

The official publication of the NC State Grange

July / August 2017

GRANGE NEWS

AN Adventurous
Week of
Grange
CAMP





Top: Jennie Gentry & the 2017 Youth Team Bottom: Emma Stack, Caroline Vandaveer & Lillie Griffin

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Events

September	14-17 State Convention
November	7-11 National Convention

AN Adventurous Week of Grange Camp



photo by: Mark Davis



develop into good leaders – especially ethical leaders- these skills will go with them into adulthood. They may become Grange leaders, or involved in other community organizations. We hope that they become good employees, and possibly have the opportunity to lead in business and industry.

It is not unusual for the topic of marketing our organization to arise in meetings. In my mind, this always brings up the question – what quality product to we have do sell? What are the strong points on which we can market the State Grange? There is no doubt that our youth program is one of them! We have a lot of parents who appreciate the fact that their children are involved. Furthermore, we have members who joined the Grange because of the youth program.

Supporting youth is an important mission for the Grange. You can be thankful that we have a Board of Directors that fully believes in our mission of youth leadership development. I am definitely appreciative of our Board, and to local Granges that help pay the expenses for youth to attend events. We also have some individuals who help to sponsor kids to camp each summer. We are truly blessed!

We had a great camp for Youth and Juniors with more than 90 participants. Each year camp reminds me of how blessed we are to have such a good group of well-behaved, good kids, who will be our leaders sometime in the years ahead. Our youth programs place a heavy emphasis on leadership development. Yes, they also have fun in the process while valuable lessons are learned about leading and working as a team.

The State Grange places a lot of financial resources into supporting youth activities. It is some of the most worthwhile money that we spend! If we can help our young participants



President, Jimmy Gentry receives the Partner in 4-H Award on behalf of the NC Grange!



Images provided by Becky Kirkland, NC 4-H



Have you seen the new NC Grange Blog??
Check out the link on our homepage of ncgrange.com!

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The Grange is a grassroots, community service, family organization with a special interest in agriculture and designed to help meet the needs of people, young and old, through a cooperative effort with government and other organizations that also seek the greatest good for the greatest number.

CRANBERRY SHORTBREAD COOKIES

JESSICA HORTON | QUEEN CITY GRANGE
2ND PLACE ADULT BERRY COOKIE

3/4 POUND (3 STICKS) UNSALTED BUTTER, ROOM TEMPERATURE
1 CUP SUGAR
1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
3 1/2 CUPS ALL PURPOSE FLOUR
1/4 TEASPOON KOSHER SALT
3/4 CUP CHOPPED DRIED CRANBERRIES
1 CUP ROUGHLY CHOPPED PISTACHIOS
1 CUP WHITE CHOCOLATE CHIPS

CREAM TOGETHER THE BUTTER AND SUGAR UNTIL LIGHT AND FLUFFY, ABOUT 3 MINUTES. MIX IN THE VANILLA EXTRACT.

IN A SEPARATE BOWL, WHISK OR SIFT TOGETHER THE FLOUR AND SALT. ADD THE FLOUR & SALT TO THE BUTTER MIXTURE. MIX ON LOW SPEED UNTIL IT JUST STARTS TO COME TOGETHER. ADD THE CRANBERRIES, PISTACHIOS, AND WHITE CHOCOLATE A HALF A CUP AT A TIME UNTIL IT'S INCORPORATED. MIX UNTIL THE DOUGH FORMS A BALL.

ROLL INTO A LOG ABOUT 2 INCHES IN DIAMETER (ROLL IT WIDER OR SKINNIER DEPENDING ON HOW BIG YOU WANT YOUR COOKIES). ROLL THE LOG IN SOME WAX PAPER.

CHILL IN THE FRIDGE FOR AT LEAST 1 HOUR.

PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 350F AND LINE A SHEET PAN WITH PARCHMENT PAPER. SLICE THE LOG INTO 1/4 INCH SLICES. PLACE THE SLICES ON THE SHEET PAN. THEY DON'T SPREAD MUCH, SO THEY CAN BE PRETTY CLOSE TOGETHER. BAKE FOR 10-13 MINUTES, OR UNTIL THE EDGES ARE JUST STARTING TO BROWN.

REMOVE FROM THE PAN AND COOL TO ROOM TEMP.

