

The official publication of the NC Grange

November / December 2019

GRANGE NEWS



2019
National
Convention

Minnesota

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 7-9

Winter Youth Conference | Asheboro, NC

March 13-15

Family Conference | Nags Head, NC

April

Grange Month!

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.

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A NOTE FROM JIMMY: GOING FORWARD

We just completed the National Grange Convention in Bloomington, Minnesota and we achieved some great successes as you will see highlighted in this issue of Grange News. It brings a question to my mind which is - what will our successes be for the coming year? I hope your Granges are planning for a busy year of activities that will make you a stronger entity in the community. For your planning, I have some suggestions.

- Plan to become a Distinguished Grange.
- Begin considering policy resolutions for next year.
- Work on your public relations plan.
- Determine what you will be doing for local advocacy.
- Determine what your programs will be for monthly meetings.
- Develop your community service plans.
- Work toward great youth and junior participation.
- Develop your fund-raising plans.
- Develop your membership growth plan.

Our NC Grange Program Guide will be completed soon. I would ask you to go through the entire guide and plan your participation in those activities. We know that Grange strength is enhanced through the activities that are conducted. We also know that great activities are part of attracting new members. Developing a good plan never hurts. Gather your officers together, get their input, and do some great things in the coming year.

SWEET POTATO CINNAMON BREAD

SHARON BLACKMAN | GRANTHAM GRANGE
1ST PLACE ADULT SWEET POTATO BREAD

3-1/2 CUPS FLOUR
2-2/3 CUPS SUGAR
2 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
1 TEASPOON SALT
1-1/2 TEASPOONS CINNAMON
1 TEASPOON GINGER
1/2 TEASPOON CLOVES
4 EGGS
2 CUPS MASHED SWEET POTATOES
2/3 CUP CANOLA OIL
2/3 CUP 2% MILK
1-1/2 CUPS RAISINS
1 CUP CHOPPED PECANS

DIRECTIONS:

PREHEAT OVEN TO 350°. IN A LARGE MIXING BOWL, WHISK THE FIRST EIGHT INGREDIENTS. IN ANOTHER BOWL, WHISK EGGS, SWEET POTATOES, OIL AND MILK UNTIL BLENDED. ADD TO FLOUR MIXTURE; STIR JUST UNTIL MOISTENED. FOLD IN RAISINS AND PECANS. TRANSFER TO 2 9X5-IN LOAF PANS. BAKE 50-60 MINUTES OR UNTIL A TOOTHPICK INSERTED IN CENTER COMES OUT CLEAN. COOL IN PANS 10 MINUTES BEFORE REMOVING TO WIRE RACKS TO COOL. YIELDS 2 LOAVES.

AUNT BLANCHE'S PRUNE & NUT CAKE

PATTY SWING | ARCADIA GRANGE
1ST PLACE LAYER CAKE

1 CUP OF COOKED PRUNES, MASHED
(SAVE COOKING LIQUID)
3 EGGS (BEATEN)
1 CUP OIL
1 1/2 CUPS SUGAR
1 TEASPOON SODA
1 TEASPOON SALT
1 TEASPOON CINNAMON
1 TEASPOON NUTMEG
1/2 TEASPOON ALLSPICE
1 CUP BUTTERMILK
2 CUPS ALL PURPOSE FLOUR
1 CUP CHOPPED NUTS

ICING

1/2 CUP CRISCO
1/2 TEASPOON BUTTER NUT FLAVOR
1 1/2 CUP POWDERED SUGAR
HEATED PRUNE LIQUID

DIRECTIONS:

TO MAKE CAKE: BEAT TOGETHER EGGS, OIL, SUGAR PRUNES AND BUTTERMILK. MIX WELL.

MIX AND FLUFF FLOUR, SODA, AND SPICES. MIX WELL INTO LIQUID MIXTURE. POUR INTO GREASED FLOURED PANS. (MAY USE PARCHMENT PAPER) BAKE IN 350 DEGREE OVEN FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES OR UNTIL TOOTHPICK COMES OUT CLEAN. LET COOL.

TO MAKE ICING: MIX CRISCO INTO POWDERED SUGAR. ADD FLAVOR AND PUT WARM PRUNE JUICE IN TO MAKE CONSISTENCY RIGHT. YOU MAY ADD MORE SUGAR IF NEEDED. STIR WELL TO MIX AND ICE COOL CAKE.

