

GRANGE



Today!

Special Convention Issue
November 12, 2024

A publication of the National Grange

WELCOME TO THE RIVER

by **Christine E. Hamp**
National Grange President

Greetings Grangers,
Welcome to Bettendorf, Iowa, and the 158th annual session of the National Grange! Here, on the banks of the Mississippi River, we gather to celebrate our shared commitment to agriculture, to our communities and our hometowns, and to the values that have served as the foundation of the Grange for generations.

This year's theme, "Meet Us at the River," speaks to the vibrant current of ideas, experiences, and connections that this convention offers. Just as the Mississippi carves a path through this country, the Grange carves a path of community support and service in each of our hometowns. Over the next few days, I encourage you to dive into the wealth of activities, workshops, and fellowship opportunities that have been planned - each an

opportunity to learn, grow, and bring fresh ideas, energy, and enthusiasm back to your local Granges.



Please make the most of your time this week to network with fellow Grangers, share your stories, and gain insights into the challenges and triumphs we all experience. No matter your experience within the Grange, I know you will leave with renewed enthusiasm and purpose. Together, we will continue to build a stronger, more united, more resilient Grange, upholding our mission and guiding the organization toward an amazing future.

Enjoy the session, embrace the river's spirit of movement and change, and let's make this year's gathering one to remember as we work together to be #GrangeStrong!

TUESDAY WORKSHOPS

- * The Heart of our Grassroots Structure: The Resolution Process including new strategies for Research and Writing
- * Cookie Decorating (Pre-Register)
- * How to Lead a Workshop
- * What to Do When Stuck Vertical Thinking.
- * Wreaths Across America
- * River Rock Painting
- * Planning and Executing Successful events: New Strategies
- * Emblem & Founders Activity
- * Bedtime & Stories & Homework time



WELCOME NEW DELEGATES

by Diana Echavarria

National Grange Communication Fellow

This year's 158th National Grange convention welcomes new faces to the delegate body.

Throughout the week you will have the opportunity to meet the 11 new delegates who will be serving as a representative of their state Grange. During their week as delegates, they will serve on committees, work on resolutions, and be instrumental in creating policies for the National Grange.

Nathan and Sarah Strawder. Recently married (CONGRATULATIONS!), both hail from Kansas and represent Otter Creek #1493. Nathan is returning as a delegate, as he previously served from 2012- 2016. Nathan is proud to now bring along his wife Sarah, who is a relatively new Grange member but has been thrilled to dive in full force into the Grange world. Sarah's first big introduction to the Grange was when Nathan drug her along to last year's national convention when he was serving the Membership department's first class of Shipmates, where Sarah



Photos by Molly Newman

was a trooper and very soon became a strong wrecking force full of ideas for the Shipmates.

Sarah has been with Grange for over a year now and has been selected to serve on the Audit & Budget committee. Her work experience includes budgeting and finances for an outside corporation. With her financial background, Sarah hopes to bring her expertise to the committee and help Grange remain financially balanced.

Nathan is a generational

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STORY SLAM

by Makayla Piers

National Grange Communication Fellow

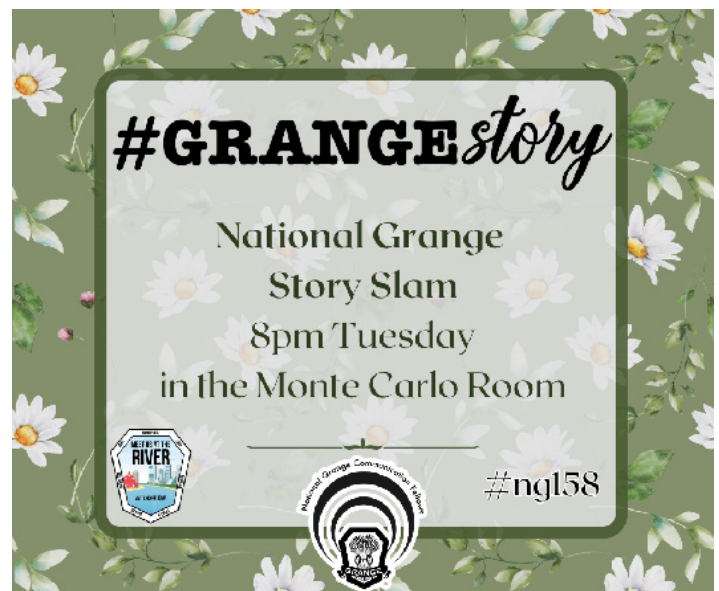
Calling all Grange members! The Communication Fellows invite you to participate in an evening of storytelling celebrating our Grange experiences.

