.

There was discussion about combining some of the funds. The Kelley Farm Fund is closed, the Building Fund is closed due to the sale of the building, and the Youth Exchange Fund is closed.

Under Expenses, Accounting Fees are \$500 per month with no current action to change anything. Professional Fees will be broken out into more detail.

***RESOLVED:** Budget Sub-Committee Chair John Benedik will forecast a 2024 budget for our July Board meeting and then begin a forecast for 2025.*

7.) Budget Sub-Committee also reported on Fundraising. It was suggested that perhaps the Foundation could sell candy in the Hospitality Room at the National Grange Convention. John will secure more information for the July meeting.

***RESOLVED:** Budget Sub-Committee Chair John Benedik will secure more information about selling candy in the Hospitality Room for our July meeting.*

It was also suggested that the Krispy Kreme promotion is still available if there would be a Krispy Kreme close to the convention site.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The 2024 Schedule will continue to be the 2nd Wednesday every other month at 7:30 p.m. eastern on Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the board's business, the GF Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:24 p.m. ET.

July 10, 2024

7:30 p.m. ET via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Wednesday, July 10th, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. ET, via Zoom virtual meeting. In attendance were Directors: Lynette Schaeffer, Vice Chair; John Benedik, Treasurer; Anna May Nauss, Secretary; Marty Billquist, Nathan Strawder, Richard Stonebraker, and Chris Hamp.

Regrets: Joan Smith, Buddy Overstreet

Guests: Amanda Brozana

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by GF Vice Chair Schaeffer.

FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by GF Vice Chair Schaeffer

TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer John Benedik is continuing to work on the Budget and will plan to present at the September Board meeting. John shared that he had a conversation with President Chris Hamp and believes he should present more detailed information to the Board, including what funds were received and what was spent.

May 2024 – Funds received were \$3,616.58

1 in 1000	\$1,000.00
Youth Fund	\$ 569.00
Junior Fund	\$ 569.00
Communication Fellows	\$ 48.00
Community & Leadership	\$1,330.58
General	\$ 100.00
TOTAL	\$3,616.58

June 2024 – Funds received were \$117.50

General Fund	\$ 107.50
Kelley Farm	\$ 10.00
TOTAL	\$ 117.50

John raised a question regarding contributions to the Kelley Farm since it is no longer a separate fund under the Foundation. Amanda Brozana shared that when she sends the acknowledgement letter, she states that the Kelley Farm is a separate entity under the Minnesota Historical Society so future payments should be sent directly to the Historical Society.

As a post note to our meeting on July 10, I followed up with Amanda and the \$10.00 is remaining in the Foundation account. The Board will need to decide if they want to continue to keep it and add it to one of the funds or the general fund, or if we want to do a sweep periodically and send it to the Minnesota Historical Society.

The new 1-in-1,000 member is Margaret Ohlsen, Washington, mother of President Chris Hamp.

The Board reviewed the Grange Foundation Investment Report. For May 2024, our overall return was 2.47%. The GF D&O insurance policy and liability policy are in effect. There are two separate policies and Chris will forward the policies to the Board. We are on a payment plan and policies are in effect until June 8, 2025.

John requested the Portfolio Snapshot from Park Avenue Securities which reflects the total portfolio summary. The last one received was dated May 2, 2024, for the period of January 1, 2024 – May 2, 2024.

Motion by Anna May Nauss to accept the Treasurer's Report, second by Chris Hamp; motion carried.

***RESOLVED:** To approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.*

READING OF THE MINUTES; RATIFICATION

The GF Vice Chair directed the board to the May 21, 2024, meeting minutes. Motion by Marty Billquist to approve the minutes as distributed as final, second by John Benedik; motion carried.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes from the May 21, 2024, meeting as final.

OLD BUSINESS

1.) 1-in-1,000 Club – Chair Marty Billquist

Marty reported that he is working on the list that was sent to him to send personal invitations to past and present delegates about the 1-in-1,000 Club. He will mail the invitations by the end of July. It was discussed and decided to change the name of the Club to the 1-in-1,000 Club.

The second zoom meeting of the 1-in-1,000 Club is scheduled for August 28, 2024, and zoom details are included in the zoom invitation for tonight's meeting. Chris asked what the program content would be for the meeting. It was suggested to begin with the article John wrote for the Good Day magazine on the Basics of the Foundation and brainstorm how we continue to grow the funds; how do we increase participation in the 1 in 1000 Club; how the Foundation can help the Grange. Chris will run reports to reflect what has come in for the various funds this year.

A question was raised whether a brochure could be produced to distribute to State Grange Presidents and Secretaries to distribute at their State Sessions in delegate packages to explain the 1-in-1,000 Club and how they can become a member. Amanda and Marty will create a brochure.

RESOLVED: Amanda Brozana and Marty Billquist will create a brochure to explain the 1-in-1,000 Club to be distributed to State Grange Presidents and Secretaries to distribute at State Sessions.

2.) Scholarship – Chair Anna May Nauss

Anna May reported that the check has been issued to the school for the recipient of the 2024 scholarship.

The information for the 2025 Scholarship has been sent to Stephanie at the National Grange office to post on the website. A question was raised if a Thank You had been sent to Jimmy Taylor and Helen Fortner and to the 2024 applicants. Amanda has sent a Thank you to Jimmy and Helen and will send thank yous to the 2024 applicants.

A question was raised if additional funds would be accepted into the Ernie Keiser Memorial Scholarship Fund and yes, additional funds will be accepted.

3.) National Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (NAITC) annual request for \$4,300.

The Grange Foundation is the sponsor of the "Partnership in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) Award. The award was presented on Thursday, June 27 by Chris Szkutak, Vice President of Massachusetts State Grange, and Chair of the NAITC Eastern Region. A question was raised if we could receive a report on the conference from Chris Szkutak and also request a photo of the presentation to include in *Good Day!* magazine. Amanda will check with Phil Vonada if a photo has been received.

There was a question by the Board if this expenditure of \$4,300 is a good investment? Lynette will send Chris Szkutak a note to request a report from the conference. Also, Mark Gibbons, who represented Potomac Grange, will be contacted for his thoughts on the conference.

RESOLVED: Lynette will contact Chris Szkutak to request a report from the NAITC conference.

4.) Kahoot Tutorial –

Richard has written the article and submitted it to Phil Vonada a couple of months ago and is just waiting for it to run. Richard also created a logo picture for Kahoot. Richard suggested that we continue to add questions to Kahoot to keep it fresh. Richard is able to determine how many people have logged in to our Kahoot and have used it.

5.) 1-in-1000 Club article –

The article about Marty's family for the Good Day magazine is currently on hold. Marty will try to complete it for the Fall issue.

6.) Back to Basic article – written by John Benedik –

Ran in the summer issue. Board members commented that the article was very good and provided a great explanation of the Foundation's funds.

7.) 2024 Grange Foundation Auction –

Amanda requested each Board member to donate an item for the auction and to let her know what is being donated. Amanda is developing a form for donors to complete detailing information about the item being donated and market price. Amanda will begin to place items online once she receives information. A mix of items is needed at different price points. Amanda is asking donors to hold their items and then ship them to the recipients. The goal is to have 50 items on the auction. The kick-off date will be at the National Grange Convention with an end date of December 4. There was a suggestion to prepare a package of old Grange memorabilia to include in the auction.

RESOLVED: Each Board member is to donate at least one item for the 2024 auction and notify Amanda to inform her what is being donated.

8.) Grange Foundation video status –

Richard Stonebraker reported that this is a work in progress. A question was raised about the intention of the video. It was discussed at our November 18, 2023, meeting to create a video about the Foundation. It was decided to table this project until we have better direction and discuss it at our September 2024 meeting. There was a suggestion to possibly highlight various components of the Foundation.

RESOLVED: The video project is tabled for further discussion at our September 2024 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1.) Chris Hamp suggested that the Foundation create and play catch-up in recognizing past directors of the Foundation. She suggested creating a Past Grange Foundation director pin to thank those who have served as a director on the Foundation Board. The plan would be at the regular meeting of the Foundation in November, that past directors would be recognized at this time and presented with the pin if they were in attendance. They will determine the number of past directors and add for the future in ordering the pins. Motion by Marty Billquist to develop a pin to recognize past members of the Grange Foundation Board to be distributed at National Grange Session, second by Richard Stonebraker; motion carried.

Chris and Amanda will work on designing the pin and send the designs to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: Chris and Amanda will design a pin to be produced to recognize past members of the Grange Foundation Board to be presented at the National Grange Session in November 2024.

- 2.) American National Standards Institute (ANSI) – GF Chair Smith has served as a member of the Institute on behalf of the National Grange. They would like to do an article in conjunction with Cleo Stamatatos, Consumer and Legislative Outreach Manager of ANSI on Chair Smith's/National Grange's participation on the development of the beach umbrella standard.

Discussion was passed on this issue as it is not a Foundation project.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- 1.) The 2024 Schedule will continue to be the 2nd Wednesday every other month, beginning with January, at 7:30 p.m. eastern on Zoom. It was discussed that 7:30 p.m. will be the regular start time.

RESOLVED: The regular meetings of the Foundation Board will be on the 2nd Wednesday every other month beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Foundation Board will be September 11, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

- 2.) Chris Hamp shared that when elected as President of the National Grange, she also became President of the Grange Foundation and President of the Advocacy Group. Over the past seven months she has realized that members of these groups do not have a clear picture of the other groups, and we are missing the opportunity to interact and assist each other. Chris is proposing a three-board retreat in person, in late January (after the inauguration), in Washington, D.C. There would be an agenda with some learning, some fun and building connections. It was discussed that the National Grange Executive Committee overlaps as members of the other two groups. With spouses/guests, there would be approximately 25 people attending.

Motion by Anna May Nauss to support the concept of the offsite retreat for the three boards, second by Marty Billquist; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The Foundation Board supports the concept of a three-board offsite retreat in Washington, D.C. in late January 2025.

- 3.) The Foundation Board received an invoice from Amanda Brozana for 2nd Quarter 2024 work for the Board. There were 18.75 hours billed for \$468.75. The invoice also included a reference note of unbilled 13.5 hours.

Motion by Marty Billquist to authorize Chris Hamp to pay the invoice from Amanda for time spent on Foundation matters, second by Richard Stonebraker; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The Foundation authorizes Chris Hamp to pay the invoice from Amanda for time spent on Foundation matters for 2nd Quarter 2024 in the amount of \$468.75.

- 4.) John Benedik reported on the request received from the Massachusetts State Grange regarding digitization of their records and utilizing the Foundation as a pass-through for funds received towards this project. The donations would be collected through the Foundation and then forwarded to the Massachusetts State Grange Secretary. The Foundation collects an administrative fee of 2.5%. If a local, county or State Grange wishes to utilize the Foundation as a pass-through, they must apply to the Foundation for approval of the project. If approved by the Foundation, donations are received, the Foundation sends an acknowledgement and then forwards the donations received monthly less the 2.5% administrative fee. There was discussion that there should be an agreement signed by both the Grange requesting the pass through and the Foundation acknowledging the approval of the pass through, the administrative fee, so both parties are aware of the agreement. It was suggested that we should send the funds electronically. John will draft an agreement and forward it to the Board for review.

Motion by Richard Stonebraker to move forward and approve the request from the Massachusetts State Grange and move forward with an agreement that will be signed acknowledging the administrative fee, when payments will be sent and that payments will be sent electronically, second by John Benedik; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The Foundation approved the request from Massachusetts State Grange to utilize the Foundation as a pass-through for contributions towards their digitization project.

RESOLVED: John Benedik will create an agreement that will be signed acknowledging the administrative fee, when payments will be sent, and that payments will be sent electronically. The agreement will be signed by the Grange requesting the pass-through and signed by officer of the Foundation.

- 5.) John Benedik raised a question if we need to advertise the upcoming election of Foundation Board members. It will be published in the 2nd issue of Grange Today in August. The Class 1 positions of Joan Smith and Marty Billquist are up for election at this year's National Session.
- 6.) It was noted that Sharon Tutrone should be removed from any Foundation email lists.

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the board's business, the GF Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m. ET.

September 11, 2024

7:30 p.m. ET via Zoom

WELCOME; CALL TO ORDER; CALL OF THE ROLL

A meeting of the National Grange Foundation Board (GF) was held on Wednesday, September 11th, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. ET, via Zoom virtual meeting. In attendance were Directors: Lynette Schaeffer, Vice Chair; John Benedik, Treasurer; Anna May Nauss, Secretary; Marty Billquist, Nathan Strawder, and Chris Hamp.

Regrets: Joan Smith, Buddy Overstreet, Richard Stonebraker

Guests: Amanda Brozana

A roll was completed, and a quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by GF Vice Chair Schaeffer.

READING OF THE MINUTES; RATIFICATION

The GF Vice Chair directed the board to the April 30, 2024, special meeting minutes. It was noted that the by-laws reviewed by the subcommittee were from October 22, 2021; also the Budget subcommittee suggestion to review the Saturday evening banquet to be rebranded as the Foundation Celebration Banquet would need to be reviewed for 2026 as the 2025 National Grange session is the cruise and there will be no planned banquets. Motion by John Benedik to approve the minutes as final with the corrections noted, second by Chris Hamp; motion carried.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes as corrected from the special meeting held April 30, 2024, as final.

The GF Vice Chair directed the board to the July 10, 2024, meeting minutes. Motion by John Benedik to approve the minutes as distributed as final, second by Nathan Strawder; motion carried.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes from the July 10, 2024, meeting as final.

TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer John Benedik reported that he is continuing to work on the Budget and wants to get final numbers at the end of the 3rd Quarter, September 30th to build the budget. He plans to review with Chris Hamp and present at our meeting in November.

July 2024 – Funds received were \$ -0-

August 2024 – Funds received were \$175.00

Junior Fund	\$ 25.00
Grange Foundation	\$ 100.00
Kelley Farm	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 175.00

John also reported that the Foundation has received donations through PayPal.

For July 2024	\$70.00	net of fees	\$66.35
For August 2024	\$50.00	net of fees	\$47.53

YTD donations received through PayPal:

\$564.67
\$ (24.00) Fees
\$540.67

In 2023, we received over \$1,600.00 in donations.

Our investments yielded a return of 2.55% for the past quarter; YTD we have realized a return of 11.16% as of August 31, 2024. Our portfolio total is \$437,924.

Motion by Anna May Nauss to accept the Treasurer's Report, second by Nathan Strawder; motion carried.

RESOLVED: To approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.

The Foundation received an invoice from Amanda Brozana for July 2024 in the amount of \$143.75 for 5.75 hours at \$25.00 per hour and unbilled 7.25 hours.

Motion by John Benedik to approve the invoice, second by Marty Billquist; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The Foundation authorizes Chris Hamp to pay the invoice from Amanda Brozana for time spent on Foundation matters for July 2024 in the amount of \$143.75.

Chris Hamp reported that she received the first two bills from Dembo Jones for auditing work for the Foundation for July and August 2024 in the amount of \$5,000.00. Chris has paid these invoices to avoid any fees.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1.) Reviewed the August 11, 2024, email which outlined the deliverables from our July 10 meeting.

a. GF Auction Update – Amanda provided an update. She raised a question if we were planning to hold a live auction at the National Grange Session Saturday evening banquet plus the online auction. The Board confirmed that they were planning to continue the live auction at the National Grange session.

For the online auction, Board members are asked to donate at least one item. A donor form should be completed with a description of the item, the market value and beginning bid. Amanda shared that she has several handicraft items but would like to include more “experience” items. Amanda wants to begin posting items by October 1.

For the auction at the National Grange session, Amanda does not currently have any items. Chris suggested that Amanda check with Cindy Greer about the quilt that was donated to determine if it is for the online auction or the live auction at the National Grange session.

RESOLVED: Each Grange Foundation Board member is encouraged to donate at least one item for the online auction and provide information to Amanda prior to October 1, 2024.

b. NAITC Report

Lynette Schaeffer received responses from Chris Szkutak and Mark Gibbons. Chris feels it is very worthwhile. Mark shared that he is not sure we are getting the bang for our buck. He recommended that we sponsor it one more time and see if we feel we are getting our money's worth. It was shared that the recipient does not actually receive a cash award, but the funds are used to offset the registration, the breakfast and part of the hotel expense. There was discussion about talking to Ag in the Classroom about restructuring the award. The Foundation pays \$4,300 and the recipient receives \$500.00 towards expenses. It was suggested that perhaps we should look at other opportunities and the 250th celebration in 2026 was suggested as a possible opportunity. The website for the group responsible for the 250th celebration is America250.

Motion by Marty Billquist to discontinue our sponsorship of the Partners in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) award through Ag in the Classroom, second by Nathan Strawder; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The Foundation Board voted to discontinue our sponsorship of the Partners in Agriculture Literacy (PAL) award through Ag in the Classroom.

c. 1-in-1000 Club – personal invitations to past and present delegates to join 1-in-1000 – Marty Billquist reported that this is not completed.

d. 1-in-1000 Club meeting on August 28 – Marty Billquist reported that it was a good meeting with good discussion. They discussed the online Grange Foundation auction. Sister Lillian Booth, California, agreed to chair a group to create a mission statement. Marty also shared that there was a group that would work on creating By-laws for the 1-in-1000 Club.

e. Past Director's Pins – Amanda reported that she received the Board members' responses and shared a picture of the pin. The pins have been ordered and should be received by October 17. One hundred pins were ordered at a cost of \$1.60 per pin. They are working to compile a list of past directors which would include Executive Committee members from 1960 forward and in 2013, members outside of the Executive Committee were added.

The plan is to present the past director pins at the National Session. There would be two opportunities – one during the GF Annual meeting with the delegates on Monday, or during the Friday evening Night of Honors. The consensus was there would be more exposure on Friday evening so the pins will be presented during the Night of Honors.

f. Thank you letters to 2024 scholarship applicants – Amanda reported that she sent an email to the applicants and encouraged them to apply for the 2025 scholarship.

g. The 1-in-1000 Club brochure – Amanda shared the beginning outline of the brochure. She wants to include the mission statement of the 1-in-1000 Club and the payment plan which is to be reviewed at our November GF Board meeting.

h. The Annual Meeting on Monday at the National Grange session - it was discussed that this meeting typically includes a review of what we have done this year and the election of Foundation Board members. It was discussed that we should recognize the 1-in-1000 Club members and recognize those who have donated items for the auction.

NEW BUSINESS

1.) Nomination Ad – Chris reported that in 2023, we began running the ad on September 2 and accepted nominations until October 15.

It was proposed that we change the deadline to accept nominations until November 1 and nominations should be sent electronically to Chris Hamp. To segregate the nominations, Stephanie would be able to set up a separate email for president@GrangeFoundation.org. Election will be held on November 11.

2.) Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement – Chris sent the proposed agreement to the Board for their review. Marty Billquist suggested that we go with a flat fee of 5% instead of a range.

Motion by Marty Billquist to change the administrative fee to 5% for sponsorships, second by Chris Hamp; motion carried.

Motion by Marty Billquist to accept the Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement with the fee amendment, second by John Benedik; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The GF Board voted to set the administrative fee to 5% for sponsorships and approved the Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement as amended with the change in fee.

3.) Save the Date – Chris Hamp asked the GF Board members to hold the last week in January – either January 28 – 29 or January 29 – 30 for a two-day Board retreat. All three Grange Boards will meet to discuss Responsibilities, how the Boards work, interactions between the different Boards and fundraising. Significant others will be invited to join as well. They are looking at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, which is located near the Reagan airport.

- 4.) The election process for GF Board members was reviewed. Nominations are received from members expressing their desire to be part of the Board; the resumes are presented to the delegates; the delegates vote and elect members to the Board.

It was suggested that we create a "job description" that would outline the expectations for Board members, such as being involved in fundraising, attending Board meetings, etc. It was also suggested that the nominations should be sent out to the delegates before the National Grange session. Voting delegates are eligible to vote.

John Benedik offered to write up Board responsibilities to be sent to those who submit nominations for the Board positions. John will send out a draft to the Board for their review.

RESOLVED: John Benedik will draft Board responsibilities to be sent to those who submit nominations for the Board positions.

Chris will acknowledge the nomination has been received and will send the Board responsibilities.

- 5.) The Board meeting on Saturday at National Grange Session – Chris will run the meeting until the election of Foundation Board officers and then the new Chairperson will finish the meeting. Chris asked Anna May Nauss to begin to draft an Agenda for the Saturday meeting.
- 6.) Based on discussion earlier about the election process, it was determined that the By-laws include the October 15 date. There was a motion by Marty Billquist to amend the By-laws, Article VI, Section 2, to change the submission deadline from October 15 to November 1, second by John Benedik; motion carried.

RESOLVED: The GF Board amended the By-laws to change the submission deadline for nominations for the Board from October 15 to November 1.

- 7.) John Benedik questioned if we should purchase candy to sell at this year's National Grange session. It was discussed and decided that we did not want to place a burden on the host committee without talking to them previously.
- 8.) The Massachusetts Project – Amanda will send the Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement to Massachusetts State Grange. She will also follow up with existing projects to determine the status of those projects.

John Benedik suggested that we review any projects approved prior to 2020 or 2022 and if funds have not been received, we should consider the project dormant.

Amanda will include a cover letter to Massachusetts State Grange outlining that the Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement states a 5% administrative fee, but since their project was approved prior to the adoption of the Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement, their fee would remain at 2.5%.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The next meeting of the Foundation Board will be Monday, November 11, 2024, in Bettendorf, Iowa and then on Saturday, November 16, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.

Chris Hamp raised a question about the 1-in-1000 Club having By-Laws within a group that has By-Laws.

ADJOURNMENT

Completing the board's business, the GF Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:26 p.m. ET.

Fraternally submitted,
Anna May Nauss, Secretary

COMPLETE INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS & ACTIONS

AGRICULTURE			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
101	NC	Oppose Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Disclosures for Farmers	Adopted
102	NE	Mandatory Electronic Identification (EID) for Cattle	Adopted
103	TX	Establishing a USDA Program to Support Farmers with Disabilities	Adopted
104	TX	Foreign Country Agriculture and Business Property Purchases	Rejected – Present Policy
105	TX	Right to Retain Crop Seed	Withdrawn
106	TX	Right to Self Repair Farm Equipment	Rejected – Present Policy
107	WA	Halt Ongoing Injury to the U.S. Sheep Industry	Adopted
108	WA	Labeling of Naturally Produced Meat	Rejected – Present Policy
109	WA	Support for Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling for Beef	Rejected – Present Policy
110	WA	U.S. Dietary Guidelines Classification of Potatoes	<i>Transferred to Education & Health</i>
111	CA	Agriculture Under Attack	Rejected – Present Policy
112	CA	Food Security and Farmland Protection Through Agriculture Literacy	Rejected – Present Policy
113	CA	Recognition of Cannabis as Agriculture for Insurance Purposes	Adopted
114	CA	Solar Family Farms	Rejected – State Issue
115	ID	Supporting Local Control of Small Scale Food and Farm Products	Rejected – State Issue
116	MD	Support for Full Funding for the National Ag in the Classroom	Withdrawn
117	MD	Enhancing Efforts to Collect, Track, and Share Information Regarding National Security Risks Arising from Foreign Investments	Rejected – Present Policy
118	MD	Establishing a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee under the USDA Crop Insurance Program	Adopted
119	MD	Expanded Use of Trained Dogs to Safeguard Domestic Agriculture	Adopted
120	MD	Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Schools	Adopted
121	MD	Livestock Indemnity Program	Withdrawn
122	MD	Reallocating USDA Conservation Funding Authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act	Adopted
123	MD	State Block Grants for USDA Ad Hoc Disaster Assistance Programs	Withdrawn
124	MD	Support for Adding Food Hubs to Farmers Markets Expanding the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture	Adopted
125	MD	Support Passage of the Federal EATS Act	Adopted
126	MD	Tree Assistance Program	Adopted
127	MD	Utilizing Livestock Grazing to Reduce the Risks of Wildfires on Federal Lands	Adopted
128	CA	Protection of California's Agricultural Farmland Which Promotes Food Security for the Nation	Rejected – State Issue
129	NY	All Electric Vehicles in Agriculture	Adopted

130	NY	Processing Revival and Intrastate Exemption (PRIME) Act	Rejected – Present Policy
131	OH	Stop Foreign Entities from Buying Land in the United States	Rejected – Present Policy
132	OH	USDA Livestock and Crop Surveys	Adopted
404	MD	Creating a New USDA Forest Conservation Easement Program	<i>Transferred from Conservation</i> Adopted
405	MD	Opposing the Use of the USDA Funds or Authority to Convert Private Agricultural or Forestland to Ground Mounted Solar Installations	<i>Transferred from Conservation</i> Adopted
814	MD	Reforming SNAP Program Eligibility for Children and Families	<i>Transferred from Labor, Judiciary, & Transportation</i> Adopted

AUDIT & BUDGET			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
201	CO	National Grange Expenses	Withdrawn
202	TX	Pertaining to National Grange Building	Withdrawn
203	MT	Pertaining to National Grange Building	Withdrawn
204	Committee	Pertaining to Feasibility Study for National Grange Headquarters	Adopted – Study Committee
205	Committee	Covered Expenses for Officers and Delegates	Adopted
206	Committee	Streamlining the Dues Paying Process	Rejected
610	NY	National Grange Headquarters	<i>Transferred from Grange Growth</i> Withdrawn

CITIZENSHIP & TAXATION			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
301	OR	National Government Office Age Limits	Adopted
302	OR	Support for Pacific Standard Time	Rejected
303	TX	Congress to Designate Election Day as a Federal Holiday	Rejected
304	TX	Congressional Term Limits	Rejected – Present Policy
305	TX	Create an Age Limited for the President of the United States	Rejected – Covered by 301
306	WA	Supporting All Veterans Returning to Civilian Life	Adopted
307	CA	Establish Guardrails in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Adopted
308	CA	Prohibit Corporate Stock Buybacks	Rejected
309	VA	Recognize and Support the Affordable Connectivity Program or Similar Program	Adopted
310	PA	United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains	Adopted
311	PA	Student Debt Forgiveness Tax Credit for Agribusiness	Adopted
312	KS	Making Election Day a Federal Holiday	Rejected
313	MD	Robo Calls	Rejected – Present Policy

314	NH	Retroactive Recognition of Disability by The Social Security Administration	Withdrawn
315	NY	Expediting Broadband Services	Rejected – Present Policy
316	NY	Social Security Expansion Act	Adopted as Amended
317	NY	TRUST Act	Adopted
318	OH	Term-Limits	Rejected – Present Policy

CONSERVATION			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
401	OR	Opposition to Removal of Dams on the Snake River	Rejected – Present Policy
402	CA	United States Forest Service Funding	Adopted
403	ID	Delisting Grizzly Bears from the Endangered Species Act of 1973	Adopted
404	MD	Creating a New USDA Forest Conservation Easement Program	<i>Transferred to Agriculture</i>
405	MD	Opposing the Use of USDA Funds or Authority to Convert Private Agricultural or Forestland to Ground Mounted Solar Installations	<i>Transferred to Agriculture</i>
406	OH	Curb Production of Electric Vehicles	Withdrawn
407	OH	Extreme Environmentalism	Rejected – Present Policy

EDUCATION & HEALTH			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
501	AI	Rights of People Regarding Choices Affecting their Bodies	Rejected
502	OR	Health Care and Health Care Providers Policy	Adopted
503	OR	Limit Medicaid's Estate Recovery Program	Adopted
504	OR	Medicare and Dementia	Adopted
505	TX	Education and Debt Responsibility	Withdrawn
506	TX	Female Sports Participation Under Title IX	Rejected
507	WA	Gluten in Food Labeling	Rejected – Present Policy
508	CA	Healthy Family Planning Via Early Vasectomies	Rejected
509	CA	Labeling of Food Products that Contain Gluten	Adopted as Amended
510	CA	Medicaid Estate Recovery Program	Rejected
511	CA	The Right for Families to Choose their Family Planning	Rejected
512	PA	FAFSA Farm and Small Business Asset Exemption	Adopted
513	NJ	Cancer Testing for High Risk Occupations	Adopted as Amended
514	CT	Controlling Interest Rates for College Loans	Adopted
515	MD	Prescription Drug Co-Pays	Withdrawn
516	MD	Whole Milk in Schools	Rejected – Present Policy
517	NY	Unhealthy Use of Social Media and Internet	Rejected – State Issue
518	NY	Use of Zyn Nicotine Pouches by Youth	Rejected
519	PA	Mental Health Absences from Schools	Rejected – State Issue

520	PA	Uniform Time of Exemption from Federal Price Negotiations for New Biologic and Small Molecule Pharmaceuticals	Adopted
608	NY	Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange	<i>Transferred from Grange Growth</i> Adopted as Amended

GRANGE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
601	ID	Censoring Grange Mail	Rejected
602	NJ	Use of Electronic Payment Systems to National Grange	Rejected
603	CT	Changes to Recognition of 80 Year Grange Members	Withdrawn
604	DE	Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	Adopted as Amended
605	MI	National Grange Website	Adopted
606	NH	Location of National Grange Session	Rejected
607	NH	Youth Age at the National Level	Rejected
608	NY	Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange	<i>Transferred to Education & Health</i>
609	NY	National Grange Convention	Rejected
610	NY	National Grange Headquarters	<i>Transferred to Audit & Budget</i>
611	OH	125 th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars	Adopted
612	OH	Food Insecurity	Adopted
613	OH	National Grange Convention	Rejected
614	VT	ASL Sign for “Grange”	Adopted as Amended
615	VT	Grange Presence at Oliver Kelley Farm	Adopted
616	VT	National Grange Convention	Rejected
617	VT	Public Service Award Certificate	Rejected
701	IA	Support for National Grange Host Committees	<i>Transferred from Grange Law</i> Rejected
702	IL	Electronic Links for Online National Grange Policy Book	<i>Transferred from Grange Law</i> Rejected
704	OR	Disposition of Resolutions by National Grange Committees	<i>Transferred from Grange Law</i> Adopted
708	IL	Search Features for Online National Grange Policy Book	<i>Transferred from Grange Law</i> Rejected

GRANGE LAW			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
701	IA	Support for National Grange Host Committees	<i>Transferred to Grange Growth</i>
702	IL	Electronic Links for Online National Grange Policy Book	<i>Transferred to Grange Growth</i>
703	NE	Subordinate Grange Membership Requirements	Rejected
704	OR	Disposition of Resolutions by National Grange Committees	<i>Transferred to Grange Growth</i>
705	TX	National Grange Dues Increase	Rejected – Covered by 726
706	WA	Opposition to the Collection of National Dues for Junior Grange Members	Rejected
707	WA	The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships	Adopted as Amended
708	IL	Search Features for Online National Grange Policy Book	<i>Transferred to Grange Growth</i>
709	CA	Amend 10.14.1 of The National Grange Digest of Laws	Rejected
710	CA	Amend National Grange Digest of Laws Chapter 12	Adopted
711	CA	Amend National Grange Digest – Officer Titles	Rejected
712	DC	Counting Granges with Few than 13 Members in Total for Delegate Representation	Adopted
713	DC	Strike Requirement to Wear Pin or Regalia at Grange Meeting	Rejected
713	MD (2023)	National Dues for Junior Grange Members	Postponed; Covered by 707-WA
714	ID	Member Intervention	Rejected
715	ID	Required Times a Pomona Grange Must Meet	Rejected
716	MA	Distribution of National Grange Mailing List	Rejected
717	MA	The Bible Upon the Altar	Rejected
718	NJ	Junior Grange Members Continuous Membership	Rejected
719	MA	Location of National Grange Session	Rejected
720	KS	Membership for Active Duty Service Members	Withdrawn
721	MA	Regarding Family Membership	Rejected
722	MD	Adjust the Frequency of Membership Reports Submitted to the National Grange	Rejected
723	MD	Change to Fraternal Membership Number in Grange	Withdrawn
724	WV	Grange Representation	<i>Referred to Study Committee</i>
725	OH	Affiliate Membership	Withdrawn
726	Committee	National Grange Dues Increase	Adopted – YEAR 1

LABOR, JUDICIARY & TRANSPORTATION			
RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
801	IL	United States Postal Service	Rejected – Present Policy
802	OR	Age Limits for U.S. Supreme Court	Rejected
803	OR	National Legalization of Marijuana for Controlled Recreational and Medical Use	Rejected
804	OR	Opposition to Local Transportation Optimization by USPS	Rejected
805	TX	1944 Water Treaty Between Mexico and the United States	Rejected – Present Policy
806	TX	Support for the Legalization of Medical Use of Marijuana	Rejected – State Issue
807	WA	Consumer Choice to Opt In or Opt Out	Adopted
808	CA	Create National Wildfire Insurance Program	Adopted
809	CA	De-schedule Cannabis from Federal Drug Scheduling	Rejected
810	CA	Regulation of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles aka Drones	Rejected – State Issue
811	MN	Federal Funding to Support Research on Gun Violence and Mitigation	Rejected
812	NJ	Cannabis Law Improvement	Rejected – Present Policy
813	MD	Foster Care	Rejected – State Issue
814	MD	Reforming SNAP Program Eligibility for Children and Families	<i>Transferred to Agriculture</i>
815	MI	Balloon Releases and Chinese Lanterns	Rejected – State Issue
816	NH	Establishing Credentials for Individuals with Communication Disabilities	Rejected – State Issue
817	NY	Combatting Illicit Xylazine	Adopted
818	NY	Opposition to Kill Switch in Automobiles	Adopted
819	NY	Protecting Workers from Excessive Heat in Workplace	Rejected – Present Policy
820	NY	Providing Child Care for Police Officers	Withdrawn
821	OH	Additional Legal Parking Spaces for Long Haul Trucks	Rejected
822	OH	Reopening Ashtabula U.S. Coast Guard Station	Rejected

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE REPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

Agriculture is foundational to America's economy, providing directly or indirectly through value-added processing, approximately 5.6% (1.53 trillion) of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For over 150 years, the National Grange has been working to improve agriculture in America and the welfare of those who work the soil or care for the creatures of the field. Our roots are in agriculture, and our future is tied to our faith in the perennial cycle of planting and harvest.

Farm Bill

A current U.S. Farm Bill is crucial for the health of our economy, the vitality of our rural communities, and the security of our food supply. We advocate for fast passage of a new Farm Bill that would address many of the following points:

Research and Development:

- Advocate for increased investment in biotechnology (e.g., CRISPR, Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats).
- Support educational programs on nutrition (e.g., Farm to Table).
- Favor voluntary labeling of genetically modified products.

Agricultural Chemicals:

- Promote healthy pollinator populations.
- Support education on the risks of Neonicotinoids and the benefits of untreated seeds.

Dairy Policy:

- Push for fair pricing structures for small and medium dairy producers.
- Advocate for defining "milk" strictly as a mammalian product.

Disaster Assistance and Risk Management:

- Support funding for USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Risk Management Division and crop insurance programs.

Farm Policies

- Encourage reclassification of small farms based on gross income (\$150,000 or less).
- Call for equitable treatment for all farm sizes and commodities.

Farm Labor:

- Urge provisions in the Farm Bill for reliable seasonal and year-round labor.
- Streamline the H-2A application process, where possible.

Food Safety:

- Advocate for a single federal agency (preferably USDA) for food safety inspections.

Livestock Production:

- Support science-based state regulations of agricultural practices, that do not interfere with interstate commerce.
- Supports the principle that the term "meat" can only be used to describe animal protein derived from harvested production livestock, poultry, seafood, or wildlife, wild or domestic.

Marketing and Cooperatives:

- Encourage USDA programs like Farmers to Families Food Box Program.
- Support labeling of products as "Product of the USA" if they meet specific criteria.

Environmental Regulations:

- Advocate for fair water rate structures and oppose expanded EPA authority.
- Support funding for conservation programs.
- Advocate for the education of proper disposal of agricultural materials.

Food Security:

- Addressing concerns of foreign ownership of agricultural land, impacting food security.

Energy:

- Support agrivoltaics and responsible regulations for dual use of agricultural land.
- Advocate for research into alternative fuel sources to reduce greenhouse gases.

Broadband

- Supports the use of Federal Funds to efficiently build out high-speed internet access to "the last mile."

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
101	NC	Oppose Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Disclosures for Farmers	Adopted

102	NE	Mandatory Electronic Identification (EID) for Cattle	Adopted
103	TX	Establishing a USDA Program to Support Farmers with Disabilities	Adopted
107	WA	Halt Ongoing Injury to the U.S. Sheep Industry	Adopted
113	CA	Recognition of Cannabis as Agriculture for Insurance Purposes	Adopted
118	MD	Establishing a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee under the USDA Crop Insurance Program	Adopted
119	MD	Expanded Use of Trained Dogs to Safeguard Domestic Agriculture	Adopted
120	MD	Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Schools	Adopted
122	MD	Reallocating USDA Conservation Funding Authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act	Adopted
124	MD	Support for Adding Food Hubs to Farmers Markets Expanding the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture	Adopted
125	MD	Support Passage of the Federal EATS Act	Adopted
126	MD	Tree Assistance Program	Adopted
127	MD	Utilizing Livestock Grazing to Reduce the Risks of Wildfires on Federal Lands	Adopted
129	NY	All Electric Vehicles in Agriculture	Adopted
132	OH	USDA Livestock and Crop Surveys	Adopted
404	MD	Creating a New USDA Forest Conservation Easement Program	<i>Transferred from Conservation Adopted</i>
405	MD	Opposing the Use of the USDA Funds or Authority to Convert Private Agricultural or Forestland to Ground Mounted Solar Installations	<i>Transferred from Conservation Adopted</i>
814	MD	Reforming SNAP Program Eligibility for Children and Families	<i>Transferred from Labor, Judiciary, & Transportation Adopted</i>

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

101-NC – Oppose Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Disclosures for Farmers

WHEREAS: carbon emissions has been perceived to be an increasing risk to financial stability- whether by natural disasters such as hurricanes, rising sea levels and wildfires or to corporations from increased costs associated with transition to a lower carbon economy; and WHEREAS: new laws and regulations that are being considered to achieve a lower carbon economy are certain to cause hardships on major corporations and their suppliers by requiring them to keep and maintain detailed records of their carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS: the calculation of carbon emissions is not an exact science and could lead to inaccurate results, which could affect the future financial stability of those major corporations and their suppliers; and

WHEREAS: the anticipation of a standardized climate disclosure rule, known as the ESG (Environmental Social Governance) {a standard for major corporations to borrow money based on the carbon emission records of their company and their suppliers} will cause increased hardship on the farming and agriculture production community by requiring them to keep confusing, possibly inaccurate and time-consuming records; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that National Grange opposes the enactment of the mandatory Environmental, Social, Governance, (ESG) disclosure ruling and any other climate disclosure ruling that requires the tracking of carbon emissions by farmers and agriculture production operations from current or future consideration or enactment.

102-NE – Mandatory Electronic Identification (EID) for Cattle

WHEREAS: the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (“APHIS”) has already approved a mandatory EID requirement for sexually intact breeding cattle over 18 months of age; and

WHEREAS: APHIS is now actively considering extending the mandatory EID requirement to include all cattle from birth; and

WHEREAS: with mandatory EID data, USDA/APHIS will have the ability to access information on where EVERY Bovine animal is located in the USA and to whom they belong; and

WHEREAS: with this information all in one location, in a federal office, accessible by anyone authorized by the government to do so; and

WHEREAS: there are climate-activists in our government who believe that cattle are partially to-blame for global-warming, and who want to further-regulate, and even decrease the number of cattle in the United States; and

WHEREAS: efforts by these activists are currently underway to identify where the cattle are, and how many there are, and to measure the amount of carbon emissions that the cattle produce, and

WHEREAS: there are government programs already being implemented in European Countries that have mandatory EID for cattle, wherein the cattle are being regulated-down in numbers and/or taxed on a per-head basis, in the name of climate-control, because they now know where to find the cattle; and

WHEREAS: incentives are currently being offered to cattle producers to enroll their herds into “Climate-Smart”/ “Sustainable Beef” (“Green Energy”) programs, which will allow these climate activists to gain access to the information on where, how many, and who owns the cattle; and

WHEREAS: our food security and beef prices most assuredly would be affected by politically-motivated actions to control beef numbers; and

WHEREAS: with the implementation of mandatory EID, the presence of climate-activists in our government, (especially USDA), and seeing what is happening in Europe (once climate-activists gain power and access to their country’s cattle-inventory), it is a small-step to conclude that we must take preemptive action to protect our cattle inventory data from being accessed by those who could use it to our cattle producer’s, and beef consumer’s detriment; and

WHEREAS: the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistical Service’s (NASS) Census of Agriculture surveys the details of agricultural production from every farm location in the United States that produces \$1000 or more in agricultural product every 5 years. Like EID, participation in the Census of Agriculture is mandated, by law, for all affected agricultural producers, however, by law, the NASS may not publicly share ANY details about individual responses about the details of individual producer’s operations and may not release aggregated data about multiple producer operations in a county if there is a chance that the county wide release of data could be disaggregated to provide reliable estimates about producer operations for that commodity in that county because there are too few producers of that commodity in that county; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange collaborate with other like-minded organizations in efforts to require the strict implementation, by federal statute, of proprietary, producer level, data privacy regulations for protecting proprietary information from all producers participating in all USDA programs that are designed to safe-guard EID [Electronic Identification] data that are as strict or stricter than the proprietary, producer level, data privacy protections used by the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistical Service for individual producer data collected under the Census of Agriculture, unless a national emergency disease outbreak has occurred.

103-TX – Establishing a USDA Program to Support Farmers with Disabilities

WHEREAS: farming is a fundamental component of our nation’s economy and food security, providing sustenance and livelihoods to millions of Americans; and

WHEREAS: individuals with disabilities face unique challenges and barriers in accessing and participating in agricultural activities, including farming and ranching; and

WHEREAS: there is a pressing need to ensure that farmers with disabilities receive adequate support, resources, and accommodations to fully engage in agricultural pursuits and contribute to the agricultural sector; and

WHEREAS: the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a key federal agency responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs to support American farmers and ranchers; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange pursue the USDA to establish and create a comprehensive program specifically designed to support farmers and ranchers with disabilities; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange work with the USDA to facilitate The USDA Program for Farmers with Disabilities with specific goals aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To increase access to agricultural resources, equipment, and technologies
- 2) To provide training, technical assistance, and educational programs
- 3) To promote research and development initiatives
- 4) To foster partnerships with relevant stakeholders,
- 5) Providing grants or financial assistance to farmers with disabilities
- 6) Conducting outreach and awareness campaigns to educate farmers with disabilities about available resources, programs, and opportunities.
- 7) Establishing demonstration projects or pilot programs to test and evaluate the effectiveness of various interventions and support services.

- 8) Collaborating with state and local agencies to coordinate efforts and leverage existing programs and services for farmers with disabilities, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange lobby the USDA to allocate sufficient funding and personnel to effectively implement and administer the USDA Program for Farmers with Disabilities.

107-WA – Halt Ongoing Injury to the U.S. Sheep Industry

WHEREAS: sheep and lambs provide the economic cornerstone for western states' rural economies, supporting schools, places of worship, small town businesses, hospitals, and the social infrastructure of rural America; and

WHEREAS: sheep perform important environmental purposes by grazing and browsing through noxious and other undesirable and invasive weed species by reducing excess vegetation in fire prone areas; and

WHEREAS: under the Tariff Act of 1930, tariffs previously enacted in 1890, 1921, and 1922 were increased to \$3 for live sheep, 7 cents per pound for lamb meat, and 5 cents per pound for mutton; and

WHEREAS: since 1930, Congress has not adjusted tariffs on sheep or sheep meat for inflation, rendering them immaterial today; and

WHEREAS: adjusted for inflation, \$3 per head in 1930 is \$54 per head today, 7 cents per pound in 1930 is \$1.25 per pound today, and 5 cents per pound is \$0.89; and

WHEREAS: the U.S. sheep industry has not been protected from known and debilitating global market distortions for decades, resulting in the following consequences:

The domestic sheep industry is non-competitive in the global export market.

In four decades, the U.S. sheep inventory declined 62%, and at 5 million head is now at the lowest level in history.