From Joyce

By: Joyce Gladfelter

Family Living Director

I just want to say a big “THANK YOU” to everyone who participated in our contests at State Convention, especially our baking entries. We tried something entirely different this year with our categories, and I was really excited with the number of entries.

Looking ahead to 2020, we will see even more changes for Family Living contests. The new guidelines are coming out soon that will include a few more category changes. We are meeting soon to discuss Family Conference 2020 plans. Feel free to call or email me anytime if you have questions or concerns.

I hope to see you at Nags Head, NC, March 13-15, 2020 at the Family Conference in March. May you and your family have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

From Sharon

By: Sharon Carter Underwood

Community Service Director

Happy Fall! I hope your Granges are already making plans to support the 2020 State Grange Community Service Project, Baby Bundles! As you know, thousands of babies in North Carolina are born in poverty each year. This project basically offers a “baby shower” in a bundle for babies born into poor families in Mecklenburg County. Our 2020 State Convention will be held there, which is why we are focusing on that area.

We are asking each Grange to collect new or handmade items on the list below and bring those to next year’s convention to be donated to this wonderful organization. The following items need to be collected for each bundle:



- Clothing: outfits, onesies and pajamas (each bundle will include 2 pairs of clothes for each of the following sizes: birth – 3 months, 3 – 6 months, and 6 – 12 months)
- Blankets
- Hats
- Socks
- Bibs and burp cloths
- Books
- Developmental toys / baby toys
- Any baby item that cannot be purchased with food stamps.

Baby Bundles endeavors to make the first year of a baby’s life a little easier for a mother in need. Even the most financially stable mothers can be overwhelmed with a newborn, and that is especially true for mothers living in poverty, many of whom are very young and need support for their babies. For more information, visit their website at www.babybundlesnc.org.

What other community service activities is your Grange planning for 2020? Let the Grange staff know so that it can be put in Grange News to inspire us all to do more for others!

ARCADIA GRANGE

CARE PACKAGES FOR SOLDIERS

By: Kelli Rapp

This is a project that gets the community involved and shares a little piece of home with selfless soldiers serving our country (stateside or deployed). Invite families and other community organizations to join with your Grange to complete packing, addressing, and shipping the boxes. Including local and NC items helps to make the boxes extra special. You may gain some new members, but the appreciation from the recipients of the care packages is priceless. You can also share homemade camo blankets with spouses or parents of the soldiers.





2019 NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION

BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA by: Jessica Horton

The 153rd National Grange Convention was held in Bloomington, Minnesota just south of Minneapolis at the DoubleTree Hotel. Delegates from across the country gathered Monday for touring and the host banquet arranged by the Great Lakes Region.

The work began on Tuesday with committee meetings and lively debates over resolutions. National President Besty Huber provided her opening address on Tuesday afternoon which included remarks about recent lawsuits, the youth and junior program, developments, issues with the National Grange headquarters and looking to the future of our organization. She encouraged Granges to “unlearn the old ways of searching for members and learn how to be an exciting, attractive, radical organization like we were in the 1880’s.” She continued by saying, “Disrupt yourself! We must stop looking behind us at our history, and start looking ahead, far ahead of the curve, to pounce

on opportunities, take calculated risks, and turn our understanding into concrete steps that take us from where we are today to where we will need to be tomorrow to be successful.”



Tuesday also brought the Legislative Luncheon where Thom Petersen, Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture, was the keynote speaker. He spoke about the challenges facing agriculture and was delighted to see the Grange taking a stand on mental health in the agriculture community.

Wednesday meant the arrival of many more Grangers to Minnesota. North Carolina members Sharon Ritchie, Dianne Hudson, Carolyn Jernigan, Judith Barnes and Linda Crawford all arrived in time for the Distinguished Grange Reception, which honored 32 local Granges from across the country. Four Granges from NC were honored: Cape Fear, Grantham, St. John’s and Westbrook Granges.



The North Carolina Youth also arrived on Wednesday afternoon in time for Ambassador interviews. North Carolina had ten youth attend which included Olivia Barber, Zac Mazag, Ashley Drop, Cole Settle, Amber Long, Nick Jones, Liz Lesley, Rylee Furr, Baylor Howerton and James Lesley. They all participated in various capacities, serving in leadership roles. Wednesday evening the roll call of states was performed in session, with North Carolina having a great showing! The National Program Director, Christine Hamp, also presented 13 Quilts of Valor to military veterans and active duty service members that evening.