PEANUT BUTTER CANDY

EVELYN DUNCAN
BUSHY FORK GRANGE
3RD PLACE NUT CANDY

1 CUP PEANUT BUTTER
1 CUP DRY MILK POWDER
1/3 CUP HONEY

MIX TOGETHER UNTIL IT LOOKS LIKE CLAY. ROLL INTO BALLS.

CHILL.

CRANBERRY ORANGE COOKIES

JOYCE CLODFELTER
TROUTMAN GRANGE
3RD PLACE BERRY COOKIE

3/4 CUP BUTTER, SOFTENED
1 CUP SUGAR
1 EGG
2 CUPS ALL PURPOSE FLOUR
1 1/2 TSP BAKING POWDER
1/4 TSP BAKING SODA
1 CUP DRIED CRANBERRIES, FINELY CHOPPED
1 TSP ORANGE JUICE OR FRESHLY SQUEEZED ORANGE
JUICE

PREHEAT OVEN TO 350 DEGREES. MIX BUTTER AND 1 CUP SUGAR UNTIL LIGHT AND FLUFFY. ADD EGG. IN A SEPARATE BOWL, COMBINE FLOUR, BAKING POWDER AND BAKING SODA. ADD TO BUTTER MIXTURE AND MIX UNTIL JUST COMBINED. FOLD IN CRANBERRIES AND 1 TSP OF ORANGE JUICE. CAN USE ORANGE ZEST, IF YOU PREFER.

BAKE 10 TO 13 MINUTES OR UNTIL LIGHTLY GOLDEN. DO NOT OVERBAKE TO PREVENT GETTING TOO HARD. (I ALSO USED PARCHMENT PAPER)

COOL ON WIRE RACKS.

AUNT MAE'S SWEET POTATO PIE

PATTY SWING
ARCADIA GRANGE
3RD PLACE SWEET POTATO PIE

2 CUPS COOKED MASHED SWEET POTATOES
1 STICK MELTED BUTTER OR MARGARINE
1 AND 1/2 CUPS SUGAR
1 SMALL CAN EVAPORATED MILK
1 TEASPOON VANILLA
1 PK. INSTANT VANILLA PUDDING
2 EGGS, BEATEN
2 UNBAKED PIE SHELLS

MIX ALL INGREDIENTS TOGETHER AND POUR INTO SHELLS. BAKE AT 350 UNTIL DONE. CHECK AFTER 35 MINUTES. MAY NEED TO BAKE UP TO 45 OR 50 MINUTES.

2017 CONTEST ENTRIES
ARE NOW OPEN AT
NCGRANGE.COM
FOR THIS YEAR'S
CONVENTION!

STRAWBERRY PIE

LINDA ALBRIGHT
PATTERSON GRANGE
3RD PLACE BERRY PIE

3 C. STREWBERRIES
1 C. CHOPPED NUTS
1 LARGE CARTON COOL WHIP
1 CAN CONDENSED MILK
1/2 C. LEMON JUICE
1 T VANILLA

CHOP STRAWBERRIES & MIX WITH COOL WHIP.

MIX MILK,LEMON JUICE,VANILLA & NUTS. MIX ALL TOGETHER. POUR INTO 2 BAKED & COOLED PIE SHELLS.

REFRIGERATE.

AN Adventurous Week of Grange Camp

PHOTOS BY:
JESSICA HORTON,
JENNIE GENTRY &
JASON CAMERON

ARTICLE BY: JENNIE GENTRY



If you were to ask any Grange youth what their favorite part of summer is, nearly all of them would say, “Grange Camp!” And if you were to attend camp, and see the bonds of friendship that are made among our campers, you would see why this week is the highlight of their summer. A 75-year tradition, this year’s camp was held July 9-15, at the beautiful Eastern 4-H Center in Columbia, NC. Ninety-three campers experienced an amazing week together where they learned about leadership, team building and the Grange through fun, exciting activities. This truly was a tremendous week of personal growth for our campers!

“Choose Your Own Adventure” was this year’s camp theme, created by our Youth Leadership Team. Through this theme, the team helped campers to discover the adventures they each want to take in their own lives, and to discover the adventure within themselves. They encouraged campers see their lives as fun journeys, and to use their journeys to make strong impacts on others. The team incorporated these lessons with special daily thoughts and vespers. At the end of the week, they gave each camper a small compass to remind them to never be afraid to find their own adventures.

This was our second year having a Junior Leadership Team at camp. Six Juniors made up the team: Caroline Barber, Karly Denning, Mason Furr, Ryley Gray, Trey Hayes, and Lyndley Whitfield. These young leaders were each paired with a Youth Team member who served as their mentor throughout the week. The team did such an amazing job leading!



