



# The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE



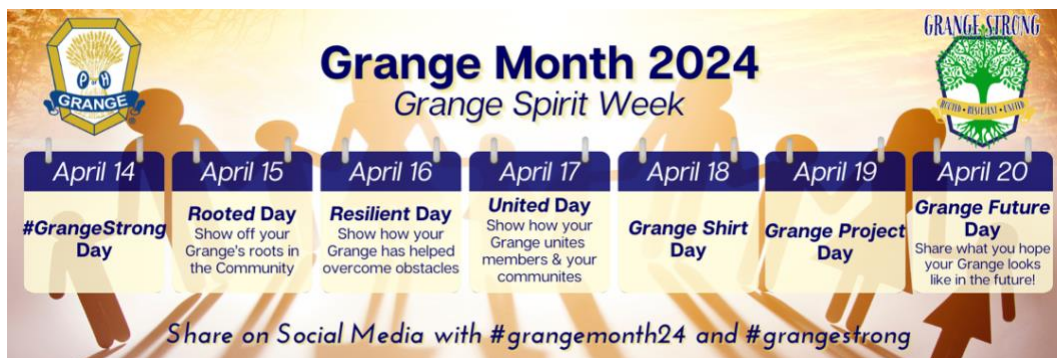
## In this Issue:

April 12, 2024

[Join the conversation for Grange Spirit Week](#)  
[Recognize and thank your members during Grange Month](#)  
[Introducing The Grange Hall podcast](#)  
[Service Project Opportunity: Collect Eclipse Glasses](#)  
[Join Membership Matters this week](#)  
[NC Youth named first recipient of the Ernestine "Ernie" Keiser Memorial Scholarship](#)  
[FCC Announces Reduced ACP Support Amounts for May](#)

[Rural Students' Access to High-Speed Internet Is in Jeopardy as Resources Recede](#)  
[SHIPmates applications open for second class](#)  
[Be part of the Grange Story – apply for the Communication Fellows](#)  
[Grange Supply Store: Guidelines for Grange Leaders](#)  
[Grange Member Benefit: Harvest Hosts](#)

## Join the conversation for Grange Spirit Week



**#GrangeMonth24** Spirit Week begins on Sunday. Are you and your Grange ready to show that you're **#GrangeStrong**?

Join us as we celebrate what makes each of our Granges unique, but also united in a common cause.

Each day from April 14-20, a theme and prompt will be posted on the National Grange Facebook page. Share these on your social media pages to show your enthusiasm for the Grange, and to show what you and your Grange are doing! You can also download the daily prompts in the Grange Month materials online. Be sure to use the hashtags **#GrangeMonth24** and **#GrangeStrong** so more people can see and connect with your posts.

We want to hear about your incredible Grange programs, open houses, and events this month. Be sure to share them on social media – tag one of the National Grange's official accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or Twitter so we can see them!

[Access Grange Month materials here.](#)

## Recognize and thank your members during Grange Month

Did you know that in addition to being Grange Month, April is **Global Volunteer Month**?

Multiple studies have shown that one surefire way to keep volunteers engaged is by recognizing them regularly and honoring their involvement. In the Grange, our members are also our core volunteer base – when is the last time you held a recognition event for your Grange’s members, not just your community volunteers?

The Silver Star (25-year), Golden Sheaf (50-year), and Diamond (75-year) recognitions have been longstanding member recognition opportunities for our members from the National Grange, with additional seals available in 5-year increments. These can be ordered through your State Grange or the National Grange – *please allow plenty of lead time to ensure they arrive in time!*

- [Silver Star and Seals Order Form](#)
- [Membership Recognition and Golden Sheaf Order Form](#)

However, we know that the wait to get to 25 years is not always easy to endure. Launched in 2021, [downloadable and fillable certificates](#) are available through the National Grange website for you to honor your members at 5, 10, 15, and 20 years. These are a fantastic way to recognize your members for their service and volunteerism.