While North Carolina Grange President Jimmy Gentry and wife, Anita, worked in committees and session on Thursday, everyone else was able to attend the convention tour. Members were bussed to Elk River, Minnesota to tour the newly renovated, 189 picturesque acres of the Oliver Hudson Kelley Farm, which is now part of The Minnesota Historical Society. As Grangers gathered in the beautiful visitors center, Judith Barnes (Westbrook) remarked, "We've been looking forward to it for years and years. Our Grange sends something to help every year, and he's [Oliver Hudson Kelley] one of our founders. I can hardly wait to see the outside. I'd love to come sometime when the crops are growing."

The tour was conducted by staff of the Oliver Hudson Kelley farm. They were incredibly knowledgeable, friendly and willing to answer lots of questions. The tour included sorghum harvesting, viewing farm animals (pigs, sheep, cows, horses, chickens), and seeing the garden and barn. Members also toured the house where they were able to make sorghum molasses in the learning kitchen. The staff has remained committed to telling the story of the farm and continues to conduct some basic farming practices that were relevant to the 1880s.

Youth members departed the farm for a service project with *Feed My Starving Children*. Grange youth, along with other local volunteers, worked for about 2 hours and packed over 37,000 meals for children in Haiti. The meal packages included chicken protein, chopped soy, dried vegetables and rice. *Feed My Starving Children* was founded in 1987 and is a Christian Nonprofit serving meals around the world. As of 1997, more than 1.2 million members have packed over 333 million meals.

That evening, youth were invited to attend the annual costume party. This year's theme was Snapchat filters. As session concluded, the 2020 host region, which includes North Carolina, met to discuss details for next year's convention in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

On Friday, the youth opened the business session with four of our youth serving as National Grange Youth Officers. National Youth Ambassadors, Rylee Furr and Zac Mazag (both from North Carolina); Mandy Bostwick, Youth Director; and Samantha Wilkins, Junior Director were honored guests of the session. All officers did an outstanding job. Following the opening of session, nondelegates and youth were able to attend multiple



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NC YOUTH TRAVEL TO MINNESOTA

By: Jennie Gentry



The last big event that youth travel to each year is the National Grange Convention. For some of our youth, it's a trip they have worked very hard for all year long. Our State and Regional contest winners, Ambassadors and Parliamentary Procedure Team put a lot of work into preparing for the trip in hopes that they will give their best performances and possibly bring home big wins. Basically, it's a big deal.

This year's National Grange Convention was held in Bloomington, Minnesota, and for those youth who attended, it was obvious that their hard work paid off. Among those representing NC Grange were our State Youth Ambassadors, Amber Long (Bushy Fork Grange) and Nick Jones (Southern Wake Grange). Four NC youth served as National Youth Officers this year and opened the Grange Session on Friday morning. A long-time convention tradition, the officer team is made up of youth from across the country. Serving from NC were Olivia Barber, Flora; Ashley Drop, Ceres; James Lesley, Treasurer; and Cole Settle, Steward. The youth officers also attended a reception with the adult National Grange Officers. Youth met the officers they represented to learn from them, receiving great advice and encouragement.

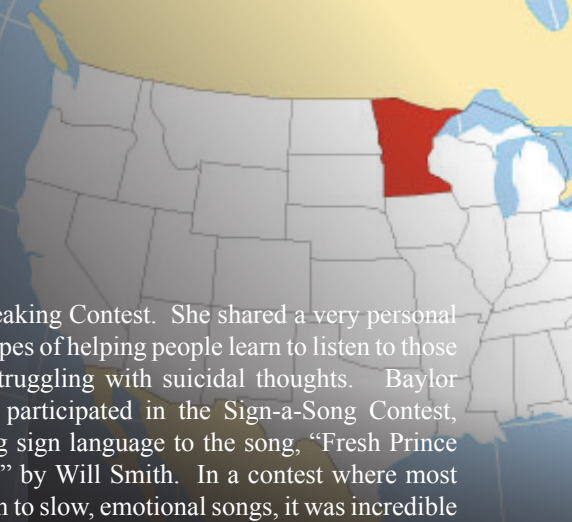
Each year, the youth participate in a special tour on Thursday of the convention. This year, they toured the Kelley Farm which is the homestead and farm of our Grange founder Oliver Hudson Kelley. It was very interactive, and youth got to participate in farm techniques that would have been used in the 1800s. After lunch, youth traveled to a facility where they worked together to bag, seal and box packets of food for children suffering from hunger in Haiti. Wearing hair nets and making enough food to feed 97 kids for an entire year, it was one of the most impactful projects we have participated in at the convention.

