

The official publication of the NC Grange

January / February 2022

GRANGE NEWS



Farm of the Year
Barnhardt Farms of Rowan County

contents

3	A Note From Jimmy NC State Grange President
4	Farm of the Year
7	Hudson Inducted
8	Granger of the Year
9	New Employee - Dewitt Hardee
10	Local Grange News (Ferguson, Corriher, Bushy Fork)
12	Community Service & WOTUS
13	Chaplain's Corner
14	Capitol News
17	New Foundation Chair, Gentry Award
18	Gotcha Covered
19	New Programs

STATE OFFICERS

President	Jimmy Gentry
Vice President	David Allen
Program Director	Bobbie Dellinger
Steward	Barden Culbreth
Assistant Steward	Wayne Stack
Lady Asst. Steward	Crystal Allen
Chaplain	LaRue Tart
Treasurer	Julia Stack
Secretary	Deborah Welch
Greeter	Philip Duncan
Ceres	Dianne Hudson
Pomona	Lily Hayes
Flora	Janice Wilcox

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

	Jimmy Martin
	Tom Cash
	Vinnie Duncan
	Jimmy Barefoot
	John Crawford
	Raymond Hayes, II
	Melanie Hudson
President	Jimmy Gentry
Vice President	David Allen
Secretary	Deborah Welch
Treasurer	Julia Stack
<i>Emeritus</i>	Carlton Barefoot
	Charles Forrester

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Insurance Programs	Mark Davis
Membership Director	Katie Greene
Legislative Director	Laurie Barnhart
Youth/Young Adult Director	Jennie Gentry
Junior Director	Emily Hartsell
Community Service Director	Sharon Underwood
Publications Director	Jessica Horton

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 18-20	Winter Youth Conference
March 17-20	Family Conference
July 10-16	Summer 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.

North Carolina Grange News (USPS 392-780) is the official publication of The North Carolina State Grange, 1734 Wilkesboro Hwy, Statesville, NC 28625 and is published bi-monthly. The yearly subscription cost is included in the annual membership dues for members of The North Carolina State Grange. ISSN # 0279-5914—Periodical Postage Paid in Statesville, NC and at additional mailing offices.





A NOTE FROM JIMMY:

We all recently lost a good friend, Ned Hudson. I knew Ned for a long time, going back to when he and Diane served as Young Couple for North Carolina. Both of us were agriculture teachers and would cross paths at professional events. Through our involvement in the State Grange, we saw each other often in that capacity. We became good friends! Ned was the person that reached out to me providing encouragement to let him nominate me for NC Grange President. He was already serving as Vice-President of the State Grange and continued to do so for most of the time that I have been in office. Ned was a good Board member, offering sound advice and contributing to good decisions. He also served effectively as President of St. John's Grange in a community that really appreciated his leadership.

Ned was also quite active in the NC Association for Soil & Water Conservation. He served as a Soil & Water Supervisor for Cabarrus County which led him to become active in the association. He served a term as President in the association and did a great job. At their annual meeting held in January, 2022, Ned was inducted into the NC Soil & Water Hall of Fame, which is the highest honor this association bestows. Both Diane and Melanie were present for the award ceremony.

I will miss Ned! He was simply a good man, well-respected not only in his community, but also the state. He and I had a lot of good conversations over the years. Ned wanted to serve, and that is exactly what he did. When the family received

friends at the funeral home after his death, as Anita and I waited in line, people were saying good things about Ned. At the recent Soil & Water Conference that I attended, people said good things about Ned. A hole will be left in the NC State Grange because of his absence, but we have fond memories of having known him.

Diane, there is no doubt that losing Ned has been difficult for you, but you can take comfort in the fact that he touched the lives of many people in a good way.

Melanie, it is hard to lose a parent. You can rest assure that Ned provided a great example for others in the way that he lived and served others. Ned reached a standard in his life that has made those of us who knew him better people.



FARM OF THE YEAR by: Laurie Barnhart

BARNHARDT FARMS OF ROWAN COUNTY



Barnhardt Farms of Rowan County was the proud winner of the 2021 NC Grange Farm of the Year last year at the Grange's State Convention in September. Grange members Adam and Carrie Barnhardt joined the Corriher Grange in October of 2018. Carrie has quite a legacy at Corriher Grange with her mother, uncles and grandparents all being longtime Grange members. Now, Adam and Carrie are happy to be raising the next generation of Corriher Grange members on their farm; Tucker, who is two and a half, and Macie, 16 months old.