Every Grange member has a story that deserves to be heard - whether it's witnessing our motto come alive in action or experiencing wisdom shared across generations. On November 12th, these stories will take center stage at our National Grange Story Slam Contest!

This isn't just another meeting - it's a celebration of our community's heart and soul through two powerful themes: the living embodiment of our motto "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity," and the beautiful exchange of wisdom between our younger and senior members. Whether you've been a Grange member for decades or just joined our family, you've likely experienced these special moments that define our community.

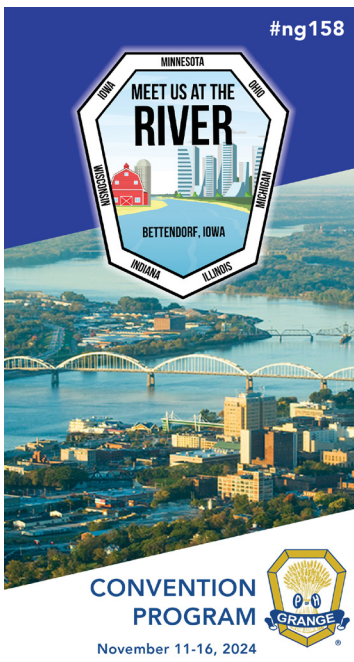
Join us for an unforgettable evening of authentic storytelling that will strengthen our bonds and

remind us all why we're proud to be Grange members. The best storytellers will be recognized with prizes in both categories!



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TAKE A LOOK INSIDE CONVENTION



Take a look at what is going on in the convention program. Scan the QR code below to take a look at what is going on inside the convention. This year's convention is also taking on some new and exciting things with every day loaded with workshops that chase a variety of topics from Grange initiatives to fun activities such as cookie decorating and rock painting. To take a look at what workshops are available visit <http://grange.biz/158workshops>

Join us Tuesday for our live-streamed events of the President's address from National Grange President Christine Hamp and our Advocacy Luncheon

speaker Phil Lehmkuhler, Midwest Regional Director for the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA).



GOLD SASHES UP FOR GRABS AT 158TH CONVENTION



An online silent auction and online raffle will be held for the opportunity to close the Grange at this year's National Grange Convention, on Wednesday, November 13 around 9:30 p.m.

A silent auction is being conducted for the President's sash and station, while all other officer sashes and positions are being raffled. Winners must be

on-site or select someone else present to have the honor of closing the Grange that evening. Winners of the silent auction or those whose name is drawn and select a speaking or action role for the closing should also be able to perform the duties well, either from memory or using a Manual.

For the remaining offices, an online raffle is being held, with a chance to win and select the office of your choice. Tickets, which are on sale now for \$20, can be purchased by any member in good standing. You can indicate the three offices in which you are most interested.

Winners will be drawn at 1:00 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, November 13, at which time they will select the office of their choice.

As each is selected, the next winner will be given

the remaining options until all offices are filled. Winners should be available to be contacted to accept and select their office if necessary. If you will be flying at selection time, or otherwise unavailable, please notify Amanda Brozana to indicate your top 3 choices or provide the name and number of someone authorized to decide for you.

Groups or Granges may pool their money to purchase tickets but only one representative for the group may serve. If a winner is selected who is not on-site, they must choose someone in attendance to serve in their place.

Zeffy, the online platform chosen for this fundraiser, is free to the Grange but adds a 17% contribution by default. You can turn this off by "adding" \$0 to your ticket purchase price or silent auction bid. To eliminate the contribution to Zeffy, select the drop-down that shows a 17% contribution and choose "Other," then make your contribution \$0.

All funds raised through the sash auctions will benefit the Grange Foundation.