On Friday evening, youth attended the annual GROW Club Banquet where our Ambassadors were inducted into the club. GROW Club is made up of anyone who has ever been to Nationals as a Prince or Princess, National Grange Youth Team member or Youth Ambassador. Emily Hartsell, member of the GROW Club board, helped induct the Ambassadors this year.

Friday evening of the convention held the popular Evening of Excellence, for which NC had a big representation. Liz Lesley (Southern Wake Grange) gave a powerful speech in the National

Public Speaking Contest. She shared a very personal story in hopes of helping people learn to listen to those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts. Baylor Howerton participated in the Sign-a-Song Contest, performing sign language to the song, "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" by Will Smith. In a contest where most people sign to slow, emotional songs, it was incredible to see someone do sign-language to a fast-paced hip-hop song. As part of the Talent Show, James Lesley and Cole Settle picked a bluegrass version of "The Rooster Song" on guitar and mandolin. James sang and had the entire crowd laughing. This dynamic duo won first place in the Variety Category.

Saturday morning of the convention held the sixth annual National Grange Parliamentary Procedure Contest, for which six of our youth worked hard to prepare. After a written test, live performance, and judges' questions, our NC team brought home first place in the contest. This team was made up of Ashley Drop, Nick Jones, James Lesley, Amber Long, Cole Settle and Rylee Furr, who served as President. Rylee also received "Best Chairman" for the contest. One of our biggest successes of the week was watching our own Rylee Furr and Zac Mazag serve as the 2019 National Ambassadors. They've worked all year under the leadership of Mandy Bostwick to visit other regions, meet legislators in DC, plan the youth program and lead activities. They led two youth workshops at the convention on Getting Involved and Finding Your Passion. They also led the get acquainted games, gave talks, assisted with giving out awards, helped emcee the Evening of Excellence and served on legislative committees. It was at the GROW Club Banquet where the two gave their retiring addresses, both of which were moving. Our Youth Program strives to give youth the best skills and experiences possible to help them become



great leaders and make an impact on their communities. Seeing these two on so many stages at the convention was a great reminder of how special our program is and how well we build excellent, thriving leaders.

In other awards, our NC Grange Youth Program was one of two states to receive the honorable Distinguished State Grange Award. In it's first year as a contest, NC Grange also won first place in both categories of the National Grange PR Contest.

Outside of the awards, honors and performances, this outstanding group of young people represented our state demonstrating professionalism, hard work, dedication to the Grange, and love for their Grange friendships. They supported each other through all activities and cheered each other on, which is part of what makes the Grange "family" so special. They also made many new friends from other states and cheered them on as well. We are extremely proud of our youth.



2019 NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION CONT.

workshops, shop in the Grange marketplace, and attend the GROW Club dinner and Evening of Excellence.

North Carolina had three participants in the Evening of Excellence this year. James Lesley and Cole Settle participated in the Talent Contest; Liz Lesley in public speaking, and Baylor Howerton in the sign-a-song contest. Each represented NC very well, and through online voting, James and Cole were selected the overall variety winners of the show.

Saturday, the NC Youth Parliamentary Procedure Team competed and took home first place. Seventh Degree was also performed and the Celebration Banquet was held.

North Carolina also received several notable awards. National Program Director, Christine Hamp, started a Public Relations contest this year. North Carolina took home first place in the "In House" category for Grange News, and fourth place for the cornhole set. NC also took first place in the "Professional" category for the NC Grange Farm of the Year sign. Lastly, Grantham Grange's Community Service notebook took home 2nd place nationwide!

FERGUSON GRANGE

By: Sharon Underwood

Mrs. Michelle Hartley and her third grade class at Boomer Ferguson School and the Ferguson Grange celebrated the creation of their new raised bed garden. This will be a hands-on learning tool to fit their state curriculum

Grange Gardening Leader Mike Brown told the students, "We made this for you because we believe in your bright future!" Each child got to cut the ribbon with a pair of giant scissors.

Pam McCarrick made "dirt cups and cookies" for a special treat to end the fun afternoon.