Adam and Carrie are first generation poultry farmers and one of the youngest commercial farming couples in Rowan County. They raise breeder hens under contract and collect nearly seven million eggs annually. That is a lot of eggs! Like most forward thinking farmers, the Barnhardts are

diversifying their operation into cut flowers, bagged poultry litter and livestock production on their forty-five acre property.

As owner and operator of Barnhardt Farms, Adam rises at 5:00 AM and works well into the evening. He handles the feed, walks the horses, hauls mortality to the composting bins, collects eggs, maintains daily records and weekly reports, communicates with their integrator regularly as well as other varied tasks and chores. Daily decisions fall on his shoulders, and he works tirelessly to keep their farm flourishing. Adam is an outstanding manager, delegating tasks to his employees and boosting morale often by providing bonuses, surprise lunches and other means of employee appreciation. Adam has worked diligently to be an affective manager and employer and has developed a



close-knit staff who respect and enjoy working with him on a daily basis. Once Adam's daily poultry chores are finished, he shifts focus to farm management tasks. He does everything from bush hogging to maintaining farming equipment. He knows every square inch of their farm and can fix anything, which is a huge talent indeed, and incredibly handy when you're a farmer. Outside of current responsibilities, Adam regularly plans and implements diversification strategies such as building a fence, running water lines, bagging litter and assisting Carrie with the flower business.

As co-owner and operator in addition to her full time job as a commercial loan officer with Carolina Farm Credit, Carrie handles most of the administrative tasks on the farm including the computer work, preparing financial records, paying bills, social media posts, job postings and much more. She collects eggs as needed and handles the poultry management when Adam is out of town. She manages the cut flower business, harvests flowers on Thursday and Friday evenings and makes flower arrangements on Friday nights. The seasonal roadside stand is set up by 8 AM on Saturdays. She also takes custom orders and makes deliveries as requested. Carrie has attended one flower vendor event and plans to attend more in the future.



Having the wonderful partnership that they do, Carrie assists Adam with decisions on large investments and future planning on staffing needs. She is the caretaker of their two children and is instilling a love of agriculture in their hearts.

Barnhardt Farms has 48,000 hens and roosters in four 42' x 500' hen houses. They keep the birds for ten months and have a two month cleaning window before the new flock arrives. The hens produce an average of 165 eggs each, resulting in over seven million eggs collected annually. Eggs are stored at 68 degrees and are transported to a local hatchery twice a week. Barnhardt Farms employs Adam and one other full time person as well as one part-time employee on the weekend.

Barnhardt Farms has also been diligent in conservation practices. They have timbered 26 acres but kept a tree line buffer to prevent erosion at their creek bank. While they have plans to improve the grassed waterways and overall property erosion, they are aware that keeping the creek bank as vegetative as possible will preserve its quality for years to come. The litter is housed in a concrete bunker 1000 feet from the creek. The Barnhardts have also applied for a grant with NRCS for obtaining a new litter shed. All chicken house water runoff is caught in grassed and gravel ditches and carried through corrugated piping for more organized rainwater management.



During 2021, Barnhardt Farms tackled a project themselves that would ultimately pay off. They dug a trench, installed water lines and ran a fence across nearly seventeen acres of property. They relied on their own intuition and muscle to finalize this task that turned out to be a four month project.

The Barnhardts have received other accolades for their farm. In 2021, they were selected as a finalist for the Achievement Award with the NC Young Farmers and Ranchers. In addition,

in 2021, they were selected as “Farm of the Month” for the West Rowan FFA Chapter.

There is no doubt Barnhardt Farms is a rising star in Rowan County. The Barnhardts work ethic and love for their land and for agriculture is certainly impressive. I feel quite certain this will pay off for them and their children in the years to come.



HUDSON INDUCTED INTO THE HALL OF FAME

by: Jimmy Gentry

During an awards banquet at the annual meeting of the NC Association for Soil & Water Association, Ned Hudson was inducted into the Soil & Water Hall of Fame, which is the highest honor presented by this group. Ned served as a Soil & Water Supervisor in Cabarrus County and was very active with the state association for many years. He served a term as President of the NC Association for Soil & Water Conservation where his very capable leadership abilities were shown. Ned gained a lot of respect within the Soil & Water Community, and during the induction ceremony there were many nice comments made about him.

Having served as an agriculture teacher his entire career, Ned's life was about agriculture while being a conservationist at heart. His wife Diane and daughter Melanie attended the awards ceremony and received the award in honor of Ned.



Kenneth Corriher

2021 NC GRANGER OF THE YEAR

by: Laurie Barnhart

Corriher Grange certainly ranked high at the annual awards ceremony during the NC Grange's 2021 State Convention in Charlotte. Not only did Barnhardt Farms receive the Farm of the Year Award, but Grange member Kenneth Corriher was named Granger of the Year.