Campers enjoyed a variety of daily camp activities such as kayaking, the giant swing, games, swimming, archery, team building, leadership, and more. Campers even faced challenges and learned more about themselves through wall climbing and the high and low ropes courses. They also enjoyed group challenges throughout the week as part of the “Battle By the Bay” competition. Groups competed in a variety of activities with one group emerging as the week’s champions. This year’s youth champion was the group Hope, led by counselors Brittany Beshears and Eli Bright and Youth Team members Marcus Avendano and Kirsten Cash. The Purple Group led by counselors Charles Howerton and Jennifer Suther were named the Junior champions.

Campers also participated in a community service project during the week. They painted glass candle holders that will be used later this fall at our State Convention. They also wrote letters of support to Evan Hill, a youth Granger who has been training for the military. It was so sweet watching our campers putting love into these projects.

After daily activities, campers joined each evening for camp’s traditional events. Sunday night brought fun get-acquainted games led by the Youth Team. Monday night held our famous Great Grange Challenge, where campers raced in a round robin of team building water activities on the sports field, which also ended with a mud slide this year. On Tuesday night, campers enjoyed the annual Talent Show and costume night in which campers dressed up as adventurers. Wednesday night held our traditional Skit Night when each group performs a skit, giving everyone many laughs. After skits, campers enjoyed an evening campfire where they had ‘s’mores and special vespers.



Thursday night, campers demonstrated their leadership skills at Model Grange Night. State Officers and Drill Team leaders performed their duties by opening and closing the Grange meeting in ritual form. Our State Youth President, Margie Griffin of Troutman Grange, led the youth officers in the Grange opening, with Zac Mazag (Troutman Grange) and Nayhive Gonzalez (Bushy Fork Grange) leading the Officer Drill as the Assistant and Lady Assistant Steward. An intricate Youth Drill was also performed, led by Nick Jones (Southern Wake Grange) and Lillie Griffin (Troutman Grange).

The Junior Officers also performed the Junior Opening and Closing of the Grange led by State Junior President, Trey Hayes of Taylors Bridge Grange. The Junior Officer Drill was led by Lyndley Whitfield (Bushy Fork Grange), and Karly Denning (Grantham Grange), who served as the Junior Assistants. All of our officers truly stood out, demonstrating phenomenal leadership skills.

Friday Night held our annual Awards Night, at which special presentations were made. Trophies were presented to each Junior Camper for superlatives chosen by their group counselors. Royalty was crowned, naming Trey Hayes (Taylor's Bridge Grange) the Junior Camp Prince and Lyndley Whitfield (Bushy Fork Grange) as the Junior Camp Princess. Counselors also selected six Juniors to receive several awards that will be presented at September's State Convention. The Junior Counselors Award went to Cade Howerton (Bushy Fork Grange) and Bryleigh Apple (Cape Fear Grange). The Junior Grange Leadership Award was given to Mason Furr (St. John's Grange) and Ryley Gray (St. John's Grange). The highest honor, the Hunt Best All Around Camper Award, was presented to Trey Hayes and Lyndley Whitfield.

Youth Awards were also presented, starting with superlatives, which were selected by their peers. Zac Mazag (Troutman Grange) and Margie Griffin (Troutman Grange) were crowned this year's Grange Camp King and Queen. (The full list of youth superlatives is included with this article.) Youth Counselors also selected special awards, to be presented at the State Convention in September. The Counselors Award was

given to Nick Jones (Southern Wake Grange) and Liz Cartwright (Guilford Grange). The Grange Leadership Award went to Marcus Avendano (Southern Wake Grange) and Rylee Furr (St. John's Grange). The highest honor, the President's Best Camper Award,

was presented to Zac Mazag and Margie Griffin. All campers did a wonderful job throughout the week! The Awards Ceremony was followed by a dance, vespers, camp slideshow, and a candlelight ceremony that was led by our Youth Team.

The week could not have been made possible without the excellent leadership and creativity of our 2017 State Youth Leadership Team, who helped plan the camp activities and theme. The team, made up of Marcus Avendano, Hannah Bright, Kirsten Cash, Margie Griffin, Katie Leonard, Amber Long, Zac Mazag and Landon Woolard, truly stood out as outstanding, charismatic, mature leaders, who our youth and juniors look up to.