CAPITOL NEWS

by: *Laurie Barnhart*

This 2019 long session could possibly be the longest session on record for the North Carolina General Assembly. To date, both chambers have adjourned but are still technically in session with no end in sight as the impasse between the Republican leaders and Governor Cooper regarding the 2020 budget and Medicaid expansion lengthens. They will return January 14, 2020 to continue the long session.

One of the priorities during November has been to finalize the redrawing and never ending saga of North Carolina's congressional district maps. The deadline for filing a congressional candidacy is right around the corner. The House Redistricting Committee met mid-November to decide which map drawn by the Joint Select Committee they would consider. The House committee ended up passing an amended version of a map that Sen. Paul Newton (R- Cabarrus & Union) drew. By the time the map passed the House floor along party lines, only one out of the six amendments submitted were adopted. The Republican members who supported Rep. David Lewis (R-Harnett) on his map were pointed out in the lawsuit. They also demanded a more transparent process. On November 15 the bill finally passed the Senate redistricting committee where it moved to the Senate floor and was passed, ordered enrolled and ratified after two amendments failed. Since it is a redistricting bill, it does not go to the Governor so veto is not an option and it becomes law. However, the courts could intervene again.

Senate Bill 537 (Licensing & HHS Amends & Rural Health Stabilization, a consolidation of Senate Bill 681, the Rural Health Care/Local Sales Tax Flex/

Utility Account), and House Bill 704 (Rural Health Care Stabilization Act which established a loan program for rural hospitals) cleared its last hurdle on November 6 when it received the governor's signature.

We also saw significant movement for the funding portion (a total of \$20 million over the next biennium) of the Rural Health Care loan program, which is included in House Bill 200, the 2019 Storm Recovery Act. It passed the House and Senate on November 14 and will be presented to the Governor for signing. Given its title, the latest version of the bill is comprised of three sections: funding for state matching programs, federal matching programs and the Rural Health Care Stabilization Fund.

Although Governor Cooper did not sign Senate Bill 552, the Low Performing Schools/Advanced Teaching Roles bill, it became law as it sat on his desk for 10 days after passing both chambers in the General Assembly. This policy changes the selection processes for Innovative School Districts, removes the 10 district limit for participation in the Advanced Teaching Roles Initiative grant program, and loosens district size requirements.

This program, which began in 2016, enables outstanding teachers across NC to extend their reach to more students without leaving the classroom. The program also recognizes teacher leaders with higher compensation, provides developing teachers with embedded, personalized professional development, allows principals to expand their leadership capabilities, and supports improved student outcomes.

We are hopeful that when the General Assembly returns in January, they will make quick work of unfinished business with plenty of time before returning in May for the short session. Upon their return in January, the potential for a veto override on the budget is still a possibility. It is expected that the Medicaid Transformation to managed



care, which has already been delayed until February 2020, will be delayed further due to the budget impasse.

NATIONAL GRANGE - VIEW FROM THE HILL

Mark your calendar for February 7-9, 2020 to visit to New Hampshire and participate in the “First in the Nation” presidential primary. As has become a National Grange tradition, we will take the Grange Fly-In on the road to work on presidential campaigns of your choice the weekend prior to the first national primary balloting on Tuesday in New Hampshire. We will visit the historic N.H. state capital building in Concord, work on campaigns in Manchester, visit the headquarters for national and international media covering the candidates and campaigns, and look for opportunities to rub shoulders with the next President of the United States. In 2016, a major portion of participants were high school and college students, so grab your students and save the dates of February 7-9. Watch for hotel reservations and additional information.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Long-Awaited Hemp Rules

Everyone in the hemp chain from grower to processor to consumer has been anxiously waiting for the USDA regulations governing industrial hemp that were announced October 29. These regulations will govern the approval of plans submitted by states and Indian tribes for the domestic production of hemp by licensed growers. The rule lays out procedures for tracking land where hemp is grown, testing concentration levels of THC (the psychoactive ingredient), disposal of non-compliant plants, and sharing information with law enforcement. Interested growers should contact their state department of agriculture for a license. In the meantime, growers of the 2019 hemp crop are struggling to find sufficient processing capacity.

Good Ozone News

The hole in the Earth’s ozone layer has shrunk to the smallest size on record since it was discovered in 1982, according to scientists at NASA. The hole that naturally grows and shrinks every year due to temperatures in the Arctic is determined to be a normal yearly phenomenon related to the ban on ozone-harming chemicals and not related to climate change.