We were thrilled to be able to present this award to Kenneth, who has been a Grange member since he was eight years old. I was honored to be able to talk with Mr. Corriher for a while at the convention. Now at 99 years young, he was absolutely amazing. I also had the pleasure of meeting both of his children, Anita and Doug, who had accompanied him to the awards program.

Kenneth is an essential part of the Corriher Grange Community. He comes to every meeting and is supportive of the Grange in every way that he can be. Kenneth's parents, M. B. and Margaret Corriher, along with the D.W. McLaughlin Family, were charter members of Corriher Grange, which was established in 1929. Kenneth graduated from Corriher Junior Grange to the Subordinate Grange in January of 1938.

During his 83 years as a Grange member, Kenneth served as Secretary, Steward and member of the Executive Committee. He was also President of Corriher Grange for several terms. In 1944, Kenneth served as an officer in the conferral of the 2nd Degree at Corriher Grange, and he participated in many degree teams around the county. In September of 1944, he attended the National Grange Session in Winston Salem where he received the 7th Degree. Over the years, Kenneth has always helped with the upkeep of the grounds and repairs of the Corriher Grange building.

In 1944, Kenneth was drafted in the US Army and sent to basic training at Camp Blanding, Florida. He had almost completed



his training when unfortunately, he slipped on the boardwalk carrying a tube launching device for a mortar and reinjured his back which had been broken a few years prior. He was put on light duty for three weeks and then discharged from the service.

Kenneth met the love of his life and future wife, the late Ruth Goodman Corriher, at a Grange youth function. Corriher Grange youth hosted a party for the Mt. Pleasant Grange youth from Cabarrus County. Kenneth and Ruth were later married and were together for 65 years.



Kenneth has been a lifelong member of Back Creek Presbyterian Church in Mt. Ulla. Over the years, he has served as Ruling Elder, adult Sunday School teacher and Clerk of the Session. Kenneth worked as a supervisor at Cannon Mills for 38 years in the packing and packaging department. In addition to his full-time job, he farmed, growing corn, cotton, grain, soybeans. He raised beef cattle as well.

In high school, Kenneth enjoyed playing tennis on the two courts at the Grange Hall. Work, raising a family and farming occupied most of his time. He also enjoyed square dancing and was a member of a square dance club in Kannapolis. To this very day, Kenneth always comes out and supports Corriher's very own square dances. He is now known for not necessarily dancing, but offering tips!

Kenneth and Ruth's two children, Doug and Anita, are both active members at Corriher Grange. Anita and her husband, Jack, have children and grandchildren that are active at Corriher as well.

Kenneth is an essential part of the Corriher Grange Community. He still maintains his membership, attends every meeting, and is supportive of the Grange in every way possible. As one of the oldest members, he certainly personifies everything the Grange stands for... faith, hope, charity, and fidelity. A life well-led, we certainly hope Mr. Corriher's legacy continues for generations.

A note:

After I wrote this story about Mr. Corriher, I sent it to his daughter, Anita, for her to proofread. She quickly responded with, "Looks great! Don't know whether you want to add a footnote or not. Dad's health had declined over the last few weeks, and he passed away January 9th at the age of 99." I was so sad to hear the news, but so happy to know he was able to be in his home, and at ninety-nine, that is so unusual, and amazing. I decided not to rewrite my story but to keep it in the present tense since that was how I remembered him. A life well led, Mr. Corriher. Godspeed!

NEW GRANGE EMPLOYEE - DEWITT HARDEE

by: Jimmy Gentry

Dewitt Hardee from Benson, NC, is the newest employee of the NC Grange. He will work on a part-time basis in the area of agricultural program management. Dewitt recently retired from the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, most recently heading up the NC Agriculture and Farmland Development Trust Fund. Throughout his career at NCDA, he worked with a variety of programs including dairy, tobacco, hurricane relief, marketing, agriculture policy as well as agribusiness development.

Dewitt is a graduate of NC State University with BS degrees in Animal Science and Agricultural Education. He also earned a Master's degree in Agricultural Education.

In Johnston County, Dewitt serves on the board of Soil & Water Supervisors. He is also a member of the Johnston Agribusiness Council, the South Johnston FFA alumni, NC Grange and NC Farm Bureau.

Along with his wife, Dewitt operates Hardee Farms and Elevation Plant Nursery and Landscaping. The Hardee's have two children and are active in Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church.



CORRIHER GRANGE

by : Vinnie Duncan

Corriher Grange members and guests gathered on Friday, December 3, for their annual Christmas program. The evening began with a BBQ meal for the State Grange Board of Directors.