In four decades, the number of domestic sheep operations with over 100 head (commercial sheep operations) declined 60%.

In just the past decade, consumption of sheep meat in America increased 62%.

While consumption increased and production declined since 2012, imports surged 134%.

By 2022, imported lamb and mutton captured 74% of the domestic market.

The American sheep industry is the first U.S. livestock sector to be predominantly outsourced; and

WHEREAS: without some form of management over current import flows, by way of tariffs, tariff rate quotas, or quantity restrictions, the systemic, downward trajectories of every measure of the American sheep industry's viability foretells the commercial domestic sheep industry will soon become the first livestock industry in American to fall completely to import competition; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange support the ability of the USDA to negotiate and establish a tariff rate quota system for import and export of ag products.

113-CA – Recognition of Cannabis as Agriculture for Insurance Purposes

WHEREAS: The cultivation of cannabis is a legitimate agricultural practice in the state of California, contributing significantly to the state's economy and agricultural diversity; and

WHEREAS: Cannabis farming, like other agricultural practices, is subject to the same risks and challenges, including natural disasters such as wildfires; and

WHEREAS: Current insurance policies often treat cannabis cultivation differently from other agricultural activities, leading to discrepancies in coverage and protection for farmers; and

WHEREAS: The lack of equitable insurance coverage places an undue burden on cannabis farmers, threatening their livelihoods and the sustainability of this agricultural sector; and

WHEREAS: Treating cannabis as agriculture in the context of insurance would ensure fair and equal treatment of all farmers, promoting consistency and fairness across the agricultural industry; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the National Grange work with legislators, insurance providers, and relevant stakeholders to establish policies that recognize cannabis cultivation as a legitimate agricultural practice, deserving of equitable crop insurance coverage.

118-MD – Establishing a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee under the USDA Crop Insurance Program

WHEREAS: The Grange believes that enhanced crop and livestock insurance coverage options are needed to reduce the necessity for ad hoc disaster assistance, especially for specialty crops; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange encourages the USDA to establish a specialty crop advisory committee to ensure that the unique perspectives of the specialty crop industry have a seat at the table for policy development and expansion for USDA crop insurance programs.

119-MD – Expanded Use of Trained Dogs to Safeguard Domestic Agriculture

WHEREAS: expanded use of federally funded dog training centers could help safeguard domestic agriculture and natural resources from invasive foreign pests and diseases; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange supports expanded use of trained dogs to safeguard domestic agriculture and natural resources from foreign invasive pests and diseases by improved inspection and detection at ports of entry.

120-MD – Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Schools

WHEREAS: fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a well-balanced diet; and

WHEREAS: fresh fruits and vegetables provide important vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, energy, and water. These nutrients help promote good health, physical and, cognitive thinking, protect against disease, strengthen immune systems, and ensure healthy growth and development in children; and

WHEREAS: partnering with the local agricultural community to get fresh fruits and vegetables will support the agriculture community; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange encourage the U.S. Department of Education to adopt a program which allows local schools to partner with the local agricultural communities to purchase locally-grown products for their school lunch programs.

122-MD – Reallocating USDA Conservation Funding Authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act

RESOLVED: the National Grange support adding food hubs to the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program under the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production; and be it further

RESOLVED; the National Grange support expanding the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production to provide guidance and promoting conservation techniques for activities of urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices.

124-MD Support for Adding Food Hubs to Farmers Markets and Expanding the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture

WHEREAS: fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a well-balanced diet; and

WHEREAS: fresh fruits and vegetables provide important vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, energy, and water. These nutrients help promote good health, physical and, cognitive thinking, protect against disease, strengthen immune systems, and ensure healthy growth and development in children; and

WHEREAS: partnering with the local agricultural community to get fresh fruits and vegetables will support the agriculture community; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange encourage the U.S. Department of Education to adopt a program which allows local schools to partner with the local agricultural communities to purchase locally-grown products for their school lunch programs.

125-MD – Support Passage of the Federal EATS Act

WHEREAS: the state of California has passed strict animal welfare rules for any food sold in the state, regardless of where those animals were raised, thus imposing their rules on animal livestock raised in other states; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange support efforts, such as the EATS Act (Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression), to prevent state and local governments from imposing a condition or standard on the production of covered livestock, outside of their own jurisdiction, as condition for sale.

126-MD – Tree Assistance Program

WHEREAS: The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) will reduce the mortality threshold, increase the reimbursement rate for rehabilitation of damaged trees, vines, and bushes and provide more flexibility for growers to replant alternative varieties, stand densities, and locations; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange urge that the USDA Tree Assistance Program (TAP) be reformed to provide more flexibility for producers to plant alternative varieties, stand densities, or locations.

127-MD – Utilizing Livestock Grazing to Reduce the Risks of Wildfires on Federal Lands

RESOLVED: the National Grange support efforts to utilize livestock grazing as a wildfire risk reduction strategy on federal lands.

129-NY – All-Electric Vehicles in Agriculture

WHEREAS: The pressure on Agriculture to park its diesel-powered equipment for climate-friendly all-electric alternatives is quickly reaching a boiling point; and

WHEREAS: Powering massive agriculture machines by battery alone will add even more weight and mass to the machines. John Deere's 8R tractor has a starting base weight of 25,200 lb. Current assessments on an all-electric version would weigh more than twice as much; and

WHEREAS: Soil compaction is always a concern in agriculture. Increasing the weight and mass of such machines could end up creating more not fewer emissions, because compacted soil releases green-house gasses such as methane and nitrous oxide, which are much more potent than the CO₂ from a tractor exhaust; and

WHEREAS: The all-electric tractors coming to market can only work four to eight hours per charge. The downtime needed to recharge such massive batteries could be several hours, thereby slowing the planting and harvesting times; and

WHEREAS: Deploying a large fleet of all-electric, heavy-duty agricultural vehicles will require multiple heavy-duty superchargers- an expensive and potentially unrealistic endeavor; and

WHEREAS: The cost of an all-electric agricultural vehicle is presently 30%+ more than that of a diesel-powered equivalent. And there is no federal program to ease the burden of the additional upfront cost of an electric tractor; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the National Grange work with other like-minded Ag Organizations to oppose efforts that mandate the adoption of all-electric Agricultural vehicles and related equipment.

132-OH – USDA Livestock and Crop Surveys

WHEREAS: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), through The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), recently announced it would no longer provide a July cattle inventory survey, as well as county-level estimates for crops and livestock and the objective yield survey for cotton; and

WHEREAS: The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) is urging USDA to reverse its decision to cancel the NASS surveys; and

WHEREAS: the NASS surveys are particularly important to farmers, ranchers, researchers and other data users as they provide a full picture of supplies in the U.S. cattle sector at the beginning and in the middle of each year, allowing for a fair assessment of the six-month cattle market; and

WHEREAS: the loss of the objective yield survey for cotton may increase the level of uncertainty throughout the summer and early fall for cotton markets; and

WHEREAS: the elimination of county yield estimates may undercut the research upon which risk management programs, including crop insurance, are based; and

WHEREAS: the elimination of county-level yield and production data for crops and livestock may also severely impact research and place the U.S. farther behind as trade competitors; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support the restoration and continuation of livestock and crop surveys, such as the July cattle inventory survey, county-level estimates for crops and the objective yield survey for cotton by the USDA National Agricultural Statistical Service.

404-MD – Creating a New USDA Forest Conservation Easement Program

RESOLVED: the National Grange support the creation of the Forest Conservation Easement Program, modeled after the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which would provide an easement option for working forests.

405-MD – Opposing the Use of USDA Funds or Authority to Convert Private Agricultural or Forestland to Ground Mounted Solar Installations

WHEREAS: the Maryland State Grange has strong concerns about taking productive agricultural land out of production to meet environmental water quality and climate goals; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange support efforts to prohibit the Secretary of Agriculture from utilizing USDA grant funding to convert private forestland and prime farmland to ground-mounted solar panel installations.

814-MD – Reforming SNAP Program Eligibility for Children and Families

WHEREAS: proposed reforms to USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) offer significant opportunities for individuals to remain on current career pathways without having to choose between SNAP benefits and employment or educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS: young people who are receiving SNAP benefits often lose those benefits if they receive employment or educational opportunities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange support efforts to reform the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) so that the income of family dependents under age 21 and attending secondary school, shall not be counted against the SNAP eligibility of the total household.

PRESENT POLICY - AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Exports & Embargoes

1. The National Grange encourages its members to work through their commodity export promotion organizations to increase the producers' participation in export market development. We strongly support retaining the present system of private enterprises and cooperatives in export sales. We continue to support government export credit programs, including blended credit, and propose the establishment of a revolving export credit fund. We further support the formation of a national marketing federation of regional marketing cooperatives to cover all agricultural export commodities and better serve the world's markets. We encourage all segments of the agricultural community to increase their private investment in export market development for American agricultural commodities.
2. The National Grange supports legislation or administrative action that will continue to maintain and increase the exporting of agricultural commodities. We recommend a new emphasis on cash sales for agricultural products along with aggressive exportation of high-value-added products. Consideration should be given to greater participation by the USDA in the administration and distribution of American food-aid programs.
3. The National Grange urges the Grain Inspection Service of the USDA to take all necessary steps to insure only grain of the quality specified in the purchase be moved into the export markets.
4. The National Grange supports increasing market development programs conducted through the USDA and AID (Agency for International Development) with emphasis on financing and development of the infrastructure of recipient countries to facilitate the receiving and distribution of U.S. agricultural products.
5. We recommend that further legislative and/or administrative actions be taken to enhance the exportation of U.S. agricultural commodities. We strongly support keeping the authority to determine national agricultural export policy in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We support all efforts to maintain the sanctity of export contracts. We support monitoring and full public disclosure of information concerning sales to foreign countries. We support negotiations to eliminate all tariff and non-tariff trade restrictions against United States' agricultural exports.
6. The National Grange will oppose any attempt to embargo, restrict or otherwise burden the export of logs or any other privately grown agricultural commodity by a complete or partial ban, quota, or tax of any nature.
7. The National Grange will support USDA negotiation of a tariff rate quota for agricultural products specifically designed to protect the sheep industry from global market distortions. ²⁰²⁴
8. The National Grange supports swift implementation of the Taft-Hartley Act's provisions against workers who refuse to load agricultural commodities for export.
9. The National Grange supports developing agricultural trade with Cuba. We seek means whereby Cuba might be extended loans and/or credit to purchase U.S. agricultural products.

Agricultural Imports

1. The National Grange supports strict enforcement of laws regulating the importation of harmful species of plants and animals. We further support measures that will require tighter oversight and control at port of entry and market outlets in an effort to control the importation of exotic fowl and pet birds and the establishment of procedures for the treatment of imported cargoes to prevent the importation of plant or animal insects or diseases.
2. The National Grange supports legislation requiring the USDA to certify that food products coming into the USA for human consumption have not been grown or treated with products not currently registered for use on food products in the United States.
3. The National Grange does not approve of using inspections, grading, health, and sanitary or labeling standards as non-tariff barriers to trade. We do support placing import quotas and/or import tariffs on agricultural commodities as a means of protecting domestic markets from seasonal and over-trend market penetration surges. We urge Congress and the President to investigate the dumping of food products from other countries into the US market that affects the agriculture industry in the United States. We insist that all imported agricultural products, including value-added commodities, meet the same strict inspection, unapproved pesticide residues, grading, and labeling standards as domestically produced products and that these standards be strictly enforced, and the country-of-origin supply certification that the imported product is free of harmful diseases and pests. We specifically recommend that all imported products be labeled with the name of the country of origin until the consumer purchases it. We further support the elimination of all export subsidies on agricultural products imported into the United States or the imposition of countervailing duties to offset the subsidy value.
4. The National Grange supports strict enforcement of existing countervailing duties to offset the subsidy value on certain agricultural and timber products being imported from Canada to protect the agriculture and timber industries in states along the Canadian border.
5. National Grange supports continued restrictions on imports of animals, meat, meat products, and bone meal into the United States from any country having Mad Cow Disease until sound scientific data proves it is safe.
6. To allow for the consumers' right to know where their food comes from, the National Grange supports country-of-origin labeling for beef, pork, lamb, fish, and shellfish that is compliant with World Trade Organization (WTO) trade rules.

Agriculture Trade Policy

1. The Grange must continue to work for sound trade agreements for agriculture by encouraging the Administration and Congress to aggressively ensure that American farmers achieve access to all markets covered by trade agreements. The National Grange opposes non-transparent, non-amendable fast-track pacts that are not open to debate by our legislative bodies.
2. The National Grange supports the dairy industry being adequately represented in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations.
3. The National Grange supports the permanent appointment of a Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. We support the strong representation of U.S. agricultural interests in all negotiations regarding U.S. trade relations and to ensure that the cost of research and development is not born solely by the American farmer.
4. The National Grange continues to work for an adequate food supply for the entire world. We encourage increased food production in developing countries. To that end, we support an international food program that provides for the support of all nations in a cooperative endeavor to meet current and projected food needs in deficient areas and ensure that food will be available and efficiently distributed. All nations should give more support for research, education, and development of programs designed to improve the capability of farmers in food-deficient areas to meet more of the food needs of their people.
5. The National Grange supports the development of a consistent policy on the use of sanctions by the U.S. government. The Grange opposes trade embargoes as a first choice of action, but should all choices fail, short of military action, and a trade embargo becomes the only alternative, the Grange urges the federal government to embargo all products - agricultural, industrial and technical - instead of specific agricultural commodities. If sanctions become necessary as a tool of foreign policy, then sanctions should be used only as a consequence of multilateral sanctions.
6. In any new trade negotiations or discussions in re-opening any existing trade pacts, the National Grange strongly supports the inclusion of policy to protect state laws, including the defense of such laws by the proper authorities in any trade court.
7. The National Grange insists that representatives of USDA and the Department of Homeland Security be present at all Free Trade negotiations to ensure that an adequate supply of domestically produced dairy products is maintained. Congress should diligently scrutinize all Free Trade Agreements to protect agriculture production in the event of serious food shortages caused by natural disasters, disease, or terrorism before voting the Trade Agreement "up or down."
8. The National Grange insists that trade pacts require all imported products from signatory countries, not just agricultural products, to meet the same strict standards as domestically produced goods for environmental protection, residue, labeling, and worker safety. These standards must be strictly enforced.
9. The National Grange believes trade pacts should not cede judicial power to foreign tribunals, such as the World Trade Organization, not bound by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Anti-Trust Issues

1. The National Grange recommends that Congress investigate the possibility that very large corporations that own and operate livestock/poultry slaughtering plants, as well as very large livestock/poultry feeding facilities, are violating anti-trust laws. We question whether or not those firms are engaged in price manipulation resulting from their control of an extremely large portion of the market, their lack of competitive bidding because of the regionally specific location of the slaughtering plants that are owned by these corporations, and their access to their own large numbers of fed animals or poultry in their own feeding facilities. If any firms are found to be in violation of antitrust laws, the Department of Justice or the Federal Trade Commission should take the necessary action to uphold the laws.
2. The National Grange calls on the Federal Trade Commission to investigate the agricultural supply, agricultural transportation, grain handling, pricing policies, and the potential anti-competitive marketing practices of all large corporations in the food processing and food marketing industries. We oppose the concentrated growing, marketing, and distribution of agricultural production by large corporations other than farm cooperatives in the US. We call upon the Federal Trade Commission to investigate the pricing policy of the food industry and anti-competitive marketing practices, such as the purchasing of shelf space and product location that places new and less expensive generic brands at a marketing disadvantage. We express deep anti-trust concerns regarding the control of the U.S. seed supply to both Congress and the Department of Justice and urge both to conduct a close review of acquisitions and mergers.
3. The National Grange urges the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a study committee composed of representatives from farm organizations, commodity groups, and integrators to study the terms of grower contracts to determine fairness to both parties and their acceptance by lending institutions. We further support better nationwide reporting of price and contract information, including forward contract prices and ongoing studies of the relationship between farm gate prices and retail prices. We urge the USDA to fully fund these efforts.
4. The National Grange urges continued awareness of issues related to the electronic trading of grain and other agricultural production. We urge the imposition of necessary regulations on Internet trading of grain where appropriate to protect the farmer.
5. The National Grange opposes any effort to exempt commodity check-off funds from being subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to continue transparency.

Biotechnology Policy, Research and Application to Agriculture

1. The National Grange supports a federal policy to allow the use of biotechnology in agriculture. We recognize that genetic engineering of plants and animals has already had a positive impact on increasing the availability of food, decreasing the environmental impact of agriculture, and creating foods that are safer, longer-lasting, more nutritious, and better tasting. We further support continued research on biotechnology and genetic engineering, including further scientific research into non-human cloning. We support an approval process for genetically modified plants and animals that utilize science-based decision-making to assure the safety of agricultural products. To that end, the National Grange philosophically supports the efforts of National Science Foundation (NSF) concerning their Plant Genome Initiative.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that provides that patented plants and livestock that have been developed through biotechnology (gene-splitting, cloning, genetic engineering, etc.) will be made available to farmers by provisions that will not result in a concentration of the patented livestock in the hands of a few large firms and will not interfere with their availability to all farmers.
3. The National Grange urges the FDA, EPA, USDA, and other national farm organizations to publicize the safety of GMOs to help reduce the resistance to the use of this technology, providing correct and scientifically verified information on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) to news media and other outlets to enhance the availability of truthful information and ultimately provide more information to the world community. The Grange supports a voluntary GMO-free labeling certification program regulated by USDA and urges that the USDA Certified Organic label automatically qualify as GMO-free.
4. The National Grange supports ongoing educational efforts by the Cooperative Extension Service that address growing concerns about GMO genetic material drift to non-GMO plants.
5. All National Grange policy language addressing Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and/or Genetically Engineered (GE) be considered to also include items labeled as Bioengineered (BE). ²⁰²²

Chemicals for Agriculture: Weed, Pest and Predator Control

1. The National Grange urges the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to consult with state, industry, and user groups when developing policies and regulations related to pesticide industries. The National Grange also urges the EPA to use a reasonable approach in carrying out the provisions and requirements of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. We recommend relying on impartial scientific research data that is based on the normal human consumption patterns of a product before suspending or canceling the use of a particular chemical. We urge more review and study of a chemical before the public is advised that an agricultural chemical may be harmful to their health. We support increased research and education being done by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and EPA to improve integrated pest management, including comprehensive strategies to minimize weed resistance issues. To that end, we support full funding of the USDA's Pesticide Data Program. We further recommend that Congress provide additional funds for Land Grant Colleges and Universities to be more actively involved with biological pest control research.
2. The National Grange supports efforts to provide information to growers and farmers on actions that can be taken when adverse public statements are made questioning their use of agricultural chemicals that are legally registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We support legislation that would allow producers and handlers to seek criminal and punitive damages from people or organizations that disseminate false or unsubstantiated information that causes punitive harm to a grower or handler of an agricultural product, including seeking equal media time. We further seek legislation that would protect a farmer from criminal or civil liability regarding that farmer's use or disposal of an EPA-registered and approved herbicide or pesticide in accordance with the manufacturer's printed instructions.
3. The National Grange supports the reasonable and practical use of agricultural chemicals as well as reasonable and practical standards for reentry to fields or areas treated with agricultural chemicals. We continue to support the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a certification program that encourages herbicide applicators to use best management practices to prevent damage to adjacent property. We continue to support adequate funding for increased research by all appropriate government agencies to develop, improve, and disseminate information on alternative or sustainable agriculture. We continue to support educational programs for farmers on the safe use and disposal of agricultural chemicals, including their containers, in an environmentally safe way.
4. The National Grange supports certification and re-certification programs for all restricted-use pesticides. All applicators of restricted-use pesticides should be certified in the application of restricted-use pesticides.
5. The National Grange opposes increased requirements for recertification of private and commercial pesticide applicators licenses.
6. The National Grange supports allowing the continued and appropriate use of the following farm chemicals: 2-4-D for weed control, triazines as a crop protectant, and any chemicals found to be effective in controlling fire ants. We further encourage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reevaluate its restrictions on certain pesticides that are used for grasshopper control so that a more effective environmental control program may be offered to farmers and ranchers.
7. The National Grange supports legislation that provides increased and continuous funding for the Inter-regional Research Project Number Four (IR-4) minor-use pesticides program. We recommend streamlining the approval process for minor-use pesticides by reducing the cost necessary for registration or re-registration.

8. The National Grange supports utilizing new technologies for determining food safety based on the negligible risk standard. We specifically urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use sound scientific data based on the actual use of pesticides and agricultural chemicals and provide a transition period for agriculture to adjust to the withdrawal of an approved pesticide.
9. The Cooperative Extension Service and the State Departments of Agriculture, in cooperation with retail and wholesale dealers of lawn and garden pesticides, should conduct special pesticide application classes for homeowners to ensure the proper use and disposal of unused chemicals and their containers. The sale of lawn and garden pesticides should be monitored closely by local and state authorities to ensure that restricted-use pesticides are not sold to uncertified applicators.
10. The National Grange opposes the EPA classifying plants as a pesticide based upon genetic engineering.
11. All fertilizer manufacturers using toxic, heavy metal, chemical or radioactive wastes should be required to list those components on the package label.
12. The National Grange will support a high-priority program for the control of noxious weeds on all lands, such as Witchweed, Tartarian, Honeysuckle, Russian or Autumn Olive, Multiflora Rose, Amaranth, and Thistle. The National Grange supports Integrated Pest Management Programs and other safe alternatives to Glyphosate use.
13. The National Grange urges the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue funding for the control of invasive species such as the Asian Gypsy Moth (Flighted Spotted Moth Complex), Pine Beetle, Tussock Moth, Asian Long Horned Beetle, and Spotted Lantern Fly. We support additional funding and legal authority to restrict the importation of foreign pests into the U.S., as well as the expanded use of trained dogs to safeguard our domestic agricultural and natural resources.²⁰²⁴ We urge USDA to alert the general public to the potential threat that foreign insects pose to our native species.
14. The National Grange supports legislation allowing farmers, ranchers and others to protect their property from predators, including endangered species.
15. The National Grange urges Congress to prohibit all sales of any form (live, dried, seeds) of any plant that has been placed on a state, regional or national noxious weed list.
16. The National Grange urges the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to continue to allow the use of atrazine after its registration review.
17. The National Grange urges a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) investigation into why domestic industries in the United States of America (USA) fail to produce enough commercial fertilizer to meet our domestic needs. The National Grange urges domestic industries in the USA to produce enough commercial fertilizer in a safe manner to meet our domestic needs.²⁰²²

Dairy Policy, Milk Marketing Orders, Dairy Prices, and Inspections

1. The National Grange supports a milk supply management program that recognizes regional differences based upon the cost and amount of production, availability of markets, percentage of production that is allocated to Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) stocks, and the percentage of Class I use.
2. The National Grange supports the use of Basic Formula Price (BFP) in determining the base price for dairy products, as well as multiple-component pricing for all classes of milk in all federal milk marketing orders.
3. We support the continued payment of Class I differentials and oppose any effort to form a national pool of Class I milk differentials.
4. The National Grange opposes any change in the classification of reconstituted milk and the de-pooling of Class III milk.
5. The National Grange requests of all appropriate agencies, associations, and boards that milk prices received by dairy farmers be quoted in terms to which consumers can relate, such as price per gallon rather than price per hundredweight.
6. The National Grange urges Congress to pressure the USDA to raise the support price of milk to a level for the benefit of both the producer and the consumer. The National Grange supports legislation that is geared toward controlling the volatility of month-to-month milk prices.
7. The National Grange also supports efforts that assist struggling dairy farmers by revising the national milk pricing system. We believe that a federal order system for milk pricing should include such concepts as: (1) supplying side controls, (2) charging Class I processors an assessment to fund the cost of cooperatives that balance the pool of milk in their areas, (3) keeping multiple component pricing, (4) declassifying Class I prices from other classes, (5) making major improvements to the dairy producer income insurance program that is complimentary to the Livestock Gross Margin Program, returns to the original feed cost formula and takes into account local prices paid, (6) creating a mechanism to more quickly respond to changing market conditions and reduce price volatility, which would include a growth management program that is flexible and responsive to market conditions while providing producers with the ability to grow, and (7) providing that any Growth Management Program must contain a minimum time period of 5 years before a total buy-out of a dairy operation can be restarted or if a partial buy-out of a herd, before an increase in production from the operation will be allowed.
8. The National Grange supports implementing a forward contracting pilot program for all classes of milk other than Class I. We support close monitoring of this program to ensure that forward contracting does not adversely affect dairy farmer profitability. However, any monitoring or review of the forward contracting policy program must be sensitive to, and protect the privacy of, individual dairy farmers participating in the pilot program.

9. The National Grange continues to seek an increase in exports of milk and milk products. We support funding of the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP) to the full limit permitted by WTO agreements. We urge milk cooperatives and other associations to become actively involved in the development of export markets for dairy products. We support additional funding for USDA to provide technical assistance to private-sector dairy export trading entities.
10. The National Grange opposes the importation of caseinates and urges the adoption of tariff rate quotes on Milk Protein Concentrates entering the country. The National Grange also supports having milk used to produce Milk Protein Concentrate (MPC) included in the total milk produced in the area Federal Milk Marketing order and urges the adoption of standards on how MPC is used and inspected to ensure compliance.
11. The National Grange continues to support the National Dairy Product Promotion Program as a means to promote and increase the consumption of dairy products. We urge the USDA to periodically account to the public for any monies that have been collected from dairy farmers under any assessment programs, including required reports to Congress.
12. The Extension Service, nutrition educators, farm organizations, processors, and vendors should promote the nutritional value of "Real" dairy products and should promote the use of the "Real Seal" merchandising program. Only those foods from mammalian sources should be allowed to use the term "milk."
13. The National Grange continues to support government purchases of dairy for domestic programs.
14. The National Grange opposes the Food and Drug Administration's proposal to allow products with the "nutritional equivalency" of a food to be labeled "substitute." We suggest that any "imitation" or "substitute" product that resembles a dairy product, whether or not nutritionally equivalent yet includes substitute dairy ingredients, may not in any manner be allowed to bear the name of the dairy product that it is purported to resemble. This also includes imported "imitation" or "substitute" products. The National Grange supports Federal Government oversight to enforce strict labeling regulations concerning organic milk, ensuring that all milk labeled organic comes from certified organic farms only.
15. The National Grange opposes legislation that requires the labeling of milk/milk products as it relates to rBST.
16. The National Grange supports legislation that would extend the present pay and trust provision of the Packers and Stockyards Act to the dairy industry. We further support a national security fund, funded by processors or secured by bonding, to protect against processor bankruptcy if the fund does not preempt a stronger state program.
17. We recognize the need for dairy farm and dairy plant inspections to help ensure the highest quality of dairy products but insist that duplication of inspections by several government entities (city, county, state, and federal) be discontinued where possible. The several levels of government should agree to accept uniform and reciprocal dairy farm and dairy plant inspections.
18. The National Grange encourages the continued performance of dairy genetic evaluations for the dairy industry.
19. The National Grange at all levels encourages the Dairy Co-ops to voluntarily initiate a program that allows membership of the Co-op to vote on any program that takes money out of the farmer's pocket with a yes vote for approval.
20. The National Grange urges the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to keep dairy as a separate food group and ensure a place on the Dietary Guidelines of America for dairy and meat products.
21. The National Grange should actively participate in education activities that are focused on informing the public of the value and protection provided by the pasteurization process.
22. The National Grange urges a change be made whereby Commodity Credit Corporation purchases of surplus dairy products are of dairy products that are in demand by domestic and international markets.
23. The National Grange supports legislation that would expand the definition of qualifying livestock eligible for the 50% bonus depreciation to include all dairy cows purchased by a dairy farm operator for business use.
24. The National Grange urges the reform of Federal Milk Marketing Order regulations so that excess milk can more easily be donated to food banks while still protecting milk processors from unfair pricing practices and protecting the price being paid to farmers for their milk.
25. The National Grange encourages fundraisers to purchase excess milk to donate to food banks.
26. The National Grange urges the FDA to adopt the 2017 higher California Standards for protein and solids-not-fat fluid milk to help standardize and improve milk quality.
27. The National Grange supports the establishment of Federal Milk Marketing Order regional cost of production rates, which would be used in the makeup of a new Milk Market Pricing Subsidy Plan,²⁰²¹ as well as drop barrel cheese from the price formula, accurately reflect values of Class III and IV price formulas, update the Federal Milk Marketing Order to reflect delivery differentials, update the make allowance more frequently, and extend multiple component pricing to all parts of the country.²⁰²³

Disaster Assistance and Risk Management

1. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation of the multi-peril federal crop insurance program (FCI) that provides coverage on all program, non-program and specialty crops on a nationwide basis. We urge the USDA to establish a crop insurance advisory committee to ensure the industry's unique perspectives are included in policy decisions and expansion of the crop insurance Program.²⁰²⁴ We support changes in the FCI program, including multi-peril insurance for all crops, including double-crop soybeans. We recommend that federal crop insurance coverage be updated annually to reflect the cost of production. We favor indexing crop insurance payments to the annual rate of inflation.²⁰²³ We further believe that area coverage should be dropped, and a realistic production base should be established for each tract of land.

2. The National Grange urges the USDA Risk Management Division to take steps to accelerate the processing and payment of claims. We support using uniform standards for grading fruits for market, hail, and other damage payments.
3. The USDA Risk Management Division should discontinue providing insurance coverage on a percentage basis. Coverage should be changed to insure crops on a dollar amount of loss per acre (or unit). The National Grange recommends removing any percent cut on estimated yields if weather conditions prevent timely planting. In addition, the USDA Risk Management Division should delete the current footnotes and should clearly state all exceptions, limitations and other provisions concerning crop coverage in the insurance policy.
4. The National Grange supports disaster aid relief that is based on individual rather than countywide losses. We urge the federal government to distribute surplus stored grain, at no cost and on a need basis, to limited resource farmers in disaster-stricken areas as well as make available a recourse loan on a need basis for damaged commodities.
5. The National Grange urges the USDA Risk Management Division to allow an option that will permit wheat producers covered by the USDA Risk Management Division's crop insurance to obtain a replant payment if replanting is required.
6. The National Grange urges the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to streamline procedures that will expedite the implementation of the disaster and market loss program payments. Funding for these payments must be an "emergency" and not otherwise reduce any other program spending.
7. The National Grange supports the Farm and Ranch Risk Management (FARRM) account program, allowing farmers and ranchers to deposit a set-aside amount of pre-tax dollars into an interest-bearing account to average income fluctuations.
8. A farm yield or county average yield history for any government farm programs shall not be influenced when a yield is less than 50% of the normal yield of a given crop and is caused by any God-given weather-related disaster (drought-heat, flood, wind, hail, etc.) that is out of a farmer's control.
9. The National Grange supports a compromise that will lower the federal crop insurance subsidy for farm operations with an adjusted gross income over \$750,000 or \$1.5 million for a married couple from 62% to 42% and opposes lowering the subsidy for farmers with an adjusted gross income of less than \$750,000. The National Grange further supports crop insurance subsidies for all agricultural producers and urges the Risk Management Agency to adequately train insurance agents about the Whole Farm Revenue Protection Program.
10. Because extreme weather conditions are devastating to producers, The National Grange encourages Congress to provide additional insurance programs for catastrophic losses to livestock, crops, and timber not covered by existing insurance programs. The National Grange supports continuing the current funding levels for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, and the Conservation Reserve Grasslands Program in the 2018 Farm Bill.
11. The National Grange supports legislation to furnish additional liability protection to food donors who would meet the requirements of regulations established and monitored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure quality and labeling standards.
12. The National Grange will work with relevant stakeholders to establish policies that recognize cannabis cultivation as a legitimate practice that deserves equitable crop insurance coverage.²⁰²⁴

Family Farm Policies and Farm Preservation Programs

1. The National Grange believes that policies that promote a viable family farm structure in America's agricultural sector are in the best interests of all citizens. We reaffirm our support for farm commodity programs that serve the best interests of producers and consumers. The purpose of the Federal Farm Program is to ensure Americans an adequate supply of safe and wholesome food, provide some income protection to the food producers and protect our environment by providing incentives for soil and water conservation. We support efforts to reallocate unobligated Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) conservation funding to other farm bill conservation programs and remove climate-related restrictions included in the IRA.²⁰²⁴ The National Grange supports programs that will stimulate interest and appreciation for an expanding agriculture industry that provides an abundant supply of reasonably priced food and fiber to meet our domestic needs and still export the products of one out of every three acres into the world markets.
2. The National Grange continues to strongly support family farms as an integral and important contributor to stable agricultural production and rural communities. We call upon the President and Congress to support programs and policies that will help sustain and enhance family farms by increasing the net farm income, providing economic and tax incentives, and credit and/or tax credits for soil and water conservation - without escalating the advantages to non-farm investors. This includes recognizing Alpaca and Llama farming as a livestock business enterprise.
3. The National Grange believes that a family farm is a business or enterprise involved in the production of food, fiber, and related products or services that is owned and operated by the members of a family who make the management and financial decisions and supply at least part of the labor. We urge USDA to modify its programs to provide additional assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers.
4. The National Grange requests federal, state, and county governments streamline the process of transferring farms and other small businesses from one family member to another so that the cost of compliance and tax consequences do not prevent the transfer from occurring.
5. The National Grange will continue to support the use of lands for the production of food and fiber as long as the enterprises are operated under best management practices as established by the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

6. The National Grange encourages the U.S. Department of Agriculture to maintain the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) as individual agencies in order to enhance their critical roles in supporting farmer-owned cooperatives and the rural communities they serve.
7. Federal, state, and local agencies should work for efficient economic development policies that treat the agriculture industry on equal terms with other businesses and industries, such as small farmers. The National Grange supports government rural development programs that provide local off-farm employment for rural people and that provide an improved income for small and medium-sized farms.
8. The National Grange supports public relations programs that disseminate accurate information on the efficiency and productivity of American agriculture, as well as the contributions it has made in providing an adequate supply of food and fiber and the important role the food and agricultural industry plays in the nation's economy. A coalition of farm and commodity organizations working together on common problems is in the best interest of agriculture and rural communities. Such a coalition will strengthen and preserve the economic well-being of the family farm. The National Grange will continue to support and take an active role in maintaining an effective national farm coalition. We support efforts to organize farm-city meetings, farm-city visits, as well as efforts to enlist the cooperation of the news media in presenting agricultural news. We endorse the efforts of the Agriculture Council of America, Livestock and Meat Board, Animal Industry Foundation, National Milk Producers Federation, and other agricultural organizations in a united program to tell agriculture's story to the American public. We will cooperate with and support the efforts of other agricultural organizations in their educational programs pertaining to false, unproven, and misleading statements about the production and safety of agricultural commodities in order to present a true picture of environmentally safe farm and ranch best-management practices.
9. The National Grange supports efforts to enhance new economic opportunities for urban agriculture by supporting programs that provide mentorship and education.
10. The National Grange supports expanding the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production to provide guidance and conservation techniques for activities of urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production. ²⁰²⁴
11. The State Granges and the National Grange urge state and federal governments to strengthen, expand, and enforce farmland protection programs to save our farmland for food and fiber production by designing tax laws to enable farm families to pass their land on to future generations. The National Grange supports a reduction in capital gains taxes for retiring farmers who are willing to sell to beginning farmers. The National Grange will also work with Congress to find additional ways to contain urban sprawl through the use of purchasing development rights and conservation easements on agricultural land. However, we oppose the development of agricultural land trusts by financial institutions. We further oppose land purchase programs that involve the federal government as the purchaser and leaser of farmland.
12. The National Grange supports the creation of a Forest Conservation Easement Program, modeled after the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which would establish an easement option for working forestlands. ²⁰²⁴
13. The National Grange opposes efforts to utilize USDA grant funds to convert private forestland and prime farmland to ground-mounted solar panel installations. ²⁰²⁴
14. The National Grange supports farmers' markets, family farms, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) that produce and sell homegrown agricultural products. Grange policy also supports the creation of pilot programs that endorse the buying of local fruits, vegetables, and produce.
15. The National Grange urges the USDA to strictly enforce the Agriculture Foreign Investment Disclosure Act. We further oppose the use of public funds and/or the services of government agencies in the development of U.S.-based, foreign-owned agricultural enterprises.
16. The National Grange urges that a high-level staff position, with appropriate resources, targeting the prevention and minimization of agroterrorism be appointed as part of the Department of Homeland Security.
17. The National Grange encourages federal, state and local governments to protect agriculture against bioterrorism.
18. The National Grange supports allowing farm parcels with less than the new 10-acre minimum, but which have a previous history in the federal farm program, to continue to receive PLC (Price Loss Coverage) and ARC (Agriculture Risk Coverage) federal farm program payments.
19. The National Grange strongly supports beginning farmer and rancher programs and urges the USDA to modify its programs to give additional consideration to individuals and families who qualify.
20. The National Grange supports price insurance protection for farmers that considers the diversity of crops, commodities, production methods, target markets and regional differences.
21. The National Grange supports the US Department of Agriculture's incentive-based approach that would increase the implementation of climate-smart farm, ranch, and forestry practices. ²⁰²¹

Farm Labor

1. In the organization of farm laborers on the West Coast and other farm labor-intensive areas, it is evident that the consolidation of production units may lead to increased costs to the consumers and the producer because of possible disruptions caused by labor disputes. Therefore, while we continue to support the rights of individuals to organize, we call for sound approaches when dealing (with labor problems in the agricultural industry. Labor and management in the food and agricultural industries should seek solutions to labor problems without striking. To further this goal, we recommend establishing procedures for negotiating labor disputes that will minimize disruptive labor strikes, especially during critical

growing and harvesting periods. We also support a prohibition on the exclusive use of hiring halls for supplying agricultural labor and a prohibition on the use of secondary boycotts.

2. The National Grange supports a youth differential minimum wage rate for youth under the age of 18, so agricultural employers will be willing to employ such persons.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that will reduce federal funding for the Legal Service Corporation (LSC), a federal agency that provides legal services to the poor, including migrant farm workers. The LSC legal services should be limited to representing the poor in the courts, not an advocacy group for farm employees that investigates perceived violations of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act.
4. The Workman's Compensation Insurance Program should be the exclusive remedy for work-related injuries under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act.

Farm Safety

1. The National Grange supports a comprehensive farm-safety training program for the operation of farm machinery, use of chemicals, and animal management to be funded through the Cooperative Extension Service at land grant universities.
2. Machinery and wagons should be equipped with reflector tape. Farmers should be encouraged to use lights and reflectors or a reflective material on all sides of tractors and machinery that is traveling on public highways.
3. The National Grange strongly opposes any attempt by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to require that farmers, farm workers, or ranchers have commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) to transport their crops and/or their landlord's crops on the public highways.
4. The National Grange supports public awareness initiatives for rural road safety involving the presence of agricultural equipment to improve signage, education awareness, and promotional efforts.

Farmer Credit Programs and the Farm Credit System

1. The primary function of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan officers should be a lender of first opportunity for farmers/ranchers and veterans seeking funds for agricultural purchases. Caution must be exercised to avoid granting undue advantage to large operations at the expense of family-sized farming units. The Grange urges the FSA to strengthen farm loan programs. Loan programs should provide the needed short and long-term low-interest credit for soil and water conservation. We support providing emergency loans and management assistance during times of natural disasters, commodity embargoes, or economic setbacks to expedite the application, review, and granting process for these loans. During situations of economic stress facing FSA farm borrowers, we support maintaining the right of mediation on farm loan foreclosures. We further believe that the present owner/operator or beginning farmer should be given the first consideration of sale or lease in disposing of foreclosed farms.
2. The National Grange supports the separation of the truly agricultural production and farm ownership lending programs from lending programs generally associated with rural development, such as the Business and Industry Loan Program, water and sewer loans, and non-farm family homes, to free Farm Service Agency county office staff to better supervise agricultural production loans. Business and Industrial Loan Guarantee Programs should be administered so they do not interfere with providing credit to family farmers.
3. The National Grange supports Farm Credit Services programs that will service the needs of farmers who are actively and directly engaged in the production of agricultural commodities. We support retaining the present tax exemptions that apply to the Farm Credit, Services, and we specifically recommend that the Farm Credit Services create policies and programs that will assist young and beginning farmers. We oppose efforts by the Farm Credit System to increase its activities regarding insurance coverage for its farm borrowers.
4. The National Grange recommends that the lending authority of the Farm Credit Services be expanded to address the total needs of rural communities, including rural economic development. We support the financing of on-farm and off-farm facilities that add value to agricultural commodities or provide services to agricultural production and marketing as well as financing for agricultural exports to all foreign markets. We further support FCS financing directed toward the development of rural enterprises engaged in the development of alternative uses for agricultural commodities, the development of rural infrastructures, such as water and sewer systems, and the creation of state-of-the-art telecommunication systems for rural areas.
5. The National Grange supports requiring all agricultural lending institutions, including those under the Federal Reserve System, to consider the security and payment history of the applicant rather than relying entirely upon his/her cash flow.

Federal Programs, Commodity Loans, Target Prices, & Farm Storage Programs

1. The National Grange supports legislative and administrative actions that will obtain an economic return for the farmer on his investment of capital, labor, and management that is equal to that of the other segments of the economy. We support permanent programs for cotton, tobacco, peanuts, rice, corn silage, wool, and mohair. Farm programs should be based on units of production, not acreage, and provide the individual farmer with maximum flexibility in their planting and production decisions. Target prices for major commodities should be based on economic need, set in relationship to the national average cost of production, and set at a level that will not encourage overproduction or underproduction. Marketing loan programs for major commodities, including soybeans and minor oilseeds, wheat, feed grains, cotton, rice, and other government-supported commodities, should provide for a loan rate that is set at the national average cost of

production and that redeems the loan at the lesser of the original loan or the state's monthly, weekly, or daily average market price as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. The difference between the regular loan rate and the marketing loan is to be retained by the farmer, provided the loan differential is subject to the \$50,000 payment limit. In the absence of a marketing loan, the traditional loan rate should be set at or near the cost of production.

2. The National Grange supports the Farm Storage Facility Loans Program (FSFL) and a farmer-owned reserve program that will place limits on the total amount of a specific commodity that is to be held in reserve as well as place limits on the amount of a commodity that any one farmer can place in the reserve. Storage rates should be commensurate with the cost of on-farm storage to enable farmers to be in a better position to take advantage of storage payments. The Secretary of Agriculture should have discretionary authority to waive the interest charges on reserve loans. We further urge that there be strict monitoring of grain stored under loan contracts by county, state, and national USDA officers and State Departments of Agriculture.
3. The National Grange supports port terminals and storage facilities for feed grains.
4. The National Grange continues its long-standing support of the County and Community Committee System as the proper means of supervising and administering all farm programs. We pledge our full support for the federal government in investigating incidences of discrimination and in implementing action that will bring about changes to end racial discrimination in USDA policies. We urge stricter monitoring and enforcement of the USDA's farm programs in order to eliminate any abuse of farm program regulations. The Grange supports funding and staffing of local USDA programs and offices at levels that are consistent with congressional mandates. In meeting these mandates, we will support co-location and cross-agency use of personnel from various agricultural agencies within counties where offices now exist.
5. The National Grange encourages the United States Department of Agriculture to actively enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.
6. The National Grange supports immediate legislation by Congress, enacting the "Constructive Receipt" exemption in the 2002 Farm Bill, and in all future Farm Bills, to exempt advance program payments from taxable income for the year they are received and, instead, treat those payments as potentially taxable income for the year they were intended to cover.
7. The National Grange supports expanding funding to develop Broadband infrastructure in rural areas to better support Precision Agriculture.
8. The National Grange urges Congress to maintain funding for the National Organic Program and the Specialty Crops Block Grant Program.
9. The National Grange supports an update to the US Department of Agriculture Whole Farm Revenue Protection plan to revise Risk Management Agency insurance plans to make them more flexible and accessible to organic farmers.²⁰²¹
10. The National Grange supports additional funding in the farm bill for specialty crops, adding aquaculture products as a specialty crop, a review of the many definitions of "rural" to include the importance of agriculture to a geographic region, in addition to the number of people living in those areas.²⁰²³

Food and Meat Inspection Programs

1. The National Grange urges an increase in inspection on all livestock, feed, meats, dairy products and all by-products being imported from all countries to the United States for the protection of our animal industry. We support extending mandatory inspection regulations to seafood. We support legislation to implement pathogen detection and reduction strategies based on sound science that targets micro bio-contamination by pathogens that may be harmful to consumers. We request the USDA to strengthen the inspection process for meat and poultry that is being imported into the United States. However, we will oppose adopting "user fees" to pay for inspection services and or any changes in the system that will result in less than continuous inspection during processing of meat and poultry for human consumption.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to eliminate the unfair prohibition against the interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry products if the state meat and poultry inspection service is equal to or better than the federal meat and poultry inspection service system.
3. The National Grange will seek legislation to have the uniform expiration date stamped, not coded, on all processed food.
4. The National Grange strongly urges that the USDA work with State Departments of Agriculture on a cooperative effort to enforce and inspect egg production, including egg grading and egg safety. Furthermore, the National Grange supports the effort where USDA and FDA work more closely together on food safety issues and that the two agencies should be given more power to order food recalls and close firms with records of serial contamination violations.
5. The National Grange supports legislation requiring more open notice to the consumer on products containing M.R.M (machine-removed meat).
6. The National Grange opposes federal legislation that would presume that all food, including food produced for local market sale and consumption, should be treated as potentially hazardous and would require family farmers to produce and maintain onerous amounts of paperwork indicating what production inputs were purchased and when food produced on an individual farm will be consumed, in order to reach an unattainable goal of total traceability of all food produced in the United States, all the way through the food system. Additionally, the National Grange opposes federal legislation that would add an unwelcome layer of national bureaucratic paperwork to the business of producing food to meet local demand without demonstrating any commensurate food safety benefits to consumers or cost reductions that benefit family farmers or their local customers.