Now, also available through the National Grange website, you can present certificates to your new members, too! [This new certificate](#) has a place to be signed by your Grange’s President, welcoming them into membership. (Also consider adding a Grange pin as a welcome present!) Many new members want something to “show” when they join – so help them **show off** their membership!

*These certificates and order forms are all in the password-protected portion of the National Grange website. Please create an account to log in and access the materials.*

Access these certificates and many more forms in the [Secretaries Forms](#) section of the website.



## Introducing The Grange Hall podcast



Announced during the National Grange Convention in Niagara Falls, New York, a new podcast from the National Grange – “The Grange Hall” is launching anywhere you get podcasts!

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

between.

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

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

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

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

## Service Project Opportunity: Collect Eclipse Glasses

Did you enjoy the total solar eclipse (or partial, depending on your location in the United States) on Monday, April 8? Do you now have a pair (or more!) of those special eclipse glasses lying around that you're likely to lose before the next eclipse?

Your Grange can help collect them to send to schools, nonprofits, and other organizations and areas that may need them!

**Astronomers Without Borders** has been sending solar glasses for annular and total solar eclipse since 2008. From Africa, Asia, North and South America, our members, partners, and National Coordinators helped to bring glasses to people who may not otherwise have a safe way to view the eclipse directly. Travelers from the United States graciously volunteered to bring them in their luggage and hand them out to local educators and organizers of public viewing events.

[Check out their website](#) to learn how you can sign up to be a collection and vetting hub, or – if your Grange decides to collect independently – where you can take your glasses to recycle them!

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

with Amanda Brozana-Rios



Join us next Wednesday evening (April 17 at 8:30pm Eastern/5:30pm Pacific) for our monthly Membership Matters!

This month, host Amanda Brozana-Rios will be joined by PA State Grange Outstanding Young Patron Desira Rickenbach.

Desira will be presenting an interactive program about getting youth and young adults engaged in the Grange - a perfect message for #GrangeMonth24.

[Click here to join](#)

## NC Youth named first recipient of the Ernestine “Ernie” Keiser Memorial Scholarship

*By Amanda Brozana-Rios, Grange Foundation Associate*



On Wednesday, April 10 the Grange Foundation board announced the winner of the inaugural Ernestine “Ernie” Keiser Memorial Scholarship award.

**Asheton Medlin**, of Roxboro, North Carolina, is a member of Bushy Fork Grange #1073 and attends the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is a junior, majoring in biology with her sights on veterinary school. Valedictorian of her high school graduating class, Medlin has academic honors and accolades, but it was the narrative of her application essay that committee members cited when discussing the selection.

“She is a powerful writer and you can feel her passion for the Grange [in her essay],” said Foundation Chairwoman Joan C. Smith.

Medlin is currently serving as National Grange Youth Ambassador, but Foundation Board member and scholarship committee chair Anna May Nauss made a point to say Medlin’s application spoke for itself, or more “to her growth because of the Grange and how much she values being a member,” she said.

Nauss said 19 people applied representing 11 states, something she said she was very proud of for the first year of the scholarship.

Smith said she was proud to see the variety in educational pursuits from a certificate program to doctoral students as part of the pool of applicants.

The gift that made the scholarship possible was named in memory of Keiser, a charter Grange member of Beach Community Grange in Virginia, and a fervent supporter of youth programming and leadership development.

Read more about the scholarship and recipient, including excerpts from her essay, in the July issue of [Good Day!](#) magazine.

grangefoundation.org/deaf'." data-bbox="114 100 864 255"/>

**APPLY FOR A DEAF AWARENESS GRANT**

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

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

www.nationalgrange.org'. There is a logo for 'MEET US AT THE RIVER' with the dates 'BETTENDORF, IOWA NOV. 12-16, 2024'." data-bbox="111 283 624 493"/>

**Save the Date!**

**REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 1**

Learn more: [www.nationalgrange.org](http://www.nationalgrange.org)

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

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

Registration will open on May 1.

