

GRANGENEWS



Thank you for your service, Jimmy!



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STATE OFFICERS

President	David Allen
Vice President	Jimmy Martin
Program Director	Bobbie Dellinger
Steward	Mark Hood
Assistant Steward	Charles Howerton
Lady Asst. Steward	Crystal Allen
Chaplain	Dewitt Hardee
Treasurer	Julia Stack
Secretary	Barden Culbreth
Greeter	Joseph Beaman
Ceres	Dianne Hudson
Pomona	Sharon Ritchie
Flora	Wanda Crawford

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

	Tom Cash
	Vinnie Duncan
	Melanie Hudson
	August Howerton
	Raymond Hayes, II
	Jason Davis
President	David Allen
Vice President	Jimmy Martin
Secretary	Barden Culbreth
Treasurer	Julia Stack
Emeritus	Charles Forrester

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Insurance Programs	Mark Davis
Coordinator	
Legislative Director	Laurie Barnhart
Youth/Young Adult Director	Jennie Gentry
Admin /Junior Director	Emily Hartsell
Community Service Director	Anna Liles
Events/Publications Director	Jessica Horton
Agriculture Programs	Dewitt Hardee
Coordinator	

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 8-15	National Convention Carnival Cruise
March 12-15	Family Conference Asheville, NC
July 5-11	Grange Camp

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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FROM JIMMY

For twenty-two years, NC Grange has allowed me to serve as the President. Initially, I did not think I would serve this long, but I found the job to be so fulfilling that I wanted to stay, even though it meant the uncertainty of an election every two years. My first career was in education serving as a teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal. It was a good career, but working for the Grange provided the greatest joy of my life. I have life-long friends, many in North Carolina, and others across the country. I am truly blessed.

One could almost say that my term of office was a Grange study filled with trial and error. We tried things that worked, other endeavors did not work. There was no research to fall back on related to Grange growth, no Professors, and no books other than histories. However, as I visited local Granges a common theme became clear. The Granges that were growing were busy with activities. They were working in their communities, conducting activities, and meeting needs. They figured out what was needed and what their members saw as important. People were interested in what they were doing and joined. These Granges grew!

Quality also became evident to me. Even though there is a lot of competition for the time available to families, they will participate in activities that are meaningful to them and their children. This is where quality comes in. We must do things better and provide something that is worthwhile.

I was blessed with a good staff and Board of Directors. They made things happen through good work and good decisions. We worked diligently to keep the State Grange relevant in the state. We had good programs and a strong legislative voice. We built good partnerships. Through good partnerships, we were more effective.

During my tenure, it became evident that we needed to work on our image as an organization. After all, the organization has been around for a long time, and we needed to look fresh and up-to-date. A re-branding process helped us to do that. The staff was fully on board, and we had a good professional to guide us.

One of the programs that I got a lot of inspiration from were the youth activities. NC Grange has a strong youth program. Through this effort, many young people learned leadership skills, social skills, and how to get along with one another. Many of our youth have had success not only in the state but also at the national level. I always went to camp. Yes, it would wear me out, but watching those kids throughout the week was always gratifying. This is some of the most important work that the organization does!

I am going to close by saying thank you. I appreciate all the years you supported me and the staff. It has been a wonderful experience that I will miss greatly.



CARRYING ON A LEGACY

by: NC Grange President, David Allen

The annual session is a time for our members to gather together for a single focused effort of deciding the business of the Grange. It is fascinating to see the diverse backgrounds of our members. Among others, we have educators, medical professionals, government workers, small business owners, and of course farmers. As widespread as our differing backgrounds and lives are, we all have some common traits. We are drawn to our organization for a variety of reasons. Some are drawn to the support and advocacy of agriculture, some to the opportunities of community service, and some to the social aspect of the Grange. Whatever the reason for belonging, we've all benefited from the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with people across the state whom we would most likely not have met otherwise.

The 2025 annual session was a weekend filled with change for the North Carolina State Grange. The retirement of President Jimmy Gentry, our highly respected and nationally renowned long-time leader initiated a number of changes, affecting many of our members. It was an honor to be elected to serve as President of the North Carolina State Grange. Like many of our members, I have not really known the Grange without Jimmy at our helm. I count as a blessing the fact that I had the opportunity to work closely with Jimmy as a board member for eighteen years, listening and learning. We are all known for the legacy that we leave. We are all the legacy of Jimmy, and moving forward, I know that you share with me the desire to make his legacy as strong and special as possible.



MAKING THE BEST OF AUTUMN

The air is getting cooler and the daylight is getting shorter as we journey into the fall season. It is a time of harvest and gathering of crops from the fields. The trees are changing their color and their leaves begin to fall. It is a beautiful time of the year that can be calming and peaceful.

However, when listening to the news of today while watching TV, surfing on our computers, or just googling on our cellular phones, we receive awful and terrifying information concerning our fellow man. Lately, we've seen the assassination of Charlie Kirk, an American conservative activist known for publicly debating his Christian beliefs, especially with younger adults on college campuses. We've seen the massive killings and mistreatment of people due to armed conflicts and genocide events between various ethical groups. And, we've seen nations around the world aligning against one another with continuous hostilities that are killing hundreds and thousands, and the list goes on and on.