7. The National Grange supports the establishment of additional mobile slaughterhouses meeting USDA standards.
8. The National Grange supports legislation that would eliminate the second inspection of bulk bin apples by the Department of Agriculture before being exported to Canada.
9. The National Grange supports a rewrite of the Veterinary Feed Directive regulations to exclude on-farm animal feed or storage products.
10. The National Grange urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to review existing meat inspection policies and to provide additional marketing opportunities that allow privately owned custom butcher shops to slaughter, package and sell animals from local farms to local in-state communities for individual use without a USDA Inspector on site
11. The National Grange urges all consumers to be diligent in researching how food and non-food products certification revenues are used with regard to any secular category so they can buy with confidence.
12. The National Grange urges the President, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to force the Dietary Guidelines for Americans Advisory Committee to consider all legitimate and pertinent health studies when making their recommendations for a well-balanced diet rather than a low-fat diet.

Horticulture, Beekeeping and Honey

1. The National Grange recommends continuing research to improve the development of more freeze-resistant nursery stock and methods of frost control
2. The National Grange urges the USDA to revise the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) to provide more flexibility for producers to plant alternative varieties, establish stand densities, or determine planting locations.²⁰²⁴
3. The National Grange recommends, if necessary, that tariffs be placed on imported honey to protect the financial position of the U.S. bee industry, which is necessary for the pollination of U.S. agricultural crops. We support the enactment of federal laws that will provide for the inspection of honeybees and honeybee hives that are transported across state lines in an effort to better control the spread of honeybee diseases and parasites. We urge Congress to set up a “bee zone” and appropriate the necessary funds to stop or at least slow down the northward invasion of the killer bees. We further recommend that the USDA promote a program to educate the general public on the importance of bees, and on the destructive Africanized bees now invading the southern U.S.
4. The National Grange supports research efforts aimed toward solving the problem occurring with honey bee colony collapse. While a cause for this syndrome has not been identified, research strongly suggests that colony collapse may be caused by a combination of many factors, one of which is the prophylactic use of neonicotinoid pesticides in agriculture production. Therefore, the National Grange supports the designation of neonicotinoids as restricted-use pesticides.
5. The National Grange supports continued efforts by all Granges to utilize Managed Pollinator Protection Plans to make their properties better habitats for pollinators and to improve honeybee health.
6. The National Grange encourages agricultural universities and pesticide companies to develop pesticides that are not harmful to bees and other beneficial insects.
7. The National Grange opposes the ban or prescription restriction of over-the-counter antibiotics for the treatment of honeybees unless such restrictions are based on scientific information.
8. The National Grange supports increased research through the states in growing mushroom spawn.
9. The National Grange supports the expansion of Federal Crop Insurance and Multi-Peril Insurance Programs to include horticultural crops.
10. The National Grange calls upon the Department of Agriculture, Land Grant universities, and industries to continue research efforts to determine expanded uses for surplus fruits and vegetables.
11. The National Grange supports federal indemnity funding for specialty crop producers against loss through no fault of their own, such as diseases, viruses, and chemical contamination.²⁰²³

Livestock and Poultry Disease Control

1. The National Grange supports continued efforts to eradicate Brucellosis, Johne's Disease, Foot and Mouth disease, Bovine Leukemia virus, tuberculosis, and screw worms, as well as the continued monitoring of our nation's borders against re-infestation of these and other infectious livestock diseases.
2. The National Grange supports funding of increased research to control and eradicate poultry diseases and parasites. The National Grange also urges the USDA to work with State Departments of Agriculture on a cooperative effort to enforce and inspect egg production, including egg grading and egg safety.
3. The National Grange supports blood testing for Johne's disease in cattle. We further support the development of a test that can isolate the causal organism of Johne's disease in a shorter time frame.
4. The National Grange requests that health charts show freedom from TB and Brucellosis when dairy cattle are either sold or shown.
5. The National Grange opposes any ban on the use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry feed unless the Food and Drug Administration or other agencies have scientifically established and determined that the use of these antibiotics is detrimental to human health. We oppose any proposals to reclassify over-the-counter animal drugs as prescription-only drugs unless scientifically based information suggests drugs should be reclassified on a drug-by-drug basis. We strongly

recommend that all producers who use antibiotics, growth stimulants, and other feed additives abide by the directions for the use of and withdrawal provisions for such products

6. The National Grange supports the establishment of firm guidelines for the management of bison and elk in the National Parks to control the spread of brucellosis and the high risk of undulant fever in humans.
7. The National Grange supports the enforcement of puppy mill laws and regulations.

Livestock Production and Animal Care

1. The National Grange supports effective regulations to require interstate transporters of livestock to maintain transport vehicles in a sanitary condition in order to prevent the spread of disease.
2. The National Grange seeks a federal indemnification standby program for livestock and poultry diseases that are not presently covered. Such a program would apply only in cases that require condemnation and slaughter to eradicate or control the given diseases. We further support federal indemnity programs to indemnify farmers against loss through no fault of theirs in cases such as radioactive fallout, chemical contamination, and bioterrorism.
3. The National Grange supports legislation and rulings that will strengthen the Packers and Stockyards Act to ensure producers have adequate price discovery, price transparency, and fairness in the marketing of U.S. livestock.
4. The National Grange supports exotic animal farming provided it does not create a health hazard for the domestic livestock industry.
5. The National Grange continues to support the beef promotion programs. We urge State Beef Councils to join in cooperative efforts to target Beef Check-off Funds to larger consumer audiences. However, the National Grange recommends that the National Beef Promotion Board consider eliminating the \$1 "Beef Check-off" on any animal that, when sold, the farmer would receive \$20 or less.
6. The National Grange strongly supports the livestock, poultry and dairy industries as suppliers of food and fiber that are so necessary for today's standard of living. We will continue to inform the public of the economics and importance of the livestock industry and their contributions to a balanced nutritional diet. We will continue to cooperate with the Animal Welfare Coalition to combat misleading statements made by animal rights organizations regarding animal agriculture.
7. The National Grange believes that the regulation of livestock and poultry care should be a state issue and does not support the establishment of federal standards.
8. The National Grange supports efforts to prevent state and local governments from imposing a condition or standard on the production of covered livestock outside their own jurisdiction as a condition of sale.²⁰²⁴
9. The National Grange supports the use of lean, fine-textured beef in any beef products. The National Grange will work to develop a commercially acceptable term for cell-based proteins and support USDA to be the regulatory oversight agency responsible for cell-based protein production.
10. The National Grange supports using animals in animal agricultural research in order to advance the science of animal husbandry in the most humane and economic fashion. The National Grange opposes efforts to declare animals to be "sentient beings" and all efforts to give animals the legal protections to which humans are entitled. We support the development of educational programs that demonstrate the advantages and humanness of modern animal husbandry. We oppose any legislation and/or regulations that would hinder good animal husbandry practices. Instead, we support developing a code of "best management practices" for the care and maintenance of agricultural animals and other animals that are under human control. We also support efforts to severely punish any individuals and organizations that commit illegal actions against animal agricultural producers and animal agricultural and biomedical researchers and facilities. We support the voluntary efforts of farmers in reducing the number of injured or downer animals. We encourage livestock auction markets to continue their programs of not accepting animals that are injured or are too weak to stand. We support the efforts of commercial processing facilities to continue the humane disposal of unwanted agricultural animals.
11. The National Grange strongly opposes legislation calling for the severe curtailment of the veal industry by such measures as eliminating confinement stalls and crates. However, the Grange will work with the National Veal Association to correct or remove the veal production practices that are not within the guidelines of best veal management. We further recommend that a USDA grader be assigned to all veal calf slaughtering plants so that a farmer or seller receives a fair price from the packing plant for their veal based on the grade that was determined by the inspector and not the plant manager.
12. The National Grange supports rodeos, the use of animals in rodeos, and the great heritage rodeos represent.
13. The National Grange supports efforts to deal with concentrated animal feeding operations issues, emphasizing sensible control and enforcement, the development of nutrient management plans, developing cost-efficient odor reduction technology, and the zoning of agricultural districts. We continue to support the development and use of "the best management practices" for the handling of animal and poultry wastes. We support liability protection for farmers who follow the appropriate regulations and "best management practices." We also support strict laws that regulate large livestock enterprises so that they apply nutrients according to an approved nutrient management plan to assure that excess nutrients will not contaminate the waters of the United States. We continue to support strict construction standards to new earthen manure lagoons and set a phase-in period after which existing lagoons would have to meet appropriate standards. We support prohibiting indefinite storage of animal waste by requiring treatment according to federal wastewater standards if the waste is not applied to land or used in another environmentally sound matter. We further support regulations or other provisions to prevent animal owners from using contracts or similar arrangements to avoid responsibilities for animal waste

management. We support imposing tough new penalties on the worst polluters. However, we believe that the implementation of any rules and regulations forcing compliance with the Clean Water Act for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations should not become mandatory until all technical expertise and funding is secured and available for timely compliance with these directives.

14. The National Grange believes the Environmental Protection Agency should not be empowered or allowed to levy fines, fees, or any other monetary pressure based on natural emissions of livestock that may ultimately affect greenhouse gases.
15. The National Grange seeks legislation to accomplish a national identification for livestock and poultry. The program should include safeguards to protect the privacy of the farmers, and the Grange will work at all levels to have farmer privacy provisions included in the national identification for livestock program legislation. The National Grange supports the strict implementation of electronic identification for cattle as mandated by federal statute and expects USDA to protect private producer data to the fullest extent possible.²⁰²⁴
16. The National Grange encourages all livestock operations to follow the goals of the Beef Quality Assurance Program and the Pork Quality Assurance Program. These actions will help manage their herds with respect to the following:
 - a. proper use of pharmaceuticals;
 - b. management of their feed sources;
 - c. low-stress animal handling techniques;
 - d. proper housing and living standards;
 - e. proper transportation techniques and transport space requirements;
 - f. culling strategies to maintain optimum herd health; and
 - g. numerous other management tools that help to make the animals healthier, more comfortable, and, as a result, more productive.
16. The National Grange encourages public education on the value of livestock grazing as a land management and conservation tool when appropriate for reducing and managing wildfire fuel load, soil improvement, and healthy lands in public parks, forests, and other lands.
17. The National Grange supports efforts to restructure the fed-cattle buying market wherein beef packers would be required to purchase not less than 50% of their needs through negotiated bidding, and they must take delivery of all cattle purchased within 14 days of the purchase date.²⁰²¹
18. The National Grange urges federal lawmakers to make permanent the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Program.²⁰²³

Marketing and Cooperatives

1. The National Grange opposes any repeal of the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 and strongly supports agricultural cooperatives and the special legal status granted to agricultural cooperatives under this Act.
2. Agricultural cooperatives should be owned and controlled by farmers. We support tax law changes that would allow cooperatives to raise additional equity capital to expand cooperative operations as long as such equity does not undermine farmer ownership and control of their cooperative. We support allowing grain-marketing cooperatives to receive commodity loans.
3. The National Grange supports rural electric and telephone cooperatives that purchase, process, and market high-quality products and services to their members.
4. The National Grange urges the USDA and other appropriate agencies to continue their educational programs for farmers on the use of the futures market through hedging and other marketing options to increase farm profitability.
5. The National Grange supports the reinstatement of USDA livestock and crop surveys, such as the July cattle inventory report and county-level estimates for crops by the National Agricultural Statistical Service.²⁰²⁴
6. The National Grange continues to support the efforts of commodity organizations to improve the promotional activities for their products.
7. The National Grange endorses federal and state legislation to protect the bargaining status of cooperatives. Purchasers should be required to recognize and negotiate in good faith with the designated representatives of their producers. The right of producers to control by democratic means the selection of bargaining cooperatives to represent them should be guaranteed by law. Processors of agricultural products should be prohibited from intimidating growers or withholding growers' contracts because of membership in a bargaining association.
8. The National Grange supports extending the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1937 to include all agricultural commodities. Following the marketing order approval by a referendum of respective producers, regulations covering allocating aggregate market supply among markets in time, space, and form; trading practices; grading standards; container and other terms of sale should be issued under the order. The USDA should have the administrative responsibility to implement Federal Marketing Orders.
9. The National Grange urges the USDA to cooperate fully with the states in developing direct farmer-to-consumer marketing programs.
10. The National Grange recommends that the provisions of any check-off be approved by a majority of the producers of that commodity in a national referendum. Following producer approval, the programs shall be mandatory, without refunds, and no more than 5% of the check-off funds can be used for administrative costs. The funds shall be under the control of the promotion board with oversight responsibility in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

11. The National Grange supports a study to determine the feasibility of a check-off program for wheat to fund a research, educational, and promotional program on the nutritional benefits of wheat flour products.
12. The National Grange supports increased research by government and industry to discover and develop new uses and markets for agricultural commodities, including the development of value-added products with the aid of non-farm groups. We further support a national agricultural marketing policy that would encourage farmers to retain important production and marketing decisions in their own hands and that would encourage domestic, regional marketing cooperatives to develop a cooperative marketing federation that is capable of entering into the international market for selling farm commodities.
13. The National Grange supports integrating and coordinating existing state and federal governments' export marketing programs, such as the Market Access Program, the Market Promotion Program, and other similar programs that are designed to develop and expand foreign markets for U.S. farm products. We believe that these programs should be limited to domestic firms and targeted to new exporting companies, small businesses, and individual farmers who sell directly into export markets. We urge Congress and the USDA to reinstate the Export Enhancement Program in order to meet the price competition in world markets. New efforts should be made in the development of marketing programs to expand agricultural exports that encourage the participation of new export marketing groups, such as farm cooperatives and export trading companies. Farmers selling commodities directly into the export market should be subject to all of the protections and restrictions that apply to corporations and other commercial ventures that are selling into the export market.
14. The National Grange supports retaining present state standards for maple syrup and opposes any mandatory federal regulations that would be less stringent than present state regulations.
15. The Grange vigorously opposes any effort that would abolish the current practice of carcass quality pricing of beef and swine in favor of one value-fits-all price concept.
16. The National Grange supports the principle that the term "meat" can only be used to describe animal protein derived from harvested production livestock, poultry, seafood, or wildlife, wild or domestic. The USDA must retain the authority to regulate the emergence of the efforts to produce cell-cultured protein in a laboratory setting.

Production Management Programs

1. The National Grange supports voluntary production control programs as a way of balancing supply with demand. Production control programs should be based on controlling the number of bushels (amount of product) allowed to qualify for price support and by the requirements to set aside a specific percentage of a farm's crop production. We support eliminating any offsetting compliance requirements between farms related to production control programs but support maintaining cross-compliance requirements for crops grown on the same farm. We support paid production diversion with payments made in cash or in-kind if farmers first comply with set-aside and other non-paid production control programs. We further recommend that any land diverted from agricultural production under farm programs remain eligible for conservation cost-share practices. Program benefits, such as loans, deficiency payments, etc., should be set at a level that is sufficient to accomplish the program's objectives and should be made available only to producers who comply with the program's requirements.
2. Production yields should be based on the proven yield of the land on that farm. We support allowing farmers to re-establish their proven yields, but we further support requiring all crop production bases to be established using a soil suitability criterion rating rather than past crop history and changing farm programs so that a farmer will not lose their farm base from under-planting.
3. The National Grange supports the concept of a Cover Crop Program that is voluntary and incentive-based for all farm programs that involve government funding.
4. Surplus food purchased by the Government should in no way be sold at reduced prices to be in competition with ongoing farm prices. Instead, we encourage surplus foods to be given to charitable organizations. The National Grange encourages increased USDA purchases of surplus agriculture products to be given away through various food assistance programs.

Research and Extension

1. The National Grange strongly supports the Cooperative Extension Service (CES), as well as the land grant universities, in their effort to maintain a quality extension program in their respective states. The CES should continue to provide leadership to the agricultural and rural sectors with programs directed primarily at improving the quality of rural life. We recommend renewed federal funding for the State Farm Safety Specialist position and farm safety programs, establishing a job retraining program for displaced, disabled, or injured farmers and ranchers, maintaining a viable 4-H Program, and increased funding by all government entities so that the CES can provide information on alternative and sustainable agricultural practices and marketing methods.
2. The National Grange continues to strongly support adequate funding for basic and applied agricultural research from federal, state, and private sources. We encourage state departments of agriculture and state experiment stations to conduct research designed to achieve the same results. We specifically recommend full funding of the federal share of agricultural research, especially in cases of emergencies when increased research is required. We strongly support additional research to provide the technology that is pertinent to small-scale agriculture, including more emphasis on research in the areas of marketing, insect control, disease control, energy use, improved product quality, and soil and water management.
3. The National Grange supports increased funding for the National Seed Storage Laboratory in an effort to preserve plant material and seed germ plasma.

4. The National Grange will support the goals of sustainable agriculture research and education programs that will promote the most efficient and effective Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce soil loss due to erosion, protect water quality from degradation by substance discharge from agricultural operations, and to identify methodologies that will result in higher profitability from production through market development.
5. The National Grange supports the expansion of precision agriculture practices to include poultry and livestock production to make animal nutrition more effective, reduce the amount of waste, and reduce the nutrient levels in the waste.
6. The National Grange endorses organic farming research and education.
7. The National Grange urges continued research on the benefits and risks of using biosolids as agricultural fertilizer.
8. The National Grange encourages USDA and state agriculture experiment stations to identify and promote fire-resistant plants and encourage their planting in fire-prone areas.
9. The National Grange encourages the development of a Farm Corps program for apprenticeships and mentoring of new and beginning farmers. ²⁰²¹
10. The National Grange supports an educational path that prepares students for a career after high school, whether that is through higher education or Career and Technology Education pathway. ²⁰²²

Tobacco Policy

1. The National Grange recommends that the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture use simple regulations in requiring cigarette manufacturers to report only the total use of domestically grown and imported tobacco by class or kind of tobacco, thus leaving manufacturers the flexibility to adjust blends for their various brands of cigarettes to meet their customer demand.
2. The National Grange supports programs at the federal level to help tobacco farmers diversify their farming operations by raising and marketing alternative crops and will support new research programs to discover new uses for tobacco, such as a new source of protein.
3. The National Grange supports negotiations, regulations, or legislation to control the importation of low-grade, inferior-quality tobacco.
4. The National Grange supports steps to make U.S. tobacco more competitive in the world market. We urge that all tobacco that is exported as U.S. tobacco must be certified as 100% U.S. tobacco.
5. The National Grange continues to support the Tobacco Auction System and the necessary improvements to modernize the Auction System to meet new packaging ideas and technology in order to facilitate the movement of tobacco through the Auction System.
6. The National Grange opposes any proposals to ban the use of menthol in cigarettes.

USDA Responsibilities, Authorities & Organization

1. The National Grange strongly supports the U.S. Department of Agriculture remaining as an independent agency with the Secretary of Agriculture as a member of the President's Cabinet.
2. The National Grange supports the repeal of the USDA's personnel regulations that forbid USDA employees from actively participating in the meetings and other activities of farm organizations, from holding office in farm organizations, from participating in membership recruitment campaigns, or from acting as a volunteer financial or business agent of a farm organization. This should not change or alter USDA's other regulations concerning general employee conduct.
3. The National Grange strongly urges the USDA to devise plans to reduce the paperwork for farmers to participate in federal farm programs. We urge the USDA and its agencies to format all reports, applications, and paperwork that are to be filed by farmers so that they may be filled out via computer media using commonly accepted word processing programs and returned to the agency for processing.
4. The National Grange urges the USDA to increase oversight of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to decrease fraud and ensure that SNAP is only used for its defined purposes.
5. The National Grange urges the USDA to review and recommend changes to current EBT (electronic benefit transfer) eligibility guidelines in order to avoid unintended consequences to the beneficiary.
6. The National Grange supports legislation to simplify the business application of the current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) so that businesses may more easily become participants.
7. The National Grange supports SNAP reform so that the income of family dependents under the age of 21 and attending secondary school shall not be counted against the SNAP eligibility for the total household. ²⁰²⁴
8. The National Grange supports increasing the available funding for food bank distribution centers. ²⁰²²

Miscellaneous

1. The National Grange supports the agricultural weather forecasting service.
2. The National Grange continues to support the development of aquaculture. We urge aqua-cultural farmers to use care and caution in the placement of rearing pens in public waterways so as not to interfere with common waterway uses.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would ensure a producer the "right to harvest" any legally planted crop regardless of any environmental or regulatory action arising between planting and harvest time.
4. The National Grange supports the production of industrial hemp when production is done within the guidelines of applicable state and federal laws.
5. The National Grange opposes EPA regulations that concern dust-blowing attributed to agricultural operations.

6. The National Grange actively supports revising the standards so that all meats in the national school lunch program are required to meet the new standards used by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service.
7. The National Grange urges the United States Congress to direct the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to amend their rules to allow consumption of grapes, whole milk, flavored milk, and potato products by students in school meal programs and to insert that language into the next Farm Bill.
8. The Grange, at all levels, supports initiatives to encourage the use of farm structures as a base for communication antennas.
9. The National Grange seeks a more aggressive position on the issue of irrigation water shared by the U.S. and Mexico on behalf of the U.S. interest and that the period of payback for the excess usage of irrigation water be limited to two years rather than five years.
10. The Grange supports legislation that offers a form of reimbursement of student loans for large animal veterinarians committing to work in private practice.
11. The National Grange supports the market availability of GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking devices to monitor the locations of agricultural/farm equipment locations.
12. The National Grange opposes efforts that mandate the adoption of all-electric agricultural vehicles and related equipment.²⁰²⁴
13. The National Grange supports legislative efforts that would allow individuals involved in agriculture as well as independent mechanics to have access to diagnostic software, information, and other necessary technological tools used to repair modern farm equipment.
14. The National Grange opposes expanding the definition of areas considered “navigable waters” as defined under the 1968 Clean Water Act.
15. The National Grange urges all appropriate federal, state, and local government agencies to expedite the harvest and removal of beetle-kill trees from all public lands.
16. The Grange will support a cotton program that provides for a marketing loan at a level that will encourage the continued exportation of cotton, as well as research into the eradication of detrimental insects.
17. The National Grange supports legislation that will assist in reducing the threat of wildfires across the United States.
18. The National Grange supports amending the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act to declare foreign ownership of farmland as a matter of national security, restrict foreign ownership to no more than ten percent share of any U.S. food production or processing capacity, prohibit foreign ownership of farmland within 50 miles of any U.S. military installation, and add the Secretary of Agriculture as a standing member of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.²⁰²³
19. The National Grange opposes mandatory environmental, social, climate, or governance disclosure that requires carbon emissions tracking by agricultural production operations.²⁰²⁴
20. The National Grange urges the USDA to create a comprehensive program specifically designed to support farmers and ranchers with disabilities and to allocate sufficient funding to achieve practical results.²⁰²⁴
21. The National Grange encourages the Department of Education to adopt a program that allows local schools to partner with local agricultural communities to purchase local production for their school lunch programs.²⁰²⁴

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Agriculture Committee for their hard work and **many** long hours before the Convention, for the past 8 months. Thanks to those committee members who worked to educate other committee members about artificial Intelligence (AI), to make it work for the committee. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly and efficiently.

Thank you to the IL State Grange for the use of Zoom. We were able to use that time to deliberate on resolutions, construct the Policy Statement, and examine the National Grange Agriculture Policy that needed to be updated.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

Kevin Cooksley (NE) – Chairperson

Lynette Schaeffer (IL) – Secretary

Melanie Bostwick (KS)

Melvin Phelps (NY)

Wayne Campbell (PA)

Allen Stiles (MD)

Mike Griffin (ME)

AUDIT & BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

The members of the Audit and Budget Committee thank the National President, Executive Committee and the National Grange staff for presenting us with a budget that allows us to continue with the programs and projects of the National Grange.

This budget for 2025 was unlike any budget prepared for the National Grange in many years. The sale of our headquarters at 1616 H Street Northwest has a dramatic impact on both the income and expenses of the National Grange.

The investment of the funds from the sale of the building will provide us with income but we must be mindful stewards and remain conservative with our spending in an effort to allow the principal to grow for future generations of Grange members.

We recommend that a portion of the income generated from the sale of the building be earmarked for new projects such as Project Sustenance, which will create awareness of the Grange and all of our programs.

Dues on all levels of the Grange remain the lifeblood of our Order, and it is imperative that every Grange across the country encourage membership growth. While every member should make a serious effort to attract new members, it is extremely important that we pay attention to our longer-tenured members. We must be cognizant of their needs and make sure that they feel valued and respected.

We encourage the National Grange Executive Committee to explore alternative options for the dues collection system. We feel that the dues system should be “turned upside down” and the dues should be collected by the National Grange with the portions for State Granges and Community Granges distributed by the National Grange on a quarterly basis. We also encourage dues payments be made electronically through a subscription service.

The members of the Audit and Budget Committee recommend that the dues increase that is being presented at this session be adopted. This is a way to generate additional income for the National Grange and will give us the resources to provide additional programs and member benefits as well as make a financial investment in our future.

It is our responsibility as leaders of the Grange to work with our Membership Director to design and create strategies for success in our membership recruitment efforts. Has your Grange considered offering members requesting to be dropped from the Grange an E-membership for a period of 1 year to keep them informed of the activities of the Grange? Hopefully, these E-members will see the benefit of membership and maintain their E-membership moving forward.

We encourage all members to continually monitor the many member benefits that are listed on the National Grange website and to take advantage of these benefits as they are not only a benefit to the membership, but many of these programs provide an ongoing revenue stream to the National Grange. Few organizations give such value for the small monetary contribution from its membership.

The Communications Department continues to expand communications to the State Granges, Community Granges and our membership. Some of these programs include the bi-weekly Grange Today and our quarterly subscription-based *Good Day!* publication.

We applaud the Communications Department for the continued innovation in our quarterly *Good Day!* magazine. *Good Day!* is available as a traditional magazine or as an online magazine. *Good Day!* is truly an asset to the National Grange. Most of the costs for the magazine are underwritten by partners of Grange Advocacy. At the present time, we have around 600 subscribers. We encourage all members to subscribe to the *Good Day!* magazine and enjoy a wealth of different articles. Please go home and promote this wonderful publication to your members.

We as leaders must continue to update our mailing and membership lists and use the database that is provided by the National Grange. This is not to “sell” our membership lists but for us to be able to communicate with our members electronically as many members prefer to receive communications electronically rather than through traditional channels.

The Grange is rich in history and tradition. We look forward to seeing the implementation of new programs to strengthen, broaden, and enrich our Grange experience.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

Res. #	Origin	TITLE	ACTION
204	Committee	Pertaining to Feasibility Study for National Grange Headquarters	Adopted – Study Committee
205	Committee	Covered Expenses for Officers and Delegates	Adopted

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY DELEGATE ACTION

204-AB Committee – Pertaining to Feasibility Study For National Grange Headquarters

WHEREAS: The decision of the location of the National Grange Headquarters is a vast and complex decision.

RESOLVED: The National Grange will create a committee made up of 1 member from each Region and 1 member from the National Grange Executive Committee to conduct a feasibility study for the location of the National Headquarters. The finding of the study will be presented at the 2026 National Grange Session; be it further

RESOLVED: The delegate body will have a voice and vote regarding the new location.

205-AB Committee – Covered Expenses for Officers and Delegates

RESOLVED, the National Grange will reimburse \$700.00 for each voting Delegate, National Officer, and approved non-delegates for the 2025 National Grange Convention; be it further

RESOLVED, that all reimbursement will take place after the 2025 National Grange Convention.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Audit and Budget Committee for their hard work. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly and efficiently.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

John Benedik (NJ) – Chairperson

Joyce Billquist (MT) – Secretary

Dwight Baldwin (IA)

Duane Hamp (WA)

Susan Hanks (CA)

Chip Narvel (DE)

Buddy Overstreet (TX)

Judy Sherrod (TN)

Sarah Strawder (KS)

CREDENTIALS REPORT

This is the report of the Committee on Audit and Budget that deals with the credentials of the delegate body. The Secretary's records show the following states have 15 or more Granges, have their dues paid for the current year, and the following duly elected delegates are entitled to be seated as representatives of these states at the 158th Annual Convention of the National Grange.

State	First Delegate	Second Delegate
California	Joseph Stefenoni	Susan Hanks
Colorado	Gary Wardell	Kathy Wardell
Connecticut	Robert Buck	Theodore (Ted) Powell
Idaho	Eileen Javaux	Richard Javaux
Illinois	Lynette Schaeffer	Don Schaeffer
Maine	Sherry Harriman	Adrian (Mike) Griffin
Massachusetts	Corey Spence	Christopher Dean
Michigan	Christopher Johnston	Connie Johnston
New Hampshire	Tricia Taylor	Leroy Watson
New Jersey	John Benedik	Pete Pompper
New York	Sandra Green	Melvin Phelps
North Carolina	David Allen	Crystal Allen
Ohio	Mike Russell	Debbie Russell
Oklahoma	Billy Shufeldt	Donna Keeton
Oregon	Sonny Hays-Eberts	Jay Sexton
Pennsylvania	Matthew Espenshade	Wayne Campbell
Rhode Island	Walter Hartley	Danielle Hartley
Vermont	Kendal Holden	Joseph Goodrich
Washington	Tom Gwin	Brittney Pittman

The Secretary's records show the following states have the required 6 to 14 Granges, have their dues paid for the current year, and the following duly elected delegates are entitled to one vote and are entitled to be seated as representatives of these states at the 158th Annual National Grange Convention.

State	Delegate	Alternate Delegate
Delaware	Stephen Seuberth	Anna Seuberth
Indiana	Jason Smith	
Iowa	Dwight Baldwin	Kathy Baldwin
Kansas	Nathan Strawder	Sarah Strawder
Maryland	Richard Stonebraker	
Minnesota	Ann Bercher	Donna Champion

Montana	Joyce Billquist	Marty Billquist
Nebraska	Kevin Cooksley	
Tennessee	Judy Sherrod	
Texas	Karen Overstreet	Buddy Overstreet
Virginia	James Taylor	
West Virginia	Barbara Foster	
Wisconsin	Debbie Vine	

Potomac Grange No. 1, Washington, D.C., is represented by Mark Gibbons.

2025 Proposed Budget

OPERATIONAL BUDGET DETAILS				
 National Grange	2025 Operational Budget			
	2025 Budget	TOTAL	ACTUALS Q1 - Q3 2024	Q4 2024 Total - 2024
REVENUE				
Membership Dues & Fees				
Subordinate Grange Dues	672,000	497,340	164,791	662,131
E-Membership Dues	2,600	2,280		2,280
GIA Supportive Membership	48,000	36,015	12,005	48,020
Subordinate Grange Charter Fees	500	475		475
Sixth Degree Fees	200	140		140
Seventh Degree Fees - Note a	-	630		630
Bond Insurance Fees	14,100	14,107		14,107
Assessments	-	47,596		47,596
Total Membership Dues & Fees	737,400	598,583	176,796	775,379
Donations & Grants				
Donations & Contributions	500	3,608		3,608
Grants		299,663	49,663	349,326
Total Donations & Grants	500	303,271	49,663	352,934
Convention Income	-	58,257		58,257
Merchandise & Magazine Income				
Merchandise Sales	20,000	15,637		
Membership Benefit Commission	4,000	4,000		4,000
Magazine Subscriptions	9,600	8,454		8,454
Shipping & Handling Fees	2,600	2,061		2,061
Total Merchandise & Magazine Income	36,200	30,152	-	30,152
Interest Revenue				
Interest Income	-	7,609		7,609
Interest Revenue	-	7,609	-	7,609
Other Income				
Trademark Licensing Income	23,000	23,040		23,040
Advocacy Overhead Reimbursement	125,000	95,000		95,000
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset	-	616		616
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Building Sale	-	8,990,748		8,990,748
Miscellaneous Income	150	155		155
Total Other Income	148,150	9,109,559	-	9,109,559
TOTAL REVENUE	922,250	10,107,431	10,107,431	10,107,431

OPERATIONAL BUDGET DETAILS				
 National Grange	2025 Operational Budget			
		ACTUALS	Q4 2024	Total - 2024
2025 Budget	TOTAL	Q1 - Q3 2024		
EXPENSES				
Cost of Goods Sold	16,500	16,185		16,185
Personnel Expenses	556,000	404,003	147,151	551,154
Professional Services				
Legal Fees	105,000	234,934		234,934
Accounting Fees	84,000	68,330	16,050	84,380
Payroll Processing Fees	1,200	878	264	1,142
Service Contracts	18,250	15,541	2,700	18,241
Consulting Services	1,500	1,025		1,025
Design Services & Media Production	550	531		531
Marketing & Outreach Services	5,500	4,570	722	5,292
Repairs & Maintenance	1,000	4,419		4,419
Other Professional Services	10,000	904,436		904,436
Honorariums	16,000	3,125		3,125
Awards	4,000	2,836	803	3,639
Seminars & Workshops	250	200		200
Corporate Insurance	20,000	19,821	3,102	22,923
Total Professional Services	267,250	1,260,646	23,641	1,284,287
Occupancy Costs				
Utilities	-	11,088		11,088
Telephone & Internet	12,000	8,963	2,420	11,383
Rental	37,900			
Real Estate Taxes	-	191,868		191,868
Total Occupancy Costs	49,900	211,919	2,420	214,339
Office Expenses				
Supplies	15,000	14,600		14,600
Postage & Shipping	7,500	6,960	209	7,169
Printing	6,800	6,560		6,560
Dues & Subscriptions	20,000	17,071	2,836	19,907
Hardware	2,500	1,554		1,554
Equipment Leasing	11,000	8,106	2,321	10,427
Website Expenses	3,000	2,892		2,892
Total Office Expenses	65,800	57,743	5,367	63,110
Conference Expenses				
Leaders' Conference	5,000	314		314
Total Conference Expenses	5,000	314	-	314
Travel Expense				
Travel, Meals & Lodging	33,000	27,954	1,486	29,440
President's Travel Meals & Lodging	15,000	11,051		11,051
Total Travel Expense	48,000	39,005	1,486	40,491

OPERATIONAL BUDGET DETAILS



National Grange

2025 Operational Budget

2025 Budget	TOTAL	ACTUALS Q1 - Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Total - 2024
Interest Expense				
Interest Expense	-	11,196	45	11,241
Interest Expense	-	11,196	45	11,241
Other Expenses				
Bank Charges & Fees	4,000	2,931	772	3,703
Paypal Charges & Fees	3,750	2,502	810	3,312
Filing Fees & Taxes	200	14,415		14,415
Bad Debt Expense	-	10,568		10,568
Total Other Expenses	7,950	30,416	1,582	31,998
TOTAL EXPENSE	1,016,400	2,031,427	181,691	2,213,118
Change in Net Assets from Operations	(94,150)	8,076,004	(181,691)	7,894,313
Change in Net Assets from Non-Operations				-
Investment Income	200,000	270,707		270,707
Interest Income	\$ 200,000			
Total Investment and Interest Income	\$ 400,000			
Non-Operating Expenses				
Depreciation & Amortization	16,143	14,318	1,825	16,143
Total Non-Operating Expenses	16,143	14,318	1,825	16,143
Change in Net Assets from Non-Operations	383,857	256,389	(1,825)	254,564
TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	289,707	8,332,393	(183,516)	8,148,877

CITIZENSHIP & TAXATION COMMITTEE REPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

CITIZENSHIP

Broadcasting

The National Grange supports public broadcasting concepts, improved service for our rural communities, and continuing federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting through self-supporting sources of financing.

Broadband

Broadband and cellular connectivity must be priorities to ensure every American equitable connectivity.

Elected Officials

The National Grange urges all elected officials to work across party lines to ensure the best outcome for all persons they represent. The National Grange supports an amendment to the United States Constitution that should read: "Congress shall make no law that applies to the citizens of the United States that does not apply equally to Senators and/or Representatives, just as Congress shall make no law that applies to the Senators and/or Representatives that does not apply equally to the citizens of the United States." Further, when the federal government is shut down because Congress has failed to pass proper funding, Congress should not be paid for the period of the shutdown.

Elections

The National Grange urges all of its members to exercise their right to vote. We further recommend that all ballots and pertinent instructions for all elections be printed in the English language only. Proof of citizenship is to be required at the time of voter registration, at the polls and/or anyone requesting an absentee ballot with federally approved photo identification to verify they are a legal voter within this country and proper state. We oppose same day registration voting laws.

Government and Legislative Affairs

The National Grange believes all government-mandated programs and agencies must contain "sunset" provisions, including a target termination date; systematic and continuous reviews of all mandated programs be made periodically by an appropriate board of review and all mandated programs must be funded and financed by the government of origin and that at any point funding is not provided, the mandate will be removed.

The National Grange strongly opposes the use of any commission, council, or other consortium of non-elected appointees to create legislative mandates that Congress must adhere to, that are not subject to judicial review or the American system of checks and balances.

Government Service

The National Grange encourages the federal government to provide assistance immediately following the successful request by a State Governor for a declaration of a national disaster in the United States, supports efforts to improve the collection and dissemination of accurate and timely statistical data by all federal agencies, encourages legislation to require the Commerce Census Bureau to return to inclusion of a separate category for farm families.

Government Spending

The National Grange strongly advocates for Congress to put aside partisan politics to pass a balanced budget, prevent federal government shutdowns, and ensure a permanent solution to our deficit problems. The National Grange believes the issuance of Social Security, other critical social service monetary supplements, military salaries, benefits, or expenses should not be affected, delayed or reduced, should a federal government shutdown occur.

Native Americans

The National Grange supports the continuation of all rights and privileges enjoyed by Native Americans as U.S. citizens, including fulfilling all responsibilities associated with such citizenship, which includes being subject to the same laws as other citizens.

Patriotism, Prayer, and Religious Observances

The National Grange strongly supports joining with like-minded organizations along with churches and individuals to protect our religious freedoms and the First Amendment.

Social Security

The National Grange encourages Congress to positively reform the Social Security System to ensure its future solvency and use Social Security funds for Social Security programs only.

Social Welfare Programs

The National Grange supports legislation that would require drug testing to be included in the eligibility requirements for welfare recipients. The National Grange supports requiring additional means to facilitate the identification and location of each child's parent for purposes of welfare recovery.

Veterans Affairs

The National Grange supports the continued operation of all Veterans' Hospitals and veterans' eligibility for medical care and benefits.

Miscellaneous

The National Grange supports the creation of a Presidential Blue-Ribbon Commission on the preservation of the American Dream to ensure that our country is stronger tomorrow than it is today.

The National Grange supports a simpler, legal route to employing guest workers, which will permit them to enter the country, work for a specific time in a specific location, and then return home.

The National Grange supports all rights that are granted in the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights and urges Congress not to consider legislation eliminating or repealing these rights.

TAXATION

Business, Investment, Capital Gains, and Inheritance Taxation

We support depreciation schedules for agricultural capital assets that accurately reflect the useful life of those assets.

Personal Income Tax

The National Grange supports developing a simpler and fairer federal income tax code, written in precise, plain and understandable language. We further support simplifying the language that is used in the government's instruction pamphlets for filing individual income taxes.

Sales, Excise Taxes, and Internet

The National Grange opposes the enactment of any national sales tax or any form of value added tax.

Taxes - General

The National Grange supports the tax treatment of agricultural cooperatives as non-profit entities.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES. #	State	TITLE	ACTION
301	OR	National Government Office Age Limits	Adopted
307	CA	Establish Guardrails in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Adopted
309	VA	Recognize and Support the Affordable Connectivity Program or Similar Program	Adopted
310	PA	United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains	Adopted
311	PA	Student Debt Forgiveness Tax Credit for Agribusiness	Adopted
316	NY	Social Security Expansion Act	Adopted as Amended
317	NY	TRUST Act	Adopted

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY DELEGATE ACTION

301-OR – National Government Office Age Limits

WHEREAS: In the federal government, there is a constitutionally enforced minimum age for a person to be sworn in to national office, there is no maximum age that a person can be when sworn into office; and

WHEREAS: It is a proven fact that as we age, both our bodies and our minds slow down and lose their ability to perform at the prominent level that is needed to run the United States of America; Therefore, be it

RESOLVED: The National Grange support age limits for federal office wherein all U. S. federal elected officials when they reach the age of eighty (80) be required to retire at the end of their current term.

307-CA – Establish Guardrails in the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

RESOLVED: The National Grange support the establishment of guardrails and ethical principles in the development and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including but not limited to the following:

1. **Accountability:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems must be designed and implemented in a manner that ensures responsibility and accountability at all stages of their use, including clear accountability for decisions made by Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems.
2. **Transparency:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems should operate in a transparent manner, with clear explanations for their decisions, enabling users and stakeholders to understand and trust Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven processes.

3. **Bias and Fairness:** Efforts must be made to eliminate biases in Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms, ensuring fairness and equity across all user demographics and avoiding discriminatory outcomes.
4. **Data Privacy and Security:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems must respect privacy rights, copyright and trademark laws and ensure that data is collected, processed, and stored securely, and protect individuals from unauthorized access or misuse.
5. **Regulatory Oversight:** Appropriate regulatory frameworks should be implemented to monitor and govern the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, including mechanisms for addressing grievances and holding organizations accountable for harm caused by Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems.
6. **Human-Centric Design:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems must remain tools to enhance human capabilities, ensuring that Artificial Intelligence (AI) augments human decision-making rather than diminishing human agency.
7. **Workforce Impacts:** Policymakers and industry leaders should take steps to mitigate the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on employment by investing in retraining programs, promoting job creation in emerging industries, and supporting workers whose jobs may be affected by automation.
8. **Ethical AI Development:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) developers should be guided by ethical considerations in designing, training, and deploying Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems, ensuring that they are aligned with societal values and priorities.
9. **Protection of intellectual property/trademark:** Policy makers and regulators implement the strictest penalties when infringement of intellectual property/trademark rights are discovered; and be it further

RESOLVED: that The National Grange urge governments, industry leaders, researchers, and civil society organizations to work together to establish these guidelines, ensuring that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used for the common good, minimizing harm, and fostering trust among all stakeholders.