The week's success is also attributed to the incredibly positive Grange Counselors, who we thank for their hard work and volunteering their time to

help make a difference. Without their nurturing, loving hearts, camp would not be the amazing camp that it is. Special thanks are also given to all of our local Granges and individuals who helped sponsor and pay for campers to attend this special week.

Grange Camp is such a unique event for our youth and juniors. Because of this special experience, our youth and junior programs are growing, and youth are recruiting more friends to join the Grange to invite them into their "second family." It is so astounding to watch campers grow, learn, gain confidence and overcome challenges. This is such a different, special camp that gives kids incredible experiences, lasting memories and life-long friendships. It is a place where kids come out of their shells, share differences and ideas, work together and accept everyone and each other. Most importantly, it is a place where campers can completely be themselves. We encourage more people to send their kids to Grange Camp, for it truly is an incredible growing experience!



Why Grange Camp

BY: MARGIE GRIFFIN

Grange Camp is something that the majority of youth in the NC Grange Youth Program looks forward to all year long. We have other events like State Convention and Winter Youth Conference (which are both equally amazing), but at camp we get to spend an entire week with some of our greatest friends in the world doing some pretty awesome activities. Together, we learn life-changing teamwork skills and we go through challenges that are meant to strengthen our leadership abilities. Thanks to Grange Camp, I have learned so much about myself and how I can be a strong leader for others. Grange Camp always has an incredibly deep impact on me in many different ways.

I leave camp each year knowing that I always have a home-away-from-home to come back to. Grange Camp introduced me to friends that I know I will have for the rest of my life. I have stronger bonds with many of my Grange friends than I have with some of my other friends from home whom I have known my whole life. Throughout the week of camp, Granger's form such strong friendships with each other that we really do become like one really big, supportive and loving family. To the youth, Grange events are basically just really big family reunions.

At camp, we get to reacquaint with all of our old friends while at the same time making friends with the new campers. By the end of the week, it is hard to tell who is an old-timer and who is new because we all intermingle so much and we become so close in such a short amount of time that it makes it difficult to tell the new from the old.

The strong sense of family at camp makes it easy to be more confident in oneself. Before I ever started attending Grange events, I was a shy kid who rarely spoke to anyone I did not know. I went to Grange Camp for the first time and that is when I first started to come out of my shell. I opened up and started talking to people and now, seven Grange Camps later, I am more confident in myself, and I am no longer intimidated by the thought of going up to strangers to start a conversation.

Grange Camp made me more confident in myself which, in turn, allowed me to gain many of the skills necessary to be a stronger leader. Speaking in front of groups at camp has helped me become more comfortable speaking in front of crowds elsewhere. Learning teamwork skills at camp made it easier to accomplish projects at school because camp taught me how to handle group work. I have learned how to make the best of group projects and how to figure out who best fits what role in getting the project finished. Lastly, Grange Camp taught me that a good leader is not always the one who does the leading all of the time. A good leader also knows when to step out of the way to allow someone else in their group a chance to take the lead.

Grange Camp benefits us all in many ways. These are just a few of the many ways that Grange Camp, and Grange in general, has impacted my life. I could never thank the Grange enough for the impact it has had on my life. It has given me some of the best friends I have ever had, and it has presented me with more life-changing opportunities and more leadership skills than I could ever have dreamed of.