So how do we balance and find peace in our daily life with all the distractions and hostilities impounding us? The answer is Faith in a Holy God and Loving Savior whose Holy Spirit is with us every second. From the beginning of mankind in the Garden of Eden where man first sinned, God has been with us – “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden” – Genesis 3:3. From the beginning of our first sinful act in the garden, man has been caught up in fierce battle between good and evil that is beyond our control without Divine intervention. In Ephesians 6:10-18, God's Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to scribe the following as a means for God's people to have a defense against evil. So take the following to heart: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with

all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.”

If you do not have the assurance of being a member of God's family and not under His protective hand, you can receive it by asking to be part of His family through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. In Acts 4:12, Luke testifies that Jesus Christ is the way: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” In John 3:3, Jesus himself said, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

So how can you be born again? Paul writes in Romans 10:9, “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” It is as simple as ABC.

Admit to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin. By faith, receive Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for all who believe.

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to God in a prayer asking forgiveness of your sin and asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart with His Holy Spirit which equates to being born again.

So what do you have to fear if you are a member of God's family? Nothing. In Ephesians 4:6, Paul proclaims the rank of God, “One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Additionally when you are born again, you will always have the Holy Spirit in you which gives you direct connection and presence with God and Jesus Christ for eternity as stipulated in Jude 1:20-21, “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.”

As you go for an autumn walk, remember how free you are from the worldly chaos as a member of God's family. Apostle Paul sums it up well in Romans 8:15. “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Enjoy your journey through life and the blessings from God our creator.

We serve a Good God who is Good all the time! May God bless your day!



LITTLE MOUNTAIN GRANGE

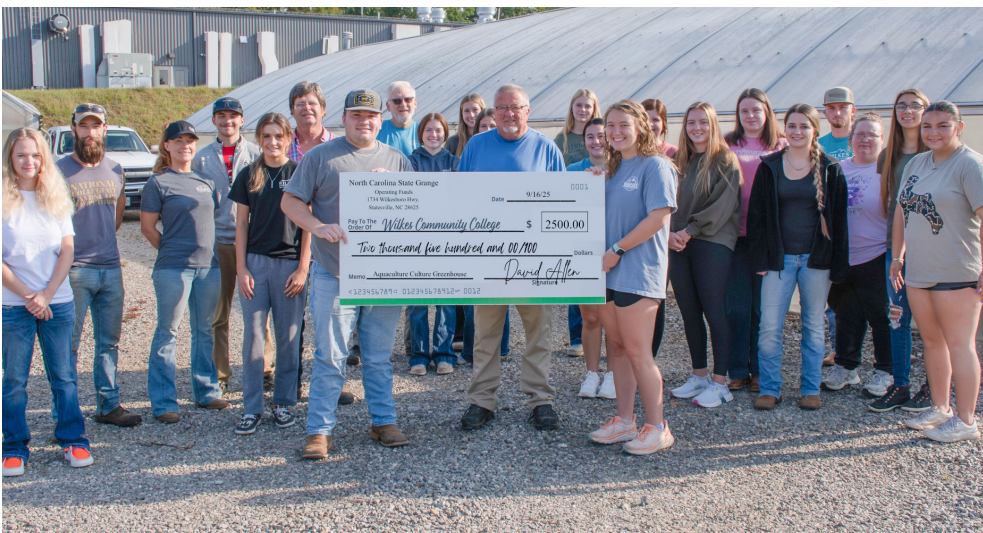
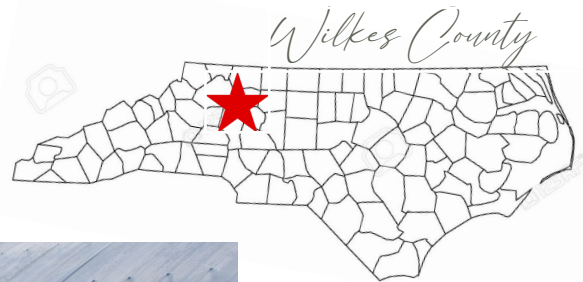
by : Nina Hayes

Little Mountain Grange held its annual community-wide School Supply Drive on August 2, 2025, with a large attendance and a lot of fun. Delicious BBQ pork plates were sold and musical entertainment was provided by Crabgrass Band of Traphill. The supplies were distributed to C. B. Eller Elementary School and Traphill Elementary School and were well appreciated. Little Mountain Grange also provided Traphill School with an assortment of corn stalks for their Fall Festival decorations.



WCC GRANGE

by : Frank Blevins



Wilkes Community College Grange was awarded a \$2500 grant through the NC Grange. This will help fund an aquaculture greenhouse that will be used for food production by WCC Agriculture with WCC Grange students and members. They will be raising tilapia, freshwater prawns, and crawdads.

Grand Prize Winner

2025 Baking Winner
Janet Langston - JoCo Grange

Mulberry Jelly

10 Cups of berries
Crush berries and yield 4 cups of
prepared juice
7 1/2 cups of sugar
2 pouches of Certo

Yield 8 cups of jelly.

- Crush berries.
- Place 3 layers of damp cheesecloth in a large bowl. Pour prepared fruit into cheesecloth. Tie cheesecloth closed; hang and let drip into bowl until dripping stops.
 - Press gently.
- Measure exact amount of prepared juice into 8 qt. stockpot.
- Measure exact amount of sugar. Add sugar to prepared juice; mix well.
- Bring mixture to a full rolling boil on high heat; boil exactly 1 minute, stirring constantly.
- Stir in pectin quickly. Return to full rolling boil; boil exactly 1 minute stirring constantly.
- Remove from heat. Skim off any foam with a metal spoon.
- Ladle immediately into prepared jars, filling each within 1/4 of top. Wipe jar rims and threads. Cover with two-piece lids. Screw band tightly.
 - Process jars in hot water bath for 5 minutes.