Farm Finances Deteriorate

The Federal Reserve Bank says farm conditions continue to deteriorate across the country because of bad weather, weak commodity prices and trade disruptions. The upper Midwest seems to have suffered most where in addition to low prices, crop yields could decrease 10-20 percent. The USDA’s Profile of New and Beginning Farmers’ latest overview report of beginning farms and farmers finds that

beginning farmers are more likely to rely on off-farm income. They are generally smaller and younger than established farms. It also finds that beginning farmers have higher debt-to-asset ratios, are more likely to receive government payments, and are more likely to receive financing from FSA. They also tend to specialize in beef cattle and row crops.

Grange Supports Research

The National Grange continues to urge Congress to pass the America Grows Act, S.2458 and H.R. 4174, introduced by Senator Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Bustos (D-IL). These bills authorize a 5% annual increase in USDA research funding for the next 5 years.

HEALTH CARE

Health Care Moves to Center Stage

At both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue and most of the space between, drug prices, surprise medical bills, drug rebates, imported drugs, copays, premiums, Part D, Part B, Medicare for some and Medicare for all is Washington’s elephant-in-the-room political footfall this Fall. The President has a plan, the Senate Finance Committee has a plan and House Speaker Pelosi has a plan. There are good and bad sections of all these plans, but they are far apart philosophically. Compromise is now a foreign language in Washington so a near-term end game is difficult to see. The National Grange will continue to fight for the good of patients as these plans unfold.

Patient First?

The National Grange joined the Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research in urging Congress to restore the patient as the central focus of their health care efforts. The Office of Inspector General at HHS found that in 2017, Part D beneficiaries experienced 84 million rejections when they tried to fill a prescription, but 73% of these denials were wholly or partially overturned when appealed. Unfortunately for patients with progressive, degenerative conditions, the disease advances unchecked during the weeks or months the insurer drags out the appeal only to acknowledge the prescription should have been filled in the first place.

What About the Pay-For?

The committee for a Responsible Federal Budget is a nonpartisan, nonprofit group comprised of former members of Congress, former Cabinet officials, economists and other professionals committed to educating the public on issues with significant fiscal policy impact. The Committee found Medicare for All could be financed by largely unrealistic options such as:

- A 32% payroll tax
- A 25% income surtax
- A 42% value-added tax

This more than doubles individual and corporate tax rates and causes an 80% reduction in non-health federal spending.

CAPITOL NEWS CONT.

“Cadillac Tax” Repeal

The National Grange is urging Senators to permanently repeal the 40% “Cadillac Tax” on employer sponsored health coverage. The bill, S.684, Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act of 2019, has 63 cosponsors in the Senate. The House passed a similar measure.

IMMIGRATION/AG WORKFORCE

Representatives Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and Dan Newhouse (R-WA) introduced their bipartisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act to overhaul agriculture labor programs on October 30. The Ag Workforce Coalition worked with the sponsors on the legislation. The Act would allow ag workers to earn legal status, limit ag worker wage fluctuations, increase access to green cards, authorize year-round workers and establish a mandatory E-Verify system for ag workers. Backing for the bill includes the United Farm Workers and most ag groups. The National Grange will work hard to get an ag worker bill through Congress and the White House.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

STELAR Reauthorization

Approximately 870,000 Americans are not served by major broadcast networks such as ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox. The Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act Reauthorization (STELAR) Act protects consumers by encouraging broadcasters to negotiate in good faith with satellite providers for national, regional and local programming. The National Grange is urging Congress to renew this important legislation to allow isolated rural areas to continue receiving pertinent and affordable programming.

Support for Lifeline Voice Service

National Grange is asking Senators to weigh in with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to urge the FCC to rethink their plans to eliminate full support for voice service until the FCC concludes its 2021 Lifeline Study. The FCC plans to drop support for voice services on December 31. A whopping 42% of Lifeline customers subscribe to plans that qualify based on their voice service offering.

Support for USDA ReConnect Program

National Grange joined multiple rural service providers to urge the leadership of the Senate Appropriations Committee to include \$605 million in their Agriculture Appropriations Bill for the USDA Broadband ReConnect Program. The House bill does include \$605 million for ReConnect.