Note: no actual sashes are being auctioned, just the opportunity to help close the Grange at the National Convention.

SILENT AUCTION LINK for the President's office:
<http://grange.biz/presidentauction>

RAFFLE LINK for all other offices:
<http://grange.biz/officeauction>

KICK-OFF TO #NG158

by Diana Echavarria

National Grange Communications Fellow

This afternoon marked the kick-off to the 158th National Grange Convention, being held in Bettendorf, IA. 158 years of fellowship, comradery, and ensuring rural America is taken care of within all the local communities of America.

This year's convention is hosted by the Midwest Region, which includes the states of Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Midwest Region Convention Committee Chairpersons Doug Baldwin and First Lady of Iowa State Grange, Kathy Baldwin had an amazing team behind them which helped in assisting the National Grange staff in organizing this year's convention logistics, events, workshops, and itinerary. Doug stated that his team "reflected on past conventions" and wanted to bring "fresh ideas and opportunities to Grangers" while maintaining the convention sessions' history and protocols.

This year's convention is set to bring numerous outings and over 60 workshops for all of the convention attendees to attend. Kathy reminded attendees that there will be scheduled tours of the John Deere factory and an Art Museum, just to name a few. Grangers will also learn about various subjects such as "Emblems and Founders Activity," "Weather Forecasting: Now and in the Future," and many more. The convention schedule will also allow Youth and Junior Grangers to work on any school assignments so they won't fall behind. There will also be nights of board games for those who like friendly competition.



L-R - Dave Herrell, President/CEO of Visit Quad Cities; Paulette Day, Visit Quad Cities; Chris Hamp, National Grange President; Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf; Philip Vonada, National Grange Communications Director; and Amanda Brozana, National Grange Membership & Leadership Development Director pose during the welcome ceremony. Photo by Samantha Wilkins

At Monday night's Welcome Reception, Robert S. Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, welcomed Grangers to the city and invited them to leave the convention when an opportunity arose to enjoy local restaurants and attractions. He also mentioned that the Mississippi River borders his town and is the largest working river in the world. This river was enjoyed at a luncheon earlier in the day to fall in line with this year's convention theme of "Meet Us at The River."

Attendees from coast to coast and border to border came together to enjoy a riverboat luncheon on board the Celebration Belle. The boat itself was built in 1986 in Florida and has become the largest excursion vessel on the Upper Mississippi. The experience was amazing! As the boat sailed along the Mississippi River, Grangers were treated to delicious food, stunning views, fellowship, and conversations.



158th National Grange Convention Livestream Schedule

All times are Central Time Zone

Tuesday, November 12

11:00 am – **President’s Address**
by President Christine E. Hamp

12:45 pm – **Advocacy Lunch**
Speaker: Phil Lehmkuhler, Midwest Regional
Director, NTIA

Friday, November 15

3:00 pm - **Installation of Officers**
7:30 pm - **National Grange Recognition Night**

Wednesday, November 13

12:50 pm - **Salute to Agriculture Lunch**
Speakers: Halei Heinzel, Alice in Dairyland
& Hon. Tom Vilsack, United States
Secretary of Agriculture

7:30 pm - **Quilts of Valor presentation**
Celebration of Remembrance
Grange Hall of Fame presentation

Watch on



@nationalgrange

#ng158



NEW DELEGATES

Granger selected to the Grange Law committee, which keeps the organizational structure of meetings and parliamentary procedures in check. Nathan is looking forward to working with the committee to modernize Grange laws while preserving the organization’s history and explaining why it was formed.

Sarah and Nathan are excited to partake in this adventure with their committees. When asked if they had any tips on how a new or seasoned Granger could be selected for a committee, they both stated that networking among Grange peers and putting themselves out there by volunteering and participation is essential to get noticed, “you get out of it what you put into it,” as stated by Nathan.

Sarah and Nathan encourage Grange members to welcome individuals who show interest and share the history of why Grange does what it does for the community and at meetings.

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Foundation Auction



Bid during the live auction to win this one-of-a-kind 158th National Grange Convention Emblem made by Gene Fletcher of California.

For Sale

\$2 EACH

GRANGE IN FOCUS LENS CLOTHS



FIND A COMMUNICATIONS FELLOW OR VISIT THE LeCLAIRE ROOM TO PURCHASE!