David Allen, Ken Plummer, Jimmy Martin and Dewitt Hardee enjoy the view from The Speedway Club

The 2025 NC Grange Convention was held September 11-14 at a new location this year, the Charlotte Airport Hilton. Grangers from all across North Carolina and as far as Tampa, Florida came together for the annual meeting. Most Grangers arrived on Thursday to deliver contest entries and community service items. Officers also took part in 6th Degree practice with coordinator, Vinnie Duncan. Attendees then rested up for Friday's full day of convention activities.

Friday began with breakfast followed by the morning tour. Since convention was being held in the NASCAR capital, staff arranged for a tour of the Charlotte Motor Speedway with lunch at The Speedway Club. Two bus loads of members rode across town, through the private gates to the infield where they were met with personal tour guides to show them around. Group by group, members climbed into vans for a thrilling ride around

the 1.5 mile oval track and then for the 2.32 mile roval course that runs along the infield and exterior track. Members learned that it takes approximately \$23 million each year to put a car on the NASCAR circuit. Drivers are not "trained" but rather grow up as children learning the sport and perfecting their craft. During the tour, a group of Legends drivers took the track for a race of smaller cars driven by 10-15 year olds.

The tour concluded with lunch at The Speedway Club which offered a spectacular view of the track. Members were also able to visit their gift shop before departing back to the hotel.



Jimmy Gentry receives The Order of the Long Leaf Pine from Lt. Governor Rachel Hunt

2025 NC GRANGE CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 11-14 CHARLOTTE, NC

by : Jessica Horton



Friday afternoon, the annual awards reception was held for all those winners nominated by individual Granges. The recipients from outside the organization (Military, Law Enforcement, Firefighter, Fire Department, Church, Educator of the Year) were all invited to join in for this special ceremony. NC Grange President Jimmy Gentry revealed the winners of each award. Some of the notable awards went to Rosedae Farm as Farm of the Year, Vinnie Duncan as Granger of the Year, and The Tart Family as the Family of the Year. Each recipient went home with a plaque made by Carrie Brown of Corriher Grange and their monetary winnings. You can find a full list of the award winners here in this issue of *Grange News*.

Friday evening, Grangers gathered for dinner with special speaker, Representative Grant Campbell from district 83, Rowan and Cabarrus Counties. He spoke of his humble upbringings which led him to medical school at UNC Chapel Hill and then on to be a military physician with the US Army Medical Corps Reserve. During his time with the Army, he served following 9/11 until 2018. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 2024 and has been an OBGYN for 25 years.

After dinner, Grangers gathered for the annual disaster relief fund auction. Peanuts were again a highlight of the bidding, as were mums grown by Jason Davis, a country ham and heirloom Limbertwig apples from the NC mountains. Together with the silent auction a total of \$3009 was raised for the disaster relief fund.

On Saturday morning following breakfast, the NC Grange Youth and Juniors opened the business session for the adults. They were led by outstanding leadership of Youth

President Taylor Rogers and Junior President Raegan Hartsell. Both were presented with special gavels by NC Grange President, Jimmy Gentry. Following the opening, Jimmy Gentry presided over the business meeting, and Vice President David Allen worked through this year's resolutions with the delegates.

Between resolution debates and amendments, a full slate of officers needed to be elected. NC Grange President Jimmy Gentry made it known he would not seek re-election and Vice President David Allen was elected to fill this position. Other newly elected officers included Jimmy Martin, who moved from the NC Grange Board of Directors to Vice President; Charles Howerton was elected Steward; Jason Davis and August Howerton were both elected to the Board of Directors.

Saturday's Youth and Junior Lunch Banquet honored many of our amazing young Grangers. The State Youth Leadership Team emceed the lunch, recounting their favorite memories from the year. State Youth Director Jennie Gentry and State Junior Director Emily Hartsell presented awards to recognize students, ages 5 to 20, for their service, leadership, character, and dedication to these programs. Included in the awards, Youth of the Year was presented to Kayla Laws, and Junior of the Year was given to Tye Furr. After completing the afternoon's business meeting, members gathered for the exemplification of the 5th and 6th Degrees under the direction of Vinnie Duncan and David Allen.

Saturday evening included a special surprise celebration for Jimmy Gentry. He completed 22 years of service to the NC Grange as President. Dinner was kicked off with



special guest, Lt. Governor Rachel Hunt. She attended just to present Gentry with The Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award. This prestigious award is no small feat, and joining this society is a very high honor. He was honored with a dinner hosted by the NC Grange Staff and Board of Directors. It was filled with memories, funny moments over his career and many heartfelt thanks. He was gifted a Martin guitar as a retirement gift and thank you.

The convention's annual memorial service was held on Sunday morning to honor those we lost over the past year. State Grange Chaplain LaRue Tart led a service and ended the weekend together on a high note. The 2026 NC Grange Convention has already been set. Mark your calendars for September 17-20 at the Sheraton Imperial in Durham.