2017 Youth Superlatives



King: Zac Mazag
Queen: Margie Griffin

Best All Around
Female: Katie Leonard
Male: Nick Jones

Best Role Model
Female: Rylee Furr
Male: Marcus Avendano

Grange Spirit Award
Female: Liz Cartwright
Male: Josh Bethany

Mr. and Miss Congeniality
Female: Baylor Howerton
Male: Michael Punt

Best Personality
Female: Caroline Vandaveer
Male: Lucas Carter

Unsung Hero
Female: Zipporah Hayes
Male: Noah Griffin

Most Outstanding Leader
Female: Amber Long
Male: Landon Woolard

Most Unforgettable
Female: Nora Smith
Male: Michael Bethany

Most Fun to Be Around
Female: Lillie Griffin
Male: Tyler Leonard

Best 1st Year Camper
Female: Savannah Gunter
Male: Austin Covey

President's Best Camper Award
Female: Margie Griffin
Male: Zac Mazag

Grange Leadership Award
Female: Marcus Avendano
Male: Rylee Furr

Counselors Award:
Female: Liz Cartwright
Male: Nick Jones

2017 Junior Superlatives

Junior Prince: Trey Hayes

Junior Princess: Lyndley Whitfield

Hunt Best Camper Award: Trey Hayes and Lyndley Whitfield

Junior Leadership Award: Mason Furr and Ryley Gray

Junior Counselors Award: Cade Howerton and Bryleigh Apple



GRANTHAM GRANGE HONORS PASTORS & FAMILIES

BY: JOYCE HOOD

Grantham Grange #968 held its Annual Pastors Appreciation Dinner on June 26, 2017 at Selah Christian Church. President, John Crawford welcomed everyone, the Bible was opened, the Pledge of Allegiance and the Grange Salutation were given. Chaplain, Sallie Stevens gave a devotion and blessing for the meal. A delicious covered dish dinner was enjoyed by the (80) in attendance.

President Crawford introduced the guests and gave them a few minutes to speak. A program of inspirational music was presented by Kevin Denton, Music Pastor at Faith FWB Church and his wife, Susan.

Our Community Service project for the month of June was to bring food items for the Jordan's Chapel Community Meals on Wheels.

FROM JOYCE!

Joyce Clodfelter, Community Service & Family Living Director

Hello, Grangers!

I hope you are thinking ahead and have your calendars marked for State Convention. Time has flown by, so I want to offer a few reminders to help with your contests and report entries.

- If you have any questions concerning reports and contests, please check the 2017 Program Guide which can be found online.
- The Family Living Report is due in the State office by August 15th. I hope each Grange will turn one in this year. The more reports turned in makes the competition even better. It is nice to see what other Granges have done through out the year.
- I encourage everyone to enter our baking and craft contests. It is fun receiving all these baked goods, knowing we are going to get to taste them during the Tasting Party on Friday Night. As a reminder, please use disposable containers. We are not responsible for returning any containers that you need to keep. Also, please do not use store bought pie crusts and do NOT enter anything requiring refrigeration.
- I hope many of you have made items for our craft contests. Please remember the "miscellaneous" category is for miscellaneous items only. This means that any item entered in this category cannot fit into any other category.

Let's make it a good year and a lot of fun. Bake your best and make those craft items. I am looking forward to seeing what you have done this past year.

Reminder: Contest entries must be submitted online by midnight, September 12th. Don't forget!

This is our second year to do the Pajamas and Books program for children, infant to age 18. We did an awesome job last year in Raleigh, but we only had 6 or 7 granges participate. Let's go for the gold this year and show Charlotte what we are capable of doing.

See you in a few weeks!

CORRIHER GRANGE 75 YEAR MEMBERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO PHILIP SLOOP &
KENNETH CORRIHER ON THEIR ACHIEVEMENT!



FERGUSON GRANGE PROJECTS

BY: SHARON UNDERWOOD

Ferguson Grange had guest speaker Matt Snyder to share his experience growing mushrooms. It was a very interesting program for June!



Ferguson Grange is proud of our new community sign and flower box. The project was completed by members Paul and Cyndee VanSweden and Clarkie and Mike Brown.

We are "Do-ers!"



Ferguson Grange is located in Wilkes County, in the Ferguson community.

SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL RECIPIENTS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| • Maddie Griffin
UNC Charlotte | • Rachel Haubert
Appalachian State | • Cole Woolard
Pitt Community College |
| • Mable Griffin
UNC Charlotte | • Dillon Privette
Campbell University | • Margie Griffin
UNC Wilmington |
| • Benjamin Cauthen
NC State | • Dylan Blackburn
Campbell University | • Kellee Payne
Mitchell Comm. College |
| • Josh Jernigan
NC State | • Kameron Forrister
Appalachian State | • Emily Harrison
UNC Chapel Hill |
| • Kathryn Clontz
NC State | • Matthew Warrick
High Point University | • Megan King
Meredith College |
| • Kaylan Sinclair
NC State | • Bennett Yeargan
East Carolina University | |
| • Morgan Warrick
Catawba College | • Taylor Woolard
East Carolina University | |