CONVENTION ATTENDEES ENCOURAGED TO JOIN IN COMMUNITY SERVICE INITIATIVES HONORING VETERANS

by Connie Johnston

Michigan State Grange, First Lady

As the host committee for the 158th National Grange Convention plans came to life, it was important for them to prepare a community service project to take place during the National Convention.

During the host committee meetings, the question of what community service project we would like to do was discussed. With a goal of trying to do something different, but also meaningful, Connie Johnston of Michigan suggested participating in collecting sponsorships for Wreaths Across America, a nationwide organization, to honor our Veterans.

With our national convention falling during Veterans Day, and the partnership we have with the Quilts of Valor program, this would align well.

There were many perks to supporting the Wreaths Across America program. Besides the continued support, we have for our troops, many obstacles we face with hosting a convention service project are the stress of how to get items such as food, toys, and/or clothing to the convention. This type of project support is just a monetary donation, which travels much easier.

The Wreaths Across America's mission statement is to Remember our Fallen U.S. Veterans, Honor those who serve, and Teach your children the value of freedom. The main purpose behind this program is to place wreaths at the grave markers of our veterans as a way of saying thank you for their service and sacrifice, during a wreath-laying event held annually in December. Wreaths Across America honors our heroes at more than 4,000 locations nationwide. This year's wreath laying will be on December 14th.

Wreaths Across America also conducts several programs to honor our living veterans.

To sponsor a wreath, it only costs \$17.00. To find out more about the program, go online to <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org>.

To learn more about the program please plan on joining us for a presentation about the program from Connie Johnston, MI, and Bonnie Mitson, ID on Tuesday, November 12, at 5 pm in the Rio de Janeiro room.



Above: Christopher Johnston and his son, Mark, lay wreaths on veterans' graves as a part of Wreaths Across America.

Below: Eugene Fletcher and Connie Johnston worked together to create a Wreaths Across

America 3D Printed Pin. Limited supply! The first 200 people who donate will receive a pin as a token of appreciation.



OPINION: ADDRESSING RURAL MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH GRANGE INITIATIVES

by Molly Newman

National Grange Communications Fellow

As a school counselor in a rural community, I am confronted daily with the profound and sometimes debilitating impact of mental health issues on children, youth, and families. The statistics are stark: rural areas experience nearly 65% higher rates of mental health concerns and suicide compared to larger cities, as reported by the CDC. This disparity is not just a statistic for me; it's a daily reality in my hometown and many other rural communities across America.

The National Grange's partnership with Rural Minds represents a necessary significant step forward in addressing this critical issue. Rural Minds highlights that people in rural areas face higher rates of depression, suicide, and other mental health issues, yet they are less likely to seek or have access to mental health care services compared to urban counterparts. This disparity is compounded by the persistent stigma surrounding mental health in rural settings, where concerns about privacy and reputation can prevent individuals from seeking help. In addition, the CDC reports that nearly 60% of rural Americans do not

live in counties with access to psychiatrists or other mental health professionals.

In my role, I regularly witness how these barriers manifest: the reluctance to be seen at a local mental health center, the challenges of accessing counselors through digital platforms due to unreliable internet connections, and the broader lack of mental health resources in rural areas. These obstacles make it imperative for organizations like the Grange, and individuals within the Order, to step up and bridge these gaps.

The approach should be multifaceted. Firstly, Grange members can leverage their community networks and organizational infrastructure to collaborate with Rural Minds and other mental health organizations, like the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), To Write Love on Her Arms, or the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), to name a few. By hosting events and workshops, we can raise awareness, reduce stigma, and connect rural residents with essential mental health resources.

Secondly, advocating for improved broadband ac-

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IN THE SHOWCASE:



Don't miss out! National Grange Showcase Store, supporting the Kansas State Grange Youth Department has a limited supply of t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies (S-5X), tumblers, hats, and license plates. Every purchase helps fund Youth & Young Adult programs and our upcoming 2026 Great Plains Regional Conference!