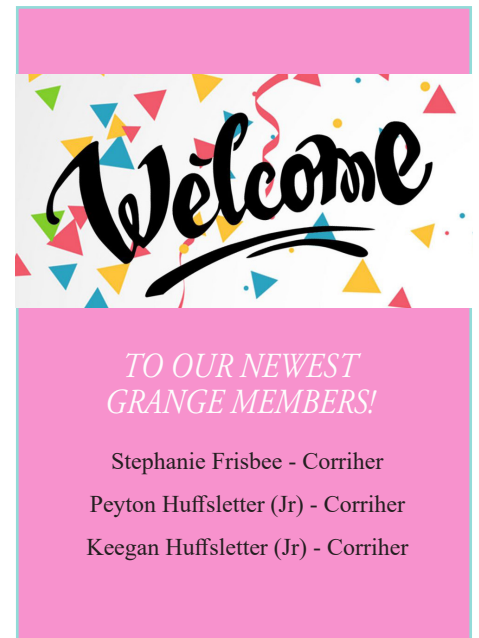
John Karriker, Corriher Grange President, welcomed everyone to the meeting, opening with the Pledge and prayer by Chaplain Philip Duncan. State Grange Board of Directors were introduced to the group by State Grange President Jimmy Gentry.

President Gentry presented recognitions to two Corriher Grange members. Hoke Karriker, who celebrated his 100th birthday in October, received his National Grange 75th year continuous membership certificate. During his 75-year membership, Hoke has served Corriher Grange in many offices and was awarded Granger of the Year by the State Grange in 1976.

Dora Greene received the National Grange Teacher of the Year recognition. Dora was nominated by Corriher Grange, representing North Carolina in the National Grange competition. Dora currently is a 5th grade teacher at Landis Elementary.

In the Junior Hall, costuming began for angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph. Everyone joined the manger scene with Vinnie Duncan narrating the Christmas Story celebrating Jesus' birth.

Following our Christmas Story, Jan Williams led the group in Christmas carols. Bobbie Dellinger read the traditional *Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Santa entered the room to a boisterous *Here Comes Santa Claus* and began distributing gifts to the adults. The children recited their list while sitting on Santa's lap and received their gifts. Everyone enjoyed refreshments, especially Lenora Bost's Christmas punch!



FERGUSON GRANGE

by : Sharon Underwood

Ferguson Grange had an exceptional Christmas party on December 16 at the Ferguson Community Center. Coordinated by Mike Kennedy, the evening included a delicious cover dish meal, a devotional, and music.

Several games were also played including “Dirty Santa,” a candy guessing game, and “the ovenmitt game.” Bradley Hicks won the candy guessing game and his mother, Lisa, won the oven mitt game. The favorite gift of the party was a flying monkey that had everyone laughing in stitches. There was also a costume contest for which Deborah Howell and Frank Shuford were the big winners.

Ferguson’s officers have also met several times, led by President Mike Brown, to organize the Grange’s 2022 calendar.



Photographs by Pam McCarrick and Sharon Underwood.

Photos-

(above) Deborah Howell and Frank Shuford, winners of the costume contest.

(left) Lisa Hicks wins a game by successfully opening a gift while wearing oven mitts.

BUSHY FORK GRANGE

by : August Howerton



Mr. Ruben Bowes, a member of Bushy Fork Grange, has recently turned 97 years old and holds the record as the oldest member and longest active member at Bushy Fork Grange. Mr. Bowes has been a member of the Grange since the late 1960's, but has been aware of the Grange as early as first grade, since his teacher, Katie Russel, was an active member at Bushy Fork. We can only assume that Mr. Bowes' lifelong love of the Grange was started by the influences of his teacher. When asked what he is most proud of regarding the Grange, Mr. Bowes responded that he is “most proud of the younger people that have come through the Grange.” The Grange provides opportunities for youth to travel, interact with a wide variety of people, and imparts important life skills such as communication, leadership, and compassion, as well as the process of writing bills and passing legislation. In 2015, Mr. Bowes retired from his post of treasurer, which he held for approximately 50 years. The current secretary and treasurer is Evelyn Duncan who, in Mr. Bowes eyes, is skilled and efficient at the position.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

by : Sharon Underwood

*Community
Service*

I am excited to announce that the NC Grange's 2022 State Community Service Project will be collecting school supplies for schools that are in need. As a retired educator, I have seen firsthand how many needs there are in public schools and how students and staff deeply appreciate any donations alike. It has been an especially difficult time for students, teachers, and schools in general during the pandemic. Many students' families struggle financially, and this project to collect supplies should help alleviate some of that stress. In the county I live in, there are over 200 students that are homeless, hungry and have many needs. How many are there in your county? Our donations will make a positive difference!