2025 CONTEST WINNERS

Farm of the Year: Rosedae Dairy

Family of the Year: Tart Family

Military Person of the Year: SFC Paul Parker

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year: Scott Bryson

Firefighter of the Year: Alex Parham

Fire Department of the Year: Landis Fire Department

Educator of the Year: Uletha Ogelsby

Church of the Year: Cold Springs Global Methodist Church

Junior Granger: Tye Furr

Youth Granger: Kayla Laws

Program Director of the Year: Beverly Moore

Legislative Affairs: Grantham Grange

Community Service: 1st: Edneyville Grange 2nd: Cape Fear Grange 3rd Grantham Grange 4th Patterson Grange

Granger of the Year: Vinnie Duncan

Public Relations: VilleWorth Grange

Grange of the Year: Edneyville Grange

Adult Poem: 1st: Clarkie Brown 2nd: Adele Goodman

Adult Essay: 1st: Adele Goodman 2nd: Sally Waddell

Junior: 1st: Ellie Roach

CRAFTS

Adults:

Knitting: 1st: Willie Harriett 2nd: Elizabeth Czamecki

Crochet: 1st: August Howerton 2nd: Willie Mae Smith 3rd: Sharon Underwood

Jewelry: Margaret Martine 2nd: LaRue Tart 3rd: Sharon Underwood

Holiday: 1st: LaRue Tart 2nd: Denise Luttrell 3rd Lisa Coone
Quilts: 1st: Willie Harriett 2nd: Shelby Furr 3rd: Sharon Underwood

Sewing: 1st: Susan Albright 2nd: Sharon Underwood 3rd: Barbara Borderieux

Recycled: 1st: Sharon Underwood 2nd: Margaret Martine

Woodworking: 1st: Jimmy Gentry 2nd: Paul McCabe 3rd: Kabin Brown

Miscellaneous: 1st: Margaret Martine 2nd: Sharon Underwood 3rd: Sharon Ritchie

Youth:

Miscellaneous: 1st: Lucy Anderson

Junior I

Holiday: 1st: Liana Brown

Sewing: 1st: Liana Brown

Recycled: 1st: Liana Brown

Junior II

Miscellaneous: 1st: Corah Dellinger 2nd: Sarah Anderson



ART

Adult:

Oil & Acrylic: 1st: Brian DeCann 2nd: Margaret Martine 3rd: Charlotte Bethany
Pastel & Charcoal: 1st: Jessie Smith 2nd: Margaret Martine
Watercolor: 1st: Margaret Martine 2nd: Sharon Underwood
Pen, Pencil, Ink: 1st: Margaret Martine 2nd: Sharon Underwood

Junior I:

Oil & Acrylic: 1st: Liana Brown
Watercolor: 1st: Liana Brown
Pen, Pencil, Ink: 1st: Kate Horton

BAKING

Adult

Pound Cake: 1st: Shelby Furr 2nd: Denise Luttrell 3rd: Mary Lee
Chocolate Chip Cookies: 1st: Denise Luttrell 2nd: Sharon Ritchie
Pumpkin Bread: 1st: Barbara Borderieux 2nd: Susan Albright 3rd: Denise Luttrell
Apple Pie: 1st: Denise Luttrell 2nd: Susan Albright
Gluten Free: 1st: Susan Albright
Cherry Cobbler: 1st: Denise Luttrell 2nd: Jessica Horton
Jellies: 1st: Janet Langston 2nd: Denise Luttrell
BBQ Sauce: 1st: Dylan Grissom 2nd: Denise Luttrell 3rd: Susan Albright

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adult:

Vegetables: 1st: Clarkie Brown 2nd: Pam McCarrick 3rd: Jeremy Horton
Pine Trees/Evergreens: 1st: Zandra Laws 2nd: Lisa Coone 3rd: John Hartsell
Pet Noses: 1st: Clarkie Brown 2nd: Charlotte Bethany 3rd: Jessica Horton
Holding Hands: 1st: Cyndee Van Sweeden 2nd: Clarkie Brown
3rd: Jessica Horton

Youth:

Pine Trees/Evergreens: 1st: Ryleigh Hartsell
Pet Noses: 1st: Ryleigh Hartsell
Nolding Hands: 1st: Ryleigh Harstell

Junior I:

Pine Trees/Evergreens: 1st: Kate Horton
Pet Noses: 1st: Kate Horton
Nolding Hands: 1st: Kate Horton
Vegetables: 1st: Kate Horton

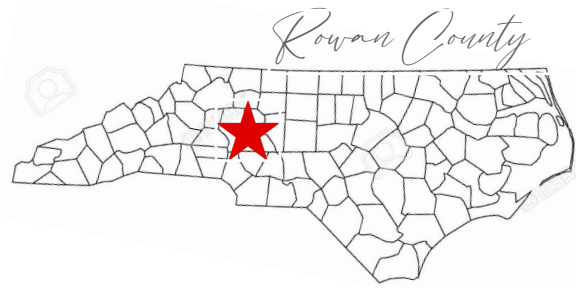
Junior II:

Pine Trees/Evergreens: 1st: Raegan Hartsell
Pet Noses: 1st: Haven Simmons 2nd: Raegan Hartsell



CORRIHER GRANGE

by : David Allen



Corriher Grange hosts a monthly fundraiser by serving a spaghetti supper on the third Thursday of the month. September 18, 2025, the third Thursday of September, was the ninety-sixth anniversary of the issuance of the original Corriher Grange Charter on September 18, 1929. We used the spaghetti supper event to celebrate our Grange Birthday, with members and guests enjoying a special cake to commemorate the occasion.