## FCC Announces Reduced ACP Support Amounts for May

Courtesy of Jake Neenan, for the Broadband Breakfast

WASHINGTON, April 10, 2024 – The Federal Communications Commission announced on Tuesday the dollar amounts for its last month of Affordable Connectivity Program support in May.

In line with [previous agency estimates](#), the reimbursements to providers serving ACP participants will be **\$14 per household**, or \$35 for subscribers on Tribal lands. That's down from \$30 and \$75 respectively. The one-time device discount is down to \$47 from \$100.

It's the latest step in the [agency's wind-down](#) of the Infrastructure Act subsidy helping more than 23 million low-income households stay online. The support amounts were calculated to divvy up the last remaining funds among providers who elected to participate in May with reduced support. Those providers won't be able to charge participating households more than what they've been paying with the full discounts applied until June.

Monthslong [calls from advocates](#), [the FCC](#), and [the Biden administration](#) to spur congressional action to keep the ACP afloat have so far failed. The ACP Extension Act, a bipartisan bill that would infuse the fund with \$7 billion, now has 223 cosponsors [in the House](#) and five [in the Senate](#), but analysts [have been pessimistic](#) about the chances of House Speaker **Mike Johnson**, R-Louisiana, allowing a floor vote.

Rep. **Yvette Clarke**, D-New York, who introduced the bill with six other lawmakers, filed a [discharge petition](#) Tuesday in an attempt to force a vote on the bill. The petition would need to be signed by a majority of House members, at least 218, for the measure to be taken up.

Some lawmakers had [hoped to attach funding](#) to the spending package passed this month, but were ultimately unsuccessful.

The end of the program will mean a higher internet bill for participants. Industry analysts have said the sunset [could negatively impact](#) the Commerce Department's \$42.5-billion broadband expansion program – also stood up by the Infrastructure Act – by [destabilizing potential revenue](#) from networks in the rural and unserved areas targeted by the program.

"We encourage providers to take efforts to keep consumers connected at this crucial time," the FCC said in the public notice announcing the reduced support amounts. "Providers can also help consumers stay connected



and mitigate their financial burden by offering to move consumers to low-cost internet service plans that the providers already offer or that they newly adopt as an offering to low-income consumers.”

In the absence of direct congressional appropriations, some lawmakers and public interest groups have suggested [using the proceeds](#) from future FCC spectrum auctions to shore up money for the ACP. Senate Republicans who introduced [a bill to re-up](#) the agency’s ability to hold those auctions, which expired last March, have opposed earmarking proceeds for any particular purpose.

As a longer term option, both industry groups [and consumer advocates](#) have suggested folding the ACP into the FCC’s Universal Service Fund. That program spends roughly \$8 billion annually on internet subsidies for low-income households, schools, and healthcare centers, plus infrastructure expansion in rural areas.

USF money comes from fees on dwindling voice provider revenues, often passed on to consumers’ bills. The commission has left it to Congress to change that contribution base, and a bicameral group of lawmakers is [evaluating potential reforms](#) to make the fund more sustainable.

In a January [letter to the working group](#), FCC Chairwoman **Jessica Rosenworcel** expressed optimism about the USF being able to handle the extra \$700 million per month in ACP expenses if its contribution base were expanded. Rosenworcel said adding broadband providers to the mix, a common suggestion, could result in higher bills for consumers if those costs were passed on. The agency’s proposed net neutrality reinstatement, although it brings broadband providers under the same legal classification that allows the FCC to tap voice providers for USF contributions, would forbear from doing so, a move [advocates have criticized](#).

In the January letter, Rosenworcel suggested Congress look to social media and streaming giants as well as digital advertisers for potential USF funding.

Why should **you** care about the ACP wind-down? Read on...