BEAUFORT COUNTY GRANGE RECOGNIZING LEADERS

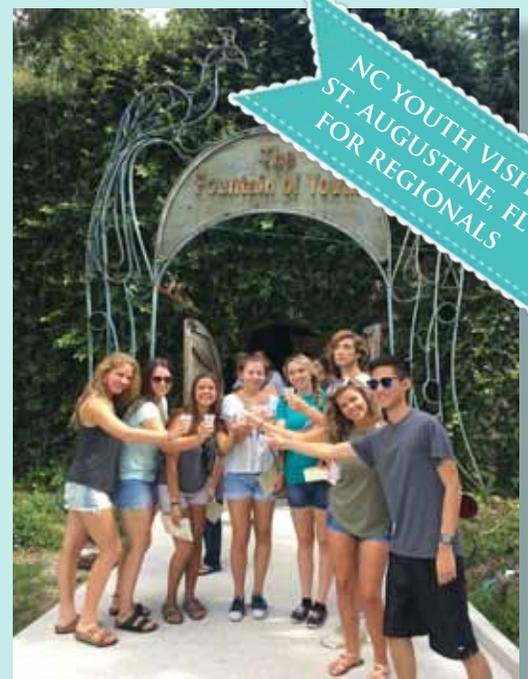
BY: DEBRA CAYTON



Beaufort County Grange #1233 recognized the minister of the year for 2017 at the June meeting. Pictured is Craig Hagen being presented a plaque by Marty Alligood, Vice President of Beaufort County Grange.

Craig Hagen has been serving as minister of St. Clairs Church of Christ since January 1, 1998. He is a 1992 graduate of Mid-Atlantic Christian University and has also held ministries in Creswell, NC and Martinsville, Virginia.

He is blessed to be involved in the field that God has called him to.



NC YOUTH VISIT
ST. AUGUSTINE, FL
FOR REGIONALS

A group of 10 Grangers from NC, including eight youth, attended the Grange's Southeast Regional Conference in St. Augustine, Florida, July 21-23. Youth participated in workshops, contests, and a tour of The Fountain of Youth. Among the NC youth contest winners are Ashley Drop, 2nd place in public speaking, and August and Baylor Howerton, 1st place in group sign-a-song. Baylor will be attending Nationals after winning Best In Show for individual sign-a-Song. Katie Leonard and Landon Woolard placed 2nd and 3rd in Grange Jeopardy and will compete at Nationals as well. It was a fun weekend getting to visit with our fellow Grangers.

CORPORATE MISSION FUND

 FARM CREDIT
CAROLINA

Organizations may apply for up to \$5,000 per year to help in their endeavors to further the future of agriculture and contribute to the agricultural economy in North Carolina.

Grants will be considered for programs only in the 54 counties and geographic areas where Carolina Farm Credit conducts business.

The Fund's mission is to build strong partnerships and alliances, leveraging the resources within the fund to preserve and promote the farmer, the family and our rural communities.

The Fund has two main objectives: to invest in the future of agriculture and to enhance and impact the quality of life in rural North Carolina.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 funding cycle. The Fund operates on an application-based grant system. Grants will be awarded for up to \$5,000 per organization per year.

To be considered for funding, organizations' values and purpose must align with the Fund's mission.

Grant applications will be accepted from January 1 to September 1. Proposals will be reviewed and grants will be awarded in the fourth quarter. All recipients will be expected to attend a banquet to recognize grant recipients in the following spring.

Please contact Maggie Hamm, Chief Marketing Officer, at Marketing@carolinafarmcredit.com or by phone at (800) 521-9952 x2854.

June was a busy month legislatively both in North Carolina and in Washington. The North Carolina General Assembly wrapped up six months of legislation at 2:00 AM on June 30th. This was the second shortest “long session” since 1973. Legislators will reconvene for sessions on August 3rd and again on September 6th. Topics expected to be taken up include redistricting, overriding any bills that Governor Cooper may veto, and approving bills currently in negotiation between the House and Senate that have been left on the table. These may include changes to medicaid reform, changes to the mental health system and addressing the impeachment concerns that have arisen around Secretary of State Elaine Marshall. Secretary Marshall has been accused of allowing undocumented immigrants to serve as notaries.

Governor Cooper vetoed the \$23 billion budget proposed by both the House and Senate. As expected, the veto was quickly overturned by the General Assembly. Highlights of the budget are below.

Raises:

- One-time \$1,000 raise for State employees. State retirees get a 1% cost-of-living adjustment.

Education:

- 3.3% average wage increase for teachers; 8.6% and 13.4% wage increase for assistant principals and principals respectively over two years
- \$27 million towards adding slots for pre-k students.
- \$100 million from the NC Lottery for rural school construction projects.