309-VA – Recognize and Support the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or Similar Program as Essential Infrastructure for Equitable Access to Resources

WHEREAS: the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has been a pivotal force in diminishing the digital divide, providing essential internet access to underserved communities; and

WHEREAS: in our increasingly digital world, access to reliable internet is crucial for education, healthcare, and maintaining social connections; and

WHEREAS: the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the critical need for digital connectivity for remote learning, telemedicine, and virtual communication; and

WHEREAS: equitable access to these digital resources is paramount for ensuring full participation in the 21st-century economy and society; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange recognize the Affordable Connectivity Program or similar program as a crucial component of the nation's infrastructure, ensuring equitable, high speed access to the internet for educational, health, and social purposes; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange advocate for sustained and increased funding for the ACP or similar program to ensure its ongoing efficacy and reach, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange advocate for the enhancement of the accessibility of the ACP or similar program through simplification of application processes and amplification of public awareness campaigns, targeting the most vulnerable populations, including low-income families, seniors, and residents in rural areas; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange encourage collaboration between government bodies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and private entities to augment the impact of the ACP or similar program, especially focusing on innovative solutions to high-speed internet connectivity challenges; and be it further

RESOLVED: that The National Grange advocate for establishing comprehensive data collection and reporting systems to assess the effectiveness of the ACP or similar program, ensuring its adaptation and improvement of universal high speed internet service over time; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange engage in advocacy and educational efforts to raise public awareness about the ACP's or similar program's role in achieving digital equity; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support the regular updating of the ACP or similar program by incorporating technological advancements to ensure the program remains effective and relevant in the rapidly evolving digital landscape; and be it further

RESOLVED: that, by adopting this resolution, the National Grange affirm our dedication to recognizing and advocating for the Affordable Connectivity Program or similar program, as an indispensable element of our national infrastructure, key to achieving equitable access to vital digital resources for all citizens.

310-PA – United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains

WHEREAS: a tax on unrealized gains would impose a financial burden on farm owners, individuals, and businesses without the actual realization of income or cash flow; and

WHEREAS: such a tax could create significant uncertainty and complexity in financial planning and investment decisions for farm owners, individuals, and businesses; and

WHEREAS: the taxation of unrealized gains may disproportionately impact farm owners, investors, and companies whose assets have appreciated in value but have not been sold, potentially leading to economic inefficiencies; and

WHEREAS: the introduction of a tax on unrealized gains could disincentivize investment and innovation, impacting overall economic growth and job creation; and

WHEREAS: implementing a tax on unrealized gains would require extensive administrative resources for valuation and compliance, increasing costs for both taxpayers and the government; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange oppose the implementation of a United States Federal Tax on Unrealized Capital Gains.

311-PA – Student debt forgiveness tax credit for agribusinesses

WHEREAS: the cost of a college education continues to rise and there is a growing shortage of workers for the agribusiness and farm sector; and

WHEREAS: according to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, nearly 580,000 Pennsylvanians – or one in 10 jobs – are employed in the agriculture and food industry, and that over the next decade, more than 75,000 new and replacement jobs will become available in the agriculture and food industry in PA; and

WHEREAS: of those anticipated vacancies, the Department has identified the most in-demand occupations will span sectors like production agriculture; animal health and veterinary services; landscaping; food manufacturing; forestry, lumber and wood products; and conservation and natural resources; and

WHEREAS: agribusinesses and farmers are seeking ways to recruit and retain a vibrant workforce; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support the development of a tax forgiveness program for agribusinesses and farmers who provide student loan assistance to their employees for Federal loans.

316-NY – Social Security Expansion Act

WHEREAS: many older Americans rely on Social Security for most, if not all his/her income; and

WHEREAS: many economists claim Social Security will run out of funds in the very near future if adjustments are not made to fund the system; and

WHEREAS: Social Security's Cost of Living Adjustment does not always keep pace with increase in the price of goods and services; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that National Grange support passage of the Social Security Expansion Act of 2023, S.393. or similar

317-NY – TRUST Act

WHEREAS: some members of the U.S. Congress are not disclosing all of his/her investments, which could create a conflict of interest when writing/voting on certain legislation; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support passage of the Transparent Representation Upholding Service and Trust in Congress (TRUST) Act, or similar legislation to require members of Congress to publicly disclose all of their personal investments.

PRESENT POLICY: CITIZENSHIP

Broadcasting

1. The National Grange supports the concept of public broadcasting and urges improved service for our rural communities. The National Grange supports continuing the present level of federal funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, in addition to self-supporting sources of financing.
2. The National Grange supports the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in its efforts to help rural areas receive satellite TV reception. The National Grange supports legislation to ensure that satellite dish owners in rural areas pay no more for their service than cable TV subscribers in the cities do. The Grange supports regulations requiring satellite television companies to provide rural customers access to more than one predetermined set of local channels including local public access channels in the customer's region.
3. The National Grange supports the continuation of religious broadcasts on radio and television.

4. The National Grange urges Congress to maintain the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a watchdog agency to protect the public from unfair practices and monopolies. We oppose media mergers where one company can control all forms of media. We encourage the FCC to provide ample opportunity for new media companies and medium-sized media companies to be able to compete.
5. The National Grange supports the elimination of foul language, obscenities, and vulgar images used on TV, radio, or public places and fully supports the increased penalties for violations imposed by the FCC.
6. The National Grange urges the FCC to ban the use of emergency vehicle sirens in all radio advertisements to prevent hazards and confusion on the roadway.
7. The National Grange urges Congress and the Federal Communications Commission to require broadcast media to maintain a constant volume level during an entire broadcast, including commercials.
8. The National Grange reaffirms its support for the 1934 Federal Communications Act, and The National Grange favors allowing up to 49% foreign ownership of a U.S. communications company as a method to exit or avoid bankruptcy for a short term (less than or equal to seven years) period; and that the National Grange believes that no one foreign entity should own more than a 25% stake in a U.S. communications company in the long-term.

Elected Officials

1. The National Grange favors changing the term of office of Congressional Representatives from two to four years. We also favor a maximum of 12 years of consecutive service for Senators and Representatives. We also support age limits for all elected officials to be set at the age of eighty (80).²⁰²⁴
2. The National Grange supports a ban on automatic salary increases for elected officials and Members of Congress, separate from those of judges and other federal government employees. All Congressional pay raises should be considered by Congress during normal business hours and on their own merits as a separate entity to be discussed in open committee hearings and voted on by roll call with a three-fourths majority voting in the affirmative as opposed to being attached to an unrelated piece of legislation. Any approved Congressional pay increases should take effect at the next session of Congress. The National Grange further favors strengthening and strictly enforcing the law limiting the number of gifts and money that members of Congress can accept.
3. The National Grange urges members of Congress to participate in both Social Security and the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). We further recommend that all laws, including employment laws, apply to Congressional members.
4. The National Grange opposes rules that permit members of the United States Congress to block other members' bills from being placed on the floor.
5. The National Grange supports an amendment to the United States Constitution that should read: "Congress shall make no law that applies to the citizens of the United States that does not apply equally to Senators and/or Representatives, just as Congress shall make no law that applies to the Senators and/or Representatives that does not apply equally to the citizens of the United States, including health care insurance programs and rates." Further, when the federal government is shut down because Congress has failed to pass proper funding, Congress should not be paid for the period of the shutdown.
6. The National Grange supports the requirement of those sworn in to testify before Congress to include "so help me God" in their swearing-in.²⁰²²
7. The National Grange supports legislation to require members of Congress to disclose all their personal investments²⁰²⁰ and to divest or place in a blind trust any specified investment owned by the Member, the Member's spouse, or a dependent of the Member. This requirement applies for the entire period of a Member's service in Congress and for 180 days after that service ceases.²⁰²²

Elections

1. The National Grange urges that projections and/or final results of national elections should not be reported or broadcast by the news media until the polls have closed in all states.
2. The National Grange urges all of its members to exercise their right to vote. We further recommend that all ballots and pertinent instructions for all elections be printed in the English language only. Proof of citizenship is to be required at the time of voter registration with federally approved photo identification when voting. We oppose same-day registration voting laws.
3. The National Grange supports the current Electoral College system for presidential and vice-presidential elections.
4. The National Grange supports a change in the qualifications for appointment as a United States Supreme Court Justice requiring the candidate to be a citizen of the United States of America.
5. The National Grange supports the federal campaign law that requires public disclosure of the names of persons who contribute \$1,000 or more and anyone who contributes \$100,000 or more to be posted on the Super PAC website within 24 hours and must stay on the website until the completion of the campaign.
6. The National Grange opposes United Nations representatives at any U.S. polling location.
7. The National Grange supports laws requiring individuals to show appropriate/proper identification at the polls and/or anyone requesting an absentee ballot, to verify they are a legal voter within this country and proper state.

Government and Legislative Affairs

1. The National Grange strongly opposes the use of any commission, council, or other consortium of non-elected appointees to create legislative mandates that Congress must adhere to, that are not subject to judicial review or the American system of checks and balances.
2. The National Grange supports the present status of Washington, D.C. as both a “federal city” and the nation’s capital, which is not affiliated with any state government and not a separate state in and of itself. We further favor restricting the Congressional delegates from non-tax paying territories of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico to being non-voting members of Congressional committees.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would specifically make protection of private property rights and then compensating private property owners for property that is taken for public use as a part of the federal statutes. The National Grange supports strengthening the Constitution’s guarantee that a person owning property has the right to control such property, including restricting trespassers, and excluding liability for injuries to a trespasser.
4. The National Grange supports a constitutional amendment that allows the President to exercise a line-item veto for budget appropriations and authorization bills.
5. The National Grange opposes all legislation limiting the individual’s ability to lobby and communicate with our elected officials either directly or through organizations such as the Grange.
6. The National Grange supports the continuation of public tours of the White House.
7. The National Grange supports allowing military recruiters to bear arms inside recruiting centers.
8. The National Grange supports the inclusion of a question on census forms as to whether a person is a U.S. citizen.

Government Service

1. The National Grange supports efforts to improve the collection and dissemination of accurate and timely statistical data by all federal agencies. The National Grange encourages legislation to require the Commerce Census Bureau to return to inclusion of a separate category for farm families.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would make compliance with regulatory requirements regarding equipment and services for volunteer fire departments contingent upon providing financial assistance to those volunteer fire departments.
3. The National Grange urges the federal government to provide assistance immediately following the successful request by a State Governor for a declaration of a national disaster in the United States.
4. The National Grange supports legislation to reclassify public safety telecommunicators and dispatchers to the same protective first-responder classification as police and firefighters.

Government Spending

1. The National Grange strongly advocates for Congress to put aside partisan politics to pass a balanced budget, prevent federal government shutdowns and ensure a permanent solution to our deficit problems. The National Grange believes the issuance of Social Security, other critical social service monetary supplements, military salaries, benefits, or expenses should not be affected, delayed or reduced, should a federal government shutdown occur.
2. The National Grange supports efforts at all levels of government to reduce costs and excessive paperwork, to review regulations, and to generally reduce any undue influence of government on the private sector. We favor the review of all tax supported federal incentive programs for possible reduction or elimination. We encourage all levels of government to downsize and/or eliminate government jobs where possible.
3. The National Grange supports the enforcement of regulations to assure that government programs abide by the bidding process, when appropriate.

Native Americans

1. The National Grange supports the continuation of all rights and privileges enjoyed by Native Americans as U.S. citizens, including fulfilling all responsibilities associated with such citizenship, which includes being subject to the same laws as other citizens.

Patriotism, Prayer, and Religious Observances

1. The National Grange strongly supports maintaining The Star-Spangled Banner as our National Anthem. The National Grange supports legislation to maintain the wording of the current Pledge of Allegiance including the words “Liberty,” and “under God.” The National Grange believes that the Pledge of Allegiance should be recited in every U.S. school classroom and by members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives during their opening sessions each day.
2. The National Grange favors making new National Veterans Cemetery facilities available.
3. The National Grange believes the American flag be treated with all due respect in accordance with recognized flag etiquette and protocol. We support the purchase of American flags made in the USA and made from domestically produced materials.
4. The National Grange opposes any attempts by any federal, state or local government agency to dictate membership qualifications for any social or fraternal organizations.

5. The National Grange joins with other like-minded organizations along with churches and individuals to protect our religious freedoms and the First Amendment. We support the words "In God We Trust" remaining on our currency and as our national motto.
6. The National Grange supports maintaining November 11th as Veterans Day. We also support legislation to provide available facilities with mental health support to all veterans returning from military life. ²⁰²⁴
7. The National Grange opposes the removal of any Federal monuments and supports reinstatement of all Federal monuments that have been removed. ²⁰²¹

Social Security

1. The National Grange encourages Congress to positively reform the Social Security System to ensure its future solvency. The National Grange urges the continuing investigation of all Social Security programs ensuring that only those who are eligible are receiving benefits. The National Grange supports using Social Security funds for Social Security programs only. We oppose the utilization of any funds from the Social Security Trust Fund to achieve a balanced federal budget or for any purpose other than Social Security benefits.
2. The National Grange urges Congress to revise Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other programs for the elderly and handicapped so that an individual's benefits will not decrease if they decide to marry.
3. The National Grange favors making Social Security benefits completely exempt from personal income taxes. The National Grange supports legislation that would remove all Social Security "Earning Limits" for individuals.
4. The National Grange supports any and all federal bills that would eliminate the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions, therefore restoring full Social Security benefits to public employees and surviving spouses.
5. The National Grange supports reform that would expedite the application for and processing of Social Security Disability benefits for all clients.
6. The National Grange urges Congress to amend the Social Security Act to assure that a beneficiary is paid for the month of his or her death. However, the Grange encourages the Social Security Administration to remove deceased persons from the rolls of social security and terminate all benefits to that person; this includes being more diligent in updating its Death Master File.
7. The National Grange encourages legislators to raise the Social Security Death Benefit to at least \$500.
8. The National Grange supports legislation to increase Supplemental Social Security asset limits and earnings in line with the economy and rate of inflation. ²⁰²³

Social Welfare Programs

1. The National Grange supports requiring additional means to facilitate the identification and location of each child's parent for purposes of welfare recovery.
2. The National Grange supports legislation that would require drug testing to be included in the eligibility requirements for welfare recipients.

Telecommunications

1. The National Grange supports legislation to promote an integrated telecommunications network to assure widely available, high-quality telecommunications to all of the nation's users at a reasonable cost as was originally intended by the Communications Acts of 1934 and 1996. We further believe that access to affordable and reliable broadband Internet service is vital to preserving the quality of life in rural America. The National Grange supports the modernization of the Universal Service Fund (USF) to secure last-mile (wireline or wireless) connectivity for rural Americans to broadband, thereby creating jobs, enhancing the economy, and boosting local businesses. The National Grange supports a national broadband policy that will provide federal government funding for rural broadband infrastructure improvement and streamline federal, state, and local permitting and regulatory reviews to expedite the deployment of communications facilities. ²⁰²⁴
2. The National Grange supports continued strict enforcement of the Federal Communications Commission's national "Do Not Call List." The National Grange supports the expansion of the Do Not Call List to include computer-dialed political telemarketing, including, but not limited to, charities and political groups. No one calling a household for commercial or charitable request reasons may use a restricted number or call a phone with a restricted number.
3. The National Grange recognizes the importance of the Universal Service Fund (USF) to the American public, especially in rural communities.
4. The National Grange will work with telecommunications coalitions to encourage an increase in the number of cellular towers and new technologies where needed in rural America.
5. The National Grange urges Congress to appropriate the necessary funding to combat the continuing cyberspace warfare threats to the United States in the 21st century.
6. The National Grange supports the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or similar programs as an essential component of America's infrastructure to achieve digital equity. ²⁰²⁴
7. The National Grange opposes any relinquishing of control of the American internet access to the UN or any foreign entity.

8. The National Grange encourages the recognition of varied computer needs and the need for consumer choice to use traditional forms of communication such as landline phones and hard copy wiring. ²⁰²³

Veterans Affairs

1. The National Grange supports the continued operation of all Veterans' Hospitals and veterans' eligibility for medical care and benefits. We further support the continuation of the current Disabled Veterans' Compensation Schedule, maintaining the current benefits and the criteria for qualifying. The National Grange encourages additional federal funds to be appropriated for the Veterans' Administration for the purpose of improving the service and care of service men and women in the Veterans' Administration hospitals.
2. The National Grange believes disabled veterans should remain eligible to receive all their service-related retirement benefits and any other benefits to which they are entitled without offsets or reductions. Also, the National Grange supports legislation requiring the U.S. Veterans Administration to pay all benefits to veterans, effective the first day of the month that the veteran was diagnosed with the service-connected presumptive condition. Further, the Grange calls upon Congress to support the inclusion of 100% service-disabled veterans in the Space Available Program operated by the Air Mobility Command.
3. The National Grange urges all levels of government to protect the parental rights of military personnel, such as custody or visitation rights while serving in combat on active duty.
4. The National Grange supports allowing all veterans registered in the Veterans Administration health care system and residing in nursing facilities, both private and state-owned, to receive their drugs through the VA pharmacies at the patient's co-pay price prior to admission.
5. The National Grange urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue the use of Veterans Administration Medical Centers and allow Veterans to seek community-based medical attention. All veterans' medical services should be paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs Services.
6. The National Grange supports legislation allowing for a separate 10% disability rating by the Veterans Administration for each ear when veterans suffer from Tinnitus as a result of military service.
7. The National Grange supports the extension of the Veterans Administration Mortgage Protection Life Insurance to all service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.
8. The National Grange supports legislation to increase to \$50,000 the maximum coverage a service-connected disabled veteran can purchase under the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Program.
9. The National Grange supports legislation that would direct the VA to select a VA medical facility to serve as the national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of biological children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of service members exposed in combat to toxic substances.
10. The National Grange supports legislation that would allow any non-citizen who has served in the armed forces of the United States and their immediate family to be offered an expedited path to full citizenship during their service or upon receiving an honorable discharge.
11. The National Grange encourages the development of housing for homeless veterans and encourages the use of alternative housing units.
12. The National Grange supports that complete medical records be made available to the service member at the time of separation for future Service-Connected Issues that may manifest after separation from service.
13. The National Grange supports legislation that would direct the Department of Defense to ensure that all National Cemeteries provide full military honors and leaves unchanged the current eligibility requirements earned through military service. ²⁰²²
14. The National Grange reaffirms its position to lobby for honorably and medically discharged veterans and their families to be given preference when applying for low-income housing. This includes Federal subsidized housing developments, whether governmental or private. ²⁰²²
15. The National Grange strongly encourages that funding for Veterans' Social Security and Medicare benefits not be reduced by Congress. ²⁰²³

Miscellaneous

1. The National Grange supports all rights that are granted as stated in the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights and urges Congress not to consider legislation eliminating or repealing these rights.
2. The National Grange supports making English the official language of the United States. The National Grange supports legislation to require that English be used on all government forms throughout the United States.
3. The National Grange favors the establishment of a new branch of the Smithsonian dedicated to the nation's food and farm heritage.
4. The National Grange supports the National Council on Disabilities efforts to ensure rights of parents with disabilities to raise children.
5. The National Grange supports the National Weather Service and other alert systems that relay important life-saving storm warnings over streaming services.
6. The National Grange urges Congress to pass the "Junk Fee Prevention Act" or similar legislation to protect consumers from excessive, hidden, and unnecessary fees when purchasing entertainment tickets, communication service fees, and the seating of young children next to parents on aircraft. ²⁰²³

7. The National Grange supports legislation to strengthen consumer protections for peer-to-peer app users to clearly state security protocols used to protect users' information, clearly explain reimbursement policies, disclose who they share consumer data with and the purpose for sharing, and allow users to delete their personal data if they no longer want to use the service. ²⁰²³
8. The National Grange supports legislation that prohibits card only business transactions and allows cash to be accepted at all institutions as a form of payment. ²⁰²³
9. The National Grange supports the establishment of ethical and sustainable fair-use guidelines to govern the use of artificial intelligence. ²⁰²³
10. The National Grange supports legislation to update the definition of "genetic" testing to include direct-to-consumer commercial genetic testing companies, forbid the use of genetic data without the person's consent, and ensure such data is stored securely. ²⁰²³
11. The National Grange supports legislation to address concerns about United States competitiveness by prohibiting goods from non-market economies or those in the United States Trade Representative's priority watch list from benefitting from de minimis treatment. ²⁰²³
12. The National Grange urges Congress to pass legislation to protect all pension assets, even if they are sold, bartered, or traded to a non-qualified plan. ²⁰²³
13. The National Grange will work with all entities to establish guidelines that ensure Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used for the common good, minimizing harm, and fostering trust among stakeholders. ²⁰²⁴

PRESENT POLICY: TAXATION

Business, Investment, Capital Gains, and Inheritance Taxation

1. The National Grange supports legislation to permit farmers to use the method of depreciation that is most suitable to the uncertainties of their businesses. We support depreciation schedules for agricultural capital assets that accurately reflect the useful life of those assets. In particular, we support a depreciation schedule of 15 years for single purpose farm structures. The National Grange supports legislation to eliminate the reporting of government funded environmental and conservation cost-share monies as income to the recipients. We oppose the use of income tax write-offs from farming to reduce the amount of taxes that are owed on the earnings of non-farm businesses or professions.
2. The National Grange supports an Investment Tax Credit or accelerated depreciation with a \$100,000 value eligibility limit.
3. The National Grange supports preferential treatment for capital gains income. We support the abolishment of the capital gains tax and oppose the implementation of a federal tax on unrealized capital gains. ²⁰²⁴ Until then, we support indexing the basic value of an asset so that only the real gain, and not the inflation value, is subject to the capital gains tax. We support excluding capital gains up to \$500,000 from the sale of agricultural lands from taxable income. We further support excluding all of the proceeds on the sale or exchange of qualified farmland development rights to a tax-exempt conservation organization from all capital gain taxes. We further support allowing farmers to invest any un-excluded capital gains from the sale of real and personal property into tax-deferred accounts, such as IRAs.
4. The National Grange believes that employees should not be liable for un-remitted income or FICA taxes if the employer properly withheld those taxes from the employee's pay but then failed to make the proper payments to the IRS or the state.
5. The National Grange opposes the enactment of any federal tax on securities transactions.
6. The National Grange supports the uniform application of all timber depletion allowances in the tax code to all timberland owners regardless of the size of their timberland holdings.
7. The National Grange supports legislation abolishing the federal estate tax, especially for small business and agriculture as long as their ownership stays in the family and the farm stays in productive agriculture. We support retaining current provisions for a full stepped-up basis on inheritances. We favor using the current use value as the basis for the property for estate tax purposes. The National Grange further supports a personal exemption from federal estate taxes of ten million dollars.
8. The National Grange supports federal tax credits or tax deductions to growers or grower co-operatives that build or own ethanol production facilities.
9. The National Grange supports legislation prohibiting employers from borrowing from an employee's pension fund. The National Grange supports legislation that would place employees or former employees, who had invested in their employers' stock as part of their retirement plan, ahead of payments to other creditors during bankruptcy.
10. The National Grange supports prosecution of cooperative executives and others suspected of illegal actions resulting in a cooperative declaring bankruptcy.
11. The National Grange urges Congress to oppose any future legislation allowing the IRS to implement percentage fees on banking transactions.

Personal Income Tax

1. The National Grange supports developing a simpler and fairer federal income tax code, written in precise, plain and understandable language. We further support simplifying the language that is used in the government's instruction pamphlets for filing individual income taxes.
2. The National Grange favors continuing 5 and 10-year averaging of lump sum distributions of pension funds for income tax purposes.
3. The National Grange favors indexing all federal income tax brackets for inflation.
4. The National Grange supports a 100% tax deduction for all qualified charitable contributions for all federal taxpayers.
5. The National Grange supports equalizing the mileage rates for volunteer services and medical transportation with mileage rates permitted for businesses for tax purposes.
6. The National Grange favors income tax credits for those families who care for their elderly or handicapped relatives, who otherwise would become residents of a nursing home. We further support exempting all benefits paid under Long Term Care insurance from all income taxes.
7. The National Grange supports a federal income tax credit for law enforcement officers for purchasing their own bulletproof vests.
8. The National Grange supports expanding medical flexible spending accounts to allow employees or retirees to set aside part of their pre-tax pay or pension. We further recommend that any unspent medical flexible spending account balance be rolled into the next year's account or refunded to the employee or retiree as taxable income.
9. The National Grange supports a 100% federal income tax deduction for all medical insurance.
10. The National Grange urges Congress to give farmers and ranchers flexibility in the tax code to adjust quickly to estate planning challenges.
11. The National Grange opposes the creation of IRS and Treasury Department authorities that require banks and financial institutions to report the account balance and total income and outflow of all bank accounts, and these departments should be required to obtain a court order to obtain this information. ²⁰²¹

Sales, Excise Taxes, and Internet

1. The National Grange opposes the enactment of any national sales tax or any form of value added tax.
2. The National Grange supports federal law prohibiting any charges or taxes on e-mail or the use of the Internet. The National Grange opposes any new or increased excise tax on telecommunications.

Taxes - General

1. The National Grange supports the tax treatment of agricultural cooperatives as non-profit entities.
2. The National Grange supports a federal prohibition on the imposition of any tax or fee on water that is drawn from private wells, lakes, and irrigation ponds.
3. The National Grange supports tax policies that will preserve the ability of this nation to find and produce domestic oil and gas resources. We support the current oil import fee and the domestic crude oil fee.
4. The National Grange supports tax exemption for income that is raised by non-profit organizations such as the Grange.
5. The National Grange supports a further strengthening of the "Taxpayers' Bill of Rights." We support placing the burden of proof on the IRS - not the taxpayer - under due process of law and providing a course of action in which the taxpayer could defend himself and recover his costs and attorney fees should the IRS fail to prove its case. We support giving the taxpayer the right to record all interviews with IRS representatives and to set a reasonable time and place for meetings. We support prohibiting the IRS from sending out bills that are in excess of owed taxes, except for interest and penalties.
6. The National Grange supports the rights of local governments to use tax-exempt municipal financing without further limitations being imposed by Congress.
7. The National Grange supports requiring a two-thirds vote of each House of Congress to increase taxes. We also support federal legislation that explicitly limits the authority of all courts in the United States to order a state or political subdivision to levy or increase taxes as a remedy for any civil litigation.
8. The National Grange opposes any sale/distribution of information from individual tax returns to any agency or individual. The National Grange believes that tax preparers should be vigilant in their obligation to comply with the privacy standards of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and the privacy rules of the Federal Communications Commission.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Citizenship and Taxation Committee for their hard work and many long hours before the Convention. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly and efficiently.

Thank you to the Michigan State Grange for the use of Zoom. We were able to use that time to deliberate on resolutions, construct the Policy Statement, and examine the National Grange Citizenship and Taxation Policy that needed to be updated.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

Christopher Johnston (MI) – Chair

Corey Spence (MA) – Secretary

Crystal Allan (NC)

Sherry Harriman (ME)

Debbie Vine (WI)

Robert Buck (CT)

Mike Russell (OH)

Gary Wardle (CO)

Harry Greer (CO)

Martha Stefenoni (CA)

POLICY STATEMENT

We encourage responsible stewardship of our natural resources. We define responsible Stewardship as a balance between use, preservation, and the environmental standards appropriate to regional needs. The National Grange is a strong advocate for land stewardship. We believe protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources are vital. We further believe education of the public regarding the importance of natural resources is an absolute necessity.

The National Grange advocates for conservation programs. These programs should encourage farmers to operate in an environmentally sound manner, focusing on scientific and technical assistance, research, education, loans, and cost-share programs.

The National Grange seeks a strong and effective Farm Bill that is critical to producers and consumers of American agricultural goods. It is fishers and hunters who look to the Farm Bill to secure access and preservation of land through conservation titles.

The National Grange understands agriculture is part of climate change and efforts to accomplish Net-Zero greenhouse emissions in the United States. We demand American agricultural data, rather than worldwide data, be used to provide a more accurate picture of greenhouse emissions in our nation and consistent sources of data be used. The National Grange supports the use of Best Management Practices and any mandates regarding agriculture reducing emissions be accompanied with economic incentives to lower the impact on agricultural producers.

We recognize plastic and other non-biodegradable materials are a significant environmental nuisance. The National Grange supports legislation that will promote the use of shorter life plastic and biologically degradable materials.

The National Grange recognizes the unique role agriculture plays in land and environmental management. The National Grange supports transparent data disclosure of any environmental testing and/or modifications conducted by any governmental agency. We advocate for flexibility in the interpretation of environmental laws for traditional land uses taking into consideration environmental situations across the country and encourage agricultural producers to engage in Best Management Practices in their operations.

The National Grange supports coordination among Federal, State and Local Governments in developing land use management plans. We urge Congress to include voluntary incentive-based assistance for conservation practices by farmers, ranchers, foresters, developers, and landowners in future Farm Bills, maintaining a commitment to conservation. We urge the United States Department of Agriculture to use scientifically based research when crafting regulations to implement the conservation portions of the Farm Bill. The optimum result should be the environment be protected with the least amount of prime, productive farmland taken out of production.

The EPA Waters of the United States has emerged through court rulings and legislative activity, with the potential to overreach into farms as it has before. The National Grange stresses navigable waters remain in the definition of the Clean Water Act.

Food waste is a problem, as approximately half of the food grown in the country is thrown away without being consumed. The Grange should be involved in efforts to reduce food waste while helping the environment.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES. #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
402	CA	United States Forest Service Funding	Adopted
403	ID	Delisting Grizzly Bears from the Endangered Species Act of 1973	Adopted

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

402-CA – United State Forest Service Funding

WHEREAS: The United States Forest Service (USFS) is responsible for managing 193 million acres of land in the National Forest System (NFS), conducting forestry research, and providing assistance to state, local, private, and international forest owners. The USFS is an agency within the Department of Agriculture, but it receives discretionary appropriations through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill; and

WHEREAS: The USFS was allotted 7.018 billion dollars for its day to day operations managing those lands held in trust for the good of the American People in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, with an additional 2.3 billion dollars allotted under the Wildfire Adjustment (WA)¹ to combat the growing threat of wildfires to the ecological stability and sustainable harvest of resources on public lands; and

WHEREAS: Over the previous five years the USFS was allotted the following amounts:

- \$7.865 Billion in FY 2023 (10.075 with WA)²
- \$8.726 Billion in FY 2022 (10.846 with WA)³

- \$5.383 Billion in FY 2021 (7.423 with WA)⁴
- \$5.483 Billion in FY 2020 (7.433 with WA)⁵
- \$6.941 Billion in FY 2019; and

WHEREAS: While the overall budget of the USFS has increased, the majority of that increase following FY 2019 has come in the form of Wildfire Adjustments as the Forest Service has needed to pivot and react to larger, and more devastating wildfires on public lands; and

WHEREAS: In September of 2024, after multiple years of rapidly increasing operational costs due to inflation, unofficial rumors began circulating online that the USFS was over budget by at least 750 million dollars up to an estimated 1 billion dollars⁶, and that cuts to non-fire seasonal positions, as well as services to the public would be conducted in 2025 in order to make ends meet if the budgetary constraints by congress continued; and

WHEREAS: These reductions may affect campground availability, recreation opportunities, public outreach, and actions the FS is required to take following litigation and legislation efforts; therefore, be it;

RESOLVED: The National Grange urges Congress to seek additional annual increases to the United States Forest Service budget so that all agency goals and obligations to the public can be completed and oppose further budgetary cuts.

403-ID – Delisting Grizzly Bears from the Endangered Species Act of 1973

WHEREAS: over the past 60+ years, the Grizzly Bear population has grown; and

WHEREAS: due to their status as an endangered species, their numbers have increased from approximately 600-800 bears across Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming to an estimated 2,220 bears; and

WHEREAS: this substantial population growth has led to an expansion of their range, resulting in conflicts with summer subdivisions and individual forest property owners; and

WHEREAS: hikers and hunters are at risk of being mauled or killed while participating in their outdoor activities; and

WHEREAS: Grizzly Bears have preyed on livestock within legal grazing areas, and pets are also in danger; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support [the efforts of other organizations advocating for] the delisting of Grizzly Bears from the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

PRESENT POLICY

Clean Air Act

1. The National Grange supports a clean air policy that will best protect agricultural interests, relieve automotive passengers, freight users and carriers of costly and unnecessary restrictions, and will protect the physical and economic health of industry and the general public.
2. The National Grange proposes that Congress determine state compliance to the Clean Air Act by statute and not by administrative regulations. Until then, we urge state and national administrative flexibility in deadlines for meeting Ambient Air Quality Standards. The National Grange strongly urges the EPA to retain the existing National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone.
3. The National Grange opposes any national mandatory motor vehicle emission inspection and maintenance programs. We oppose any national law or regulation that would require the use of "stand-alone" vehicle emission testing facilities. The National Grange supports exempting agricultural equipment and machinery manufactured prior to January 1, 1993, from the current Clean Air Act.
4. The National Grange supports the use of Freon until such a time as safer and more suitable alternatives are found or a proven substitute.
5. The National Grange favors reducing sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions from coal-burning plants. The National Grange encourages more research into clean technology and revision of EPA standards for the use of coal and gas in building new generating plants. The National Grange opposes any "Cap and Trade" bill or related legislation concerning climate change that would restrict greenhouse gas emissions.
6. The National Grange opposes the adoption of the United Nations Climate Change Treaty or the Kyoto Protocol agreement on greenhouse gas emissions by the United States until uniform standards for greenhouse gas emissions are applied to all major countries, regardless of their economic development. In the meantime, we support the following measures: expansion of voluntary efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions; scientific research and educational programs on climate; investing in the development and deployment of new technologies and urging utilities to update their older plants, bringing them into compliance with the current Clean Air Act.
7. The National Grange supports a program of government incentives that will reduce commuting by private vehicle, increase subsidies for mass transportation or carpooling, and sponsor more research to make alternative energy cars viable.

Clean Water Act and Wetland Management

1. The National Grange supports federal clean water laws and regulations that are] enforced uniformly between the states. While our goal is a zero percent pollution standard, we understand that this goal is unrealistic and unobtainable.

2. The National Grange recommends that adequate State and Federal funds be provided for any soil or water conservation program required by the Clean Water Act, including at least 75% of the federal cost share on agricultural best management practices (BMPs) for non-point source pollution abatement administered through local conservation districts. The National Grange urges Congress and the President to clarify Clean Water Act Section 303 (d) so that the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) will be reasonable and attainable without extreme hardships placed on agriculture and other industries. Furthermore, the National Grange urges State and Federal Governments to fund conservation programs that will help farmers and municipalities meet the goals of TMDL and Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) with regard to the Chesapeake Bay cleanup.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to provide funds to study water quality regarding groundwater contamination. We further support the creation of groundwater protection and management plans that will limit the amount of toxic chemicals in groundwater, realizing that a policy of no degradation is unobtainable. We support local control of groundwater management and management plans and support the enforcement of penalties to cities and towns that improperly dump waste in our streams and waterways.
4. The National Grange opposes efforts to require states to designate any watersheds with populations of threatened or endangered species as an Outstanding Resource Watershed that would further impede the use of that water by traditional agricultural users.
5. The National Grange supports the US Supreme Court's holdings regarding the Congressional intent of the phrase "navigable waters" as used in the Clean Water Act that limits the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the US Environmental Protection Agency to regulate inland waters and wetlands. We oppose legislative efforts to remove or amend the definition of "navigable waters" in the Clean Water Act.
6. The National Grange supports legislation to improve the wetland regulatory programs by Federal, State and/or Local Governments to streamline the permitting process; delineate wetlands by categories based on readily identifiable natural characteristics, environmental value, function, and abundance; refine the wetland mitigation system; improve the system of compensation for private landowners; and increase the role of the states in the wetland permitting process. We further support exempting wetland designations from areas that are artificially created by irrigation, stock water ponds, fire protection ponds, or have been cropped for one of the last five years.
7. The National Grange supports the creation and funding of the Chesapeake Bay Resilient Farms Initiative, modeled after the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative. ²⁰²¹

Conservation Reserve and Agriculture Conservation Programs

1. The National Grange supports a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that will provide long-term solutions to natural resource concerns on our nation's farms. We believe that CRP programs should be integrated with other environmental protection programs and should have a high environmental benefit to the cost-ratio by accepting only highly erodible land for 10 years at a rental rate that is in relationship to its productive value. We believe that the commodity base acres in CRP land should remain as a production reserve and only be transferred to other production acres to meet increased export demand. However, we favor eliminating the offsetting and cross-compliance provisions as they relate to the Conservation Reserve Program.
2. The National Grange recommends that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) enforce the inspection of CRP land for noxious weed control. CRP payments should be withheld from the owners of the CRP tracts that are infested with noxious weeds until the (FSA) or NRCS certifies that the noxious weed control program is being carried out by the landowner. To assist landowners in their responsibility to control noxious weeds, we further urge the USDA (subject to state FSA Committee rules) to change the date, when mowing to control noxious weeds is allowed on CRP lands from July 15 to at least as early as June.
3. The National Grange supports federal funding for soil conservation, including sufficient funding to retain technical assistance for conservation. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program) appropriations should be maintained at a level that will significantly help meet the conservation needs of America's farmland. EQIP to complete needed conservation practices and CSP to maintain those practices. Conservation contracts should follow land ownership with penalties assessed for the destruction of said practices before the final contract date. In the event that any federal conservation cost-share funds are granted to states, all such funds should be made available to farmers for cost-share payments. EQIP and CSP funds should be used for the cost-sharing program for which they have been appropriated, and none of these funds should be diverted for administrative costs of the states' delivery systems.
4. The National Grange urges each State Grange to work with their respective Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) agencies to implement Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs).
5. The National Grange opposes any legislation or initiative that would require Federal acquisition of private land or water for the preservation of 30% of all land and water by 2030. ²⁰²¹

Energy Conservation

1. The National Grange supports voluntary and economically viable energy conservation for agriculture, industry, commerce, and the home.
2. The National Grange encourages the voluntary "energy efficient" construction of new structures without mandating retrofitting existing structures.
3. The National Grange supports economic assistance to low-income persons and those who are on small, fixed incomes to help them pay for the high cost of energy.

4. The National Grange endorses the continuation of state and federal subsidies for home and business generation of solar energy.
5. The National Grange supports all oil and gas price decontrol as a positive step in reducing our need for foreign oil and gas. We oppose any increase in taxes and/or any decrease in tax credits (i.e. depletion allowance) on natural gas and oil production. The National Grange believes that all companies, including farm cooperatives, should be allowed to sell gasoline at both the wholesale and retail levels without divesting. The National Grange supports the following practices to guard against supply uncertainty and unreasonably high prices:
 - a. retain one billion barrels of U.S. oil reserve while supplies are adequate; and
 - b. encourage greater use of natural resources, especially those that are renewable and non-polluting. The National Grange only supports further releases from the U.S. Strategic Oil Reserve in the event of war or interruption of delivery of foreign supplies of petroleum into the U.S.
6. The National Grange supports legislation to direct the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to set fuel economy standards at their maximum feasible level, taking into account technical feasibility, safety, and the economic impact to the public. The National Grange urges increased research and development of more fuel-efficient internal combustion engines.
7. The National Grange supports restricting the use of Helium for personal use and maintaining the supply for industrial uses.

2023

Energy Development

1. The National Grange urges the repeal of laws and regulations that have discouraged the United States' energy production by private enterprise. We support a national energy policy that will encourage the development of all forms of domestic energy, traditional and alternative in a scientific and environmentally sound manner in order to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. The National Grange believes all domestically produced hydroelectric power should be classified as renewable energy under all applicable Federal and State statutes.
2. The National Grange favors the complete utilization of petroleum and other mineral resources, including the exploration and production of oil reserves on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and from any outer continental shelf lease sales in accordance with the terms of an environmentally sound development plan.
3. The National Grange supports legislation requiring the nation's motor fuels to contain a renewable component (Biodiesel and/or Ethanol). We support the increased development and use of ethanol and ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE) in gasoline blends with adequate income tax incentives to make the production and use of ethanol and ETBE economically feasible.
4. The National Grange supports the use of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas production in all hydrocarbon-producing strata.
5. The National Grange supports regulated oil and gas production in the United States, which protects landowners and allows adequate compensation while allowing production to continue.
6. The National Grange supports an examination and reform of environmental laws so that new oil refineries can be built to supply our fuel needs. We further support a study of the need for different mandated formulations for gasoline and, if possible, a reduction in the number of gasoline blends to make it easier and less expensive to refine and transport the finished product.
7. The National Grange endorses the goal of generating at least 25% of domestic energy needs from domestic renewable resources while continuing to produce safe, abundant and affordable food, feed, and fiber.
8. The National Grange urges the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, U.S. Coast Guard, and any other pertinent Federal agencies to develop and strengthen regulations regarding the siting of liquefied natural gas terminals, and consideration should be given to the overall economic impact on the region before any site is approved.
9. The National Grange encourages Congress and/or the Department of Energy to implement a plan to strengthen our electric grid as required to support increased demand on electricity supply that will result from usage of increasing numbers of electric vehicles. ²⁰²²
10. The National Grange seeks legislation incentivizing the solar energy and other alternative energy industries to locate facilities away from productive farmland and to preserve farmland through sufficient tax credit and zoning incentives or other inducements. ²⁰²²

Environmental Regulations and Controls

1. The National Grange supports requiring all appeals or court actions against properly approved and financed federal state or municipal construction projects to post a security bond equal to the projected cost of the project before the appeal or lawsuit may be adjudicated that will, in turn be forfeited if the appeal or lawsuit subsequently fails.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to require that all environmental impact statements under the National Environmental Policy Act must equitably balance and weigh economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of proposed Federal actions to reduce unnecessary delays on worthwhile and vital projects.
3. The National Grange supports the EPA's standards on the use of dangerous trace metals. We further support continued EPA programs to monitor the industrial and farm uses of materials that contain dangerous trace metals.
4. The National Grange supports new "Right to Farm" laws at the local, state and federal levels to further protect them against charges of civil or criminal violation of environmental regulations when those charges apply to activities that are essential to a normal farm operation in that area.
5. The National Grange urges Congress to maintain the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an independent federal agency.
6. The National Grange urges USDA to use only scientifically based research when crafting regulations to implement the conservation title of the Farm Bill.

7. The National Grange opposes any Federal legislation that would restrict the sale or use of any fuel used in a diesel engine for highway usage. ²⁰²¹
8. The National Grange urges Congress to oppose the Securities and Exchange Commission's rule that would require public companies to disclose their Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions, as this requirement would impact and potentially harm the national agriculture industry. ²⁰²²

Federal Grazing

1. The National Grange supports basing all decisions on Federal Grazing regulations, including grazing fee pricing formulas, upon solid economic principles, current livestock market prices, good conservation practices and extensive public input from existing grazing permittees. We favor legislation that would further limit any overall reduction in grazing to 10% or less on any given allotment except in the case of emergencies such as drought.
2. The National Grange strongly supports considering the economic impact that restrictions on grazing in riparian areas may have on farmers before legislation is passed.
3. The National Grange encourages the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to carry out an aggressive program to fill all grazing allotments on the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands. However, we support restricting the sale of federal grazing permits to anyone other than someone using the permit for grazing purposes.

Land Withdrawals and Wilderness

1. The National Grange supports releasing all public lands not currently designated as Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas to multiple uses. We oppose any further designations of National Forest lands as wilderness, especially in Alaska. We believe that all public lands suitable for producing commercial timber, farm or grazing resources, commercially valuable minerals, or public recreational facilities (including motorized sports activities) should be precluded from future consideration for wilderness designation and, instead, actively managed to achieve sustainable multiple-use goals.
2. The National Grange believes that regulations governing the management of Federal Wilderness areas should allow for controlled access by motorized vehicles in cases of emergency, especially when lives or private property are at stake. We further support the harvest of timber resources from Federal Wilderness areas following natural disasters. We oppose the destruction or obliteration of any Forest Service roads and further oppose designating any roadless areas of the National Forest System as permanently off-limits to logging, mining, or other development.
3. The National Grange strongly opposes the use of eminent domain or any regulatory property-taking via administration designation by any Federal agency to include any private property in any Federal Wilderness area, any part of the Federal Wild and Scenic River System, any part of the American Heritage Rivers Initiative, any land conservation program authorized by an international agreement or treaty or any habitat management area under the Endangered Species Act.
4. The National Grange supports legislation directing mitigation of identified losses of public and private lands from the state tax base due to federal acquisition through transfer of an equivalent acreage from federal land to public or private ownership or by providing an annual payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT), based on an independent economic impact analysis to be adjusted annually for inflation.