2025 NC Grange Officers

Congratulations to our newly elected State Officers. David Allen of Corriher Grange was elected as President. Charles Howerton of Bushy Fork Grange was elected to the position of Assistant Steward. August Howerton also of Bushy Fork Grange was elected to the Board of Directors. Jason Davis of Westbrook Grange was elected to the Board of Directors. Dewitt Hardee of JoCo Grange was elected to Chaplain, and Jimmy Martin of Brogden Grange was elected to Vice President. Find a full list of officers on page 2.



Left: Jimmy Martin receiving his sash from Anita Gentry. Below: Jason Davis, Melanie Hudson and August Howerton receiving their sashes from Anita Gentry.



DAVIS RECEIVES HONORS

by Malen Zarcone

Association for Career and Technical Education

Originally published by Morning Ag Clips

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announced Robert Jason Davis, Assistant Dean of the School of Agriculture & Biological Sciences at University of Mount Olive, in Mount Olive, NC as the 2026 ACTE Region II Post-secondary Professional of the Year. This award recognizes the finest career and technical education (CTE) educators at the postsecondary school level who have demonstrated innovation in the classroom, commitment to their students and dedication to the improvement of CTE in their institutions and communities.

Dr. Jason Davis, a lifelong advocate for agricultural education and leadership, has dedicated his career to serving students, educators, and the agricultural community in North Carolina and beyond. A native of Clinton, NC, in Sampson County, Davis found his passion early through active involvement in the National FFA Organization during high school.

After earning a B.S. in Agricultural Education from North Carolina State University in 1998, Davis began teaching agriculture at Hobbton High School, where he spent seven and a half years instructing students in Horticulture, Agricultural Mechanics, and Introduction to Agriscience. While teaching, he completed his master's degree in Agricultural Education in 2003.

In 2005, Davis was selected to serve as the State FFA Coordinator in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at NC State University, leading the North Carolina FFA Association. During this time, he also completed his Doctorate in Agricultural Education. His leadership extended nationally as he served as Southern Region Vice President and later President of the National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education (NASAE), Secretary of the National FFA Foundation, and President of the National Council for Agricultural Education ("The Council"). In these roles, Davis championed professional development for NASAE members, broadened award programs, influenced the development of agriculture, forestry, and natural resource standards, strengthened diversity initiatives, and advanced fundraising efforts to meet the needs of a growing student organization.

In 2020, Davis joined the University of Mount Olive as the Assistant Dean of the School of Agriculture & Biological Sciences, where he continues to guide future educators and foster partnerships with

business, industry, and community organizations. His service also includes roles on the NC FFA Board, community college advisory boards, and local organizations such as the Hobbton FFA Alumni and the Westbrook Grange.

Davis's commitment to agricultural education began at the grassroots

level as a regional vice president of the North Carolina Agriculture Teachers Association, where he helped increase membership to 100%, launched a horticulture supply cooperative for teachers, and supported professional growth opportunities for educators. Throughout his career, he has worked tirelessly to strengthen agricultural education through teaching, state leadership, and higher education.

Outside of his professional roles, Davis is also a farmer, raising sweet corn, cut flowers, and 1,000 chrysanthemums. He enjoys beekeeping and gardening and is an active member of Hopewell United Methodist Church, the Clinton Rotary Club, and the Benson Masonic Lodge. He also serves as President of both the Westbrook Grange and the Hobbton FFA Alumni. At home, he shares his love of agriculture with his loyal dog, Maggie.

Davis is one of five finalists for the 2026 national title. The national winner will be announced at the ACTE Awards Gala, an award presentation recognizing the best CTE educators in the country. The event will take place on December 9, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. The Awards Gala is sponsored by Goodheart-Willcox, The Army, and Stratasy. For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, visit our webpage.

About ACTE

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, school counselors, guidance and career development professionals and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.



CAPITOL NEWS

by : Laurie Barnhart



The North Carolina General Assembly convened for a brief session on September 22 following a month's recess. They adjourned the next day. Despite the short duration, lawmakers managed to address an array of legislative matters.

Although there has been no agreement on a two-year budget, the General Assembly did approve funding for disaster relief and economic development projects. Both chambers passed the package which was immediately sent to Gov. Stein's office for his signature.

Unable to agree on a comprehensive two-year state budget, North Carolina lawmakers approved disaster relief funding and various construction projects. The package was passed by the House after the Senate unanimously passed the measure. The bill goes to Gov. Josh Stein, who can approve it, veto it, or let it become law without his signature. The bill includes the following provisions:

- \$65 million for disaster relief, including Tropical Storm Chantal, which flooded parts of Chapel Hill and Orange County in early July. Of the money, \$55 million is for the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management for state match funds and \$5.5 million for repairs to state highways damaged by Chantal.
- \$34 million for public infrastructure improvements around Raleigh's Lenovo Center, home of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes

and N.C. State University's men's basketball team. The Hurricanes are set to begin the first phase of a large-scale development around the arena to include parking structures, a new music venue and other retail spaces this winter.

- \$51 million for economic development projects in Hertford County, including \$40 million for a publicly owned dock and \$11 million for construction of a public road.
- \$65 million in new funds for the North Carolina Global TransPark Authority.
- \$900 million in construction projects across the state, which were included in a previous financial package.

Both chambers passed competing plans for funding, adjourning without an agreement to avoid cutting reimbursement rates to hospitals, nursing homes and other medical providers who treat Medicaid patients.

(excerpts from WRAL News)

One topic of conversation at the NC Grange's annual meeting in September was the 250th anniversary celebration of our country's Semiquincentennial celebration next year. The General Assembly has formed a committee, chaired by Senator Ted Alexander and Representative Hugh Blackwell. The America's Semiquincentennial Committee has continued to meet weekly. Information

about the plans of this committee can be found at ncleg.gov.