## [Rural Students’ Access to High-Speed Internet Is in Jeopardy as Resources Recede](#)

By Gabriel E. Hales and Keith N. Hampton for [The Conversation](#)

Researchers found that one-third of rural students still lack high-speed broadband internet at home

Students in rural America still lack access to high-speed internet at home despite governmental efforts during the pandemic to fill the void. This lack of access negatively affects their academic achievement and overall well-being. The situation has been getting worse as the urgency of the pandemic has receded.

Those findings are based on a new study we did to determine the post-pandemic outlook on [internet access for rural students](#).

During the pandemic, school districts quickly deployed emergency resources such as Wi-Fi hot spots to facilitate remote learning. In rural Michigan, student home internet connectivity soared to 96% by the end of 2021, a remarkable [16 percentage-point increase](#) from 2019.

However, these gains are proving temporary. By 2022, student access in rural Michigan began to decline. Today, many more students are disconnected [than during the height of the crisis](#). The downward trend is likely to continue as [resources from pandemic emergency measures diminish](#).

We surveyed students in grades 8-11 from [18 rural Michigan schools before and after the pandemic](#), tracking changes in their digital access, educational outcomes and well-being. We found that [one-third](#) of rural students still lack high-speed broadband internet at home.

### Why it matters

[Our recent report](#) highlights how rural gaps in access to the internet, mainly the lack of broadband home internet access, were not resolved over the pandemic. And these persistent access gaps could affect students’ [digital skills](#), [academic performance](#) and [well-being](#).

Rural students lacking adequate home internet face significant educational disadvantages compared with their better-connected peers. These [disadvantages include](#) lower classroom grades, [lower standardized test scores](#), lower educational aspirations and lower interest in STEM careers. Our findings link these adverse outcomes, which start with access gaps, to subsequent gaps in digital skills. These digital skills are less likely to develop without reliable broadband connectivity at home.

In early 2020, schools mobilized state and federal relief to provide students with home internet and laptops. Our study demonstrates the success of these initiatives in rural areas, where school-provided Wi-Fi hot spots accounted for nearly all of the [16 percentage-point increase in home internet access](#) during the pandemic’s peak. Importantly, as hot spot funding has ended, many households maintained access by subscribing to local internet service providers.

The success in transitioning students from school-provided Wi-Fi hot spots to paid subscriptions is now at risk. Many low-income households rely on the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#), the nation’s largest

internet affordability initiative, created under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021](#). This program provides a monthly discount of up to US\$30 for eligible households and up to \$75 for households on Native American tribal lands. The program is set to expire in [April 2024](#).

We found that internet access among rural students had [begun to decline](#) in 2022. This trend is likely to accelerate with the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Young people's time spent online – such as surfing the internet, playing video games and interacting on social media – helps them develop valuable skills. These skills include problem-solving, information literacy and creative expression. These skills apply across both digital and offline environments. Our research shows that digital skills helped rural students [maintain their interest in STEM fields and their goals of pursuing college](#), even as these interests declined during the pandemic.

Additionally, rural adolescents are at a heightened level of risk for social isolation. While adolescent mental health within our study – as measured by [self-esteem](#) – returned to pre-pandemic levels, rural students without adequate home internet remain at higher risk.

### What still isn't known

A major challenge in bridging the access divide is pinpointing underserved areas. Accurate maps are crucial to direct billions of dollars in funding from programs such as the [Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program](#), also known as BEAD, and the [Rural Digital Opportunity Fund](#) toward truly underserved communities. As part of the process to receive BEAD funding, each state must identify unserved and underserved homes. Local governments, nonprofit organizations and internet service providers can also develop [scientifically rigorous and reliable approaches to challenge the accuracy of these maps](#).

Maps must be finalized and grants must be made to states before large-scale infrastructure improvements will commence. However, some other early initiatives are now coming online. For example, in 2022, the [Quello Center at Michigan State University](#), in partnership with a [regional education network nonprofit](#), started the [Michigan MOON-Light project](#). Funded with a \$10.5 million grant from the [Broadband Infrastructure Program](#), this project increases the bandwidth on Michigan's education network that is being made available to local service providers. These providers will deliver reliable high-speed internet to 17,000 previously unserved households by the end of 2024.