Mining

1. The National Grange urges Federal agencies to work with the states to develop surface mining guidelines, giving the states the flexibility to control and supervise the surface mining of coal, gravel, and similar materials. To ensure against the destruction of surface mined areas, a performance and a completion bond should be required of the mining companies that would assure the completion of reclamation plans as they are developed. Such plans should require the return of the land where strip mine operations occur to a reasonable topography and fertility level and should be enforced by law. The deposits that are required under Section 402(a) of the Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 should be returned to the states for strip mine reclamation. The National Grange further supports any regulation or law that holds the coal company liable for subsidence damage to structures caused by underground mining.
2. The National Grange supports changes in the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act that recognize the special conditions of small independent mine operations and provides for greater forbearance in correcting violations.

Preservation of Fisheries Resources

1. The National Grange urges the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission to support the designation of only those marine sanctuaries that guarantee fishery usage and recognize the fishery management authority of the current sanctuary boundaries.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to reauthorize the Magnuson Fisheries Conservation Management Act. We urge all appropriate federal agencies to work closely with all state wildlife agencies to maintain sustained fishing yields by regulating sport and subsistence fisheries in order to allow for the adequate recovery of fish and aquatic species in areas where they have declined. We support the United States working with all countries to regulate commercial fishing to allow for the adequate return of fish into many areas where fish yields have declined. We further support an extension of the U.S. territorial sea to not less than 50 miles where foreign commercial fishing may not be performed. The National Grange favors all reasonable measures to save the Pacific Salmon in the Columbia and Snake Rivers as long as the priority for these river systems is power generation, water use, and navigation. We support securing the passage of a treaty between Canada and the United States to govern the operation of the salmon industries in each respective nation. We support uniform regulation of all net fishing in the Columbia River, Puget Sound, and the Pacific Ocean before drastic economic measures to reestablish

wild runs of Pacific Salmon are enacted. The National Grange recommends that fish ladders be included in the planning of any future dam construction on streams or rivers where fish migration may be affected. We favor the transport of juvenile fish, the hatchery propagation of salmon stocks, flow control, and control of the salmon harvest until a final Pacific Salmon recovery plan is in place. We support the establishment of a program to audit the harvest of salmon on the lower Columbia River. We further believe that all salmon fishing on the Columbia and Snake Rivers should be restricted to hook-and-line methods only. We recommend to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service that spawned out salmon carcasses be planted near remote site incubators for smolt releases as a food source for the young fish.

3. The National Grange urges the federal government to continue funding the National Marine Fisheries Service at a sufficient level to enable them to continue the biological studies that will lead to the elimination of drift net fishing by all nations.
4. The National Grange supports adequate funding of the Marine Mammal Protection Act for use by the various states in developing appropriate marine mammal management plans and policies. In addition, we urge Congress to exclude Harbor Seals and California Sea Lions from the Marine Mammal Protection Act and place them under the control and protection of the states, including a controlled harvest season for Harbor Seals and California Sea Lions until the yearly run of the Pacific Salmon increases to the point where the salmon will no longer be considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act.
5. The National Grange supports research and long-term solutions to prevent the introduction and the spread of invasive and/or destructive aquatic organisms as well as the necessary destruction of established populations of these species such as, but not limited to, Asian Carp and *Pfiesteria*. We support legislation requiring all shipping lines to change their ballast water in the open ocean to curtail the further introduction of foreign species, such as the Zebra Mussel, into our domestic waterways.
6. The National Grange favors the regulated harvesting of freshwater clams and mussels.
7. The National Grange supports legislative and regulatory measures to prohibit the National Marine Fisheries Service from taking control of private lands, breaching of dams, and killing of hatchery salmon under the authority of its 4 (d) Rules. The National Grange urges Congress to order the National Marine Fisheries Service to reconsider the proposed setbacks on private property along all bodies of water or to pay for the taking of the property. We urge Congress to intervene and formulate a true scientific basis for the establishment of buffers/setbacks and buffer/setback restrictions along all bodies of water. We encourage the National Marine Fisheries Service do more to start identifying corrective measures beyond licensing and regulation to save the fish off our nation's coasts including avoiding by-catch, single-species management, ocean sanctuaries, eco-friendly gear, and consumer alertness. We further believe that alternative sources of fish production, i.e. aquaculture, should be encouraged where appropriate.

Private Land Use, Planning, Zoning, and Eminent Domain

1. The National Grange urges the USDA, in conjunction with land grant universities, to provide assistance to local governments and citizen groups in educating the public on the importance of keeping land in agricultural production and in developing farmland retention programs that protect the rights of landowners and the prerogatives of local governments. The National Grange supports land use planning and zoning remaining a function of local and state governments.
2. The National Grange urges that the transfer of development rights be used to protect family farms. Whenever land is designated for permanent agricultural use, farmers should receive adequate compensation for the loss in land value.
3. The National Grange urges the Farm Service Agency or any other agency not to relinquish the use of any farmlands, wetlands, or other lands to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or any other government agency.
4. The National Grange supports efforts to improve locally controlled site-specific resource and environmental management in the Columbia Basin.
5. The National Grange supports legislation reaffirming congressional power over international agreements concerning the disposal, management, and use of lands owned by the United States and also protects state powers from federal actions designating lands to international agreements.
6. The National Grange supports legislation to mandate that when private property is acquired for a specific purpose by any federal agency through eminent domain, condemnation, foreclosure or negotiated price, and the property is subsequently not needed or used for the specific purpose it was acquired for, the original owner shall have first right of repurchase at either the original price or the current market price, whichever is less.
7. We support legislation that eminent domains should be used only for public purposes, such as rights of way for transportation and utilities.
8. The National Grange urges the federal government to replace, whenever possible, condemned private land with public land of equal value/productivity, and to maintain a balance between public and private lands throughout the nation.
9. The National Grange supports changing laws so that, in points of controversy, private property rights take precedence over environmental regulations.
10. The National Grange supports legislation to prohibit the Federal Government or any agency or authority of the Federal Government from exercising its power of eminent domain to be used for private economic development unless there is an immediate danger to the health and/or safety of citizens. Furthermore, the National Grange supports federal legislation to require that no state, political subdivision of a state, or any person or entity to which such power has been delegated shall exercise its power of eminent domain for the purpose of private economic development or over property that is subsequently used for economic development unless there are situations of immediate danger to the health and/or safety of citizens. Any state or political subdivision that exercises the power of eminent domain for private economic development shall be ineligible for any federal economic development funds for any purpose for a period of at least two years.

Private Timber Land Management

1. The National Grange supports the use of best management practices (BMPs) and sustained yield management practices on private forestlands. The National Grange believes that in return for public benefits resulting from improved forest management on individually owned forest lands. Any forest management assistance programs should recognize the multiple-use aspects of private forest lands, including timber production, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, recreation, and scenic values.
2. The National Grange requests Congress to control arbitrary appeals of U.S. Forest Service timber sales, assessing penalties to the appellant to cover the costs of failed appeals. We further support legislation to require each appeal of a timber sale to post a security bond equal to the value of the timber sale before the appeal may be adjudicated that will, in turn, be forfeited if the appeal subsequently fails.

Public Lands Management Practices

1. The National Grange believes that multiple use of non-reserved land should be the cornerstone of the United States' public land policy in order to achieve the following objectives: energy exploration and development; sustained yield management for food and forest production; recreational uses for all citizens; responsible wildlife management; soil conservation and watershed protection.
2. The National Grange supports the maintenance of appropriate conservation practices on all public lands leased to private individuals yet will continue to support placing a moratorium on the acquisition of private land by the U.S. Forest Service. The National Grange recommends that a user fee be implemented for all commercial and recreational use of federal land requiring a permit.
3. The National Grange supports prescribed burning on public forestlands as a forest management technique to reduce uncontrolled fires on public lands. We oppose public forest management plans that include the use of natural, uncontrolled forest fires as a forest management technique. After a major natural forest fire, we support a maximum two-year administrative deadline for applicable Federal, State, and local forest management agencies to formulate a forest recovery plan and complete all appeals. We support expedited restorative actions, such as reforestation and harvest of dead or dying timber resources, as part of every forest recovery plan.
4. The National Grange supports sufficient appropriations for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service to sustainably manage our nation's forests, reduce wildfire fuel hazards, assist state and local agencies prepare for wildfire emergencies,²⁰²³ adequately carry out an expanded silviculture program, wildlife management, water and soil protection, weed control, recreational needs, protection of natural, historic and cultural resources, to develop additional forest campgrounds and increase the available spaces in existing campgrounds to keep them open year-round where economically feasible. We also urge that U.S. Forest Service campground fees be raised to more nearly cover the costs of operating these campgrounds.
5. The National Grange favors the increased planting of lumber-producing trees on both national and state forest lands, including increased funding for Federal and State tree nurseries to produce additional seedlings for timber. We urge the U.S. Forest Service to permit selected timber stands to reach old growth and be harvested on a sustained yield basis. Furthermore, we support prohibiting states from exercising authority to restrict the sale or export of logs that are harvested from State-owned land.
6. The National Grange recognizes the states' rights to own and/or manage Bureau of Land Management (BLM) unreserved lands, not including National Forest lands. Revenues that are received by counties should be protected when control of any Federal land is assigned to State Governments.
7. The National Grange supports legislation to require Federal and State Governments to pay a proportionate share of monies, in lieu of taxes, to those counties, cities, and communities that provide public services to the parks and recreational areas within their boundaries. In addition, the Grange supports Federal legislation allowing National Parks to keep a major portion of entrance fees to be used for the development and maintenance of recreational facilities.
8. The National Grange calls on federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute incidents of tree and trail spiking and the destruction of logging equipment on federal and state land.
9. The National Grange supports amending the National Antiquities Act to include public comment before any regulation or Executive Order designating any additional public land as a National Antiquity becomes effective.
10. The National Grange supports a policy that any responding agency to a fire, whether local, state, or federal, be required to notify adjacent landowners and other authorities with jurisdiction, for their own safety, of all wild and grass fires in the area.
11. The National Grange supports the use of state and/or federal funds to reimburse small landowners for the mitigation of loss of land values due to any state or federal logging restrictions on private lands.
12. The National Grange opposes the creation of the Owyhee Canyonlands Monument in Oregon and Idaho.
13. The National Grange urges Congress TO increase Forest Service funding so all agency goals and objectives can be completed.²⁰²⁴

Recycling

1. The National Grange supports legislation that would require a deposit on non-biodegradable beverage containers and urges manufacturers to use recycled materials.
2. The National Grange supports requiring all government agencies to initiate a recycling program for paper, metal, glass, etc. Government agencies should also be required to use recycled paper whenever feasible. The National Grange supports a

review of recycling agricultural plastic wastes, such as Cornell University's Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project (RAPP), and encourages funding from the USDA for this type of research in order to help all American farmers with this concern.

3. The National Grange supports legislation requiring the use of biodegradable feedstocks in all appropriate consumer-based products, such as retail plastic bags, product packaging, diapers, and packing materials. We support legislation to require single-use and short-life plastic products and packaging to be manufactured with biodegradable ingredients that will completely degrade within three years when exposed to a biologically active environment. The National Grange encourages the use of alternative bags such as canvas, cotton, mesh, biodegradable paper, or other biodegradable products. We urge all manufacturers to reduce their use of packing materials in their consumer products.
4. The National Grange supports efforts to restrict the disposal of tires in landfills. We support additional efforts to recycle used tires to recover valuable petrochemical feedstocks and to utilize recycled tires in road and other construction projects.

Rural Electric Cooperatives, Public Power and Rural Electricity Consumers

1. The National Grange supports the continued application of the existing preference concept of the Federal Power Act being granted to public power utilities in the licensing and re-licensing of Federal hydroelectric facilities. We further support granting co-preference in the licensing and re-licensing of federal hydroelectric facilities to rural electric cooperatives.
2. In order to assure adequate electric, telephone, and broadband service to rural areas, the National Grange supports the continuation and expansion of the existing USDA Rural Utility Service low-interest revolving loan fund to assure the financial stability of rural electric and telephone cooperatives.
3. The National Grange supports continuing electric service to urban areas that are within a rural electric cooperative's service area. However, rural electric cooperatives that provide electric service to predominantly rural areas should continue to have first priority for low-interest federal financing. In addition, we urge the electricity industry to charge rates for farmers and small businessmen who are competitive with their large wholesale customers.
4. We support maintaining the current structure of rural electric systems without forced deregulation of publicly owned plants or any other action that would be detrimental to rural electric consumers. The National Grange supports reform to the Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act so that non-utility generating stations operate to sell their output at competitive market rates. The National Grange supports requirements for increased accountability and responsibility on the part of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and power companies in the operation of any nuclear power plant. The National Grange supports the careful selection by the Department of Energy of sites for the disposal of low-level nuclear wastes, excluding prime agricultural, forest, and parkland. The National Grange supports efforts to open the Yucca Mountain site ~~in 2020~~ for the storage of nuclear waste and opposes actions to delay the project. We urge that the public be involved in the decision to conduct additional research on the long-term consequences to the environment of the disposal of nuclear waste. The National Grange further urges the Department of Energy to conduct an extensive educational program to inform citizens of the safeguards and hazards that are involved in the disposal of these wastes.
5. The National Grange opposes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's imposition of a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) and Standard Market Design (SMD) on the Northwest Region of the U.S. We support the present cost-based rate system, as determined in the 1937 Congressional Bonneville Power Administration repayment agreement; requiring Bonneville Power Administration to adopt for pricing electricity, instead of a market-based repayment pricing system. We support the present Federal Power Marketing Administrations. We further recommend the establishment of Power Marketing Administrations in areas of the United States where desired and feasible. We vigorously oppose selling the Western Area Power Administration and Bonneville Power Administration to private power companies. The National Grange also supports the allowance of the Northwest Region to develop an alternate approach to strengthening the transmission system.
6. The National Grange urges the U.S. Government to engage in diplomatic negotiations on the environmental impacts that contribute to air and water pollution before permitting the transfer of electricity across the borders into the United States.

Soil Conservation and Non-Point Source Pollution

1. The National Grange supports voluntary programs to control specific known point sources of pollution, as well as non-point sources of agricultural pollution. We support the concept of conservation tillage practices and other types of sediment control. We believe irrigation and agricultural drainage practices should be recognized as soil and water conservation practices. We encourage broad participation in the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act studies in order to assure that quality, locally designed, and controlled conservation programs are developed in order to meet the needs of family farmers. We support programs offering at least 50% cost share assistance for establishing grass strip boundaries and other soil conservation best practices, as well as technical assistance, as the primary means of correcting agricultural non-point source pollution problems. We also support programs offering at least 50% cost-share assistance to correct agricultural pollution and free technical assistance prior to non-income-producing practices that require major expenditures. The National Grange will raise awareness about regenerative agriculture and encourage practices to minimize on-farm inputs while building capacity for future production.
2. The National Grange opposes the sole use of uniform federal government farm pollution policies and supports that each state or region continue to maintain its own farm pollution policies that are unique to its industry and geography.
3. The National Grange supports the privately financed National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation, the American Conservation Corps, as well as vocational programs to educate and train youths to help in the conservation of our woodlands with sustainable forests and arboreal practices and other natural resources, using presently established facilities. We believe that all citizens should share in soil conservation costs through tax dollars that support State and Federal programs focusing on technical assistance, research, education, loans, and cost-sharing programs.

4. The National Grange supports locally developed stormwater management programs administered through local conservation districts.

Toxic and Hazardous Wastes

1. The National Grange supports a program to educate consumers on the proper handling and disposal of hazardous household waste, such as energy-saving light bulbs and any other items containing mercury.
2. The National Grange supports realistic insurance coverage plans being made available by the Federal Government at a reasonable cost for existing and future storage tanks and other potential sources of toxic and hazardous waste pollution.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would require urban sewer sludge disposal to be strictly regulated, i.e. knifing or ground injection as used in agriculture. We only support burning if such burning meets EPA air quality standards.
4. National Grange supports federal legislation prohibiting the dumping of waste material or raw sewage from foreign countries in landfills located in the United States.
5. The National Grange supports continued research on non-toxic materials in preparing pressure-treated wood for building materials.
6. The National Grange supports public education of the dangers of sodium azide (NaN_3) and legislation to set guidelines for the proper storage or disposal of all unused airbags.
7. The National Grange supports the current exemptions for family farmers from the EPA's Toxic Spill Prevention Containment and Control regulations.

Water Projects, Irrigation and Reclamation Reform Act, State Authority for Water Rights

1. The National Grange recommends that federal, state, and local governments work closely with each other and local landowners in the development and construction of watershed projects, dams, and reservoirs for multiple uses, such as flood control, storing and releasing surplus flood water, replenishing underground water, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, industrial and municipal use, and recreation. We urge both Congress and the President to make the necessary funds available in order to complete all planned and feasible federal water development projects and provide cost-share assistance for the rehabilitation of dams and other flood control structures that were previously constructed with Federal Assistance. The National Grange supports efforts to provide State and Federal funds to pay the recreational share of impoundment facilities on small water development projects.
2. The National Grange believes that the Federal Government should compensate for any loss or diminution of water rights resulting from the exercise of a federally reserved right.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to consolidate the activities of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior to eliminate duplication.
4. The National Grange supports local control over State Water Projects.
5. The National Grange supports a national water policy requiring all alternate sources of water, including full development of desalination plants for urban uses, must be considered before approval of any water diversion project.
6. The National Grange supports the use of existing multi-purpose dams, creating possible draw-downs or transfers of water from productive agricultural lands to waters that could possibly assist in flushing young salmon to the ocean, and urges the development of alternative methods of enhancing fish populations, including salmon.
7. The National Grange requests the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and all environmental agencies to facilitate restorative dredging of rivers prone to flooding.
8. The National Grange supports maintaining minimum water levels along the Great Lakes in order to support commerce, hydroelectric production, and tourism in the region. We support accurate monitoring of water drawn from the Great Lakes Water Basin for agricultural, industrial, and residential uses. We support only allowing those states and provinces that belong to the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes to be authorized to allow permitting to remove and use waters of the Great Lakes. However, we also believe that agriculture entities should be exempt from any permits or fees for removing water from the Great Lakes.
9. The National Grange supports irrigation rules and regulations that prohibit abuse of the Reclamation Reform Act and assure the fullest measure of benefits from Federal Irrigation Projects for family farmers. The National Grange supports the continued development and widespread utilization of more efficient irrigation systems in addition to legislation outlawing the practice of using trusts, partnerships, corporations, and estates to circumvent the 960-acre irrigation subsidy qualification that favors small farmers.
10. The National Grange will actively work to preserve the way of life of the Klamath Basin farming community of Oregon and California. We support reversing the decisions of the Ninth Federal Circuit and permanently restoring the flow of irrigation water from Klamath Lake to the farmers and farm communities served by the irrigation system. We further oppose any efforts to remove water storage and electrical generation capacity from the Klamath River Basin system. We call on Congress to convene a local working group to draft a viable Klamath Basin Restoration Plan and then fund that plan for the benefit of the entire Klamath Basin community.
11. The National Grange vigorously supports state control of water rights. We oppose any federal plan that infringes on states' water rights. In particular, any water resource planning that is conducted by State or Federal Agencies must respect both the states' sovereignties and the agricultural sector in establishing priorities for water allocations. The National Grange firmly opposes the inter-basin transfer of water that would alter the flow of water into downstream states unless such transfer is dictated in an approved river basin compact.
12. The National Grange supports legislation to further develop water desalination technology. ²⁰²¹

13. The National Grange opposes the commodification of water rights and supports Federal legislation that bans speculative trading in water rights. ²⁰²¹

Wildlife Management

1. The National Grange encourages Congress to amend the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to restore proper perspective by requiring public hearings and economic impact statements on the impacts to the affected areas before a species may be listed. We support changes to the ESA to require that only a purely biological and numerical definition of an endangered species be used without being based on subspecies, distinct populations, or hybridization. We believe that only those species actually threatened with extinction should be listed in the ESA, taking into consideration total populations, available habitats, and recovery areas on the North American continent. We further support a review of the ESA with the following guidelines: focus on keystone species (organisms critical to the stable functions of entire habitats and ecosystems), not minor or reduced species; rely on public lands for preservation; encourage voluntary protection by individuals and corporations; curtail taking of private lands for ESA; balance human costs with ecological benefits; compensation for private property owners for loss of usage of their property due to the ESA. We support the delisting of grizzly bears from the Endangered Species Act. ⁽²⁰²⁴⁾
2. The National Grange supports legislation legally allowing people to defend themselves or their property from an attack by any animal listed as an endangered species without concern of retribution from government authorities.
3. The National Grange supports legislative and regulatory measures to prohibit further implementation of any Wolf Recovery Plan. We further support the passage of legislation to outlaw the propagation of wolves or wolf hybrids.
4. The National Grange supports the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the chief administrator of the National Bison Range.
5. The National Grange believes it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to control the expanding populations of legally protected plants and animals where those plants or animals pose a threat to human life or health, or where those plants or animals pose a threat to established economic activity. We encourage State and Federal Wildlife Conservation Agencies to assist farmers in all cases of crop and property damage by wild game.
6. The National Grange is opposed to any Grizzly Bear recovery plan. We support legislation requiring government agencies to notify property owners when they relocate park bears or other potentially dangerous animals. We support efforts to delist the Grizzly Bear from the Endangered Species Act. ²⁰²⁴
7. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation of licensed hunting and trapping of game animals, waterfowl, and game birds. However, we favor the levying of stiff penalties for the poaching of wildlife. We further support the continued usage of steel-jaw traps.
8. The National Grange believes that wildlife management areas should not be used for recreation or any other development that diminishes the value of the lands for wildlife management purposes.
9. The National Grange supports legislation to expand the hunting season of Canada and Snow geese from November 1st - April 1st. We also support increasing the daily bag limit for Canada and Snow geese.
10. The National Grange supports any prairie dog management plan that allows people to control the prairie dog population through shooting and toxicants without the need for a special license.
11. The National Grange opposes the listing of the Eastern Oyster on the endangered species list.
12. The National Grange opposes forcing dams to spill spring waters in an unproven effort to help salmon.

Miscellaneous

1. The National Grange will raise awareness about regenerative agriculture and encourage practices to minimize on-farm inputs while building capacity for future production.
2. The National Grange supports efforts of the National Park Service to replant sequoia and mixed conifer seedlings in Giant Sequoia groves and endangered species habitats. ²⁰²³
3. The National Grange opposes the removal of any dam in the Columbia/Snake River system, and any plan to remove any dam must include an equitable and robust economic transition plan for the affected rural and agricultural communities, and any decision-making process must include the feasibility of replacing the dam's services with alternative methods of transportation, recreation, energy, and irrigation. ²⁰²³

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Conservation Committee for their hard work and many long hours before the Convention. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly and efficiently.

Thanks to National Grange President, Chris Hamp, and Burton for attending our Zoom calls, and adding value to our discussion. Thank you to the National Grange for the use of Zoom. We were able to use that time to deliberate on resolutions, construct the Policy Statement, and examine the National Grange Conservation Committee Policy that needed to be updated.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

Barbara Foster (WV) – Chairperson

Kay Stiles (MD) – Secretary

Matt Espenshade (PA)

Richard Javaux (ID)

Billy Shufeldt (OK)

Tom Gwin (WA)

Don Schaeffer (IL)

Sonny Hays-Eberts (OR)

Stephen Seuberth (DE)

EDUCATION & HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

The National Grange's mission is to strengthen individuals, families and communities through service, education, nonpartisan grassroots advocacy and agricultural awareness. This includes a commitment to protecting America's education and healthcare system. Below are the main focuses that guide our approach to ensuring our membership has access to:

Education

- The National Grange encourages a balanced approach to education. We support a fair delivery of all available financial aid as well as some federal targeted loan forgiveness programs to all that qualify.
- Encourage our school systems to find ways to increase the availability of appropriate counseling and volunteer efforts to work with our schools.
- Encourage legislation that provides funding for free quality meals for all school students in pre-K through 12th grade, to strengthen all students and the future of our country.

Health

- We encourage bipartisan congressional legislation as it relates to research and development of vaccines, affordable healthcare, and lower out-of-pocket medication costs.
- We seek passage of the Farm Bill to continue programs such as: affordable childcare, SNAP, WIC, and school lunches.
- We will continue to be the voice in raising awareness about these disparities and inequities for rural residents related to healthcare access, affordability, and more. We will continue to partner with organizations to educate our members and the public about ways in which this gap can be closed.
- We endorse the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network and The National Agricultural Crisis Hotline to provide 24/7 access to trained responders in response to the nationwide rural mental health crisis. In addition, we request the Veterans Administration (VA) to increase treatment options for veterans with mental health issues.
- We support the Medicare flexibilities allowing for increased bandwidth for telehealth use, vaccines, mental health coverage, breakthrough Alzheimer's treatment, opioid abuse programs, and for hospitals at risk of closure. In addition to new technologies such as Multi-Cancer Early Detection tests with increased rural access for these technologies. We support Pharmacy Benefit Manager Reform as being necessary oversight so that cost savings are passed along to the consumer.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES. #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
306	WA	Supporting All Veterans Returning to Civilian Life	<i>Transferred from Citizenship & Taxation Adopted</i>
502	OR	Health Care and Health Care Providers Policy	Adopted
503	OR	Limit Medicaid's Estate Recovery Program	Adopted
504	OR	Medicare and Dementia	Adopted
509	CA	Labeling of Food Products that Contain Gluten	Adopted as Amended
512	PA	FAFSA Farm and Small Business Asset Exemption	Adopted
513	NJ	Cancer Testing for High Risk Occupations	Adopted as Amended
514	CT	Controlling Interest Rates for College Loans	Adopted
520	PA	Uniform Time of Exemption from Federal Price Negotiations for New Biologic and Small Molecule Pharmaceuticals	Adopted
608	NY	Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange	<i>Transferred from Grange Growth Adopted as Amended</i>

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

306-WA – Supporting All Veterans Returning to Civilian Life

WHEREAS: there are half-way houses to support criminals who are transitioned from prison back to society, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support legislation to provide available facilities with mental health support to all veterans transitioning from military life to civilian life, if the veteran chooses to avail themselves of the opportunity.

502-OR – Health Care and Health Care Providers Policy

WHEREAS: Kidney transplant patients have often been unable to afford drugs necessary for continuing treatment of kidney transplants; and

WHEREAS: It is inefficient and cruel to provide a lifesaving treatment and then not provide for its continuing success; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The National Grange support legislation, such as the Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act, to requiring coverage of the cost of immunosuppressive drugs used for post operative kidney transplant therapy by insurance companies and public agencies that pay for health care.

503-OR – Limit Medicaid's Estate Recovery Program

WHEREAS: Medicaid eligibility allows beneficiaries to retain assets of only \$2,000, but a primary residence may be exempt; and

WHEREAS: A 1933 act of Congress mandated that if Medicaid pays for long term care (including in-home care) then state agencies that administer the program must attempt to recover funds from the estate of the deceased beneficiaries, which can force the family to sell the previously exempted primary residence to satisfy the debt; and

WHEREAS: Medicaid "is the only public benefit program from the United States of America that requires states to seek to get money back" according to Illinois Representative Jan Schakowsky, who has introduced HR7573, the 'Stop Unfair Medicaid Recoveries Act'; and

WHEREAS: Estate recovery primarily impacts low-income families and perpetuates poverty; and

WHEREAS: Otherwise qualified people may decline desperately needed Medicaid services when they learn of the estate recovery program; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The National Grange supports amendments to the federal Medicaid Estate Recovery Program to include thresholds, below which state Medicaid agencies can not legally attempt asset recovery from the estates of deceased Medicaid beneficiaries for long term care services, if those assets were legally allowed to be retained by the beneficiary during their time in long term care

504-OR – Medicare and Dementia

WHEREAS: Medicare does not consider dementia a medical issue. Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe everything from Lewy Body Dementia to Alzheimer's and much more. Medicare deems the needed care as 'Companionship' or 'Custodial' and says this care can be provided for by family members; and

WHEREAS: All doctors should mention financial planning at the onset of the disease — especially when dementia can hit people in their 50s, 60s, 70s and on; and

WHEREAS: U.S. policymakers should reconsider how Medicare can better support dementia patients. Classifying the care needs as non-medical companionship, especially in the latter stages of the disease is terribly misguided; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The National Grange supports federal legislation to require Medicare to better support dementia patients and their families by redefining the definition of dementia as a medical issue (not a "companionship" or "custodial" care issue) that may often require specific, skilled medical care beyond what can be expected to be provided by family members.

509-CA – Labeling of Food Products That Contain Gluten

WHEREAS: Gluten is a protein compound found in wheat, rye, barley, and crossbreeds of these grains; and

WHEREAS: Celiac disease is a chronic autoimmune disorder triggered by the consumption of gluten that damages the small intestine and prevents the absorption of vital nutrients leading to malnutrition, anemia, infertility, osteoporosis, other autoimmune and neurological diseases and cancer; and

WHEREAS: 1 in 133 Americans suffer from Celiac Disease, and the percentage of adults with non-celiac gluten sensitivity could be as high as 6%; and

WHEREAS: The only treatment for both celiac and non-celiac gluten sensitivity is a diet 100% free of gluten; and

WHEREAS: The current FDA guidelines for food labeling currently require labeling for wheat, but not barely or rye; and

WHEREAS: Hidden sources of gluten are found in “flavorings,” “food coloring” and “seasoning” made from barley and rye; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the National Grange supports adding gluten to the FDA list of major food allergens.

512-PA – FAFSA Farm and Small Business Asset Exemption

WHEREAS: an obscure 2023 Federal law called ‘The FAFSA Simplification Act’ removed an exemption for farm and small business assets when the U.S. Department of Education calculates eligibility for student aid; and

WHEREAS: these assets not only include land, storage buildings, and equipment but, also crops still in the fields and livestock in the barn; and

WHEREAS: farmland, machinery and crops are often high value, the income and return from them is often small and limited; and

WHEREAS: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) eligibility criteria is not only used for federal student aid, FAFSA eligibility criteria is also used to determine eligibility for state student aid as well as grants and scholarships from many other public and private institutions; and

WHEREAS: this legislation has created a financial aid barrier to children of farmers and small business owners pursuing college degrees, most pertinently programs in agricultural sciences; and

WHEREAS: it has been established that preserving farmland and keeping it in the possession of farmers is for the common good of the general public; farmers should not have to choose between denying higher education for their children or selling their livelihood to pay for education; and

WHEREAS: an entire generation of middle-class farmers’ and small business owner’s children will see higher education as simply unaffordable because of FAFSA eligibility requirements; and

WHEREAS: legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Congress to remedy this situation; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support federal legislation and any efforts by the U.S. Department of Education aimed at reinstating the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) exemption for the value of farm and small business assets from consideration when calculating eligibility for student financial aid for higher education; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange urge the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to reinstate the FAFSA exemption for farm and small business assets when calculating financial aid eligibility; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Grange contact the U.S. Department of Education to urge them to reinstate the FAFSA Simplification Act’s exemption of farm assets and so that farm families are eligible for student aid otherwise denied by the new law.

513-NJ – Cancer Testing for High-Risk Occupations

WHEREAS: many first responders, disaster relief personnel, agricultural workers, and other occupations are exposed to chemicals that could increase their risk of developing cancer; and

WHEREAS: the types of cancer that these brave men and women are subjected to include bladder, brain, colorectal, esophageal, gynecological, kidney, lung, prostate, skin, testicular and thyroid cancers as well as leukemias, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, mesothelioma, multiple myeloma, just to name a few; and

WHEREAS: screenings for these diseases may not be covered by insurance until after the individual has retired and the retiree may be a point where the cancer or other illness is advanced, and treatment may not cure the cancer but provide the afflicted with limited additional time with their family before their death; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange support national legislation that will require health insurance companies/payors to cover cancer testing, including multi-cancer screening for high-risk for cancer occupations prior to retirement.

514-CT – Controlling Interest Rates for College Loans

WHEREAS: the root of our student loan crisis has not been addressed; and

WHEREAS: the government has instituted Federally supported student loan programs with interest rates that range between 6.5% to 9%; and

WHEREAS: students graduating from college are often many thousands of dollars in debt and do not immediately have jobs and the means to repay their loans with the excessive interest charged; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange urge Congress to mandate the Federal Department of Education to set Federal Student Loan interest rates under 3% and allow current loan owners to refinance past loans to the rate of 3%.

520-PA – Uniform Time of Exemption from Federal Price Negotiations for New Biologic and Small-Molecule Pharmaceuticals

WHEREAS: the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides for price negotiation between the federal government and pharmaceutical companies to reduce drug costs to consumers; and

WHEREAS: the IRA creates an arbitrary distinction between biologics and small-molecule drugs, where, after Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval, biologics are granted 13 years of exemption from price controls, while small-molecule drugs are granted only nine years; and

WHEREAS: small-molecule drugs are typically available in pill form and thus easier for patients, especially in rural areas, to access; unlike large molecule drugs or biologics that usually require doctor-administered infusions; and

WHEREAS: the IRA included language that arbitrarily created a disincentive to invest in small molecule drugs by reducing the amount of time that a brand new cure can be on the market and be exempt from IRA price control provisions, making it harder to recoup investment for companies developing small molecule drugs by limiting them to nine years of exemption from price controls since clinical trials can take several years; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Grange supports the EPIC Act, Ensuring Pathways to Innovative Cures HR 7174 or similar legislation, to make all types of drugs eligible for price negotiation after (13) thirteen years of approval.

608-NY – Hearing Impaired Assistance at National Grange

WHEREAS: at the 157th Annual National Grange Convention in Niagara Falls, New York, technology was used to project the 7th Degree on screens so the audience could see the Degree as it was not on a stage; and

WHEREAS: there were several issues with the sound equipment, thus making the case very difficult to hear; and

WHEREAS: those with hearing impairments could not understand the 7th Degree, including its meaning and significance; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange research the use of closed captioning features for National Grange convention

PRESENT POLICY: EDUCATION

Education for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Special Needs Children

1. We believe that all hard-of-hearing children and adults, their teachers, parents, and professionals who are trained in this area should assist in determining the extent, content, and purpose of the educational programs. Particular consideration should be shown to those program options that provide the subject with an appropriate and equal opportunity for communication access, including the state's school for the deaf, which may be the least restrictive environment for a deaf or hard-of-hearing child.
2. We strongly support the continuation of the Education of the Deaf Act to provide maximum benefit for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, both in programs and services.
3. We oppose any repeal of the provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provides necessary accommodations for children with special needs.
4. We should consider the use of closed captioning features for the National Grange convention. ²⁰²⁴

Educational Funding

1. We support the continuation of the federally guaranteed student loan, grant, and work-study programs. The National Grange recommends that Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Expected Family Contribution (EFC) regulations be adjusted to reflect family expenses, such as real estate taxes, medical expenses and other financial obligations in the determination of financial aid. We urge strict enforcement of the requirements for repayment of federally financed student loans with severe penalties for default. The National Grange suggests that the guidelines for student financial aid laws be revised so students financially independent of their parents are eligible to receive financial aid for their higher education.
2. We support the retention of Federal Government Impact Aid for public school districts that lose traditional revenue sources due to a federal presence or activity.
3. We support federal categorical aid to school library centers.
4. We believe that public funding should be used only in public schools. We support redirecting public funding to nonpublic or charter schools only when the money is for special needs students, where the law mandates special training that is not available in public schools. We oppose any legislation that establishes a voucher program that distributes block grant funds to be distributed as vouchers to children attending nonpublic schools.
5. We support federal funding for state allocation of dollars for rural education to promote better salaries and benefits for teachers in rural education and to improve rural school conditions.
6. We urge adequate funding by the federal government for all federally mandated education programs. In particular, we support equal educational opportunities for exceptional and differently abled persons, including federal funding at the 40% level for federally mandated individualized education programs for special needs children.
7. We support federal legislation protecting the Upward Bound Talent Search, designed to benefit low-income students seeking a college education.
8. We support legislation that awards grants to institutions for history teacher preparation initiatives stressing content mastery in traditional American history and the principles on which the American political system is based.
9. We support the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act, and we urge Congress to provide adequate funding to support this legislation.
10. We support reinstating the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) to exempt farm and small business assets when calculating financial eligibility so that farm families are eligible for student aid. ²⁰²⁴

Food Safety and Labeling

1. We believe the agricultural industry should be free to advertise their products as long as the advertisement is accurate and is based on facts.

2. We favor strict enforcement of all food labeling laws by the Food & Drug Administration and support a uniform system for labeling food and drink products, which should include an expiration date. We encourage the National Safety Working Group and Congress to enact far-reaching legislation increasing the inspection rate and level of safety of imported foreign foods. We also support legislation requiring food companies and restaurants to clearly mark food labels and items on menus that may contain artificial ingredients or sulfites. However, we support each individual restaurant's right to decide whether to include calorie counts on their menu boards of calories, fat, carbohydrates and sodium on their menus for all food and beverage items.
3. We urge the Department of Health and Human Services to review and strengthen the regulations pertaining to manufactured products used in the home canning process, including requiring a manufacturer's name and expiration date on these products.
4. We favor continued testing of cider processing but strongly urge Congress and the USDA not to require pasteurization of all commercial cider.
5. We support easy and inexpensive access to vitamins and supplements. We urge that all herbal medicines sold in the United States be labeled with a warning to consult with a physician or pharmacist before using. We further support legislation that would require manufacturers and processors of vitamins, herbal supplements, and other dietary supplements to report certain information to the Secretary of Health and Human Services annually, including a list of supplements manufactured, the labeling to include the country of origin and the major ingredients for such supplements, and be verified to contain only and all ingredients listed on the product label.
6. We support national legislation to require clear labeling of food and medicines as well as other products that may be ingested when they contain gluten in any form or as gluten-free when they do not contain gluten.
7. We encourage the continued efforts of the FDA and the USDA to establish a viable definition for the term "Natural" on food labeling.
8. We urge the Food and Drug Administration to modify regulations for the Food Safety Modernization Act in order to balance the need to ensure the safety of the food supply while seeing that the farmers selling directly to the consumer are not harmed economically.
9. We support the Food and Drug Administration's efforts to significantly reduce levels of toxic heavy metals such as cadmium, inorganic arsenic, lead, and mercury in baby food. ²⁰²¹

General Education Policies

1. We support strengthening and improving the system of public education. Parents should have a choice of schools based on the schools' performance numbers, provided that those parents furnish transportation for the children. We believe that every child should be able to receive a public education and that the state is responsible for providing said education, which shall include the following: a broad curriculum with emphasis on basic language, physical education, math, and science skills; an opportunity for students to choose either vocational or "college preparatory" training; functional buildings; frequent public reports and accountability of funds; and basic training in agriculture, including the "Ag in the Classroom" program, covering both production and consumption.
2. We support the adoption of a comprehensive health education curriculum.
3. We support the teaching of foreign languages, including sign language. We recommend that all other subjects be taught in the English language and that all non-English speaking students and residents in the United States be given the opportunity to receive immediate instruction in the English language through programs such as English as a Second Language. The National Grange seeks to establish a program for state Granges to advocate for American Sign Language to be offered in primary and secondary schools.
4. We support affordable telecommunications services for rural schools and libraries.
5. We support the retention of the Head Start program and encourage its transfer to the US Department of Education. The National Grange also suggests that the Head Start program be completely integrated into federal and state education programs and that federal level funding be supported as needed to efficiently support the program.
6. We support the teaching of both the theory of evolution and the story of creation, allowing individual school boards and students to make their own choices.
7. We encourage civics classes to be included in high school graduation requirements as suggested by the U.S. Department of Education and support the teaching of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, including the Preamble and the Bill of Rights, in schools.
8. We oppose any legislation allowing illegal aliens to receive tuition discounts at American institutions of higher learning.
9. We endorse "Read Across America;" we recommit our organization to engage in programs and activities to make Americans the best readers in the world.
10. We oppose any changes in the language of classic literature, except those necessary for translation from another language.
11. We urge the Federal Department of Education to encourage all local school systems to retain recess for elementary school children.
12. We support legislation to establish standardized requirements for school nurses in all 50 states, as well as legislation to adequately fund school nurse programs to be able to handle the increased workload.
13. We urge the U.S. Department of Education to mandate that penmanship be a required course of study in early primary education.

14. We urge the US Congress and Administration to overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as the “Every Child Succeeds Act”), reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of evidence of student learning and school quality in accountability, and not mandate any fixed role for the use of student test scores in evaluating educators.
15. We support legislation that directs the Consumer Product Safety Commission to adopt a stronger, mandatory stability standard for clothing storage units and other potentially unstable furniture within one year of enactment. Such standards must include specified testing related to tip-overs, including an increased weight limit to simulate children up to six years old, testing under real-world conditions such as climbing, carpeted floors, and open drawers, the inclusion of smaller clothing storage units, and new, strengthened warning requirements for all such products entering the U.S. market. ²⁰²¹
16. We support the teaching of history that is factually accurate and has a balanced approach, showing both the positive contributions of all races, religions, and cultures as well as the mistakes and shortcomings that occurred. We can only learn from our past mistakes if we properly understand them. ²⁰²¹

Nutrition

1. We urge adequate funding for school breakfast and lunch programs. These programs are to be inclusive of keeping dairy in the Dietary guidelines of both the USDA and HHS, as well as the promotion of whole milk in any other child nutrition program. We support the availability of all types of milk in the schools, including lactose-intolerant alternatives. ^{President's External Address 2024}
2. We support the inclusion of essential non-food personal articles such as laundry soap and toilet paper for purchase with SNAP and not through cash distributions, as well as the continuation of the WIC program.
3. We continue to urge the repeal of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act and have that authority transferred to the local communities to set their own guidelines for the reduction of childhood obesity in conjunction with structured physical and nutritional education. We urge funding be continued for the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program.
4. We encourage Congress to pass the Farm Bill, which supports the following programs: local schools and the regional food banks that rely on funds for lunches and food boxes. It is consumers – low-income women, infants, and children enrolled in WIC and families whose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars help them meet their nutritional needs. It is communities, our rural communities, who see dollars flowing in through funded USDA programs to expand credit for all sorts of various things, for creating public-private partnerships and advancing economic well-being, for supporting and creating local jobs, for opening or improving healthcare and childcare facilities and services; for expanding broadband to the last mile; and for fixing crumbling infrastructure such as water systems and wastewater facilities. In general, the farm bill supports a prosperous rural America, so the Grange supports the farm bill. ^{President's External Address 2024}
5. We oppose any punitive taxation aimed at obesity reduction/elimination.
6. We applaud and support any and all efforts to make clearer the expiration labeling on products and clarity in the actual science behind the Dietary Guidelines.
7. We oppose attempts to reclassify the potato from a vegetable to any other designated food group in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. ²⁰²⁴
8. We support clarifying food expiration label dates to either “Best if Used by” to indicate that the products will decline in quality or freshness past the date on the label or “Use by” to indicate a product's safety risks can increase after that date, both which already have support from the Food and Drug Administration. ²⁰²³

PRESENT POLICY: HEALTH

Alcohol, Tobacco, Controlled and Toxic Substances

1. We encourage the bold, accurate labeling of household products (including carpeting and furniture that have been treated with toxic chemicals), farm chemicals, and other products containing toxic ingredients.
2. We support the continuation of the many programs presently fighting substance addiction. We also urge that funding for addiction treatment be governed by medical personnel and not by non-medical administrators of reimbursement programs. We support legislation to end insurance discrimination against Americans living with mental illness and addiction in order to provide necessary assistance and treatment programs that will allow many of these afflicted individuals to return to a productive life in mainstream society.
3. The use of steroids and other stimulants, unless prescribed for medical reasons, should be made illegal in all competitive sports, and we support having heavy penalties imposed upon the violators.
4. We also support legislation banning the sale of synthetic marijuana and synthetic cannabinoids regardless of their chemical composition or the name they are sold under.
5. We support aggressive enforcement of the laws to stop the import of all jewelry and any other products from foreign countries that contain highly dangerous levels of cadmium or other metals or chemicals.
6. We support legislation to prohibit the use of BPA and other similar industrial chemicals in all children's products, human food, and food packaging.
7. We urge stricter enforcement of existing bans on flavored vaping products. ²⁰²¹
8. We urge the Drug Enforcement Administration to re-examine and revise their classification schedule of controlled substances based on current science. ²⁰²¹

Consumer Protection

1. We support access to affordable health care and health insurance for every American, regardless of age, race, income, health condition, or location, with freedom of choice of medical provider and facility. We call upon federal regulators to

ensure insurance companies abide by mental health parity laws already on the books to correct what remains an unequal healthcare system for patients with behavioral health conditions. In addition, healthcare cost containment strategies should maintain the highest quality of care without compromising effectiveness and efficiency. We call upon the president to take immediate steps to reduce regulatory burdens and duplication and enhance care coordination by allowing healthcare providers to focus on patients rather than paperwork. We support restrictions being placed on insurance companies so that they can only cancel policies for nonpayment or fraud and not because of new health issues. We favor legislation to guarantee that the attending physician's decision is the governing factor regarding appropriate medical treatment or length of hospital stay. The physician's decision should be the deciding factor for coverage, whether or not treatment or hospitalization takes place in or out of the patient's home state. We believe HMOs should be required to accept the determination of the attending healthcare provider as evidence of the need for an emergency visitation or ambulance service. We encourage all families to carry catastrophic health insurance.