On the national level, the 250th anniversary of our country's independence will be celebrated on July 4th, 2026. One of the highlights that is planned for that day will be a "Sail4th 250" flotilla in the Port of New York and New Jersey which will be adorned with a tremendous fireworks display and the grand opening of the National Garden of American heroes in Philadelphia, which also will be the central location for all events. July 4th, 2026, is sure to be an exciting time for America! More information about the events planned can be found at america250.org.

Congress has been in session continually since they reconvened after the August recess. Local and national news not to mention social media platforms, are primed with more news that you can possibly take in. Between the execution of Turning Point's CEO, Charlie Kirk, continued news around tariffs, trying to pass a budget, and the Russo-Ukrainian War that seems to never end, we are inundated with unpleasant and often very disturbing news.

There was great news in September when House Resolution 842-Multicancer Early Detection Testing was passed by the House Committee on Ways and Means on September 18 after being considered in a mark-up session, with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. The North Carolina Grange has worked closely with Cloud & Associates in

lobbying for this legislation. If passed, the resolution will allow, beginning in 2028, the testing of multi-cancer early detection screening testing for Medicare patents that are approved by the Food & Drug Administration. This screening process screens for many cancer types. The resolution was passed, but to date, is not scheduled for another committee. This testing is paramount in detecting five specific types of cancer, including breast, cervical, colorectal, lung and prostate cancers. 70% of deaths are caused by these types of cancers.

Below is a thorough wrap up of Congressional policy news and updates from National Grange.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD **Screwworm scare closer than ever**

Agriculture producers, wildlife agencies, and pet owners are more concerned than ever after a case of New World screwworm has been confirmed less than 70 miles south of the Texas border in Mexico. The previous northernmost case detection was 370 miles farther south. Cattle, bison, and horse imports from Mexico have remained suspended since midsummer. Screwworm fly larvae feed on live flesh and can lead to serious injury and even death of their host. Last spring, the USDA announced the expansion of numerous interventions with Mexico to control and eradicate the screwworm fly.

Market Aid for Farmers

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins says USDA officials are keeping a close eye on commodity markets to determine if farmers will need help this fall to keep their operations afloat. House Agriculture Committee chairman Glenn Thompson is shopping the idea of including farm payments in the upcoming “skinny” or “farm bill 2.2”

this fall. Thompson has suggested that tariff revenues could be used to keep farmers financially stable, but some trade attorneys say that may not be legal. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman is open to similar market support. This is in response to falling prices for farm crops. Commodity prices have remained low, and trade disruptions have chipped away at export markets. China, for example, is the United States’ largest buyer of soybeans but has yet to book any soybeans for shipment from this year’s harvest. In a recent survey by Farm Journal, 46% of the farmers surveyed believe the U.S is on the brink of a farm crisis.

More rural veterinarians

USDA plans to help pay off veterinary school debt for veterinarians in rural areas where shortages are most acute. Numerous studies have pointed out the decline in rural vets over the past several decades. A recent study by the Farm Journal Foundation found that approximately 500 rural counties nationwide are in need of large animal veterinarians. The National Grange has been supporting these efforts for several years.

Producers watching USDA reorganization plans closely

Farmers and ranchers want to be sure the USDA continues to provide the services needed by the agriculture sector. Recent reductions in staffing levels at all agencies within USDA, the relocation of staff to five regional hubs around the country, and the planned closure of its Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Maryland are among their concerns. The Beltsville center has long been considered the cornerstone of US agricultural science. The loss of staff expertise and their years of experience

could potentially adversely affect food production if the reorganization fails to live up to expectations.

Conservation

The USDA has accepted an additional 1.78 million acres into its Conservation Reserve Program for 2025. The Conservation Reserve Program is the agency’s flagship conservation program, where landowners, farmers, and ranchers voluntarily convert marginal or unproductive cropland into vegetative cover that prevents soil erosion, restores wildlife habitat, and improves water quality.

Health Care

In mid-September, National Grange president Chris Hamp wrote to members of the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, expressing strong support for H.R. 842, the Medicare Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act (MCED). The Act gives Medicare the authority to cover breakthrough early detection technology that can discover any one of a large number of cancers with a simple blood draw. The Ways and Means Committee subsequently unanimously passed the bill. The Health Subcommittee held a hearing where the MCED received strong support from witnesses and subcommittee members. The legislation enjoys 304 bipartisan cosponsors in the House and 62 bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate and is a high priority for the National Grange.

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Why health care costs are rising — and what we're doing about it

Health care is too expensive and at times frustrating. You're not alone in asking: Why does it have to be so hard? Why is it so complex — and so expensive?

Over the years, many changes have made the health care system more confusing and costly. Some companies are focused more on profits than helping people. That's part of why North Carolina now has some of the highest health care costs in the country.

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC), we know every dollar matters. As the cost of health care services continues to rise, we're working hard to protect your coverage and keep care within reach.

What's driving costs for Affordable Care Act (ACA) individual plans in 2026?



Fewer people in the Marketplace

When healthier people leave the system, those remaining typically need more care —driving up costs for everyone.



Rising cost of care

From prescriptions to hospital visits, prices are going up. Experts expect 2025 to be the largest jump in health care costs in over a decade.