TRADE

China Trade War Continues with Hope

By all accounts, U.S. and Chinese negotiators plan to finish “phase one” of their trade deal by mid-November. The Administration maintains the deal includes Chinese pledges to purchase \$40-\$50 billion in U.S. agriculture commodities annually. The agriculture community is guardedly optimistic “phase one” can come to fruition but is anxiously awaiting final details. Analysts predict additional phases of the deal that lift tariffs and solve issues of technology and intellectual property are much more difficult to negotiate and will take much longer.

USMCA Close Yet so Far

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is set to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). USMCA has wide bipartisan backing along with industry and labor support, but a few members of Congress keep moving the goal posts. Mexico has already ratified the agreement and Canada has committed to complete their ratification process as soon as the U.S. House of Representatives brings it up for a vote. A vote by Thanksgiving is still possible.



*TO OUR NEWEST
GRANGE MEMBERS!*

Frank Blevins - Ferguson
Tony Dula - Ferguson
Randy Hicks - Ferguson
Roger Underwood - Ferguson
Scott Westbrook - Grantham
Margaret Cook - Grantham
Patrick Eason - Grantham
John & Susan Garrett - Guilford
J. Wayne & Maria Crowder - Guilford
Madalyn Freeman - Patterson
Nathan Kiger - St. John's

Be sure we have correct addresses
on file for your members!

Every year in Moultrie, Georgia, the Sunbelt Ag Expo takes place. It is a massive expo full of agricultural exhibits, vendors, farm equipment, livestock and more. Thousands of people attend the 3-day event each year, and to be perfectly honest, I had never heard of it until a year ago when Jimmy

Gentry, our NC Grange President, informed me that North Carolina was the "Spotlight State" for 2019.

Every year, one of the sunbelt states rotates to act as the "spotlight" state for the expo and this year it was North Carolina. The Grange, along with NCDA, NC A&T, NCSU and the NC Farm Bureau, were sponsors representing North Carolina. After a year of many planning meetings, emails and conference calls, we all found ourselves in Moultrie on October 13 to setup the Spotlight State exhibit in 90 degree temperatures. Sound perfectly miserable, right? It was actually one of the best experiences I have had since going to work for the NC Grange six and a half years ago.

Moultrie is the perfect setting for an agriculture expo with exhibits from land grant universities in the Sunbelt and farm equipment as far as the eye could see, all polished to a gleaming shine. A team from the NC Grange traveled to Moultrie two days before opening day to set up and were joined opening day by more of our staff that stayed until closing day. Our theme of the spotlight state exhibit was "NC - Mountains to the Sea, Diversified Agriculture - Unified Vision." The committee's vision was to display most of our commodities in North Carolina, stretching from the mountains to the sea, beginning with our beautiful Christmas trees and ending with our NC seafood industry exhibit. The Grange exhibit was at the front entrance, proudly framed with beautiful NC Christmas trees



NORTH CAROLINA SHINES AS THE "SPOTLIGHT STATE" 2019 SUNBELT AG EXPO, MOULTRIE, GA

that were covered in white lights in front of a scenic fall mountain backdrop. A pagoda covered the exhibit, and under it sat a picnic table draped with blue and white checked tablecloths. We also had beautiful arrangements of fall flowers, pumpkins and white crates that were full of mini pecan pies! We gave out all the pies, which

were a huge hit! Our staff worked together to assemble our exhibit, and it came together perfectly.

My husband, Jeff, along with Katie Greene, Mark Davis and I were part of the setup crew. Jessica Horton and Jennie Gentry came opening day and stayed until the very end to break down the exhibit. Jimmy Gentry came opening day. He was a part of the opening ceremony and the ribbon cutting. One of the highlights on opening day was receiving a visit from US Secretary of Agriculture and former Georgia Governor Sonny Purdue.

I think what impressed me the most was the way our North Carolina team worked together and supported each other. Everyone worked to assist with our exhibits, made suggestions and lent a helping hand. It was so exciting to see an empty building come together to showcase everything that our beautiful North Carolina agriculture has to offer to the world. At the end of the week, our flowers and trees were donated to local FFA chapters.

Special kudos goes to John Hammond and Kevin Hardison with the NCDA, who showed amazing leadership in pulling all the moving parts together. Not only that, but they truly were two of the most pleasant people I have ever worked with. We were all very proud to be part of this team from the Old North State!