2. We support legislation on a federal level that will require insurance companies to cover testing for breast cancer for all patients regardless of age.
3. We urge federal agencies to be more aggressive in their investigations and prosecutions of fraud, waste, and abuse in the health care system. We support efforts to maintain the National Practitioners Data Bank, allowing consumers access to malpractice reports to properly choose the best medical professional for themselves.
4. We encourage all continued legal and legislative actions necessary to eliminate the sources of counterfeit medications and to pursue the prosecution of those found responsible for the making and marketing of them in support of increased efforts to educate the public on the dangers of obtaining medications from unreliable sources.
5. We support extending health care coverage under COBRA for all terminated employees who qualify for a period of up to 36 months or until eligible for Medicare/Medicaid and include portability of health insurance coverage even if there is a pre-existing condition for those who change jobs or become unemployed. We support tax incentives for businesses to provide health insurance coverage for their employees and 100% tax deductibility of health insurance premiums for the self-employed and individuals acquiring private health insurance.
6. We support federal legislation requiring all restaurants and all public buildings to be smoke-free and to require builders and landlords to include carbon monoxide detectors as well as smoke detectors in buildings they build or manage. Carbon monoxide detectors should be monitored quarterly and replaced as needed.
7. The National Grange strongly opposes any effort to require the Internal Revenue Service to turn over tax return documents to other government agencies that review health care decisions.
8. The National Grange opposes the imposition of a tax on medicine or medical supplies.
9. The National Grange urges Congress to legislate incentives and policies to encourage the production of food, pharmaceuticals, energy, and defense supplies in the United States or other countries considered allies of the United States.
10. The National Grange opposes the use of personalized pricing without consumer and public awareness. ²⁰²²

Family Planning

1. We support the release of adoption records that will provide family health history.
2. We oppose the distribution of any contraceptives to middle school-age students.
3. We support legislation that requires coverage of infertility treatments.
4. We support legislation that gives the individual and/or family the right to determine their family planning decisions and to utilize all medically appropriate medications and/or procedure options for healthy family planning. ²⁰²⁴

Health Care

1. We believe that teeth should be declared a legitimate part of the body requiring the same comprehensive level of care and coverage as any other part of the body by health insurers and that all prosthetics, including dentures, implants, crowns, and bridge work be covered at the same rate as all other medical procedures. The National Grange also believes that dentists should be treated as any other medical specialists by both the government and insurance carriers and reimbursed at comparable rates.
2. We support deductible tax Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs) in the form of an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) type account to be used strictly for medical expenses. The National Grange supports legislation that reinstates the list of Over-the-Counter items eligible for reimbursement under Health Saving Accounts (HSAs), Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), and Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs), removes limits on contributions and allows year-end balances to roll over to the New Year or return to the employee.
3. We support World Mental Health Day observed annually on October 10.
4. We support programs that strengthen families and advocate for educational programs that emphasize the importance of families and the prevention of family dysfunction.
5. We support the "Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act of 2023" or similar legislation that would authorize federal support for state-based maternal mortality review committees that review pregnancy-related deaths to identify causes and make recommendations to prevent future mortalities. ²⁰²³
6. We urge Congress to enact legislation requiring all healthcare providers and medical companies to have tight security in place to protect the safety of healthcare records and that there be strict penalties in place due to negligence to conform with this law. ²⁰²³

7. We request the Food and Drug Administration ban the use of erythrosine, otherwise known as FD&C Red #3 dye, in any products used for human consumption. ²⁰²³
8. We strongly support legislation to amend the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018 by eliminating the nautical mile limitation to include United States Navy and Marine Corps veterans who were assigned to the Vietnam theater of combat operation or who received the Vietnam Services Medal. ²⁰²³
9. We support legislation for the Food and Drug Administration to investigate the health effects of high levels of caffeine in energy drinks. ²⁰²³
10. We support the End Diaper Need Act of 2023. ²⁰²³
11. We support legislation to require coverage of the cost of immunosuppressive drugs used for post operative kidney transplant therapy. ²⁰²⁴
12. We support legislation to require insurance companies to cover cancer testing, including multi-cancer screening, for high cancer-risk occupations prior to retirement. ²⁰²⁴

Hearing Impaired and/or Disabled People

1. We strongly support legislation to protect the rights of hearing impaired and/or disabled people.
2. We encourage manufacturers of machinery and stereo equipment to place warning labels, where feasible, informing consumers that permanent hearing loss could occur as a result of prolonged noise exposure above 85 decibels.
3. We support legislation requiring emergency warning messages to be both close captioned and delivered verbally, and all television stations provide closed captioning for news, weather, sports, and other live events.
4. We support the installation and use of "induction hearing loop systems" compatible with telecoil ("T" switch) hearing aids.
5. We support legislation that would require all health insurance companies to cover hearing screening, testing, surgery, and hearing aids, including mandatory regular hearing screenings and hearing aids for children.
6. We support legislation that would establish detection and intervention programs for newborns and infants with hearing loss. We further urge Congress to pass legislation to require hearing testing of newborns prior to their release from the hospital.

Long Term Care and Assisted Living

1. We support coverage for long-term nursing/in-home care, including an allowable tax credit for long-term care insurance premiums and an allowable tax credit for adult daycare expenses incurred by primary caregivers of adults who cannot care for themselves. A tax credit should also be available for programs to provide assisted living to the elderly in their own homes. We urge changing the Medicare entitlement and managed health care insurance programs so that they provide payment for assisted living programs.
2. We support legislation that will provide uniform care and services to nursing home patients and will protect their rights.
3. We encourage Congress to require Medicare to make timely payments to both acute care and extended care facilities to ensure that the correct level of care is maintained for all patients.
4. We urge the U.S. Health Care Financing Authority should allow elderly couples to be in the same nursing home when long-term care for both becomes necessary.
5. We support action that develops a comprehensive and economical method to treat patients requiring Palliative Care.
6. We recommend that the National Institutes of Health and Center for Disease Control utilize the information learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop and implement a more comprehensive plan for assisting the older population during times of health emergencies, and this plan should ensure that long-term care facilities have sufficient access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and infectious disease testing for all staff and patients; and that daily, clear reports for long term care facilities on any infectious disease cases be made available to the public.

Medical Research/Awareness

1. We support and recognize the value of medical research in increasing the quality of life. We support improvement in the quality of healthcare services and access to new and existing technologies. We encourage continued funding of medical research, including the responsible use of animals in research.
2. We encourage research to continue on alternative treatments, such as acupuncture, hypnosis, massage therapy, prayer, and meditation, which may be used in conjunction with the standard treatments that are showing results against diseases.
3. We support the National Cancer Institute and encourage Congress to continue providing funds for research.
4. We support the establishment of a "radiation database" on radiation releases to the public resulting from both intentional and unintentional releases due to nuclear weapons testing and accidental releases from nuclear power plants.
5. We support legislation to explore the risks involved in the use of water fluoridation in the United States.
6. We urge that information about Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) should be given to all parents and caregivers of children under five years.
7. We urge adequate funding for agencies at all levels dealing with the HIV and AIDS problem and support increased emphasis on testing.
8. We urge the use of government funds for stem cell research only on postnatal or adult stem cells. We further support the research and possible use of cord blood stem cells and promote the registry and donation of cord blood stem cells. However, we support legislation banning full human cloning.
9. We support legislation that would ban the patenting of naturally occurring genes. We only support the patenting of treatment and/or alterations of those naturally occurring genes.

10. We support governmental efforts on the state and national level to fund research on the prevention and treatment of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses, to disseminate information and to educate the public about its prevention, detection, and treatment.
11. As an incentive for the pharmaceutical industry to develop drugs for "orphan" diseases, we encourage "market exclusivity" for orally administered Alzheimer's and Dementia medicines and treatments.
12. We support continued research on man-made nanoparticles used in medical devices and sunscreen.
13. We support the various national, state and local agencies and commissions striving to eliminate the unintended and intended abuse of heroin and opioid addiction. The National Grange will be proactive in supporting various treatment solutions and programs. The National Grange supports systems to limit the overprescribing of opioids and the education of the application of Naloxone (Narcan) pursuant to state regulations. *President's External Address 2024*
14. We encourage legitimate scientific studies on the risks and benefits of the use of medical marijuana in the treatment of disease.
15. We encourage legislation that would provide funding for public service announcements to increase awareness of farm and ranch stress and destigmatize mental health care in rural communities; provide voluntary stress management training to Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency and National Resources Conservation Service employees as these agencies are constantly in direct contact with members of the ag community and will be able to direct producers in need to appropriate mental health services; and convene a task force of agricultural and rural stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels to assess the causes of mental stress in farmers and ranchers and identify best practices for responding to such stress.
16. We support legislation by the US Congress on a plan of action to coordinate and improve efforts to prevent, control, and respond to future pandemics and the potential effect they may have on our public health as well as the health of our economy.
17. We support and encourage:
 - Research into identifying the causes of chronic pain, especially in rural life.
 - National and state initiatives that encourage research and development of new pain relief therapies that avoid opioids and other addictive drugs
 - Research into possible chronic pain mitigation strategies through education, technology, and other mechanisms
 - Robust policy discussions and education about pain management among Grange members and their rural communities

Medicare/Medicaid

1. We support the following reforms and changes in the Medicare and Medicaid programs: a) equity of payment between inpatient and outpatient procedures according to Medicare's Diagnostic Related Groups; b) equity in reimbursements between rural and urban hospitals; c) prohibit hospitals or doctors from setting fees or discontinuing Medicare assignments for specific diagnosis during treatment on the basis of the method of payment or from charging amounts above the Medicare limits for Medicare services; d) faster processing of claims to permit faster reimbursement; e) extended coverage to ensure sufficient time for full recovery; f) health care professionals; and (g) all reimbursements under the Medicare program to all Medicare patients, medical personnel, suppliers, be made within a three-month timeframe and (h) adequately compensate primary care physicians for non-procedural services.
2. We support a full investigation of the causes of the rapid increase in Medicare/Medicaid costs. We urge our legislators to investigate pricing, availability and coverage options provided by health insurance companies as supplemental coverage for Medicare recipients. We support the ability of Medicare and Medicaid to negotiate with drug companies for the best reimbursement price of prescription drugs for consumers. We further support a cap on the annual increase in Medicare deductions of no more than the general inflation rate. We strongly urge Congress to refrain from reducing payment to physicians and providers under Medicare since it would add an additional burden to patients needing to use the program. We urge all U.S. Senators and Representatives to continue to support funding to all aspects of the current Medicare programs.
3. We will lobby for a change in current Medicare insurance to include coverage for hearing exams and hearing aids. The National Grange urges Medicare and Medicaid to review their payment schedules and make changes that recognize recommended and accepted medical procedures and screening tests, such as coverage for the prostate-specific antigen test (PSA); increased coverage for home health care costs, reimbursement for services of midwives and physicians' assistants; coverage for outpatient office laser surgery.
4. We favor legislation permitting retired people to deduct the cost of their supplemental health insurance from their taxable income and legislation to improve access to Medicare to ease the financial burdens on seniors. We support changing current regulations to permit seniors who are "grandfathered" by residence address into a Medicare supplemental insurance program to be allowed to move anywhere within the original service area without being dropped from their insurance plan. We further support a division of assets procedure for Medicaid and Medicare that would preserve the financial stability of a healthy spouse.
5. We support the right to have a second doctor in the operating room, where medically required, for patients on Medicare.
6. We support legislation that would give eye and dental insurance to seniors aged 65+ for those procedures that Medicare does not cover, with a co-pay/deductible for amounts over \$100.00.

7. The Grange at all levels works to convince our government that Medicare money should also be spent on health screening for early intervention of diseases, which is far more economical than the huge cost of treating advanced stages of the diseases.
8. We urge Congress to pass an act allowing Medicare information to be given to an assigned representative and that the representative be allowed to act on behalf of said patient without consignment of Medicare and/or Social Security benefits.
9. We urge the United States Congress to amend the Federal Health Care Overhaul Bill to read that all states be fiscally responsible for their portion of Medicaid expenses.
10. We urge Congress to amend the Social Security Act "to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the three-day inpatient hospital stay requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.
11. We support legislation that would require Medicare to cover Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCEd) blood testing or other cancer screening tests once they are approved by the Food and Drug Administration and are available. ²⁰²²
12. We support legislation to include coverage for essential immunizations, such as shingles, pneumonia, pertussis, and others, under Medicare, Part D. ²⁰²²
13. We urge Medicare to review its policy regarding coverage for the diabetic continuous glucose monitoring device (CGM) and change its prescription coverage to allow refills every 28 days rather than 30 days. ²⁰²³
14. We support legislation to require Medicare to better support dementia patients and their families by redefining dementia as a medical issue that may require specific skilled medical care. ²⁰²⁴
15. We support amendments to the federal Medicaid Estate Recovery Program to include thresholds below which state Medicaid agencies cannot legally attempt asset recovery from the estate of deceased Medicaid beneficiaries for long-term care services if those assets were legally allowed to be retained by the beneficiary during their time in long-term care. ²⁰²⁴

Patients' Rights

1. We favor the passage of laws, which allow parents/guardians in conjunction with their doctors to decide whether or not to keep severely physically and mentally handicapped children alive by life support systems without interference by the government.
2. We urge that the new federal and state laws on privacy of medical information be examined, and amended if necessary, so that medical practitioners may release or disclose limited information when necessary to contact relatives or others who are needed to authorize medical treatment. We further support legislation that would require patients, when physically or mentally able, to submit their medical background to health care professionals.
3. We support legislation that would bring about protection of parental and/or guardian rights in the guidance, control and administration of their dependent minors' health care.
4. We support federal legislation that makes a child eligible for medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs until the child's 26th birthday, regardless of the child's marital status. ²⁰²¹
5. We support legislation to provide facilities with mental health support to all veterans returning from military life to civilian life. ²⁰²⁴

Prescription Drugs and Medicines

1. We support making prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs more affordable. The National Grange strongly encourages drug companies to produce lifesaving and life-enhancing medicines for a wide variety of diseases and medical conditions. We further support requiring all government and private prescription drug coverage programs to offer the widest possible selection of lifesaving and life-enhancing medicines at an affordable price for those who need them.
2. We support allowing U.S. citizens who are visiting foreign countries to bring back with them up to three months of supplies of regulated pharmaceutical products for their own use, provided they have valid prescriptions for those specific pharmaceutical products from their U.S. physician. We support the current Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act provisions that generally do not allow regulated pharmaceutical products to be imported into the U.S. for sale or distribution unless those importers are also pharmacists and/or pharmaceutical wholesalers currently subject to federal and state regulation. We strongly support current laws and regulations that require anyone who imports regulated pharmaceutical products for sale or distribution in the U.S. to keep accurate records tracking the origin, history, and chain of custody of these products before they entered the U.S. We support legislation requiring anyone authorized to import regulated pharmaceutical products for sale or distribution in the U.S. to be financially responsible for any testing necessary to verify the authenticity and/or degradation of the pharmaceutical products they import. We support strictly limiting the importation of pharmaceutical products to drugs from licensed pharmacies and wholesalers who sell to the public in Canada. We support providing the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) with sufficient resources and authority to ensure the safety of imported drugs from Canada by employing technological and other safeguards. We further support legislation requiring anyone authorized to import regulated pharmaceutical products for sale or distribution in the U.S. to be allowed to import such products only if they are shipped into the U.S. in counterfeit-proof and tamper-resistant packaging.
3. We support a voluntary program that would offer pregnant women who test HIV-positive voluntary access to the drug AZT that could prevent the transfer of the HIV antibodies to the unborn child or newborn child.
4. We will work to secure legislation requiring physicians to obtain specific written approval from the patient or those legally authorized to give approval before prescribing experimental drugs. When the physician prescribes experimental drugs, the warning and permission form must be in clear, common layman's language on a separate medical form.
5. We support having well-advertised places in our communities/counties where residents can safely dispose of outdated or unused medicines, vitamins and/or supplements, etc.

6. We support legislation that would require pharmaceutical companies to significantly reduce the minimum dose purchase requirement for pneumococcal vaccines. We recommend that local county Health Departments include this vaccine in required childhood immunizations.
7. We urge the Food and Drug Administration to mandate that pharmaceutical producers label all products and commodities containing gluten.
8. We encourage people to follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding immunizations.
9. We support legislation that would allow foreign-made baby formula, as long as it meets the Food and Drug Administration regulations, to be marketed in the United States to ensure the long-term supply chain of infant formula.²⁰²²
10. We are opposed to the use of Pharmacy Benefit Managers in the pharmacy industry.²⁰²²
11. We support "The Ensuring Access to Lifesaving Drugs Act," as well as any other legislation, that gives the Food and Drug Administration the power to balance the risks and benefits of the expiration date of chemotherapy agents during a shortage when it is safe to do so, particularly when the alternative is for patients to do without.²⁰²³
12. We support legislation to require pharmaceutical companies to list inactive ingredients in prescription medications for both the pharmacy and the consumer, as is currently done for over-the-counter medicines.²⁰²³

Rural and Home Health Care

1. We urge that the federal government maintain block grant/matching funds to states for community health clinics.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to ensure that fairness in price and benefits offered becomes a part of any and all medical insurance programs. The National Grange believes that payment to health care providers should adhere to a schedule of fees for services provided that is fair and equitable across the United States.
3. The National Grange supports incentive programs for doctors who will agree to practice in rural areas where basic medical care is not available and supports the creation and/or expansion of programs that encourage students to become general practitioners and that address incentives and reimbursements for primary care.
4. The National Grange supports the establishment or use of the necessary infrastructure for the expansion of telemedicine into rural areas. The National Grange also supports the elimination of regulatory and statutory impediments to broaden the use of telemedicine and telehealth and institute a more uniform approach for reimbursement.
5. We encourage local Granges to present programs that educate the community about pharmaceutical assistance programs.
6. The National Grange supports preserving quality, rural home health care services provided under traditional fee-for-service Medicare by opposing the imposition of new, patient co-payment fees and the imposition of further cuts to reimbursement rates for home health care service providers.
7. The National Grange supports efforts by Congress, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the home health care industry to reduce unnecessary Medicare spending on home health care services by aggressively weeding out instances of fraud, abuse and poor management practices in the home health care sector.
8. The National Grange supports passage of the "Caregiver, Advise, Record and Enable (CARE) Act" to prepare caregivers for home healthcare medical and nursing tasks.
9. The National Grange, through Grange Advocacy, engages the American Association of Community Cancer Centers in discussions regarding potential joint efforts to address the lack of access to proper health care and cancer care in rural America. Further, National Grange will support legislation to improve funding and change regulations to help keep rural hospitals and health care facilities open.
10. The National Grange supports the expanded use and funding of educational loan repayment funding programs to incentivize physicians, specialists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, chiropractors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals' commitment to serve rural areas and underserved communities designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), Medically Underserved Areas (MUA), Medically Underserved Populations (MUP), Exceptional Medically Underserved Populations (Exceptional MUP), and Governor-Designated Secretary-Certified Shortage Areas for Rural Health Clinics (RHCS) throughout the United States.²⁰²¹
11. The National Grange continues to partner with Rural Minds Inc. and other like-minded mental health organizations in an effort to educate the public and in particular, rural areas in the importance of mental health awareness and suicide prevention.²⁰²²
12. The National Grange will lobby Congress to establish a system of block grants to be made available to states for the purpose of expanding mental health care in rural areas and communities.²⁰²²
13. The National Grange works with the Centers for Disease Control to create and disseminate information that would inform medical providers and the at large agricultural community with the signs, symptoms, treatment, and causes of the infection known as "Q" Fever which results from the exposure to infected animal feces, urine and birthing by-products and to do further research on "Q" fever that will develop effective treatments for this illness.²⁰²²

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Education & Health Committee for their hard work and many long hours and meeting twice a month prior to Convention. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly and efficiently.

Thanks to National Grange President, Chris Hamp, and Burton for attending our Zoom calls, and adding value to our discussion. Thank you to the National Grange for the use of Zoom. We were able to use that time to deliberate on resolutions, construct the Policy Statement, and examine the National Grange Education & Health Committee Policy that needed to be updated.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

Mark Gibbons (DC) – Chairperson
Debbie Campbell (PA) – Secretary
Ann Bercher (MN)
Danielle Hartley (RI)
Debbie Russell (OH)

Christopher Dean (MA)
Eileen Javaux (ID)
Anna Seuberth (DE)

Lisa Goodrich (VT)
Barb Narvel (DE)
Tricia Taylor (NH)

GRANGE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

“Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” ~ President John F. Kennedy.

The National Grange is committed to strengthening our organization's role in community service, agricultural and rural advocacy, and member empowerment to ensure a sustainable and inclusive future for advancing the Grange.

With the sale of the National Grange headquarters, the organization must focus on financial sustainability. To address operating expenses, a revised dues structure for the National Grange must be evaluated, encouraging Granges at all levels to collect enough to support relevant programs and outreach. Recognizing the importance of a modern, cohesive membership experience, we advocate for establishing a national membership database to streamline communications and increase member engagement.

Effective communication is vital to our mission. All State Granges must actively promote the *Grange Today!* newsletter, *Good Day!* magazine, and the “Grange Hall” podcast to all members and stakeholders. Members are encouraged to actively engage with and contribute to these resources and disseminate information to enhance awareness of events, benefits, and organizational goals. We will continue exploring new communication tools, including a potential mobile app, to facilitate timely, direct communication with members.

In 2025, we will launch “Project Sustenance,” a Grange-wide initiative focused on addressing food security and personal sustainability within our communities. Every Grange is encouraged to participate in this initiative by building or expanding programs that promote self-sufficiency, community sustainability, and access to nutritious food.

Nonpartisanship is a cornerstone of our advocacy and civic engagement. The Community Granges should foster civil discourse by organizing forums and town halls on local, state, and national issues, providing a safe space for community members to engage in respectful dialogue. This approach will strengthen the Grange's role as a trusted community voice and uphold our values of collaboration and service.

We prioritize leadership development at every level to sustain the Grange's legacy. The SHIPmates Program and other leadership initiatives provide members with training and mentorship to foster capable future leaders. We encourage every member to energetically seek to bring new members into our fellowship, welcoming and engaging them, and appreciating the energy and ideas each brings to our work.

The National Grange's archives, a treasure trove of artifacts, historical documents, and records should be preserved in partnership with the Grange Foundation. We will explore establishing a Grange Museum or alternative strategies to protect and share our history with the public and future generations.

The National Grange is poised for growth to strengthen its impact by fostering financial stability, developing partnerships, enhancing communication, promoting civic engagement, and developing future leaders. Together, we will uphold the Grange's values and ensure its legacy remains vibrant for future generations. Our traditions, fraternal bonds, and community impact make us rich beyond comparison.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES. #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
604	DE	Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	Adopted as Amended
605	MI	National Grange Website	Adopted
611	OH	125 th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars	Adopted
612	OH	Food Insecurity	Adopted
614	VT	ASL Sign for “Grange”	Adopted as Amended
615	VT	Grange Presence at Oliver Kelley Farm	Adopted
704	OR	Disposition of Resolutions by National Grange Committees	<i>Transferred from Grange Law</i> Adopted

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

604-DE – Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

WHEREAS: according to the National Rural Health Association, farmers are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than the general population; and

WHEREAS: farmers have unique stressors in their business; and

WHEREAS: most farms are run by families; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the National Grange promote the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in communications deemed appropriate by the National Grange staff.

605-MI – National Grange Website

WHEREAS: the National Grange website may be the first-visited website for persons interested in learning about the Grange; and

WHEREAS: it is of upmost importance for this website to promote and encourage growth of the Grange; and

WHEREAS: the National Grange website includes a website page for each community Grange; and

WHEREAS: the National Grange website does not appear to be maintained and up-to-date, especially as it regards the community Grange websites; and

WHEREAS: the website page for community Granges that have not opted to use this method as a means to publicize their Grange currently show a last post as April 17, 2012 and are all identical in content; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange remove all inactive Community Grange website pages older than three years from the National Grange website and add a link to Community Granges with their own website and/or social media.

611-OH – 125th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign War

WHEREAS: this year the VFW enters its 125th year of service to America's veterans. The VFW is honoring the impacts and achievements that will continue to positively impact the lives of all; and

WHEREAS: the VFW is "Celebrating the Legacy"; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange recognize, congratulate and thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 125 years of service.

612-OH – Food Insecurity

WHEREAS: food insecurity forces families to make unimaginable choices each day; and

WHEREAS: in a country known for its robust agricultural industry, it is disheartening to know just how many people struggle with hunger; and

WHEREAS: according to Feeding America, in the U.S. 1 in 10 people are currently facing hunger; and

WHEREAS: it is important for us to come together as a community to support and uplift our most vulnerable populations through programs such as Farm Bureau's Harvest for ALL campaign; and

WHEREAS: the American Farm Bureau "Harvest for ALL" campaign is wrapping up its 22nd year fighting hunger through donations of food, money and volunteer hours to local food banks and pantries across the country; and

WHEREAS: farmers continue to step up to address food insecurity and contribute to this nationwide effort to make a tangible difference in the lives of those facing food insecurity; and

WHEREAS: fighting food insecurity is a collective effort of many organizations; and

WHEREAS: farmers remain dedicated to feeding the world, and sometimes it is up to us to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors have access to fresh, nutritious food, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange and Granges across the country, support the American Farm Bureau's "Harvest for ALL" campaign to perfect the opportunity for farmers to collaborate with local business and organizations to fight food insecurity.

614-VT – ASL Sign for "Grange"

WHEREAS: the Grange has a history of supporting the deaf community and promoting the learning of American Sign Language, and WHEREAS: there is currently no ASL sign for "Grange"; and

WHEREAS: it is more difficult and time consuming to fingerspell G-R-A-N-G-E in an ASL conversation than it would be if "Grange" had a sign; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange promote the American Sign Language (ASL) sign for "Grange".

615-VT – Grange Presence at Oliver Kelley Farm

WHEREAS: Oliver Hudson Kelley was the lead founder in the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange; and

WHEREAS: Grangers across our country desire that Oliver Kelly's name be remembered with the historic evidence that had been displayed at the Oliver Kelley Farm now owned by the Minnesota Historical Society; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange work with the Minnesota Historical Society to restore artifacts and information at the Oliver Kelley Farm in recognition of Brother Oliver Hudson Kelley's role in founding and promoting the Grange.

704-OR – Disposition of Resolutions by National Grange Committees

WHEREAS: In addition to familiar options for dealing with resolutions such as adopt, reject or amend, National Grange committees may also classify a resolution as 'covered by present policy; and

WHEREAS: National Grange Present Policy is only published online as a chapter of the annual convention proceedings of the National Grange session; and

WHEREAS: a National Grange committee can also include a resolution in that committee's annual Policy Statement, a document that expires and is re-approved annually by the delegates to the National Grange convention; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That if a resolution from a State Grange is classified as 'covered by present policy' that the committee must clearly and specifically identify the text in the Present Policy that covers said resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED: That if a State Grange resolution is included in a National Grange committee's annual Policy Statement, the relevant sentences of the Policy Statement must be specifically noted and footnoted

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Grange Growth Committee for their hard work here at our convention. Our committee was poised with looking at how our Grange will grow, and I feel that everyone at the table met the task.

Thank you to those outside of the committee for contributing to the work of our committee. It is my hope that every member of our Order take the work of this committee and continues to build upon it.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

Richard Stonebreaker – Chair (MD)

Joseph Stefenoni – Secretary (CA)

Kathy Baldwin (IA)

Donna Keeton (OK)

Jay Sexton (OR)

Marty Billquist (MT)

Karen Overstreet (TX)

Jason Smith (IN)

Charlene Espenshade (PA)

Pete Pompper (NJ)

POLICY STATEMENT

Just as our Ritual provides the vehicle to understand our teachings and principles, our Constitution and By-laws provide the structure for our Order to function with unity of action. We understand the theory of “chain of command,” and we encourage members of the Grange to strictly follow this process at all levels of the Order to resolve any matters at the lowest level possible.

In today's political climate, it is important to remain non-partisan. The Grange does not support any party, candidate, nominee, or appointee. Our emblem is never used for partisan political activities.

All Grangers should apply the high standards demanded by our Fraternal bonds to conduct our personal participation on social media sites regarding our Order and fellow members.

The National Grange should communicate with the State Granges regarding contractual trademark agreements in their state.

The Grange Law Committee urges that traditional, or the approved alternative, opening and closing ceremonies always be used to maintain our fraternal and lodge tax classification under IRS regulations, especially the verbal portions of these ceremonies, because these ceremonies are necessary to legally conduct business as a Grange. We urge tolerance and common sense in educating our local Granges about recognizing the importance of our Ritual.

The Grange Law Committee urges the language of the Junior Grange manual be updated to incorporate more contemporary language that will be easier for children to understand.

The Grange Law Committee commends the effort of the Video Study Committee looking at the feasibility for video recordings of the first four degrees for archival and instructional purposes. Once the recordings are completed, it should be the responsibility of the Assembly of Demeter to determine the appropriate uses of these video recordings.

The National Grange adopted changes to our Digest of Laws authorizing, but not mandating, the use of alternative titles, by all levels of our Order, for several Grange officers including the title of President for the office of Master and the title of Vice President for the office of Overseer. Our committee urges every Grange member to accept the use of the alternative titles, where local custom/preference of that Grange determines that members of our communities will be more comfortable joining the Grange. It is also necessary to instruct our fellow members in the history of our heritage officer titles. This instruction should be included in the Heirloom Program developed by the National Grange Membership/Leadership director.

“Nature’s Motto is Onward: She never looks backward”. We must keep looking forward to addressing issues that keep current and new members from feeling welcome in the Grange as we plot a course toward a successful 200th anniversary of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry.

As members, we all enjoy the protection of our Digest of Laws, which are legally enforceable and binding by the Federal and State courts. We embrace our fraternal responsibility to abide by these edicts and guidance and hold our brothers and sisters accountable. Failure to do so results in strife and discontent. Let us practice our motto - “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity.”

In today's society with scam phone calls, emails and mailings, we encourage National Grange to notify all state Masters/Presidents of mailings going out to our members at least 10 (ten) days before the mailing to ensure there is proper communication and to allow them to answer questions, if they arise from members, on the validity of the communication.

We encourage the ensuring that future National Grange Sessions are held in a manner that supports maximum member participation and minimizes financial burdens on delegates and members, as well as consulting with and informing regions regarding locations and/or venue changes and being transparent with our members.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES. #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
707	WA	The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships	Adopted as Amended
710	CA	Amend National Grange Digest of Laws Chapter 12	Adopted
712	DC	Counting Granges with Few than 13 Members in Total for Delegate Representation	Adopted
724	WV	Grange Representation	<i>Referred to Study Committee</i>
726	Committee	National Grange Dues Increase	Adopted – YEAR 1

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

707-WA – The Effect of Junior Grange Dues on Family Memberships

WHEREAS: for the purposes of a Grange Family Membership, the National Grange Digest of Laws, Chapter 4.6.6 (B) defines a family: “A family shall consist of a couple and their dependents, or a single person and their dependents. Dependents are defined as children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, foster, adopted or stepchildren, under the age of 23, who live as a member of the same household or in absence due to illness, education, or military service. Legal dependents of any age shall be considered part of their legal guardians’ family.”; and

WHEREAS: dues are collected for the entire family (adults and dependents) and not the individuals in a Grange Family Membership; and

WHEREAS: this has typically been applied to Subordinate Grange members, ages 14-23; and

WHEREAS: the Junior Grange Membership Program is designed for children, ages 5-14, and includes both chartered Junior Granges and 1+ Junior Grange Members; and

WHEREAS: the National Grange has a resolution up for a second vote this year (2024) calling for the collection of Junior Grange dues by the National Grange; and

WHEREAS: the complexities of the types of Grange membership are already difficult for some Grange Secretaries to understand, creating additional confusion at the Junior, Subordinate, State, and National Grange levels; and

WHEREAS: it would be beneficial to have these complexities discussed and worked out prior to the National Grange charging dues for Junior Grange members; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange delay the second vote on the resolution on collecting Junior Grange Dues (2023 resolution 713-MD) at the national level until such time as a full discussion on the issues surrounding how Junior Grange dues affects Family Memberships can be held and satisfactorily addressed.

710-CA – Amend National Grange Digest of Laws Chapter 12

RESOLVED: That Chapter 12 of the National Grange Digest of Laws be amended as follows:

12.6.1 Fees. Following referral from an Arbitration Panel and prior to appointment of the Trial Court, the Complainant will deliver to the Judicial Officer the filing fee payable to the Grange having jurisdiction within 10 working days. If the Complainant fails to pay the filing fee required, the Complaint will be dismissed. For complaints on the Subordinate, Pomona, and State levels, other than a State Master, the fee is \$100. For State Masters and National Officers and Delegates other than the National Master, the fee is \$200. For the National Master, the fee is \$300.

12.6.2 The Judicial Officer shall appoint a Trial Court composed of three (3) members within 15 days of receipt of the Complainant's filing fee, naming one member as Chairperson. No member of the Arbitration Panel may serve on the Trial Court.

(A) For Complaints on the Subordinate, Pomona, and State levels, the members of the Trial Court should, if possible, be comprised of members not belonging to the Subordinate or Pomona Granges where either Complainant or Respondent are members.

(B) For Complaints involving State Masters and National Officers including National Master and Delegates, the members of the Trial Court shall be past voting Delegates of the National Grange and shall be from States other than that of Complainant and Respondent.

12.6.3. Once the Complaint has been referred to the Trial Court, the Trial Court shall transmit to Respondent a complete copy of the Complaint and its attachments, the names of the members of the Trial Court, and a copy of Chapter 12 of the Digest of Laws. Respondent shall have ten (10) days from receipt to answer the Complaint in writing. A copy of the Answer shall be delivered to the Chairperson of the Trial Court and to Complainant.

12.6.4 The Trial Court shall set the time and place of hearing to occur within 21 30 days of appointment, at which all testimony shall be taken under oath. Virtual hearings with both audio and video are permissible and shall be recorded. The Trial Court shall order a complete transcript of the proceedings. The hearing shall proceed in the normal courtroom manner of question and answer with first Complainant and then Respondent presenting evidence. The Chairperson of the Trial Court shall rule on admissibility of evidence.

712-DC – Counting Granges with Fewer Than 13 Members in Total for Delegate Representation to National Grange

WHEREAS: Chapter 9, Section 4, Paragraph 1 reads:

“9.4.1 Whenever it shall appear from the reports in the office of the Secretary of the National Grange, or it shall otherwise be brought to the attention of the National Grange that the number of active Subordinate Granges with thirteen or more members in good standing in any State Grange has been reduced below six, such State Grange shall not be entitled to representation, as voting delegates, at the Annual Meeting of the National Grange.”; and

WHEREAS: no similar such bylaw is written that would reduce the number of voting delegates from two to one for State Granges with less than 15 Granges with at least 13 members or more; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that Chapter 9, Section 4, Paragraph 1 be changed to read:

“9.4.1 Whenever it shall appear from the reports in the office of the Secretary of the National Grange, or it shall otherwise be brought to the attention of the National Grange that the number of active Subordinate Granges with thirteen or more members in good standing in any State Grange has been reduced below six, such State Grange shall not be entitled to representation, as voting delegates, at the Annual Meeting of the National Grange. Similarly, if it is brought to the attention of the National Grange that the number of active Subordinate Granges with thirteen or more members in good standing in a State Grange is less than 15 but more than 5, that state shall be reduced to one voting delegate at the Annual Meeting of the National Grange.”

724-WV – Grange Representation

WHEREAS: if a State Grange falls below 6 Subordinate Granges the State has no voting representation at the National level; and

WHEREAS: regardless of the number of members in the State Grange; and

WHEREAS: dues are still paid on members to National Grange; and

WHEREAS: the members pay dues, but have no representation in the organization; and

WHEREAS: this gives no incentive for a State Grange to rebuild itself; and

WHEREAS: each state pays an assessment fee of \$1.00 per member to help defray cost of National Session, but if you have 5 or less subordinates, again you pay and have no representation; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that state should still be a voting member at the National level as long as there is at least one (1) active Grange in the state; and be it further

RESOLVED: that The National Grange Digest of Laws be amended to provide that states with 2 voting delegates, now be awarded three (3) votes, states with one (1) voting delegate, now be awarded two (2) votes, and states with five (5) or less Granges be awarded one (1) vote.

Referred to Study Committee

726- National Grange Dues Increase

RESOLVED: that Chapter IV, Sec. 4.8.2B be amended to read:

(B) “Subordinate Granges - The minimum annual dues for regular or affiliate members of a Subordinate Grange shall be twenty dollars (\$20.00) for individuals and forty dollars (\$40.00) for a family, payable in advance. The State Grange which has jurisdiction over such Subordinate Grange, may establish the total dues payable by Subordinate Granges to State Granges.”; and be it further

RESOLVED: that Chapter IV, Sec. 4.8.2F be amended to read:

(F) “E-Members – The annual dues for E-Membership will be forty-six dollars (\$46.00). (1) Dues will be divided as follows: \$36.00 to the National Grange, \$10.00 to the State Grange. ...”; and be it further

RESOLVED: Chapter IV, Sec.4.8.2G be amended to read:

(G) “National Grange - Part of the membership dues paid by Subordinate Granges and Associate Members to State Granges shall be paid quarterly as dues to the National Grange. Dues payable to the National Grange shall be as follows: (1) For each individual Subordinate Grange member \$5.00 quarterly (\$10.00 for each family membership) beginning on January 1, 2026. (2) For each Associate Grange member - \$5.00 quarterly.”

Two-year resolution. First reading adopted in 2024.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the 2024 Grange Law Committee for their hard work and many long hours before the Convention. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly in a timely fashion.

Once again, thanks to Zoom, we were able to use that time to deliberate on resolutions, construct the Policy Statement, and examine National Grange's Grange Law Policy that needed to be updated and streamlined. We especially thank Brother Leroy Watson for his extra time that was put in with drafting this policy

Of course, none of this could have happened without the dedication of our committee members and I thank them for their patience with me as their Chair. A huge thank you should especially go to Brother Leroy Watson for his research and work done with all resolutions prior to being distributed to the committees.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

Walter Hartley (RI) - Chair

Cindy Greer (CO) - Secretary

Roger Bostwick (KS)

Sandra Green (NY)

Kathy Wardle (CO)

Kathy Gibson (MA)

Susan Noah (OR)

Leroy Watson (NH)

Joseph Goodrich (VT)

Nathan Strawder (KS)

PRESENT POLICY IS REPRESENTED IN THE CURRENT DIGEST OF LAWS.

LABOR, JUDICIARY, TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

POLICY STATEMENT

Labor

The National Grange supports the rights of employers and employees to thrive in an environment of prosperity and safety. We believe America's workforce deserves to earn a fair wage with adequate retirement benefits. We encourage the preservation of existing private and public pension benefits.

We support improved efficiency in agricultural guest worker programs for temporary and permanent workers.

Judiciary

The National Grange is a staunch defender of the U.S. Constitution and the rights and privileges it protects for all persons. We ask for the creation of a Presidential Blue-Ribbon Commission on the Preservation of the American Dream.

The National Grange strives to support and respect the hard work and bravery of the nation's first responders.

The National Grange believes citizens and elected officials are the appropriate individuals to adopt the laws by which we will be governed. Administrative agencies and other governing bodies should be prohibited from implementing regulations that dramatically impact our daily lives without periodic review by elected officials. We further oppose the use of eminent domain to take private property for private commercial use.

We support legislation to increase cybersecurity for all personal banking and credit card data by all internet providers to prevent fraudulent use of that data. We encourage citizens to apply due diligence in protecting themselves from cyberfraud.

Transportation

The National Grange believes our nation's overall infrastructure (broadband, transportation, drinking water, waste management, ports, aviation, parks, schools, etc.) is in critical need of repair and upgrade. We encourage Congress to appropriate adequate funding to repair/upgrade our nation's infrastructure. We also support the posting of fuel tax amounts on every fuel pump.

We support laws requiring drivers to slow down and move over while passing an emergency vehicle that is stopped with lights flashing. All drivers must guard against distractions from cell phones and other devices. We support enhancing the visibility of school buses, construction, farm equipment, rail cars, bicycles, motorcycles, trucks, etc. We encourage walkers, joggers, bicyclists, etc. to wear highly reflective clothing.

The National Grange urges all states to have the same criteria/standards for Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL) drivers.

INDEX OF RESOLUTIONS

RES. #	STATE	TITLE	ACTION
807	WA	Consumer Choice to Opt In or Opt Out	Adopted
808	CA	Create National Wildfire Insurance Program	Adopted
817	NY	Combatting Illicit Xylazine	Adopted
818	NY	Opposition to Kill Switch in Automobiles	Adopted

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

807-WA – Consumer Choice to Opt In or Opt Out

WHEREAS: merchant sites often automatically "opt in" consumers creating extra charges, subscriptions, or agreements for payment over time without the consumer's knowledge; and

WHEREAS: this creates opportunity for unsuspecting consumers to lose hundreds of dollars a year to unwanted charges and subscriptions; therefore be it

RESOLVED: the National Grange support legislation to require all continuing online transactions for recurring, automatic payments for subscriptions that will be made over time to be opt in, by requiring an action by the consumer to signal acceptance with the terms and conditions of the on-going transactions; and be it further

RESOLVED: that to enhance transparency, the National Grange further support requiring that the opt out procedure to cancel any continuing online subscriptions must be as easy to access for the consumer as the original opt in process.

808-CA – Combating Illicit Xylazine

WHEREAS: across the United States, drug traffickers are mixing xylazine with fentanyl and other narcotics, making dangerously potent street drugs that's effects can't be reversed with the opioid-fighting drug naloxone, resulting in an increased toll on human life; and

WHEREAS: lawmakers are considering scheduling xylazine as a controlled substance by legislation at both state and federal levels, changing it in status from a veterinary prescription drug to a drug scheduled under the federal Controlled Substances Act in order to provide additional tools for law enforcement and bring stricter punishments to bear on the illicit xylazine market; and

WHEREAS: xylazine is used on many different animal species such as cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, cats and zoo animals to calm and facilitate handling, perform diagnostic and surgical procedures, relieve pain, or act as a local anesthetic; and
WHEREAS: there is a lack of practical alternatives for these legitimate uses of xylazine in cattle, horses, and many wildlife and zoo animal species; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange oppose any federal or state efforts to schedule xylazine as a controlled substance or other regulations that imposes additional restrictions or prohibitions on the use of xylazine as a safe and effective, veterinary prescription drug.