Federal premium help is changing

COVID-era government subsidies (called enhanced premium tax credits) are set to expire at the end of 2025. Without them, some ACA members will see higher monthly premiums in 2026.



New rules may shift costs

Tighter eligibility rules starting in 2026 may cause some healthy people to leave the ACA market and drive premiums up for those that remain.

2025 Youth of the Year

YOUTH
by : Jennie Gentry



Kayla Laws

Kayla Laws was named the 2025 Grange Youth of the Year at a special awards luncheon during this year's State Grange Convention. Selected by the State Youth Committee, she was surprised with the honor in front of family and friends, and those who know her can attest that she is very deserving of this distinction.

A member of Bushy Fork Grange, Kayla is the daughter of Cindy Bowen and Kyle Laws and granddaughter of Bobby and Linda Howerton, all from Roxboro, NC. She is serving her second year on the State Youth Leadership Team and is the current State Youth Program Director. She also served as a National Youth Office in Iowa last year. She has worked very hard to promote the Grange, and to plan and lead activities for our youth program.

Kayla was born into a Grange family. When she started attending Grange Camp at a young age, she was very quiet and shy but loved every bit of the experiences she gained. As a youth member, she has attended every Grange event she possibly can on all levels. She is very involved in her local Grange and the service projects they hold and even spoke at their awards night to promote the state youth program. She credits Grange for playing a huge role in helping her gain confidence and break out of her shyness, becoming the leader she is today.

Kayla has received several significant youth awards in the Grange including the State Grange Counselors' Award as well as the State Grange President's Award, one of the top honors a youth can receive in our program. She also received the Best All Around Superlative at Grange Camp this year, selected by her peers. Kayla's leadership, compassion and character have played a part in her selection of these awards.

Kayla shows endless enthusiasm for the Grange and enjoys helping new youth get involved in our program. She is a great role model for others and is well respected and loved by her peers and all who work with her. She truly goes out of her way for others. Her dedication to the Grange, positive attitude, love for others, and willingness to serve are also what led the State Grange Youth Committee to select her as Youth of the Year.

Kayla is a freshman at UNC-Greensboro where she is a member of the university's dance team. She is pursuing a degree in business administration and minoring in dance with the goal of opening her own dance studio in the future. Upon receiving this award, she expressed, "This award means so much to me. The Grange has impacted my life in so many big ways and has helped shape me into the person I am today. Thank you, not just for this award, but for every opportunity you have given me. I love this organization so much!" We congratulate Kayla Laws on this much deserved honor.





SO, WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

Open enrollment for individual health insurance is upon us now. So, what plans are available for 2026? Will your doctor and/or hospital still be a network provider? Exactly how will the recent legislation activities impact who can get coverage, and what about premiums? How will health care providers adapt? How will insurance carriers adjust? As the list of questions continues to grow, answers are coming slowly, and our time to get those answers is growing short.

In our annual agents training provided by CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services), they highlighted a disclaimer that usually states something like this: as of this printing, this is the correct information. This year's disclaimer was a bit different, implying that there would be updates as various parts of current legislation are being digested and implemented for the current and future years. Agents have sixty days to review the "new" releases in order to continue to be certified to market and service their clients' needs.

Let us begin with what is driving health insurance premiums and benefits. The major driver of premium increases lies within the cost of care. Sick care is becoming more expensive. Some economists are projecting an eight to ten percent increase in medical cost for 2026 alone. Another point of sticker shock for clients this year is the anticipated loss of the temporary enhanced premium subsidies enacted during COVID that are scheduled to expire at the end of 2025. This expiration is one of the political points that our federal legislators cannot agree upon. Should this temporary enhancement become a permanent part of premium subsidy? That answer depends on who you ask. Regardless of the outcome of these premium enhancements, the cost of care is going to increase premiums. As premiums spiral upward, more people will choose to be uninsured. This is a double-edged sword as fewer healthier insureds in the insurance pool will mean fewer premium dollars to pay out the claims, hence forcing the carrier to increase the premiums for those still obtaining

insurance coverage. Also, as the new legislation tightens who and/or when someone can apply for coverage, this will also limit the number of individuals eligible to obtain coverage, again possibly shrinking the numbers in the insurance pool.

Looking at changes that we do know at this point for 2026, let's start with the Medicare side. Medicare Prescription Drugs has a maximum out of pocket amount of \$2,100 which is a minimum increase of \$100. The minimum prescription deductible was raised to \$615, an increase of \$25 from 2025. Keep in mind that several BCBSNC Medicare Advantage plans have a zero-dollar prescription drug deductible for tier 1 or tier 6 drugs. Other carriers may have a similar structure. Now, as the cost shift has moved more towards the carrier(s), there are some reductions in "extra benefits" as well as deductible increases in certain tier prescriptions. This will be a great year to review all your current prescriptions with your agent to make sure that you have the most cost-effective plan for your individual needs. Overall, our BCBSNC Medicare clients will see minimum premium changes due to some restructuring of plan benefits, most of which I've seen as window dressing with minimal effect on our clients.

One great announcement for our BCBSNC Medicare Insureds is our fitness benefits. For 2026, I am pleased to report our Medicare Insureds fitness benefit now includes SilverSneakers. This gives our insureds access to thousands of fitness facilities nationwide and the ability to be enrolled at multiple locations at any time! As a reminder to our Medicare folks, Open Enrollment began on October 15, 2025, and will continue through December 7, 2025, for a January 1, 2026, effective date. Give your NC Grange Agent a call today and set up an appointment with them if you haven't already done so.