By: Laurie Barnhart



GOTCHA COVERED

AN ENDING AND A NEW BEGINNING

by: Mark Davis

As the year rapidly comes to an end, the 2019 insurance enrollment periods have closed for most individuals, or will close soon for the 2020 health insurance elections. The end of a year also reminds us that there are new beginnings as well. One of those new beginnings occurs when there are “life changes” for an individual or to a family’s circumstances. Life changes create special enrollment periods (SEP) where the individual or family can obtain or change health insurance coverages outside of the annual open enrollment periods. Examples of some of these changes involve relocation, marriage, divorce, birth, adoption and change in or loss of employment. As these are true-life changes, we need to re-evaluate our current health insurance plans to make sure they will fit our individual or family needs for the remainder of the year.

Another “new beginning” for the NC Grange Insurance Program is the ability to now offer our seniors the Medicare Supplements, Standalone Part D Plans, and Medicare Advantage Plans in those counties where they are available and in areas that we do not have a NC Grange Appointed Agent to sell these products. The NC Grange has chosen to exclusively market the BCBSNC product line based on our long association with BCBSNC and the stability and reliability that BCBSNC has shown to the citizens of North Carolina in providing health insurance options. If you or your friends are close to becoming eligible for Medicare Benefits, or if someone that is already eligible just moved into your area, please reach out to one of our NC Grange Agents or to our Insurance Program Director. We will be delighted to assist in every way possible. This is a new revenue stream for the NC Grange, and we want to see this program grow!

The third “new beginning” is the announcement of a highly requested product that is now being offered. For more years than I would like to count, our insurance agents heard and noted the request for individual vision insurance coverage. We are delighted to announce the unveiling of “Blue 20/20 Individual Vision Plan,” which is accessible now! Whether you are under

or over 65, this plan is available to anyone. Plus, you do not have to have a BCBSNC medical plan to obtain this individual vision coverage. Vision coverage not only helps keep our vision healthy, but also allows for regular exams that can catch early signs of other serious medical issues. According to the article by S.D. James, “Get an Eye Exam: Arthritis to Cancer Seen in the Eye” (April 11, 2012, abcnews.go.com), the annual eye exam is a key to early diagnosis of several medical conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers, neuromuscular diseases and more. BCBSNC is offering two different vision plans:

The basic plan covers just the annual eye exam and some discounts for contact lenses, frames and lenses. The Exam Plus Plan covers the annual eye exam plus an allowance for contact lenses, frames or lenses. This plan also has discounts for frames that exceed the allowance, additional add-on services such as UV treatments, tint, scratch coatings and more. It also offers a discount for Laser Vision Correction.

The monthly premium for both plans are attractive and will benefit many individuals in the NC Grange. BCBSNC is using the EyeMed network providers which include many local providers such as MyEyeDr, LensCrafters, Pearle Vision, and the Independent Provider Network. Finding a provider that accepts this insurance coverage should not be an issue. If there is not an in-network provider in your area, or your current provider is not in the EyeMed network, you will have the option of seeing the out-of-network provider on a reimbursement basis, but at a lesser benefit amount for out-of-network providers.

If you or someone you know might be eligible for a special enrollment period, or if you would like more information on this program, please contact one of our local NC Grange Agents or the NC Grange Insurance Program Director at mhdavis@ncgrange.com. We are happy to assist you in any way we can and help get you enrolled into this new Individual Vision Coverage.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

*create in me a
clean heart, O God*

by: Jerry Snyder, NC Grange Chaplain

Most of us are familiar with the Sixth Degree in the Grange. We perform the ceremony every year at our state convention. The ceremony ties the Grange to our God, the creator of us all.

I was reading the other day in the 139th Psalm and realized that the prayer that was repeated in the Sixth Degree comes from this Psalm. Let me quote from the New International Version.

“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord. You hem me in – behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day for darkness is as of light to you.”

Psalms 139:1-12

Some of our Grange families have been through some dark nights this year and many are still suffering from those dark places. Pray for them, encourage them, let them know how much they mean to you and how much you love them.

As we enter into the holiday season, let us give thanks to an Almighty God who blesses us with his love, his bounty

and his forgiveness, and let us remember at Christmas, Jesus is the reason for the season. Let us keep Christ in our hearts and in our celebrations this year.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.
Psalms 19:14

Peace and grace.

Jerry

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In Memoriam

*Robert Fox
David Sports*

*St. John's Grange
Westbrook Grange*

You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

*Psalm 118:28
* 50 Year Member*



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