Taxes:

- Reduces corporate and personal income tax rates. Beginning 2019, the corporate income tax rate will fall from 3% to 2.5%, and the personal income tax will be reduced from 5.499% to 5.25%.
- Expands the child deduction for people eligible for the federal child tax credit. Deduction ranges from \$0 to \$2,500.
- Increases the standard deduction to \$20,000 (currently \$17,500) if married, filing jointly; \$15,000 (currently \$14,000) for head of household; \$10,000 (currently \$8,750) for single; and \$10,000 (currently \$8,750) if married, filing separately.

Disaster Relief:

- An extra \$100 million will be designated towards Hurricane Matthew relief.
- \$10 million to fight opioid addiction.

Agriculture & Veteran’s Affairs:

- Provides \$2.3 million to purchase an airplane for firefighting readiness and response.
- Provides \$250,000 to increase the availability of fresh food in food deserts across the state through the Healthy Food/ Small Retailer program.
- Establishes a Beehive Grant Fund to encourage the establishment of new beehives in the state.
- Establishes a Military and Veterans Healing Arts Grant Program to increase access to the arts for service members, veterans and military families.

North Carolina Farm Act of 2017

The General Assembly also came to an agreement on the NC Farm Act of 2017, SB 615. Highlights from this bill include:

1. Section 3: The General Statutes allow agricultural land, horticultural land, and forestland to be valued for property tax purposes based on its present use (i.e., not its highest and best use). This section of the bill makes some changes to this statute.

2. Section 8: Clarification of agritourism to include adding a building or structure that is used for agritourism as a bona fide farm purpose if it is located on a property that has: (i) a qualifying farmer sales tax exemption certificate from the Department of Revenue; or, (ii) is eligible for participation in the present use value program.

3. Section 20: The bill would allow a person to apply for a one-year extension of their conditional exemption certificate beyond the original three-year period if they satisfy specific conditions. This would typically be used in the case of a disaster such as Hurricane Matthew.

Young Aged Farm Labor:

The News and Observer recently published, “*Could a 7-year-old have picked the food you’re eating? The law says no. Workers say yes*”. The narrative focuses on Jacqueline who states that she was working on tobacco and sweet potato farms with her parents and sibling as young as age 7. Jacqueline is now 19. As a child, Jacqueline “often experienced splitting headaches, nausea and dizziness – common symptoms of green tobacco sickness, a type of nicotine poisoning farm workers call ‘the green monster.’ It occurs when nicotine is absorbed through the skin.”

Under federal labor laws, children 12 and older can work in agriculture without a work permit for an unlimited number of hours outside of school with permission from a parent. However, if a parent works on a farm and gives their children permission, kids under 12 may work in nonhazardous jobs on the farm. The News and Observer article stated that, “Workers hired through the H-2A program, which allows foreign citizens to fill seasonal jobs in agriculture temporarily, are paid \$11.27 an hour and receive free housing and transportation. Other farm laborers are paid the federal and state minimum wage of \$7.25, though there are some wage exceptions for small farms.” This would mean that families that are not working through the H-2A program are working 40+ hours a week at minimum wage allowing some to fall below the poverty line. Farm Labor Organizing Committee’s communications manager Catherine Crowe said, “If you pay poverty wages, kids are going to have to work to make up for that loss of income in the family.”

Many families currently working on farms do not see this trend of young farm work going away anytime soon.

Online article can be found here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/business/article160293514.html>

From the Hill

President Trump visited Poland on July 6th in conjunction with the G20 conference hosted in Hamburg, Germany. His speech in Warsaw was well received by the Polish people when he spoke of “the triumph of the Polish spirit over centuries of hardship” as an inspiration “for a future in which good conquers evil, and peace achieves victory over war”.

The G20 Conference attendees includes 19 of the world’s wealthiest nations plus the European Union. This group encompasses two-thirds of the world’s population and 85 percent of the world economy. The primary objective of this summit is to prevent international financial crises and to shape the global economic agenda. The White House stated that “The primary objectives (for Trump to speak upon) are three: To promote American prosperity, to protect American interests, and to provide American leadership.”

The G20 conference marked the first time that President Trump was able to meet face-to-face with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Discussion was also held over Russia’s alleged interference with last year’s election. The two

leaders also agreed to shake hands on a ceasefire for parts of Syria, where the US and Russia back opposite sides in this country's years-long civil war.

President Trump tweeted after the conference that "The G 20 Summit was a great success for the US".