Still, other major infrastructure improvements across the country will [not be realized for several years](#).

*The [Research Brief](#) is a short take on interesting academic work.*

## **[SHIPmates applications open for second class](#)**

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

### **TRAINING PROGRAM FOCUSES ON MEMBERSHIP, LEADERSHIP, FELLOWSHIP**

*2024 SHIPmates will be selected from each region; applications now open*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They are unafraid to express their opinion in a civil and respectful manner.

Servant leadership is not just a concept to SHIPmates, but a mindset and something they live by.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More information can be found on the National Grange website.

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



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

Communication Fellows receive training in various forms of press and media, including writing press releases, feature stories, and editorials, working in social media platforms, video editing, and much more. Fellows will have access to most parts of the National Grange Convention, with the opportunity to

network with current and future Grange leaders, including past Communication Fellows – some of whom are now State Grange Presidents and National Grange Delegates.

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

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

*All applications are due July 1, 2024.*

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

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

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

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

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

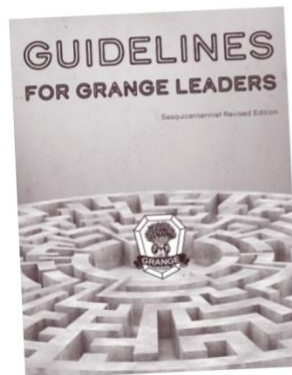


SUPPLY STORE

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

## GUIDELINES FOR GRANGE LEADERS

*(Sesquicentennial Revised Edition)*

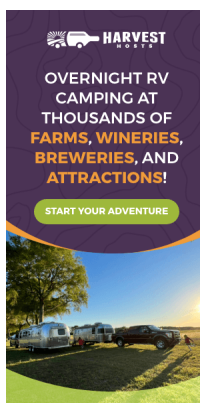


This book aims to define and describe the duties and responsibilities of Pomona and Subordinate Masters/Presidents, Lecturers, Secretaries and appointed committees. This book is meant to assist in carrying out duties and responsible. *Sesquicentennial Revised Edition* was edited by Betsy E. Huber, past National Grange President.

**\$6.00** plus shipping

Get yours by ordering online through the Grange Supply Store at [grangestore.org](http://grangestore.org) or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

## Grange Member Benefit: Harvest Hosts



Grange members can enjoy 20% off their membership with Harvest Hosts, which has thousands of unique locations across the U.S. and Canada that allow members with self-contained RVs to stay overnight on the property of an agriculturally-oriented business with no camping fees. With over 5,000 locations within the network, there is an adventure for everyone. There is an app associated with Harvest Hosts that provides maps of the destinations, trip routing and planning, and much more. Members of Harvest Hosts can also enjoy other RV-oriented savings of over \$2,000 year-round.

Join today with the code **GRANGE20** to redeem this offer.

Learn more: [www.harvesthosts.com](http://www.harvesthosts.com) .





## GRANGE JEWELRY



Grange Jewelry is now in stock at the Grange Store. Pins include years of service and member recognition pins from 5-80 years, past officer pins, Degree recognition pins, and much more!

*Some jewelry is now on clearance!*

**Prices vary**

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

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

## NATIONAL GRANGE

HEADQUARTERS: 1616 H ST. NW, SUITE 200, WASHINGTON, DC 20006 | (202) 628-3507

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stephanie Wilkins, IT Director. *National HQ*, ext. 101 or email [swilkins@nationalgrange.org](mailto:swilkins@nationalgrange.org)

**Lecturer** Tom Gwin, [lecturer@nationalgrange.org](mailto:lecturer@nationalgrange.org) or (360) 581-0177

**Grange Foundation** Joan C. Smith, Chairperson. [ngfb@grange.org](mailto:ngfb@grange.org) or (571) 662-7220