There are also changes for the Under65 individuals. The major point here will be increased premiums for the reasons already discussed. Exactly what that increase will be

is to be determined pending the outcome of the enhanced premium subsidy debate. The other major effect for some folks is the eligibility for coverage. This will mainly affect non-citizens in the US. For those that enroll outside of the Open Enrollment Period (November 1, 2025 – January 15, 2026), be prepared to submit proof of your Special Enrollment Period (SEP). Also, for those under the 150% federal poverty level, the previous year-round SEP was eliminated in August 2025. These two actions are an attempt to close areas of abuse.

BCBSNC has expanded plan options in many counties, both on and off marketplace. With the expansion of certain plans, CMS required the elimination of others. Also, it is imperative that clients update their household income for 2026. Recent legislation removed the “recapture cap” where individuals under-reported income to receive a higher premium subsidy. The previous cap limited the amount of the overpaid premium subsidy that the insured had to repay when they filed that year’s tax return. I’ll recommend that individuals review their reported income at least quarterly to make sure that an unpleasant surprise does not greet them when the tax man comes. Individuals are able to adjust their reported income monthly, if so needed.

Just from scratching the surface of the changes occurring for 2026 individual health insurance, your local health insurance agent has become even more important. They will make sure that you have the coverage that best fits your health needs and financial pocketbook. Give us a call today!



Cont. Capitol News

Immigration / AG Workforce

Agriculture is waiting for labor relief

Labor for the agriculture sector is a growing crisis. Several administration officials continue to signal that relief is coming to provide a pathway for agriculture to get the immigrant labor it needs to harvest crops, milk cows, and tend to livestock. Agriculture Secretary Rollins says the White House is actively working on such a plan. President Trump continues to assure farmers that he has their back and will distinguish “criminals” and “murderers” from nonthreatening farm workers who have been working on American farms and ranches for years. In a recent news interview, Border Czar Tom Homan emphasized the importance of the U.S. creating a path forward so that farms and ranches can have a legal and stable workforce. That plan cannot come too soon for producers. In the meantime, the administration recently improved the H-2A seasonal and temporary immigrant program by making it easier to renew those particular ag worker visas.

Transportation

Improve and modernize rural roads and bridges

Many roads and bridges in rural areas badly need modernization to address outdated designs, weight restrictions, capacity limitations, and safety challenges. The National Grange and 59 other state and national agriculture and agribusiness organizations have expressed support for H.R.4585, the Agricultural and Rural Road Improvement Program Act. In a letter to the leadership of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Highway and Transit Subcommittee, the groups urged action on the bill, which would reprioritize \$1.5 billion over five years in existing highway formula funds toward replacing or rehabilitating rural bridges to eliminate posted weight limits, providing for increasing access to farms and agricultural facilities, and improving highway safety.

Updates to seasonal ag CDL needed

Improvements are needed to the Farm-Related Restricted Commercial Driver’s License (Seasonal Ag CDL) according to the National Grange and 69 other agriculture-related groups. The groups referred to legislation (H.R. 4601) introduced by Representative Mann of Kansas and 20 cosponsors in a letter to the leadership of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. Under the legislation, implements and vehicles designed for farm use will not be classified as commercial motor vehicles. In addition, Ag CDLs could be renewed online.

FERGUSON GRANGE

by : Sharon Underwood



Ferguson Grange welcomed Extension Agents Abbie and Matthew Clay as our special program presenters for our September meeting. They shared information about the horticulture tours they took on their recent honeymoon in Costa Rica.

Our Grange is happy to announce that “Miss Edith’s Barn” at Whippoorwill Academy and Village has been started. The North Carolina Grange has been very encouraging and supportive financially with this project to honor the late Edith Ferguson Carter, a lifelong member of the North Carolina and Ferguson Grange. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this a reality. Perhaps soon we will be able to celebrate and do some square dancing inside this special barn! The village is directed and managed by Margaret and Dick Martine.

Ferguson Grange also had a promotional booth at Daniel Boone Day, an event held at Whippoorwill Academy and Village. We sold handmade crafts, baked goods and plants to raise money for future community service projects. On top of this, we celebrated the upcoming Farmers Appreciation Day with an NC Ag game and gave out ‘smarties’ candies and small plastic animals as prizes. Children were also able to make a pressed flower craft. Over 13 Grange members helped volunteer for the annual festival. It was a great day!





Welcome to our newest Grange members!
We are delighted to have you join us.

Associate Members:

Craig Myers

John Burt

Matthew Knight

William Upchurch

St. John's:

Codey Elwood

Andrew Moorehead

Schley:

Jayne Stitzel

Jo Cato

Dan Cato

Mike Cato

Old Richmond:

Ann Bliss

JoCo:

Tina Kornegay

Dan Kornegay

Robin Tutor

Ferguson:

Tammy Ellington

Pam Gibson

COMMUNITY

by : Anna Liles



Dear NC Grange,

Thank you for believing in, and being a part of, the Nourish Up mission – feeding our neighbors with food and compassion. Your donation of 650 lbs. of food provides groceries and meals to our neighbors in need. Your generosity makes a tremendous impact.

We cannot nourish our neighbors without neighbors like you. Thank you for your support and compassion.

Sincerely,

Martha Cochran





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PERIODICAL
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Save The Date

2026 Family Conference
Asheville, NC
March 12-15
AC Hotel Biltmore Village

Registration goes live January 7, Noon