US Senate Looking Towards Passage of Health Care Bill After Week-Long Break

Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell decided to delay the vote on the health care bill until after the July 4th break. Democrats do not support the bill and several Republicans do not support it in its current form. There is concern among the Republicans that the bill will not have the votes to pass on the Senate floor. A report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that up to 22 million Americans could lose their healthcare if this bill were to pass in its current state. This statistic is fueling much of the opposition, as citizens put pressure on their representatives to vote "no".

McConnell released a statement on July 15th that the vote will yet again be delayed due to the recovery of Arizona State Republican Senator John McCain's eye surgery. Senator McCain's vote is vital to pass the bill. It is unclear how long the vote will be delayed.

North Carolina Senator Thom Tillis Holds Up Department of Homeland Security Nominee

Senator Tillis placed a hold on Lee Francis Cissna's nomination for director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, a department within Homeland Security. This department is responsible for naturalization issues, green cards, visas for temporary workers and the e-verify program that checks job applicants for legal residency in the country. By placing this hold on the nomination, Senator Tillis hopes to pressure Homeland Security to make available more H-2B visas. The H-2B guestworker program allows American businesses to hire seasonal foreign workers for non-agricultural jobs mainly in the seafood, landscaping and tourism industries. North Carolina is one of the top users of H-2B visas. Without more of these visas, businesses in these industries in North Carolina will continue to suffer tremendous labor shortages.

It is hard to believe but 2018 training for our NC State Grange Health Insurance Agents is underway.

Many have completed the first Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) required training for the senior, taking on the average of six to eight hours of reading and testing. The bar is set high on the Medicare Training exam with a minimum passing test score of 90%. Agents get only three attempts on the 50 random question comprehensive exam to enable them to proceed to the second phase of the training, the Fraud, Waste and Abuse modules. Once they have passed these modules, they obtain their annual CMS Certification. The second and third training requirements are that of the carrier, which is product specific for the plans they offer on the Medicare Advantage and Stand Alone Part "D" plans. BlueCross BlueShield of NC has scheduled statewide meetings, beginning August 22 – 24, and Aug 29-31 for our agents. These meetings will cover specific plan benefits and changes for 2018, although the agents will not be able to discuss specific details until the Open Enrollment begins (CMS rules and regulations). Once the agent goes to one of these training sessions, they must take an exam for both the Medicare Advantage as well as one for the Stand Alone Part "D" plans. Both of these exams also have a minimum passing score of 85%. We typically only have two opportunities for these exams to obtain that score. If any agent fails to take their training, or obtain the minimum passing score, they are barred from marketing those products to their clients, and in most cases, lose the opportunity to collect any "renewal"

the past. In addition, for the senior market, agents had the opportunity to join in on one of two webinars hosted by BlueCross BlueShield of NC on a new standalone Part "D" plan they will offer this year at the open enrollment. This is a plan that agents and members have asked for, and it should have a very good reception from the glimpse shown to agents thus far.

On the under 65 Individual Plans, CMS is hosting webinar training sessions for the 2018 Health Insurance Marketplace. These sessions are scheduled for an hour and one half (1 ½) of training on updates, system changes, along with other issues. Then as noted before, we have the BCBSNC Producer meeting where we obtain the product specifics and changes for 2018, as well as everything needed to complete in the month of August a CMS re-certification for Marketplace/ACA training in the month of August. This recertification also includes a proficiency exam as well.

August and into early September are busy months for our Health Insurance Agents as they prepare for the coming Open Enrollment Season for both the Over and Under 65 Markets. The open enrollment for Medicare Advantage and Standalone Part "D" plans is October 15, 2017 thru December 7, 2017. If you are a senior that needs a review of your plan, I would suggest that you contact your agent by mid-September and set your appointment up as early as possible. We can talk plan specifics beginning October 1, 2017, but cannot take an application before October 15, 2017. The open enrollment for the Individual ACA plans (those under 65) will start November 1, 2017 and run thru December 15, 2017, which is 45 days shorter than last year.

Reviewing the annual training steps that our agents must complete in order to have the opportunity to serve you, their clients, will validate the confidence you have already placed in our top-notch insurance agent team. When you see them, pat them on the back for successfully completing another year of recertification and let them assist you by putting their training to work for you!

In Memoriam

Ms. Inez Phelps

*Mr. JC Stanely, Jr.**

Bushy Fork

Greenwood

*You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.
Psalm 118:28 * 50 Year Member*

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