818-NY – Opposition to "Kill Switch" in Automobiles

WHEREAS: a massive infrastructure funding bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, signed by President Biden, included a little known provision to equip new vehicles with cameras and sensors aimed at detecting intoxication and other dangerous driving patterns; and

WHEREAS: this bill would require automobile manufacturers to add technology by 2026 to prevent cars from operating (ie. add a "kill switch") if said cameras and/or sensors determine a driver is impaired; and

WHEREAS: this technology is imperfect, the implications of this technology malfunctioning are unknown, and could leave drivers stranded in dangerous situations; and

WHEREAS: camera AI and recognition technology already has a bad track record recognizing patterns across race, sex, and disability related metrics; and

WHEREAS: poorly thought out electronic key technology has already resulted in mass thefts of Kia and Hyundai automobiles, leading to a class-action lawsuit settlement worth about \$200 million; and

WHEREAS: the compromise of driving systems would have an even larger negative impact and risks from malicious threats, bad actors and possible terrorist acts, on our nations highways; and

WHEREAS: this technology has Fourth Amendment implications that would negate a diver's right to be "secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects" in their free from "unreasonable searches and seizures" and is therefore is unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS: congressional leaders proposed an amendment to defund this provision in the House of Representatives, which was narrowly defeated; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Grange oppose any state or federal mandate, and further supports immediate repeal of any existing state or federal mandates, that require automobile manufacturers to install camera and/or sensors to track drivers to allow or disallow operation of an automobile, except in cases where a person has been properly convicted of a related offense and been forbidden to operate any motor vehicle that does not contain this technology, as part of their lawful sentence.

PRESENT POLICY

PRESENT POLICY: LABOR & TRADE

Commercial Trade Policies

1. The National Grange believes that opening trade between nations increases international understanding. We will actively support programs to increase the competitive position of U.S. companies in world markets.
2. The National Grange encourages purchasing American-made products and recommends that all levels of government be required to buy American-made products whenever feasible.
3. The National Grange supports a fair and equitable textile import policy that provides assistance to the domestic industry, is beneficial to the producers of fibers, and is not price inflationary to U.S. consumers.
4. The National Grange supports prohibiting the sale or lease of U.S. properties and/or businesses to any foreign entity whose country prohibits the sale or lease of properties and/or businesses to U.S. businesses or citizens.
5. The National Grange supports national, coordinated policies to combat trade-distorting practices instituted by foreign governments, such as currency manipulation and unilateral repudiation of sovereign debt, especially in those cases where it becomes more difficult for U.S. farmers and manufacturers to sell their products in overseas markets.

Immigration, Non-Citizens, and Migrant Workers

1. The National Grange supports the strict enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States and regular review of these laws to be sure they meet the needs of our country. We support increased efforts to patrol our borders, preventing the illegal entry of foreigners into our nation, including the assignment of military forces to assist civilian agencies in enforcing our border control policies. We support a prohibition on general amnesty for all persons in the country illegally of any nationality. We support requiring proof of citizenship and/or legal registered immigration to receive government benefits. We also recommend that federal authorities be allowed to detain any foreigners with expired visas for the duration of their investigation and processing and be deported if their immigration status is determined to be illegal.
2. The National Grange supports legal programs to bring guest workers into the United States on a temporary basis for the production of seasonal crops. We support reform of current foreign guest worker programs to allow for expedited processing of foreign guest workers employed in the agricultural sector as well as reform of the H-2A program so that the wage costs to farmers when hiring under the H-2A program more closely reflect the prevailing local wage. We further support an amendment to the Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act recognizing that a crew chief is an independent contractor who is responsible for the general care of his crew when it does not conflict with the requirements that are assigned to the landowners.

3. The National Grange believes that agricultural employers are responsible for checking the identification, but not for the authenticity, of migrant and seasonal worker documentation at the time of employment; employers who unknowingly hire persons in the country illegally should not be penalized.
4. National Grange supports legislation or a Constitutional amendment to require that children born in the United States must have one parent who is already a United States citizen in order to automatically receive citizenship and government benefits.
5. The National Grange supports the enactment of a practical and enforceable guest worker visa program. The National Grange supports the expansion of the H-1B visa program for professionals with advanced agricultural or technical skills to enter the United States to provide services in sectors where there is a documented need.
6. The National Grange supports legislation that would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to expand the H-2A nonimmigrant visa category (temporary agricultural workers) to include dairy workers and sheepherders, with the initial period of admission for such temporary workers being three years and allowing for extensions of additional three-year periods without requiring a period of absence from the United States be necessary for an extension.
7. The National Grange urges all jurisdictions, including sanctuary jurisdictions, to cooperate with federal immigration and law enforcement authorities to detain and incarcerate violent offenders who are in this country illegally.

Wages, Employment, and Unions

1. The National Grange supports the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931. Until that time, the threshold exemption level of the Act should be indexed to the rate of inflation.
2. The National Grange opposes the legislative enactment of a Farm Worker Bill of Rights. We oppose legislation that would impose a 40-hour work week that places a limitation on hours that can be worked in a single day or that require time and a half pay for overtime on a farming operation.
3. The National Grange opposes the child labor laws of the U.S. Department of Labor restricting family members under the age of 18 from working with animals, handling pesticides, working in timber operations, manure pits, grain elevators, feed lots, livestock auctions, and cultivating, harvesting, and curing tobacco, as well as restricting family members under the age of 16 from operating power-driven farm equipment; examples: tractors, combines, farm trucks, ATVs, and shredders.
4. The National Grange supports realistic Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) workplace safety regulations. Any employer who is cited by OSHA for violating workplace safety regulations should be allowed a reasonable period of time to correct that violation before being penalized. The National Grange believes that OSHA reform legislation, as well as any other new workplace health and safety standards, should exempt farms with fewer than 10 full-time employees.
5. The National Grange favors lifting the bans in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1943, which outlaws work that is done in the home in embroidery, gloves and mittens, handkerchiefs, buttons and buckles, jewelry, and clothing.
6. The National Grange supports allowing individuals enrolled in an accredited job training or vocational education program who are collecting unemployment compensation to decline offers of employment without losing their unemployment benefits.
7. The National Grange supports legislation that would require products bearing an "American Made" or equivalent claim to have U.S. manufacturing costs constituting at least 75% of the total manufacturing costs for the product and to be substantially assembled in the United States.
8. The National Grange supports legislation that requires all employers to pay at least the federal minimum wage, regardless of whether the employees are tipped. We also support legislation to allow younger teens (ages 13-15) to be given the privilege of working a maximum of ten hours a week for less than the federal minimum wage. After a probationary period established by the employer, the younger teen should be paid the federal minimum wage.
9. The National Grange urges the necessary changes to the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that would exempt volunteer worker member co-operatives from minimum wage requirements, allowing members access to quality foods at affordable prices.
10. The National Grange strongly urges that the process of forming a new union continue to be by secret ballot. We favor binding arbitration clauses in labor contracts covering public sector employees.
11. We support the right of individuals to join a union and collectively bargain in good faith as long as employees are not required to join or contribute money to any organization that claims to represent their interests in the workplace. We further support mandatory restrictions on the use of compulsory union dues for political, charitable or social causes without dues-paying members' consent.
12. The National Grange supports legislation that allows employers to hire replacement workers during a strike.

PRESENT POLICY: JUDICIARY

Banking and Consumer Credit Law

1. The National Grange supports strong independent banks in lieu of further concentration of banking and financial powers in interstate and nationwide firms. Banks should be prohibited from entering the field of general commerce.
2. The National Grange believes that any banks allowed to write and sell insurance must be subject to all applicable state insurance regulations and laws as administered by State Insurance Commissions. We believe that any banks that are allowed to offer or underwrite securities must be subject to regulation by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.
3. The National Grange supports the continued independence of the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) and opposes the merger of the NCUA with any other government financial institution insurance fund.

4. The National Grange urges state and federal banking regulators to better monitor fees charged by banks, reduce and eliminate those that are unfair, and provide customers with protection against aggressive banking business practices.
5. The National Grange supports regulations requiring that all dormancy and/or inactivity fees for store gift cards and prepaid gift cards be permanently eliminated, just as these fees have been eliminated for credit cards.
6. We oppose unreasonable delays in the availability of the funds from a deposited check. We support requiring all banks to honor government checks that are presented to them for payment.
7. The National Grange supports cannabis industry access to the regulated and secure banking system, enabling state-licensed businesses to access traditional banking services, fostering financial transparency, and enhancing public safety.

2023

Bankruptcy

1. The National Grange favors additional penalties for bankruptcy fraud to combat planned bankruptcies and other abuses.
2. The National Grange supports changes to bankruptcy laws to require that when companies or businesses file for bankruptcy, employees who are owed compensation are always the first secured creditors.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to classify producers with ownership interest in agricultural products as secured creditors in bankruptcy cases.

Children and Family Law

1. The National Grange supports efforts to increase public awareness of child abuse and the existence of child predators in our society. All child abuse laws and child predator laws should be reviewed, revised, and enforced to secure the safety and well-being of all children while remaining protective of the rights of innocent families and individuals. The National Grange supports equalizing sentencing of perpetrators of sexual abuse without regard for the familial relationship of the perpetrator to the child. We further support greater notification requirements on convicted child predators, including immediate notification to authorities of address changes, community notification of the presence of a convicted child predator, a national child predator registry on the internet listing the current address of all convicted child predators, and substantially increased penalties for failure of convicted sex offenders to comply.
2. The National Grange favors reforms that would consider the best interests of the child in all proceedings, investigations, or rulings by the courts.
3. The National Grange supports requiring that the biological parent's name, if known and proven, be recorded on the child's birth certificate for purposes of determining the child's right to Social Security and other support that should be provided.
4. The National Grange supports policies that grant legal surrogate decision-making authority to grandparent caregivers in the absence of responsible parents or stepparents. We support financial, social and legal services as needed to grandparent caregivers raising grandchildren. We further support protecting the visitation rights of grandparents. In the case of a child who is legally removed from the parents, the grandparents should be the first to be considered as the custodian of that child.

Civil Law

1. The National Grange supports fairness in the civil judicial system at the state and federal levels through the reform of tort, liability, and malpractice law. We favor a civil law system in which the plaintiff, if they lose, will be responsible for paying the defendant's legal and court costs, and, if the case is dismissed as frivolous, the plaintiff is also responsible for the defendant's legal and court costs. We further support limiting the amount of contingency fees that are paid to lawyers as well as putting caps on excessive jury awards for economic and non-economic damages, such as pain, suffering, and bad faith. We support placing limits on findings of joint and several liability and clearly established standards of bad faith action. We support incentives for alternative dispute resolutions, such as arbitration.
2. The National Grange opposes the use of Social Security numbers as identification by businesses and medical professionals. The National Grange supports the creation of a different means of identification for customers and patients.
3. The National Grange favors legislation to regulate support animals to reduce the opportunity to fraudulently claim pets as service animals.
4. The National Grange believes that Legal Services Corporations and local legal aid bureaus should not receive any federal funding for suits against farmers. The National Grange also believes individuals should be prohibited from initiating so-called "citizen suits," civil litigation against farmers and others for environmental violations, without demonstrating any direct loss or damage to initiate such a suit.

Consumer Protection Law

1. The National Grange supports legislation to allow consumers more control over who has access to credit reports.
2. The National Grange supports enhanced transparency for all recurring automatic online transactions by requiring the opt-out procedure to cancel to be as easy to access for the consumer as the original opt-in process. ²⁰²⁴
3. The National Grange supports the identification of all products that are foreign-made or assembled.
4. The National Grange supports requiring all companies to comply to the full extent of the law in setting strict limits for lead, lead paint, and chemicals known as phthalates and the mandatory third-party testing of products intended for children 12 and under.
5. The National Grange supports national legislation to protect an individual's right to privacy and to protect the confidentiality of all personal records from fraudulent use. The National Grange supports a program to educate individual consumers regarding how to report suspected identity theft activities. We also support stronger penalties for those convicted of identity

theft including full restitution to all victims. The National Grange supports allowing children's Social Security numbers and other private information to be frozen by the child's legal custodian in order to protect the child from identity theft.

6. The National Grange supports allowing nonprofit organizations to make continued "incidental use" of copyrighted music.
7. The National Grange supports regulations that require companies to give consumers the option of mailed billings or statements without surcharges.
8. The National Grange encourages companies to print product expiration or use by dates in the mm/dd/yy format.
9. The National Grange supports federal legislation to require "compounding pharmacies" participating in interstate commerce to be classified as pharmaceutical manufacturers, under the Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act. The National Grange also supports that, as pharmaceutical manufacturers, "compounding pharmacies" be subject to Pharmaceutical Good Manufacturing Practices, FDA inspection and enforcement, and federal drug industry user fees.

Crime and Punishment

1. The National Grange supports imposing stiff mandatory sentences in criminal cases. We further believe that convicted criminals should be responsible for restitution to their victims and society. The National Grange believes that persons who are convicted of rape, murder, or any three-felony offenses should serve their full sentence without the benefit of parole or furlough. We support the death penalty for premeditated crimes ending in death. We further support the death penalty for all citizens who are convicted of military espionage in either peacetime or war.
2. The National Grange favors classifying the importing, manufacturing, cultivation, or distribution of all illegal drugs as felonies under state and federal statutes. The National Grange recommends that there be no changes in the federal laws that currently ban the production and sale of marijuana in the United States. An appropriate prison sentence should be imposed upon conviction for any felony drug offense.
3. The National Grange supports the continued reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to help prevent the enslavement of persons and protect those who have been victims of enslavement. The National Grange also encourages its members to educate themselves and others about the dangers of human trafficking.
4. The National Grange opposes federal regulations that force the closing of jails or that require excessive expenditures of state funds to support correctional facilities.

Firearms and the Second Amendment

1. The National Grange opposes any additional gun control laws until the present laws are strictly enforced. We oppose legislation restricting the rights of citizens to bear arms for the protection of their families, property, and common defense, except for assault weapons manufactured and designed specifically for military use. We favor severe and mandatory sentences, including incarceration, for anyone using firearms while committing a crime.
2. The National Grange supports prohibiting the manufacture and sale of toy guns that are replicas of real guns.
3. The National Grange urges that at the federal level, a law of national reciprocity between states be created so that all states can recognize a legal permit to carry weapons from one state.

General Law

1. The National Grange supports tort reform to exempt manufacturers of goods and machinery from all lawsuits, fines, liabilities, and other civil penalties if they meet all the state and federal regulations that were in effect at the time the product was built or produced.
2. The National Grange supports federal legislation to prohibit gambling on the Internet. We further support legislation to make the unsolicited e-mailing or posting of advertisements for pornographic websites and materials both a criminal and civil offense in order to control the availability of pornographic material to children.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to place the psychoactive plant *salvia divinorum* under the control of the Controlled Substance Act.
4. The national Grange opposes efforts to schedule xylazine as a controlled substance or other regulations or prohibitions that restrict the use of xylazine as a safe and effective veterinary prescription drug. ²⁰²⁴
5. The National Grange supports legislation that will create a new 12th Circuit Court of Appeals to meet the needs of the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Pacific Territories.
6. The National Grange believes that state law, not federal law, should have jurisdiction over "hate crimes," and state law should be responsible for assigning specific punishments for these crimes.
7. The National Grange believes that cell phone use by inmates should be banned at all state and federal correctional facilities. Prison visitors should be required to surrender all cell phones at the facility entrance until their departure.
8. The National Grange supports legislation requiring that Members of Congress shall deposit all personal investments into blind trusts for the duration of their term of office.
9. The National Grange supports the use of drone aircraft and associated technologies for agricultural purposes.
10. The National Grange opposes any court-ordered halting of the harvesting and transporting of any farmer's perishable crop by declaring the crop as "hot goods" because of violation of minimum wage, overtime, and child labor provisions of federal law.
11. The National Grange supports the principle that all federal judges, with the exception of the Supreme Court, be reconfirmed every 10 years to remain on the bench.
12. The National Grange supports revisions to the Hatch Act to permit federal employees to run for local municipal and county offices so long as no conflict of interest exists.

13. The National Grange urges Congress to keep the number of members of the United States Supreme Court at one Chief Justice of the United States plus eight associate justices. The National Grange opposes any legislation that will remove the lifetime tenure of the justices of the United States Supreme Court.

Insurance Law

1. The National Grange supports the efforts of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies to strengthen and improve insurance guarantee funds.
2. The National Grange believes that the National Flood Insurance Program should operate on an actuarially sound basis. National Flood Insurance Programs (buildings, structures) should not be available for properties that have suffered multiple losses where steps were not taken to protect the property from further damage.
3. The National Grange urges that the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conduct a public awareness campaign to help property owners understand their rights when there is a flood map reclassification.
4. The National Grange urges the National Flood Insurance Program to change policy provisions to allow blanket coverage over multiple structures on a property. Additionally, we support the continuation of the 'Write Your Own' (local insurance agent) model of securing Flood Insurance.
5. The National Grange urges state and federal regulators to establish the necessary safeguards that will make it possible for the viatical industry to serve viators and investors in a responsible way.
6. The National Grange opposes any legislation that would require insurance companies to comply with "The Community Reinvestment Act," 12 U.S.C. 2901.

Protection for Victims and Jurors

1. We support increased protection for those who serve on juries. All jury deliberations should remain confidential. The National Grange supports legislation to forbid public disclosure of information about criminal investigations that could be detrimental to the case of either the prosecution or the defense until after the case's final disposition.
2. The National Grange supports legislation to assure that victims and witnesses of violent crimes must be notified in writing at least 60 days before any hearings in which the person who has been convicted of that crime seeks release or a change in release status from either a prison or a psychiatric hospital.
3. The National Grange supports legislation to protect the language interpreter with an interpreter/client privilege just as lawyers have attorney/client privileges.
4. The National Grange supports the continued use of the national database of DNA evidence acquired during previous investigations of sexual assault to be used in the investigation of other sexual assault cases across the nation (CODIS, Combined DNA Index System). The National Grange further supports federal grants to the states to audit the quality of the inventory of prior evidence acquired from sexual assault investigations by local law enforcement agencies to increase the value of this evidence in the investigation of sexual assault cases across the nation.
5. The National Grange supports the establishment of a consumer-oriented national conviction registry of medical professionals who have been previously convicted of ethical or criminal activity and barred from the practice of medicine.

PRESENT POLICY: TRANSPORTATION

Air Travel

1. The National Grange supports the continuation of the assignment of Air Marshals on random flights.
2. The National Grange opposes legislation authorizing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to establish fees for air traffic control and related activities, services, facilities, and equipment that increases user fees and taxes for general aviation such as crop dusting, the patrol of pipeline and power lines, and forest fires and commuting to rural communities. We also oppose legislation creating a board dominated by airline representatives that would recommend FAA user fee pricing schedules.
3. The National Grange supports increased aviation safety.

General Transportation Policy

1. The National Grange believes that a strong, balanced transportation infrastructure system, at the lowest cost and consistent with adequate and efficient service, is in the best interest of farmers and consumers. We oppose efforts by state governments to toll expanses of the Interstate Highway System that are built and operating as toll-free.
2. The National Grange urges federal and state weed control agencies to control noxious weeds on their highway rights-of-way and to work with the railroads to control noxious weeds along railroad rights-of-way but always respecting the landowners' property rights and preferences.
3. The National Grange supports inter-modal ownership of transportation carriers only when that intermodal ownership is consistent with the public interest, will not unreasonably restrain competition and will not result in segments of agriculture and rural areas being held by captive shippers.
4. The National Grange strongly supports a multi-media public announcement system that provides disabled consumers with timely information about arrivals, departures, gate changes, etc., for all types of transportation systems.

5. The National Grange supports right-to-repair legislation that allows independent vehicle maintenance facilities or car dealership garages to have access to the technology/programming needed to repair all makes of vehicles, which allow consumers to have a choice of where to take their vehicle for maintenance and repair.
6. The National Grange supports safety and educational programs for individuals 17 years and younger to use all non-roadway vehicles such as ATVs, snowmobiles, dirt bikes, sleds, etc., and also endorses the use of helmets and other protective gear.
7. The National Grange supports a standardized toll road transponder that works on all roads across the USA.
8. The National Grange opposes government-subsidized tax credits that solely target the purchase of electric vehicles. ²⁰²³
9. The National Grange opposes mandates that require automobile manufacturers to install cameras and/or sensors to track drivers to allow or disallow the operation of vehicles except in cases where a person has been convicted of a related offense and is required to operate a vehicle with this technology. ²⁰²⁴

Highway Policy, Interstate System and Federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF)

1. The National Grange strongly supports the continuation and reauthorization of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). We support removing the HTF from the federal budget. We oppose any proposal that would change the concept of dedicating all federal motor fuel taxes to the HTF to be used for highway and highway-related purposes. The National Grange supports the creation of a Federal Mass Transportation Trust Fund from user tax revenues separate from the HTF and highway user taxes.
2. The National Grange opposes increasing the federal gasoline tax for purposes other than the HTF and reaffirms its position that all funds received from highway fuel taxes be used only for the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges. The federal and state governments should not use these funds to balance their budgets or fund other programs. We oppose impounding HTF monies as a means of enforcement of federal laws.
3. We support federal legislation to remove federal fuel tax from fuel used to operate farm trucks.,
4. The National Grange favors full compensation for homes, farming operations and businesses when displaced by eminent domain for highway rights-of-way.
5. The National Grange calls for increased border surveillance to ensure that commercial vehicles and drivers based in Canada and Mexico are in full compliance with the United States' motor vehicle equipment standards and requirements.
6. The National Grange supports streamlining environmental requirements to expedite the completion of transportation congestion-relief projects in order to reduce pollution while promoting efficient land use and road capacity.
7. The National Grange supports the following provisions as part of any future reauthorization of the federal highway programs and/or the Federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF):
 - a. additional funding for core safety programs that are properly directed to lifesaving roadway safety projects.
 - a. provisions to reduce administrative delays at federal and state agencies responsible for approving highway planning.
 - b. financial incentives for states to obligate new congestion relief funding for projects that reduce highway bottlenecks.
 - c. full funding by Congress for all "guaranteed" highway funds in future Transportation Appropriations bills.
 - d. full enforcement of additional new fuel tax fraud provisions and additional credit for the HTF for revenue enhancements related to the new tax collection on ethanol.

Highway Policy – Non-Interstate

1. The National Grange urges government agencies to conserve land for agricultural purposes when considering the location and design of highways, including planting trees and shrubs along highways in places where such growth could stop soil erosion and aid in snow control.
2. The National Grange supports continuing the federal highway aid system as a federal-state partnership with more flexibility in the states' use of money for safety, construction, and maintenance of state and local highways, including rural roads and bridges that are built to the community's needs as determined by county and local road commissions.
3. The National Grange recommends that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration require surface highway reflectors on the center lane divider of all two-way highways on the federal highway-aid system and adopt standards to ensure a better and more durable road surface.
4. The National Grange supports the expansion of rural intra-city bus, air, and rail services.
5. The National Grange supports funding to construct adequate parking or rest areas to allow commercial and other drivers to stop and rest. We encourage the use of "Weigh Stations" as rest locations.
6. The National Grange continues to uphold the States' rights to regulate the farmer's transporting of equipment and crops and opposes any federal legislation or regulations that would require farmers to obtain commercial driver's licenses to operate farm equipment.
7. The National Grange supports legislation to increase federal funding to maintain and repair local bridges throughout the nation.

Impaired Driving

1. The National Grange believes the dangers of drinking and driving should be included in all federal anti-drug information and education programs.
2. The National Grange supports maintaining the minimum age for the consumption of alcoholic beverages at 21.
3. The National Grange recommends that transportation authorities, both government and privately owned, be vested with the authority to randomly test employees for drug and alcohol use or impairment.

Railroad Transportation

1. The National Grange supports scheduling more commuter trains to offer better service to the public. We further support efforts to create a Commuter Bill of Rights that would guarantee that rail passengers stranded on railway trains would have access to food and water, as well as assure their timely removal from the disabled train.
2. The National Grange urges all appropriate state and federal agencies to consider the economic impact and public interests when undertaking transportation planning with regard to the impact of rail line abandonment. We support the integration of rail and highway system planning in advance of possible abandonment to maximize economies to the public and private sectors as well as federal assistance to states for this purpose and to assist in rail takeovers by states where maintenance of service is cost-effective to local or state governments and to local shippers. We support economic and social impact statements from railroads as well as meaningful local public hearings in the areas affected as a part of the abandonment process.
3. The National Grange supports the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Board to ensure the development and maintenance of a strong and effective rail network to enhance competition among and between rail carriers to ensure efficient rail service and reasonable rates.
4. The National Grange supports legislation requiring warning reflectors to be placed on both sides of all railroad cars in the United States.
5. The National Grange supports legislation that would require railroads to reveal to each landowner, before abandonment, the full and complete legal basis on which the railroad has claimed its right to occupy the corridor. If the railroad's right is less than fee simple ownership, it should disclose to each landowner that its occupancy right would be extinguished upon abandonment.

Roadway Safety

1. The National Grange supports the enforcement of weight limits on vehicles operating on our highways.
2. The National Grange supports truck regulations requiring the use of brushes and/or flaps that will channel the water down, reducing the spray.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would require rear and side impact/under-ride guards on all newly manufactured semi-trailers.
4. The National Grange urges the Federal Highway Administration to establish and promulgate standards for the minimum walk light time, type of visual images, and audible sound level for controlled crosswalks throughout the United States.
5. The National Grange supports requiring railroad crossings in rural areas to have rumble strips installed in road surfaces on approaches to crossings, be clear of brush and other vision-inhibiting material, and be equipped with flashing warning lights.
6. The National Grange supports requiring that all motorcycle, bicycle, and moped riders wear protective helmets and either wear high-visibility clothing or have an apparatus to make them more visible to other motorists.
7. The National Grange supports requiring all motor vehicles to have a rear bumper or undercarriage guard coming within 16 inches above the ground.
8. The National Grange urges automobile manufacturers to include the following modifications on their new models: uniformly located door latches; louder and more visible interior direction signal indicators; spare tires of equal quality and size as regular tires; uniform tow points; light-sensitive sensors that would automatically turn on automobile headlights at a certain degree of darkness; at least one mirror on the right side of a vehicle to reflect an undistorted view of images and a curvature type mirror to pick up blind spots; and headlights that turn on automatically with the windshield wipers.
9. The National Grange supports standardizing the cellular emergency numbers for the interstate highway systems throughout the country.
10. The National Grange supports legislation that would penalize a driver for using a cell phone when it is the cause of an accident.
11. The National Grange supports regulations that would strengthen the safety standards for smaller cars and opposes any weakening of the safety standards of sport utility vehicles.
12. The National Grange strongly supports state and national laws that require reflective tape on all existing and new trucks to help reduce under-ride accidents.
13. The National Grange supports legislation banning high-intensity discharge (HID) headlights and/or driving lights and/or Xenon lights.
14. The National Grange encourages all states to use the same laws pertaining to school bus operations and traffic control around school buses. We support legislation requiring all newly manufactured school buses to be equipped with strobe lights that are highly visible in all types of weather. We further support requiring all school buses to have a sign on the back stating "Stay Back 50 Feet" and that all school buses manufactured have blind spot sensors or devices.
15. The National Grange supports present U.S. Department of Transportation requirements for random drug and alcohol testing for school bus drivers.
16. The National Grange supports legislation restricting the placement of any visual entertainment device within the driver's area of vision within a motor vehicle.
17. The National Grange supports requirements that newer vehicles be equipped with blind spot indicators visible by the driver and that after-market suppliers have blind spot indicators available for earlier models.

Truck Transportation Policy

1. The National Grange supports legislation and regulatory policies that enhance stability and competition in truck operations for cost-effective and dependable service.

2. The National Grange supports regulations requiring brake lights to be activated on commercial motor vehicles when a Jake Brake is used.
3. The National Grange supports legislation that would require reporting of positive drug tests for drivers with any commercial license to the Department of Motor Vehicles of the issuing state so long as there is a mandatory right of appeal and a second test to eliminate false positive results. The report of a positive drug test should remain in the driver's file for a period of two years.
4. The National Grange supports the Department of Transportation (DOT) reclassifying light-, medium-, and heavy-duty utility vehicles separate from on-highway (cross-country) trucks. However, we recommend that logbooks not be required on light, medium, and heavy-duty utility vehicles.

Water Transportation

1. The National Grange supports a moratorium on user fee increases for agricultural products transported on coastal and inland waterways. All user fees on waterways should be based on the percentage of federal expenditures attributable to opening waterways to barge traffic and should be placed in an Inland Waterways Trust Fund and used only for the construction and maintenance of inland waterways.
2. The National Grange supports maintaining the current United States Corps of Engineers' season for transporting grain on the Missouri River.
3. The National Grange supports the immediate upgrades to the locks on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers facilitating more significant barge traffic and providing an economic engine to fuel growth and prosperity.
4. The National Grange recommends repealing the Jones Act, which requires all freight moved between American ports to be carried in American ships.
5. The National Grange supports legislation to prevent any company controlled by a foreign government from taking over the management of U.S. port facilities.

PRESENT POLICY: FOREIGN & DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Foreign Aid

1. The National Grange urges the U.S. government to unconditionally extend foreign aid only in cases of natural disasters. We further support basing a greater use of agricultural products in lieu of cash transfers for humanitarian assistance; closer monitoring of International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to encourage developing countries to provide self-help; considering the recipient countries' present foreign debt, repayment schedule, and record before providing them with new financial assistance; and keeping in mind the needs of domestic programs when Congress considers the appropriate amount of foreign aid.
2. National Grange recommends that all countries share in the economic assistance to developing countries through the United Nations.
3. The National Grange favors canceling all U.S. aid and supplies to foreign countries that take, hold, or kill American citizens, refuse to recognize international law, willingly permit the production and shipment of illegal drugs into our country, or allow the takeover of U.S. embassies or any property belonging to the U.S. government.
4. The National Grange encourages agricultural research and development in and for developing nations.

International Relations and the United Nations

1. The National Grange supports a friendly relationship with the Republic of China (Taiwan).
2. The National Grange supports a positive non-military program promoting the democratic form of government to roll back or contain dictatorial forms of government.
3. The National Grange supports actions by our government in condemning terrorist acts and supports efforts to secure the release of all hostages.
4. The National Grange supports a U.S. foreign policy that only allows American troops to be committed to foreign countries in turmoil when it is in the strategic interest of the United States and adequate safeguards are provided. We support the United States' involvement in the United Nations' military operations, including funding such military operations only with the approval of Congress.
5. The National Grange strongly supports extending and maintaining the protections of U.S. Constitutional law, guaranteeing individual rights under all international law. We further urge the United States government not to ratify or sign agreements or treaties that limit individual rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution or Bill of Rights or that impose taxation on the citizens of the United States.
6. The National Grange opposes US participation in the International Criminal Court. We further oppose the use of U.S.-appropriated funds for the establishment or operation of the Court. We further urge the U.S. government to use all of its diplomatic and political influence to protect U.S. Service persons or U.S. citizens from being subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.
7. The National Grange urges the United States Government and the International Boundary and Water Commission to take immediate action to have Mexico meet its treaty obligations.

National Defense

1. The National Grange supports international agreements leading toward a balanced reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons and chemical weapons. To complement this objective, we further support the development of national strategic and civil defense systems.
2. The National Grange recommends that the federal government negotiate with foreign countries for compensation for the military defenses that we provide to their countries.
3. The National Grange supports a strong, effective military. We urge Congress to appropriate sufficient funding, including adequate pay for all branches of the military. We support policies that will re-establish effective security and intelligence capabilities.
4. The National Grange supports the continued presence of the United States Armed Forces in South Korea.
5. The National Grange believes that all citizens between the ages of 18 and 26 must register with the Selective Service.

United States Postal Service

1. The National Grange supports efforts by the Postal Service to eliminate waste, hold down operating costs, and increase services and reliability. We support the following postal reforms:
 - a. We urge that any future postal rate increases be no greater than the rate of inflation.
 - b. We will support stable rates or eligibility requirements for nonprofit organizations' postal rates. We support the retention of the third-class bulk mail rate for not-for-profit organizations at a reasonable rate.
 - c. We support the reorganization of the Postal Rate Commission to include representation of the interests of mail users.
 - d. We encourage Congress to allow the U.S. Postal Service to be innovative and flexible in the modern business world and develop a competitive culture within its employees so it may return itself to financial and operational soundness and continue to fulfill its mission.
2. The National Grange supports Rural Free Mail Delivery Service as an essential part of universal mail service. We support the continuation of rural Saturday mail delivery and all other mail services to rural areas.
3. The National Grange encourages the Postal Service to make their patrons aware that handicapped persons may apply for mail delivery to their door.
4. The National Grange urges the United States Postal Service to utilize guidelines such as the 10-mile proximity rule in relation to the proposed post office closures, taking into consideration the special needs of the community as well as the statistical analysis developed for closure criteria. The National Grange believes that patrons of rural post offices should be given six months' notice before their post office is closed and should be provided with an opportunity to express their viewpoint at a public hearing.
5. The National Grange supports continued priority mail delivery for chicks, bees, plants, and other living agricultural feedstocks in a timely manner.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Labor, Judiciary and Transportation Committee for their hard work and many long hours before the Convention. Having an outstanding committee made the difficult task of this committee go very smoothly and efficiently. Thanks to Leroy Watson for his research and reference notes on each resolution, which contributed greatly to our efforts.

Thank you to the National Grange for the use of Zoom. We were able to use that time to deliberate on resolutions, construct the Policy Statement, and examine the National Grange Labor, Judiciary and Transportation Policy that needed to be updated.

Thank You.

Fraternally submitted,

David Allen (NC) – Chairperson

Mark Noah (OR) – Secretary

Glenn Gibson (MA)

Brittney Pittman (WA)

Cheryl Watson (DC)

Kendal Holden (VT)

Ted Powell (CT)

Connie Johnston (MI)

James Taylor (VA)

HISTORY OF NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

FOUNDING OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE:
December 4, 1867 - Washington, D.C

HISTORY OF THE CONVENTIONS OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

Session #	Year, Month	Place	Master
1	1868, Jan.	Washington, DC	William Saunders
2	1869, April	Washington, DC	William Saunders
3	1870, Jan.	Washington, DC	William Saunders
4	1871, Jan.	Washington, DC	William Saunders
5	1872, Jan.	Washington, DC	William Saunders
6	1873, Jan.	Georgetown, DC	William Saunders
7	1874, Feb.	St. Louis, MO	D.W. Adams
8	1875, Feb.	Charleston, SC	D.W. Adams
9	1875, Nov.	Louisville, KY	D.W. Adams
10	1876, Nov.	Chicago, IL	John T. Jones
11	1877, Nov.	Cincinnati, OH	John T. Jones
12	1878, Nov.	Richmond, VA	S.E. Adams
13	1879, Nov.	Canandaigua, NY	S.E. Adams
14	1880, Nov.	Washington, DC	J.J. Woodman
15	1881, Nov.	Washington, DC	J.J. Woodman
16	1882, Nov.	Indianapolis, IN	J.J. Woodman
17	1883, Nov.	Washington, DC	J.J. Woodman
18	1884, Nov.	Nashville, TN	J.J. Woodman
19	1885, Nov.	Boston, MA	J.J. Woodman
20	1886, Nov.	Philadelphia, PA	I.P. Darden
21	1887, Nov.	Lansing, MI	I.P. Darden
22	1888, Nov.	Topeka, KS	James Draper
23	1889, Nov.	Sacramento, CA	J.H. Brigham
24	1890, Nov.	Atlanta, GA	J.H. Brigham
25	1891, Nov.	Springfield, OH	J.H. Brigham
26	1892, Nov.	Concord, NH	J.H. Brigham
27	1893, Nov.	Syracuse, NY	J.H. Brigham
28	1894, Nov.	Springfield, IL	J.H. Brigham
29	1895, Nov.	Worcester, MA	J.H. Brigham
30	1896, Nov.	Washington, DC	J.H. Brigham
31	1897, Nov.	Harrisburg, PA	J.H. Brigham
32	1898, Nov.	Concord, NH	Aaron Jones
33	1899, Nov.	Springfield, OH	Aaron Jones
34	1900, Nov.	Washington, DC	Aaron Jones
35	1901, Nov.	Lewiston, ME	Aaron Jones
36	1902, Nov.	Lansing, MI	Aaron Jones
37	1903, Nov.	Rochester, NY	Aaron Jones
38	1904, Nov.	Portland, OR	Aaron Jones
39	1905, Nov.	Atlantic City, NJ	Aaron Jones
40	1906, Nov.	Denver, CO	N.J. Bachelder
41	1907, Nov.	Hartford, CT	N.J. Bachelder
42	1908, Nov.	Washington, DC	N.J. Bachelder
43	1909, Nov.	Des Moines, IA	N.J. Bachelder
44	1910, Nov.	Atlantic City, NJ	N.J. Bachelder
45	1911, Nov.	Columbus, OH	N.J. Bachelder
46	1912, Nov.	Spokane, WA	Oliver Wilson
47	1913, Nov.	Manchester, NH	Oliver Wilson
48	1914, Nov.	Wilmington, DE	Oliver Wilson
49	1915, Nov.	Oakland, CA	Oliver Wilson
50	1916, Nov.	Washington, DC	Oliver Wilson
51	1917, Nov.	St. Louis, MO	Oliver Wilson
52	1918, Nov.	Syracuse, NY	Oliver Wilson
53	1919, Nov.	Grand Rapids, MI	Oliver Wilson
54	1920, Nov.	Boston, MA	S.J. Lowell
55	1921, Nov.	Portland, OR	S.J. Lowell
56	1922, Nov.	Wichita, KS	S.J. Lowell
57	1923, Nov.	Pittsburgh, PA	S.J. Lowell

58	1924, Nov.	Atlantic City, NJ	L.J. Taber
59	1925, Nov.	Sacramento, CA	L.J. Taber
60	1926, Nov.	Portland, ME	L.J. Taber
61	1927, Nov.	Cleveland, OH	L.J. Taber
62	1928, Nov.	Washington, DC	L.J. Taber
63	1929, Nov.	Seattle, WA	L.J. Taber
64	1930, Nov.	Rochester, NY	L.J. Taber
65	1931, Nov.	Madison, WI	L.J. Taber
66	1932, Nov.	Winston-Salem, NC	L.J. Taber
67	1933, Nov.	Boise, ID	L.J. Taber
68	1934, Nov.	Hartford, CT	L.J. Taber
69	1935, Nov.	Sacramento, CA	L.J. Taber
70	1936, Nov.	Columbus, OH	L.J. Taber
71	1937, Nov.	Harrisburg, PA	L.J. Taber
72	1938, Nov.	Portland, OR	L.J. Taber
73	1939, Nov.	Peoria, IL	L.J. Taber
74	1940, Nov.	Syracuse, NY	L.J. Taber
75	1941, Nov.	Worcester, MA	L.J. Taber
76	1942, Nov.	Wenatchee, WA	A.S. Goss
77	1943, Nov.	Grand Rapids, MI	A.S. Goss
78	1944, Nov.	Winston-Salem, NC	A.S. Goss
79	1945, Nov.	Kansas City, MO	A.S. Goss
80	1946, Nov.	Portland, OR	A.S. Goss
81	1947, Nov.	Columbus, OH	A.S. Goss
82	1948, Nov.	Portland, ME	A.S. Goss
83	1949, Nov.	Sacramento, CA	A.S. Goss
84	1950, Nov.	Minneapolis, MN	Henry D. Sherwood
85	1951, Nov.	Atlantic City, NJ	Herschel D. Newsom
86	1952, Nov.	Rockford, IL	Herschel D. Newsom
87	1953, Nov.	Burlington, VT	Herschel D. Newsom
88	1954, Nov.	Spokane, WA	Herschel D. Newsom
89	1955, Nov.	Cleveland, OH	Herschel D. Newsom
90	1956, Nov.	Rochester, NY	Herschel D. Newsom
91	1957, Nov.	Colorado Springs, CO	Herschel D. Newsom
92	1958, Nov.	Grand Rapids, MI	Herschel D. Newsom
93	1959, Nov.	Long Beach, CA	Herschel D. Newsom
94	1960, Nov.	Winston-Salem, NC	Herschel D. Newsom
95	1961, Nov.	Worcester, MA	Herschel D. Newsom
96	1962, Nov.	Fort Wayne, IN	Herschel D. Newsom
97	1963, Nov.	Portland, OR	Herschel D. Newsom
98	1964, Nov.	Atlantic City, NJ	Herschel D. Newsom
99	1965, Nov.	Topeka, KS	Herschel D. Newsom
100	1966, Nov.	Minneapolis, MN	Herschel D. Newsom
101	1967, Nov.	Syracuse, NY	Herschel D. Newsom
102	1968, Nov.	Peoria, IL	Herschel D. Newsom
103	1969, Nov.	Daytona Beach, FL	John W. Scott
104	1970, Nov.	Boise, ID	John W. Scott
105	1971, Nov.	Charleston, WV	John W. Scott
106	1972, Nov.	Hartford, CT	John W. Scott
107	1973, Nov.	Lincoln, NE	John W. Scott
108	1974, Nov.	Sacramento, CA	John W. Scott
109	1975, Nov.	Columbus, OH	John W. Scott
110	1976, Nov.	Atlantic City, NJ	John W. Scott
111	1977, Nov.	Greensboro, NC	John W. Scott
112	1978, Nov.	Denver, CO	John W. Scott
113	1979, Nov.	Lancaster, PA	John W. Scott
114	1980, Nov.	Cedar Rapids, IA	Edward Andersen
115	1981, Nov.	Spokane, WA	Edward Andersen
116	1982, Nov.	Providence, RI	Edward Andersen
117	1983, Nov.	San Antonio, TX	Edward Andersen
118	1984, Nov.	Portland, ME	Edward Andersen
119	1985, Nov.	Eugene, OR	Edward Andersen
120	1986, Nov.	Madison, WI	Edward Andersen
121	1987, Nov.	Syracuse, NY	Edward Andersen
122	1988, Nov.	Redding, CA	Robert E. Barrow
123	1989, Nov.	Greensboro, NC	Robert E. Barrow
124	1990, Nov.	Wichita, KS	Robert E. Barrow
125	1991, Nov.	Burlington, VT	Robert E. Barrow

126	1992, Nov.	Denver, CO	Robert E. Barrow
127	1993, Nov.	Cleveland, OH	Robert E. Barrow
128	1994, Nov.	Peoria, IL	Robert E. Barrow
129	1995, Nov.	Harrisburg, PA	Robert E. Barrow
130	1996, Nov.	Spokane, WA	Kermit W. Richardson
131	1997, Nov.	Springfield, MA	Kermit W. Richardson
132	1998, Nov.	Greensboro, NC	Kermit W. Richardson
133	1999, Nov.	Portland, ME	Kermit W. Richardson
134	2000, Nov.	Fresno, CA	Kermit W. Richardson
135	2001, Nov.	Cedar Rapids, IA	Kermit W. Richardson
136	2002, Nov.	Portland, OR	Kermit W. Richardson
137	2003, Nov.	Burlington, VT	Kermit W. Richardson
138	2004, Nov.	Rochester, NY	William A. Steel
139	2005, Nov.	Columbus, OH	William A. Steel
140	2006, Nov.	Springfield, IL	William A. Steel
141	2007, Nov.	Reno, NV	William A. Steel
142	2008, Nov.	Cromwell, CT	Edward L. Luttrell
143	2009, Nov.	Grand Rapids, MI	Edward L. Luttrell
144	2010, Nov.	Charlotte, NC	Edward L. Luttrell
145	2011, Nov.	Tulsa, OK	Edward L. Luttrell
146	2012, Nov.	Boise, ID	Edward L. Luttrell
147	2013, Nov.	Manchester, NH	Edward L. Luttrell
148	2014, Nov.	Sandusky, OH	Edward L. Luttrell
149	2015, Nov.	Lincoln, NE	Edward L. Luttrell
150	2016 Nov.	Herndon, VA	Betsy E. Huber
151	2017, Nov.	Spokane, WA	Betsy E. Huber
152	2018, Nov.	Stowe, VT	Betsy E. Huber
153	2019, Nov.	Minneapolis, MN	Betsy E. Huber
154	2020, Nov.	<i>Virtual</i> – Washington, DC	Betsy E. Huber
155	2021, Nov.	Wichita, KS	Betsy E. Huber
156	2022, Nov.	Sparks, NV	Betsy E. Huber
157	2023, Nov.	Niagara Falls, NY	Betsy E. Huber
158	2024, Nov.	Bettendorf, IA	Christine E. Hamp
Upcoming			
159	2025, Nov.	<i>Carnival Horizon</i> From Miami to Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao	
160	2026, Nov.	Tulsa, OK	
161	2027, Nov.	TBA	

**NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER
OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY**

FINANCIAL REPORT

December 31, 2023

**NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER
OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY**

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Independent Auditors' Report

To the Board of Directors
National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry
Washington, District of Columbia

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, (a non-profit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Adoption of FASB ASC 326, Financial Instruments – Credit Losses

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements, National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry adopted FASB ASC 326, Financial Instruments – Credit Losses. Our opinion is not modified with respect to that matter.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control related matters that we identified during the audit.