Be among the first to place your order for shirts starting Wednesday evening—each shirt will be made on the spot! Visit us in the Showcase Room or find Molly Newman in the Fellows Room to snag yours before they're gone

STORY SLAM

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Event Details:

Location: Monte Carlo Room
Registration Time: 7:45 PM
Event Start: 8:00 PM

Category Story Topics (Choose One or Both):

1. Living Our Motto: Describe a moment when you saw the Grange's motto of 'In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity' come to life.

2. Wisdom Across Generations: Share a story about a younger Grange member who surprised you with their wisdom or a senior member who taught you something unexpected.

Rules & Guidelines:

- Stories must be true (names may be changed for privacy)
- Time limit: 2-5 minutes
- Stories must be recited from memory, not read
- Content must be family-friendly and appropriate
- Focus on one specific moment or interaction

Judging Criteria:

Judges will evaluate stories based on:

- Projection: Clear voice and effective use of volume
- Body Language: Engaging physical presence and gestures
- Connection to Content: Authentic relationship to the story being told
- Emotional Impact: Ability to move and engage the audience

Tips for Powerful Storytelling:

- Share stories that moved you personally - they're more likely to move others
- Include specific details that bring your experience to life
- Practice your story to ensure smooth delivery within the time limit
- Consider how your story reflects Grange values

- Think about your audience's journey through your story
- Making an Impact

We encourage storytellers to consider their story's impact. The most memorable stories often:

- Illuminate Grange values in action
- Bridge generational gaps
- Share moments of personal growth
- Reveal unexpected wisdom
- Strengthen our sense of community

The Monte Carlo Room provides the perfect setting for our community to connect through storytelling. Whether you're sharing or listening, join us for an evening of reflection and celebration of our diverse Grange experiences.

For questions or additional information, please visit the Communication Fellows in the La Clair room.

Note: This event celebrates our community's experiences while respecting privacy. Storytellers are welcome to modify identifying details while maintaining the truth of their experience.



OPINION

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cess is crucial. Reliable internet is not just a convenience but a lifeline for accessing telehealth services and connecting with mental health professionals online. The Grange must continue to advocate at local, state, and national levels for investments in broadband infrastructure that benefit rural communities.

Education also plays a pivotal role. Incorporating mental health awareness and support into Grange programming ensures that members are informed and equipped to recognize signs of distress in their communities. Training sessions on mental health first aid and suicide prevention can empower Grangers to intervene and support those in need.

Lastly, storytelling and personal narratives can be powerful tools in breaking down barriers and destigmatizing mental health issues. By sharing stories of resilience and recovery within our Grange publications and meetings, we can foster a culture of openness and support. We should also be willing and able to share our personal stories outside of our Grange Halls and meetings - sometimes, it just takes one person being willing to share to help save a life. One idea

is to create a testimonial bank of Grange and community members who are willing to share their stories and experiences, putting real faces to the challenges of mental health. This bank could operate at the state, national, or community level, offering a platform for people to connect through shared experiences.

As Grangers, we have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead by example in promoting mental health wellness in rural America. Our collective efforts can make a profound difference in the lives of individuals and families who often feel isolated and underserved. Together, we can create communities where seeking mental health support is encouraged, accessible, and embraced without judgment.

Let us harness the strength of our organization and the compassion of our members to address this pressing issue. By working collaboratively with partners like Rural Minds, advocating for digital infrastructure, and promoting education and awareness, the Grange can truly make a difference in rural mental health.

FIDGETS

\$5 EACH

MADE BY EUGENE FLETCHER, CALIFORNIA

**YOUTH & JUNIORS
HOMEWORK**

Tuesday 8-10 am
Riviera Room

Wednesday 10 am - NOON
Rio de Janeiro Room

Friday 4-6 pm
Riviera Room

Saturday 9-10 pm
Monte Carlo Room

Emma Edelen (IA), Certified Science Teacher & Tutor

PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

**GO CHECK OUT VARIOUS
ITEMS FROM THE
NATIONAL GRANGE
BUILDING!
TAKE A PIECE OF
HISTORY HOME WITH
YOU!**

**LIMITED QUANTITIES
OLDIES, BUT GOODIES**
AVAILABLE IN SHOWCASE - IOWA ROOM