*North Bethesda, Maryland
November 4, 2024*

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 759,989	\$ 355,204
Investments	621,096	488,062
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for credit loss/doubtful accounts of \$ 201,187 and \$137,217 as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively	390,989	295,693
Prepaid expense	52,567	61,368
Inventory	<u>29,395</u>	<u>35,712</u>
Total current assets	<u>1,854,036</u>	<u>1,236,039</u>
Property and Equipment, at cost		
Land	192,238	192,238
Building and improvements	3,371,286	3,347,886
Equipment	<u>47,057</u>	<u>47,057</u>
	3,610,581	3,587,181
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>2,310,825</u>	<u>2,217,807</u>
	<u>1,299,756</u>	<u>1,369,374</u>
Other Assets		
Right-of-use assets - operating leases	<u>12,840</u>	<u>17,243</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 3,166,632</u>	<u>\$ 2,622,656</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 193,728	\$ 53,016
Accrued payroll liabilities	29,133	37,973
Accrued expenses	38,171	37,742
Other liabilities	113,260	4,565
Deferred revenue	1,299	4,962
Due to Grange Foundation	116	-
Notes payable - current portion	<u>107,999</u>	<u>122,242</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>483,706</u>	<u>260,500</u>
Long-Term Liability		
Notes payable - non-current portion	1,193,967	1,297,233
Tenant security deposit	39,720	49,858
Other long term liability	<u>157,483</u>	<u>16,361</u>
Total long-term liabilities	<u>1,391,170</u>	<u>1,363,452</u>
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	696,430	408,527
Without donor restrictions - board designated	<u>595,326</u>	<u>590,177</u>
Total net assets	<u>1,291,756</u>	<u>998,704</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 3,166,632</u>	<u>\$ 2,622,656</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
For the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Support and Revenue		
Product and services		
Membership dues and fees	\$ 752,818	\$ 788,463
Legislative income	195,500	105,000
Convention income	77,825	63,582
Trademark licensing income	20,110	52,410
Merchandise and magazine subscription income	46,649	41,424
Contributions		
Grants	588,510	-
Donations and contributions	11,704	305
Other income		
Building rental income	637,005	950,356
Other state grange revenue	-	72,148
Employee retention credit	215,779	-
Other income	2,327	168
Net investment return	59,979	(72,784)
Total support and revenue	<u>2,608,206</u>	<u>2,001,072</u>
Expenses		
Program services	1,286,209	892,198
Building operations	654,334	645,577
General and administrative	355,940	536,763
Fundraising	18,671	18,741
Total expenses	<u>2,315,154</u>	<u>2,093,279</u>
Change in net assets	293,052	(92,207)
Net assets without donor restrictions, beginning of year	<u>998,704</u>	<u>1,090,911</u>
Net assets without donor restrictions, end of year	<u>\$ 1,291,756</u>	<u>\$ 998,704</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

	Program Services			Supporting Services			Total
	Convention	Membership	Other Programs	Building Operations	General and Administrative	Fundraising	
Professional services	\$ 20,700	\$ 25,532	\$ 349,137	\$ 216,232	\$ 204,806	\$ 1,054	\$ 422,092
Personnel expenses	46,914	109,657	253,668	92,206	98,278	11,996	202,480
Occupancy costs	916	2,376	9,020	304,306	1,912	235	306,453
Travel expense	142,511	4,044	36,770	343	362	44	749
Office expenses	9,880	9,183	89,922	4,704	4,964	609	10,277
Non-operating expenses	7,430	17,399	40,496	14,693	15,500	1,903	32,096
Credit loss expense	5,537	12,967	30,179	10,950	11,551	1,418	23,919
Interest expense	5,512	12,908	30,043	10,900	11,500	1,412	23,812
Cost of goods sold	-	-	13,508	-	-	-	-
Other expenses	-	-	-	-	7,067	-	7,067
Total	\$ 239,400	\$ 194,066	\$ 852,743	\$ 654,334	\$ 355,940	\$ 18,671	\$ 1,028,945
							\$ 2,315,154

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	Program Services			Total Program Services	Supporting Services			Total Supporting Services	Total
	Convention	Membership	Other Programs		Building Operations	General and Administrative	Fundraising		
Professional services	\$ 8,836	\$ 15,488	\$ 31,877	\$ 56,201	\$ 252,172	\$ 405,120	\$ 701	\$ 657,993	\$ 714,194
Personnel expenses	47,880	142,603	280,802	471,285	126,706	91,978	13,296	231,980	703,265
Occupancy costs	689	3,443	8,068	12,200	223,008	1,324	191	224,523	236,723
Travel expense	115,837	12,597	27,194	155,628	1,666	1,196	172	3,034	158,662
Non-operating expenses	6,769	20,161	39,700	66,630	17,914	13,004	1,880	32,798	99,428
Interest expense	5,076	15,119	29,770	49,965	13,433	9,752	1,410	24,595	74,560
Office expenses	6,863	10,981	33,427	51,271	6,946	4,833	699	12,478	63,749
Bad debt expense	1,410	4,201	8,272	13,883	3,732	2,710	392	6,834	20,717
Cost of goods sold	-	-	13,033	13,033	-	-	-	-	13,033
Other expenses	-	-	-	-	-	6,846	-	6,846	6,846
Conference expense	2,102	-	-	2,102	-	-	-	-	2,102
Total	\$ 195,462	\$ 224,593	\$ 472,143	\$ 892,198	\$ 645,577	\$ 536,763	\$ 18,741	\$ 1,201,081	\$ 2,093,279

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
For the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 293,052	\$ (92,207)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	97,421	99,428
Realized and unrealized loss (gain) on investments, net	(36,609)	89,525
Credit loss/bad debt expense	72,602	20,717
Right of use asset amortization	4,403	-
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts receivable	(167,898)	69,508
Prepaid expense	8,801	(1,759)
Inventory	6,317	(15,733)
Increase (decrease) in:		
Accounts payable	140,712	(42,220)
Accrued payroll liabilities	(8,840)	3,735
Accrued expense	429	29,688
Other liabilities	168,743	(76,633)
Deferred revenue	(3,663)	(3,674)
Due to Grange Foundation	116	-
Tenant security deposits	(10,138)	(29,087)
Cash provided by operating activities	<u>565,448</u>	<u>51,288</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Proceeds from sale of investments	83,888	61,944
Purchases of investments	(99,239)	(75,580)
Purchases of property and equipment	(27,803)	(4,132)
Cash used in investing activities	<u>(43,154)</u>	<u>(17,768)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payments on notes payable	(117,509)	(116,999)
Cash used in financing activities	<u>(117,509)</u>	<u>(116,999)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	404,785	(83,479)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<u>355,204</u>	<u>438,683</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 759,989</u>	<u>\$ 355,204</u>
Supplemental disclosures of cash flow information:		
Interest paid	<u>\$ 72,275</u>	<u>\$ 74,560</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 1. Nature of Operations

National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry (National Grange) was incorporated as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation on October 29, 1986, under the provisions of the District of Columbia Non-Profit Corporation Act, Chapter 5, Title 29 District of Columbia Code. National Grange is a nonprofit organization comprised of four distinct divisions. The mission of the National Grange is to improve the quality of life in America's families and communities. The National Grange provides representation for its members on agriculture and rural/urban issues, encourages and supports grassroots community and organizational leadership.

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis of Presentation

National Grange is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to two classes of net assets: net assets without donor restrictions and net assets with donor restrictions. Net assets without donor restrictions represent the expendable net assets that are available for support of National Grange. These net assets may be used at discretion of National Grange's management and the Board of Directors. Net assets with donor restrictions are subject to donor-imposed stipulations that may or will be met by actions of the National Grange and/or the passage of time and those that are subject to donor-imposed stipulations that the National Grange maintain them permanently.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Cash and Cash Equivalents

For purposes of the statements of cash flows, National Grange considers money market funds or short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of purchase to be cash equivalents, except for those with long-term purposes.

Investments

Investments are carried at fair market value.

Accounts Receivable and Allowance for Credit Loss

National Grange reports accounts receivable net of an allowance for credit losses, which is reviewed and adjusted annually based on a comprehensive assessment of outstanding receivables. Receivables are typically collected within 30 days of invoicing. The allowance for credit losses is determined using historical loss data, current economic conditions, and projections of future economic trends. Any changes in assumptions affecting specific receivables are accounted for in the period they occur, leading to potential adjustments in the allowance.

In 2022, prior to implementing ASC 326, National Grange assessed the allowance for doubtful accounts by identifying potentially uncollectible balances and applying historical experience to an aging analysis of receivables. Uncollectible amounts were written off against the allowance once management determined collection was unlikely.

As of December 31, 2023, and 2022, the estimated allowance for credit loss/doubtful accounts was \$ 201,187 and \$ 137,217, respectively, reflecting management's year-end review of accounts receivable.

Inventory

Inventory, which consists of educational materials, is valued at the lower of cost or market using the first-in, first-out (FIFO) method.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Property and Equipment

Property and equipment are carried at cost. Property and equipment acquired with a cost or fair market value in excess of \$ 5,000 are capitalized at cost in the accompanying statement of financial position. Depreciation and amortization are computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the related assets ranging from three to thirty years, or in the case of capitalized leased assets or building improvements, the lesser of the useful life of the asset or the lease term. Gains or losses on disposition of property and equipment are charged to operations and are stated in the statement of activities. Cost of maintenance and repairs that do not improve or extend the useful lives of the respective assets are expensed as incurred. Depreciation expense charged to operations amounted to \$ 97,421 and \$ 99,428 for the years ended December 31, 2023, and 2022, respectively.

Deferred Revenue

Deferred revenue consists of membership payments and rental payments that apply to future periods. Membership payments are recognized in the fiscal year corresponding with the membership terms. Revenue reprieved before performance obligations are fulfilled and building rental income payments received before the contingencies have been met are shown as deferred revenue in the accompanying statement of financial position.

Revenue Recognition

Revenue is generated from the following services:

Building rental income – Revenue is recognized monthly based on the respective lease agreements when criteria have been met.

Membership dues and fees – Membership dues are nonrefundable, exchange transactions based on member benefits received and are recognized as income over the period of performance related to the membership terms. Access to these benefits is voluntary and can occur during the membership period and are treated as part of the membership itself, rather than multiple performance obligations.

For membership-based revenue recognized over time, the straight-line method is used to allocate the performance obligations over the performance measurement period. National Grange determined that this method provides a faithful depiction of the transfer of goods or services because the customer is required to pay regardless of how frequently the product or membership benefits are used, and the National Grange stands ready to make its goods or services available to the customer on a constant basis over the contract period.

There is no contribution element, as there is no difference in value of member benefits received and dues paid.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Revenue Recognition (continued)

Legislative income – Legislative income is an exchange transaction and is recognized when the performance obligation is met in accordance with the respective agreements.

Other State Grange Revenue - During the prior year National Grange continued the suspensions of two State Granges. These suspensions required the National Grange to take over the administrative task usually performed by the State Grange and to collect certain funds that would normally belong to the State Granges. After a State Grange is closed for seven years plus any additional time determined by the National Master has been met, the assets revert to the next higher level of Grange. The National Grange held these funds in trust on behalf of the Wyoming Grange. During the year end December 31, 2022, it was determined that the appropriate required time has passed, and these funds reverted to National Grange and therefore were recognized as revenue during the year.

Merchandise and magazine subscription income – Merchandise and magazine subscription income are exchange transactions and are recognized when the customer receives control of the good or service provided.

Trademark licensing income – Trademark licensing income is an exchange transaction and is recognized when performance obligation is met in accordance with the respective agreements.

Convention income – Convention income is an exchange transaction and is recognized after the event and performance obligations are fulfilled. There is no contribution element, as there is no difference in value of the convention benefits and the amounts paid.

Donations and contributions – Revenue is recognized with or without donor restrictions when cash or unconditional promise to give is received, depending on the existence or nature of any donor restrictions. Conditional promises to give, that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier, and a right of return, are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been substantially met.

Net investment return – Investment income is recognized upon receipt since there is no performance obligation.

Other income – Other income is generally small in nature and recognized upon receipt.

The contract balances consist of the following on the statements of financial position as of December 31:

	2023	2022	2021
Accounts receivable, net	\$ 390,989	\$ 295,693	\$ 385,630
Deferred revenue	\$ 1,299	\$ 4,962	\$ 8,636

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Disaggregation of Revenue

National Grange's products and services revenue are recognized over time or at a point in time based on the performance obligations of each contract. Various economic factors affect revenues and cash flows. Substantially all customers are in the United States.

The following table disaggregates National Grange's revenue based on the timing of satisfaction of performance obligations for the years ending December 31, 2023, and 2022:

	2023		
	Products and Services Transferred Over Time	Products and Services Transferred at a Point in Time	Total
Membership dues and fees	\$ 752,818	\$ -	\$ 752,818
Legislative income	-	195,500	195,500
Merchandise and magazine subscription income	-	46,649	46,649
Trademark licensing income	-	20,110	20,110
Convention income	-	77,825	77,825
Total	<u>\$ 752,818</u>	<u>\$ 640,084</u>	<u>\$ 1,092,902</u>

	2022		
	Products and Services Transferred Over Time	Products and Services Transferred at a Point in Time	Total
Membership dues and fees	\$ 788,463	\$ -	\$ 788,463
Legislative income	-	105,000	105,000
Merchandise and magazine subscription income	-	41,424	41,424
Trademark licensing income	-	52,410	52,410
Convention income	-	63,582	63,582
Total	<u>\$ 788,463</u>	<u>\$ 262,416</u>	<u>\$ 1,050,879</u>

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Functional Allocation of Expenses

The costs of providing various program and administrative services have been summarized on a functional basis in the statement of activities. Expenses are allocated on a reasonable basis that is consistently applied; this is done based on time and effort.

Leases

In February 2016, FASB issued FASB ASC 842, Leases, which revised existing practice related to accounting for leases under FASB ASC 840, Leases for both lessees and lessors. The new guidance in FASB ASC 842 requires lessees to recognize a right of use (ROU) asset and a lease liability for qualified leases. FASB ASC 842 requires leases to be classified as either operating leases or finance leases. For lessees, operating leases will result in a straight-line operating lease expense while finance leases will result in finance lease expense that includes the amortization of the right of use asset and interest on the lease liability. The lease liability will be equal to the present value of lease payments and the ROU asset will be based on the lease liability, subject to adjustment such as for initial direct costs. Additionally, National Grange elected the package of practical expedients permitted under the transition guidance. This package includes the following: relief from determination of lease contracts included in existing or expiring leases at the point of adoption, relief from having to reevaluate the classification of leases in effect at the point of adoption, and relief from reevaluation of existing leases that have initial direct costs associated with the execution of the lease contract. Effective January 1, 2022, the National Grange adopted FASB ASC 842 using the modified retrospective transition method. In addition, National Grange adopted ongoing accounting policies to not recognize ROU assets and lease liabilities for leasing arrangements with terms of less than one year and to not separate lease and non-lease components for all classes of underlying assets. As a result of the adoption of FASB ASC 842, the National Grange's previous capital lease does not need to be reevaluated but will now be classified as a finance lease. The beginning net asset balance was not affected by this adoption.

Reclassifications

Certain reclassifications to prior year balances have been made in the accompanying financial statements to make disclosures consistent with those of the current year.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Adoption of FASB ASC 326, Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments

In June 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") issued Accounting Standards Update ("ASU") No. 2016-13, Financial Instruments – Credit Losses (Topic 326): Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments ("ASU 2016-13" or "ASC 326"). ASU 2016-13 revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and requires organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. During 2019, the FASB issued additional ASUs amending certain aspects of ASU 2016-13.

On January 1, 2023, National Grange adopted the new accounting standard and all related amendments using the modified retrospective method. As part of this adoption, National Grange evaluated its allowance for credit losses in accordance with ASC 326. The allowance increased from \$137,217 in the prior year to \$201,187 as of December 31, 2023. This increase reflects adjustments for expected credit losses based on historical loss data, current economic conditions, and projections of future economic trends. National Grange will continue to monitor the adequacy of its allowance for credit losses as part of its ongoing financial review process.

Subsequent Events

In preparing its financial statements, National Grange has evaluated subsequent events through November 4, 2024, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

In February 2024, National Grange sold its primary building. This sale is considered a non-recognized subsequent event and does not affect the financial statements as of the year ended December 31, 2023.

Note 3. Concentration of Credit Risk

National Grange maintains its cash accounts at institutions with balances that may exceed \$250,000, which is the amount insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. National Grange has not experienced any losses in such accounts and monitors the creditworthiness of the financial institutions with which it conducts business. Management believes that National Grange is not exposed to any significant credit risk with respect to its cash balances.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 4. Income Taxes

National Grange is exempt from federal income taxes on its exempt activities under the provisions of Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code. Under these provisions, no tax is imposed on any income related to the National Grange's tax-exempt purpose. National Grange has determined that it does not have any material unrecognized tax benefits or obligations as of December 31, 2023 and 2022. National Grange is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions; however, there are currently no audits for any tax periods in progress. National Grange's federal and state income tax returns are subject to examination by the Internal Revenue Service and state tax authorities, generally for a period of three years after the returns are filed.

Note 5. Pension Plan – Simple IRA

In March 2002, National Grange established a SIMPLE IRA employee benefit plan covering substantially all employees after the 90-day probation period at open enrollment and met minimum age requirements. Employees are allowed to defer up to 15% of annual salary with a 3% match by National Grange. For the years ended December 31, 2023, and 2022, the matching portions were \$ 8,927 and \$ 11,051, respectively.

Note 6. Fair Value Measurements

Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) provides the framework for measuring fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy under FASB are described as follows:

Level 1

Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the National Grange has the ability to access.

Level 2

Inputs to the valuation methodology include:

- quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets;
- quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets;
- inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability;
- inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3

Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 6. Fair Value Measurements (continued)

The asset or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques used need to maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

Following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2023 and 2022.

Mutual Funds: Valued at the daily closing price as reported by the fund. Mutual funds held by the National Grange are open-ended mutual funds and are registered with the SEC. These funds are required to publish their daily net asset value (NAV) and to transact at that price. The mutual funds held by the National Grange are deemed to be actively traded.

The following tables set forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, National Grange's investments measured at fair value on a recurring basis:

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2023

	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mutual Funds:				
Equity	\$ 433,643	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 433,643
Alternative Investments	85,737	-	-	85,737
Fixed Income	<u>101,716</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>101,716</u>
	<u>\$ 621,096</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 621,096</u>

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2022

	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mutual Funds:				
Equity	\$ 306,960	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 306,960
Alternative Investments	45,537	-	-	45,537
Fixed Income	<u>135,565</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>135,565</u>
	<u>\$ 488,062</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 488,062</u>

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 6. Fair Value Measurements (continued)

There were no purchases, issuances, settlements, realized or unrealized gains or losses related to Level 3 assets during the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022.

All assets have been valued using a market approach. There were no changes in the valuation techniques during the current year.

The following summarizes the investment return and its classification in the statement of activities for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Interest and dividends	\$ 29,496	\$ 22,864
Realized and unrealized net gain (loss)	36,609	(89,525)
Investment management fees	<u>(6,126)</u>	<u>(6,123)</u>
Total net investment return	<u>\$ 59,979</u>	<u>\$ (72,784)</u>

Note 7. Liquidity and Availability

The following represents National Grange's financial assets available to meet general expenditures over the next twelve months at December 31, 2023 and 2022:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 759,989	\$ 355,204
Investments	621,096	488,062
Accounts receivable, net	<u>390,989</u>	<u>295,693</u>
	1,772,074	1,138,959
Less:		
Net assets without donor restrictions – board designated	<u>595,326</u>	<u>590,177</u>
	<u>\$ 1,176,748</u>	<u>\$ 548,782</u>

As part of National Grange's liquidity management, it invests cash in various short-term investments, including mutual and money market funds. The Board manages its liquid resources by focusing on investing excess cash in investments that maximize earnings potential balanced with the amount of risk the Board has decided can be tolerated. The Board, at its discretion, can revise the terms of the board designated net assets so that National Grange can meet obligations for general expenditures.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 8. Leasing Activities

As part of its ongoing operations the National Grange leases to tenants those parts of the building it does not use. The leases are operating lease agreements with terms between one to five years, renewable, at current market rents. Some leases have expense pass-through clauses based on the previous year's operating costs. Expected rental income for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, is estimated depending on renewals and if additional space becomes available.

In January 2022, the National Grange listed the property for sale, therefore the future minimal rentals under the leases will be received on a month to month basis until the property is sold.

Lease income is included in the statement of activities as building rental income. Cash receipts from operating leases are classified within cash flows from operating activities.

Due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, National Grange negotiated lease concessions with their lessees. National Grange provided no rent forgiveness for lease concessions during the year ending December 31, 2023 and provided no rent forgiveness for lease concessions for the year ended December 31, 2022.

Note 9. Notes Payable

The National Grange has a Loan Management Account (LMA) with Merrill Lynch under which it obtains advances as needed. The account is a demand loan and is secured by the National Grange investment account. The loan bears finance charges at a variable interest rate. There is no balance at December 31, 2023 and 2022.

The National Grange has a promissory note with the Grange Foundation (a related party) in the amount of \$ 100,000 principal and interest payable monthly at an interest rate of 2.4% that was due in full September 15, 2022. Due to delay in receiving payments, the maturity extended to August 2023. The balance at December 31, 2023 and 2022, is \$ 0 and \$ 19,499, respectively.

The National Grange entered into a business loan agreement with a bank, dated January 21, 2016. In October 2018, the National Grange modified the original loan in order to increase the current term loan to \$ 1,793,000 and extend the maturity date to October 2028. This loan is collateralized by a deed of trust on the National Grange building and a first priority blanket lien on all the assets. The interest rate will be fixed for the first five years at the then prevailing 5-year CMT plus 2.17% with a floor of 5.00%. The rate will re-set at the end of year five to the then prevailing 5-year CMT plus 2.17% with a floor of 5.00%. The balance of the bank loan at December 31, 2023 and 2022, is \$ 1,301,966 and \$ 1,399,976, respectively.

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 9. Notes Payable (continued)

The aggregate annual maturities of long-term debt over the next five years are as follows:

Year Ending December 31,	
2024	\$ 107,999
2025	113,524
2026	119,333
2027	127,010
2028	826,154
Thereafter	7,946
	<u>\$ 1,301,966</u>

Note 10. Due to State Granges

During the current year, the National Grange suspended operations of the Florida State Grange and South Carolina State Grange. As a result, the National Grange assumed responsibility for the administrative functions typically managed by these State Granges and began collecting certain funds that would ordinarily be allocated to them. In accordance with organizational policy, if a State Grange remains closed for seven years, its assets will revert to the next higher level of the Grange.

Currently, the National Grange is holding \$12,033 in cash from the South Carolina State Grange and \$47,805 in cash from the Florida State Grange. Additionally, \$81,074 is being held in investment funds on behalf of the Florida State Grange. This investment amount is categorized under other liabilities, and any changes in its value will be reflected in the statement of financial position accordingly.

Note 11. Leases

National grange leases copier equipment under a financing lease with a November 2026 expiration date and a \$1 purchase option at the end of the lease period. The lease asset and liability were calculated utilizing US Treasury Yield Curve Rate, according to the National Grange's elected policy.

Lease expenses paid and expensed and future maturities of lease payments under non-cancelable financing leases at December 31, 2023 are as follows:

<u>Lease Cost</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Finance lease expense:		
Amortization of ROU assets	\$ 4,402	\$ 4,402
Interest on lease liabilities	295	376
Total lease cost	<u>\$ 4,697</u>	<u>\$ 4,778</u>

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 11. Leases (continued)

Other Information:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash paid for amounts included in the measurement of lease liabilities:		
Operating cash flows from finance leases	\$ 295	\$ 4,402
Financing cash flows from finance leases	4,565	376
Weighted-average remaining lease term (years) – finance leases	2.92	3.92
Weighted-average discount rate – finance leases (percentage)	1.81	1.81

Maturity Analysis:

	<u>Financing</u>
December 31,	
2024	\$ 4,860
2025	4,860
2026	<u>4,455</u>
Total undiscounted cash flows	14,175
Less: present value discount	<u>(378)</u>
Total present value	<u>\$ 13,797</u>
Short-term lease liabilities	\$ 4,649
Long-term lease liabilities	<u>9,148</u>
	<u>\$ 13,797</u>

Liabilities associated with financing leases are included with other liabilities on the statement of financial position.

Note 12. Board Designated Net Assets

The board designated net assets of the National Grange are reported in the financial statements as follows:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Annual convention	<u>\$ 595,326</u>	<u>\$ 590,177</u>

NATIONAL GRANGE OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 13. Risk and Uncertainties

National Grange invests in various investment securities. Investment securities are exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks. Market risks include global events which could impact the value of investment securities, such as a pandemic or international conflict. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and those changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of financial position.

Note 14. Related Party Transaction

During the year ended December 31, 2019, the National Grange borrowed \$ 100,000 from the Grange Foundation (a related party). See Note 9 for details.

The National Grange provides administrative services to Grange Advocacy (a related party). The National Grange earned \$ 195,500 and \$ 105,000 for the years ended December 31, 2023, and 2022, respectively.

Note 15. Paycheck Protection Program

In April 2021, National Grange entered into a promissory note with a commercial bank which provides for a loan in the amount of \$ 96,000 pursuant to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. National Grange applied for and has been notified that \$ 96,000 in eligible expenditures for payroll has been forgiven. Loan forgiveness is reflected as other income in the statement of activities for the year ended December 31, 2021. The PPP loan has a term of five years and bears interest at a rate of 1.0% per annum. National Grange's PPP loan is subject to an examination by the SBA or its authorized representatives for ten years after the date the note is forgiven or paid in full.

GRANGE FOUNDATION

FINANCIAL REPORT

December 31, 2023

GRANGE FOUNDATION

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Independent Auditors' Report

To the Board of Directors
Grange Foundation
Washington, District of Columbia

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Grange Foundation, (a non-profit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Grange Foundation as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Grange Foundation and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Grange Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Grange Foundation 's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Grange Foundation 's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control related matters that we identified during the audit.



*North Bethesda, Maryland
November 4, 2024*

GRANGE FOUNDATION
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Assets	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 105,911	\$ 123,627
Due from National Grange	116	500
Pledges receivable	1,034	1,332
Investments	262,767	214,043
Prepays	357	357
Note receivable - current portion	<u>-</u>	<u>19,499</u>
Total current assets	<u>370,185</u>	<u>359,358</u>
Long-Term Assets		
Investments	<u>102,090</u>	<u>85,435</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 472,275</u>	<u>\$ 444,793</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 6,594	\$ 6,161
Other current liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>490</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>6,594</u>	<u>6,651</u>
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	185,034	166,141
With donor restrictions	<u>280,647</u>	<u>272,001</u>
Total net assets	<u>465,681</u>	<u>438,142</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 472,275</u>	<u>\$ 444,793</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenue			
Donations and contributions	\$ 8,542	\$ 18,540	\$ 27,082
Net investment return	29,256	16,808	46,064
Miscellaneous	520	-	520
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>26,702</u>	<u>(26,702)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue	<u>65,020</u>	<u>8,646</u>	<u>73,666</u>
Expenses			
Program services	26,701	-	26,701
General and administrative	<u>19,426</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>19,426</u>
Total expenses	<u>46,127</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,127</u>
Change in net assets	18,893	8,646	27,539
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>166,141</u>	<u>272,001</u>	<u>438,142</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 185,034</u>	<u>\$ 280,647</u>	<u>\$ 465,681</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue			
Donations and contributions	\$ 6,514	\$ 61,031	\$ 67,545
Net investment return	(35,467)	(18,184)	(53,651)
Miscellaneous	558	-	558
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>35,549</u>	<u>(35,549)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue	<u>7,154</u>	<u>7,298</u>	<u>14,452</u>
Expenses			
Program services	35,551	-	35,551
General and administrative	<u>10,910</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,910</u>
Total expenses	<u>46,461</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,461</u>
Change in net assets	(39,307)	7,298	(32,009)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>205,448</u>	<u>264,703</u>	<u>470,151</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 166,141</u>	<u>\$ 272,001</u>	<u>\$ 438,142</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

	Programs				General and Administrative	
	Foundation	Junior Grange	Grange Youth	Total Programs		Total
Professional services	\$ 9,388	\$ 1,419	\$ 1,375	\$ 12,182	\$ 19,126	\$ 31,308
Travel expense	-	4,993	5,041	10,034	-	10,034
Conference Expenses	-	-	4,349	4,349	-	4,349
Office expenses	136	-	-	136	227	363
Other expenses	-	-	-	-	73	73
Total	<u>\$ 9,524</u>	<u>\$ 6,412</u>	<u>\$ 10,765</u>	<u>\$ 26,701</u>	<u>\$ 19,426</u>	<u>\$ 46,127</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	Programs				General and Administrative	
	<u>Foundation</u>	<u>Junior Grange</u>	<u>Grange Youth</u>	<u>Total Programs</u>		<u>Total</u>
Professional services	\$ 11,712	\$ 2,071	\$ 5,141	\$ 18,924	\$ 9,858	\$ 28,782
Travel expense	-	8,538	6,184	14,722	-	14,722
Office expenses	1,256	188	461	1,905	56	1,961
Other expenses	-	-	-	-	996	996
Total	<u>\$ 12,968</u>	<u>\$ 10,797</u>	<u>\$ 11,786</u>	<u>\$ 35,551</u>	<u>\$ 10,910</u>	<u>\$ 46,461</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
For the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 27,539	\$ (32,009)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:		
Realized and unrealized loss (gain) on investments, net	(41,139)	58,470
(Increase) decrease in:		
Due from National Grange	384	1,353
Pledges receivable	298	2,349
Prepays	-	52
Increase (decrease) in:		
Accounts payable	433	923
Other current liabilities	(490)	(4,557)
Cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>(12,975)</u>	<u>26,581</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of investments	3,965	94,054
Purchases of investments	<u>(28,205)</u>	<u>(197,053)</u>
Cash used in investing activities	<u>(24,240)</u>	<u>(102,999)</u>
Cash flow from financing activities		
Collections of notes receivable	<u>19,499</u>	<u>20,247</u>
Cash provided by financing activities	<u>19,499</u>	<u>20,247</u>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(17,716)	(56,171)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<u>123,627</u>	<u>179,798</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 105,911</u>	<u>\$ 123,627</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 1. Nature of Operations

The Grange Foundation (the Foundation) was incorporated as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation on November 21, 1960. The Foundation was organized to support youth development, promote agriculture education and research, improve communities, and foster culture, heritage, citizenship, and charitable activities. The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry (National Grange) is an affiliated Organization that acts as trustee for the funds received on behalf of the Foundation.

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Method of Accounting

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis of Presentation

The Foundation is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to two classes of net assets: net assets without donor restrictions and net assets with donor restrictions. Net assets without donor restrictions represent the expendable net assets that are available for support of the Foundation. Net assets with donor restrictions are subject to donor-imposed stipulations that may or will be met by actions of the Foundation and/or the passage of time and those that are subject to donor-imposed stipulations that the Foundation maintain them permanently.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

For purposes of the statements of cash flows, the Foundation considers all checking and money market accounts, as well as, all highly liquid instruments, which are to be used in current operations, to be cash and cash equivalents.

Investments

Investments are carried at fair market value.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Accounts Receivable

Grange Foundation reports accounts receivable net of an allowance for credit losses, which is reviewed and adjusted annually based on a comprehensive assessment of outstanding receivables. Receivables are typically collected within 30 days of invoicing, and the allowance is determined using historical loss data, current economic conditions, and future economic projections. Changes in assumptions regarding specific receivables are recognized in the period they occur, leading to potential adjustments in the allowance.

In 2022, prior to the implementation of ASC 326, the Grange Foundation evaluated the allowance for doubtful accounts by reviewing outstanding receivables, considering those delinquent after 30 days. Accounts receivables were reported at their gross amounts owed, and uncollectible amounts were charged off against the allowance once management deemed them uncollectible.

Based on management's review, an allowance was not considered necessary at December 31, 2023 and 2022. The accounts receivable balance at December 31, 2023, 2022, and 2021 was \$-, \$-, and \$1,832, respectively.

Pledges Receivable

Unconditional promises to give that are expected to be collected within one year are recorded at net realizable value. Unconditional promises to give that are expected to be collected in future years are recorded at the present value of their estimated future cash flows. The discounts on those amounts are computed using risk-adjusted interest rates applicable to the years in which the promises are received. Discount amortization is included in contribution revenue. Conditional promises to give are not included as support until the conditions are met. For the fiscal years ending December 31, 2023 and 2022, all pledges receivable of \$ 1,034 and \$ 1,332, respectively, are expected to be received within one year.

Revenue Recognition

Revenue is generated from the following services:

Donations and contributions - The Foundation recognizes contributions when cash or an unconditional promise to give is received. Contributions received are recorded as "without donor restrictions" or "with donor restrictions" depending on the existence or nature of any donor restrictions. Donor-restricted revenue is reported as an increase in net assets with donor restrictions, depending on the nature of the restrictions. When a restriction expires (i.e., when a purpose restriction is accomplished or a time restriction is met), net assets with donor restrictions are reclassified to net assets without donor restrictions and reported in the statements of activities as net assets released from restriction. Contributions that are restricted by the donor is reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions if the restrictions expire in the fiscal year in which the contributions are recognized.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Revenue Recognition (continued)

Net investment income – Investment income is recognized upon receipt.

Revenue is primarily driven by contribution funding to further the Foundation’s mission. This funding could be impacted by availability, legislation, and other not-for-profit competition. There is currently no legislation or competition that should affect the Foundation’s operation or contribution funding.

Disaggregation of Revenue

The Foundation’s products and services revenue are recognized at a point in time based on the performance obligations of each contract. Various economic factors affect revenues and cash flows. Substantially all customers are in the United States.

No products or services revenue were recognized for the year ended December 31, 2023 or December 31, 2022.

Functional Allocation of Expenses

The costs of providing various program and administrative services have been summarized on a functional basis in the statement of activities. Expenses are allocated on a reasonable basis that is consistently applied; this is done based on time and effort.

Reclassifications

Certain reclassifications to prior year balances have been made in the accompanying financial statements to make disclosures consistent with those of the current year.

Subsequent Events

In preparing its financial statements, the Foundation has evaluated subsequent events through November 4, 2024, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

Note 3. Concentration of Credit Risk

The Foundation maintains its cash accounts at institutions with balances that may exceed \$ 250,000, which is the amount insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The Foundation has not experienced any losses in such accounts and monitors the creditworthiness of the financial institutions with which it conducts business. Management believes that the Foundation is not exposed to any significant credit risk with respect to its cash balances. At December 31, 2023 and 2022, the Foundation had no uninsured cash balances.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 4. Income Taxes

The Foundation is exempt from the payment of income taxes on its exempt activities under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Under these provisions, no tax is imposed on any income related to the Foundation's tax-exempt purpose. The Foundation has determined that it does not have any material unrecognized tax benefits or obligations as of December 31, 2023 and 2022. The Foundation is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions; however, there are currently no audits for any tax periods in progress. The Foundation's federal and state income tax returns are subject to examination by the Internal Revenue Service and state tax authorities, generally for a period of three years after the returns are filed.

Note 5. Fair Value Measurements

Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) provides the framework for measuring fair value. The framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy under FASB are described as follows:

Level 1

Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the Foundation has the ability to access.

Level 2

Inputs to the valuation methodology include:

- quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets;
- quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets;
- inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability;
- inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by the observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the Level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3

Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 5. Fair Value Measurements (continued)

The asset or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

Following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2023 and 2022.

Exchange traded funds:

Valued at net asset value (NAV) of units at year end.

Certificates of Deposit:

Valued as similar assets with comparable interest rates, maturities, and investment grade.

The following tables set forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Foundation's investments measured at fair value on a recurring basis:

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2023

	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Exchange traded funds:				
Equity	\$ 123,803	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 123,803
Fixed income	221,054	-	-	221,054
Certificates of deposit	-	20,000	-	20,000
	<u>\$ 344,857</u>	<u>\$ 20,000</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 364,857</u>

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2022

	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Exchange traded funds:				
Equity	\$ 197,657	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 197,657
Fixed income	99,623	-	-	99,623
Commodity	2,198	-	-	2,198
	<u>\$ 299,478</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 299,478</u>

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 5. Fair Value Measurements (continued)

There were no purchases, issuances, settlements, realized or unrealized gains or losses related to Level 3 assets during the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022.

All assets have been valued using a market approach. There were no changes in the valuation techniques during the current year.

The following summarizes the investment return and its classification in the statement of activities for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022.

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Realized and unrealized net gain (loss)	\$ 41,139	\$ (58,470)
Interest and dividends	8,205	7,663
Investment management fees	<u>(3,490)</u>	<u>(3,462)</u>
Total net investment return	<u>\$ 46,064</u>	<u>\$ (53,651)</u>

Note 6. Liquidity and Availability

The following represents the Foundation's financial assets available to meet general expenditures over the next twelve months at December 31, 2023 and 2022:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 105,911	\$ 123,627
Due from National Grange	116	500
Pledges receivable	1,034	1,332
Investments	262,767	214,043
Notes receivable – current portion	<u>-</u>	<u>19,499</u>
	369,828	359,001
Less: net assets with donor restrictions	<u>(280,647)</u>	<u>(272,001)</u>
	<u>\$ 89,181</u>	<u>\$ 87,000</u>

The Foundation manages its liquid position by maintaining adequate net assets without donor restrictions and by investing funds in excess of current operational needs. The Foundation maintains its liquid cash in a checking and investment accounts. Short-term investments per the statement of financial position are included above as any investment can be liquidated immediately to meet general expenditures.

Note 7. Risk and Uncertainties

The Foundation invests in various investment securities. Investment securities are exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and those changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of financial position.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 8. Related Party Transaction

The National Grange (a related party) had a promissory note with the Foundation in the amount of \$100,000, with principal and interest payable monthly at an interest rate of 2.4%, due in full on September 15, 2022. Due to delays in receiving payments, the maturity was extended to August 2023. The note receivable was carried at the unpaid principal balance. The Foundation did not believe an allowance for notes receivable was needed as of December 31, 2023, and 2022. The balances at December 31, 2023, and 2022, were \$ 0 and \$ 19,499, respectively. Interest received was \$ 210 and \$ 618 for the years ended December 31, 2023, and 2022, respectively.

Note 9. Net Assets with Donor Restrictions

Net assets with donor restrictions result from gifts of cash with donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets with donor restrictions at December 31, 2023 and 2022, are available for the following purposes:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Endowment fund	\$ 104,596	\$ 87,786
1 in 1000 Club	43,343	38,313
Junior Leadership	27,967	33,124
Youth Leadership	23,853	33,000
Scholarship Fund	20,500	20,000
American Arts & Heritage	15,866	11,236
Program for the Deaf	14,941	16,079
G.R.O.W. Club	12,650	11,626
National Lecture	8,185	9,378
Youth Exchange Program	5,195	5,195
Leadership & Community Development	1,624	1,384
Communication Fellows Program	1,567	358
Kelley Farm	220	2,323
Building Fund	100	2,200
SHIPmates Fund	40	-
	<u>\$ 280,647</u>	<u>\$ 272,001</u>

Note 10. Donor-Restricted Endowments

The Foundation's endowment fund consists of one fund established to support the purpose of the Foundation at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The Foundation's endowment includes only donor-restricted funds and, as required by generally accepted accounting principles, net assets associated with endowment funds are classified and reported based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 10. Donor-Restricted Endowments (continued)

The Board of Directors of the Foundation has interpreted the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act of 2006 (UPMIFA) as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift as of the gift date of the donor-restricted endowment funds absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Foundation classifies as net assets with donor restrictions (a) the original value of gifts donated to the perpetual endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the perpetual endowment, and (c) accumulations to the perpetual endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added to the fund. In accordance with UPMIFA, the Foundation considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds: (1) the duration and preservation of the various funds, (2) the purposes of the donor-restricted endowment funds, (3) general economic conditions, 4) the possible effect of inflation and deflation, (5) the expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments, (6) other resources of the Foundation and (7) the Foundation's investment policies.

Investment Return Objectives, Risk Parameters and Strategies

The Foundation has adopted investment and spending policies, approved by the Board of Directors, for endowment assets that attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding to programs supported by its endowment funds while also maintaining the purchasing power of those endowment assets over the long-term. Accordingly, the investment process seeks to achieve an after-cost total real rate of return, including investment income as well as capital appreciation, which exceeds the annual distribution with acceptable levels of risk. In order to conservatively preserve the donor-restricted endowment funds, the endowment assets are invested in a money market and exchange traded investments. Investment risk is measured in terms of the total endowment fund; investment assets and allocation between asset classes and strategies are managed to not expose the fund to unacceptable levels of risk.

Spending Policy

According to the investment policy adopted by the Board of Directors of the Foundation, the endowment fund will remain an endowment type fund, and Board of Directors will evaluate the investment return each year to determine how much, if any, will be appropriated for distribution. From time to time, certain donor-restricted endowment funds may have fair values less than the amount required to be maintained by donors or by law (underwater endowments). The Board of Directors of the Foundation have interpreted UPMIFA to permit spending from underwater funds in accordance with the prudent measures required under the law.

GRANGE FOUNDATION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2023 and 2022

Note 10. Donor-Restricted Endowments (continued)

The endowment net asset compositions by type of fund were as follows as of December 31, 2023 and 2022:

	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	
	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Donor-restricted endowment funds		
Original donor-restricted gift amount and amounts required to be maintained in perpetuity by donor	\$ 91,062	\$ 91,062
Accumulated investment gains (losses)	<u>13,533</u>	<u>(3,276)</u>
Total	<u>\$ 104,596</u>	<u>\$ 87,786</u>

The changes in endowment assets were as follows for 2023 and 2022:

	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	
	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Endowment net assets – beginning of year	\$ 87,786	\$ 105,970
Investment return:		
Realized and unrealized net gain (loss)	15,986	(18,270)
Interest and dividends	1,879	1,095
Investment management fees	<u>(1,057)</u>	<u>(1,009)</u>
Total investment returns	<u>16,808</u>	<u>(18,184)</u>
Endowment net assets – end of year	<u>\$ 104,596</u>	<u>\$ 87,786</u>

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NATIONAL GRANGE

Founded in 1867 as the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, we proudly serve as America's oldest agricultural advocacy organization with deeply held nonpartisan ideals.

We are headquartered at the historic National Grange Building at 1616 H St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006.

However, the heart of the Grange is located in the more than 1,400 communities in which fraternal local Grange chapters operate today. More than 135,000 members initiate policy resolutions through a grassroots process and advocate for issues of importance to themselves and their neighbors. In addition, they serve as part of the social safety net and network that improves the quality of life for those living in rural America or following agricultural pursuits.

We welcome you to learn more about the Grange at nationalgrange.org or by visiting a local Grange meeting.