How to Participate:

To participate in this project, Granges are encouraged to do two things. First, identify the schools in need in your county and collect school supplies to donate to them. Those schools can be identified by contacting your individual public school's social worker. Second, collect items and bring them to the 2022 State Grange Convention to donate to a school in Durham or Wake County to assist the area where our convention will be held.

Suggested Items to Collect:

Please collect the following items for this project. You can also contact the local school that your Grange chooses to support for more specific items that the school might need.

School Supplies: pencils, crayons, markers, spiral notebooks, book bags, glue sticks, colored pencils, notebook paper, copy paper, dry erase markers, rulers, scissors, Kleenex, highlighters, erasers, pencil bags, construction paper, stickers, hand sanitizer, etc.

Hygiene Supplies: soap, small size shampoo & conditioner, lotion, deodorant, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products

Please plan to discuss this State Grange Project with your Grange and decide how you can best support both a local school(s) and schools in the Raleigh-Durham area for our State Convention. Our Granges have always been very generous to every state project effort, and I thank you in advance for your support. Your Granges will also do many other types of community service projects this year, and we would love to hear about them. Please send your project updates and pictures to me or Jessica Horton at the NC Grange Office so that we can feature them in Grange News.

WOTUS

Unfortunately, Waters of the United States (WOTUS) has become a political football with each administration changing the rules. The NC Grange urges caution with the current administration wishing to undo the last administration's rules pertaining to WOTUS. Our farmers need stability and certainty which is what they now have. We are happy with the current rules, and any consideration for returning to the regulations established prior to 2015 are unsettling. Those rules were a federal government overreach, quite complicated, and difficult to comprehend. The current rules are more concise and reasonable.

There is already a heavy emphasis on protecting water through state Soil & Water Conservation programs as well as federal programs through the Natural Resources and Conservation Service. These agencies provide a great service and have a targeted focus on local waters. This reduces the need for the federal government to assert jurisdiction over these local waters as was done before.

As consideration is given to possible new rules, please consider the impact that the regulations could have on agriculture production in this country. We hope that nothing is put into place that would be detrimental or costly to farmers. Many agricultural groups will provide comments in connection with this possible change, and we want to be sure that the voice of agriculture is heard. Furthermore, the US Department of Agriculture should be included in the process.

Federal jurisdiction over the waters should not reach the extreme levels that they did prior to 2015. Navigable waters should remain a focus. Much progress has been made over the years through the Clean Water Act to make our waters less polluted. There is no doubt that that progress will continue with programs currently in place, thus reducing the need for a far-reaching WOTUS rule.

Jimmy Gentry
President
North Carolina State Grange.



HOPE

It's a new year! Are you wishing for a brighter HOPE of better things to come than what has been in the past? Maybe you're like me and need to lose those extra pandemic and holiday pounds, or perhaps you need to get a better job or finally get back to school. Maybe you want to better your health, better manage your finances, organize the family calendar, or get out more. The list is endless, and we sometimes wonder what lies ahead. At times we might feel hopeless, and that creates a stressful life. But we must look to our true source of HOPE, and that is God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The dictionary states that "hope" is "a feeling that what is wanted will happen; to want and expect, to trust or rely." We sometimes confuse this word hope with wishful thinking. If we just hope something happens, we actually have no control over whether or not it will take place. This is when we must fully rely on the Biblical sense of HOPE that provides secure assurance that God is trustworthy. We must be reminded that God is faithful, and He will never fail us. Hope waits and endures; it is not merely wishful thinking. "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have HOPE," Romans 15:4.

As I was writing this article while sitting in my corner chair in my bedroom, I looked out the window and saw a sparrow on the fence post. It immediately reminded me of God's promise that we are not to worry about tomorrow, as He already provides for the birds and lilies of the field, and how much more does He love us than these. Our HOPE is in Him! Praise His Name!

In each article I write for the Grange Chaplain's Corner, I feel compelled to tell you that you are not alone. I, too, have been through what seemed like hopeless situations. An old saying says, "As long as I have breath, there is HOPE." There is also a quote by Robert Schuller that states, "Let your hope, not your hurts, shape your future."

We all need HOPE. Jesus Christ gives us that HOPE. Because of Him we have hope for this life and eternity. Unfortunately, we live in a culture that many have lost hope. So, it's our responsibility to spread the love of Jesus to others. The hope we have as believers is more than a desire. It is simply trusting in God and the confidence in Him even in doubtful situations. "And now O Lord, for what do I want. My HOPE is in you," Psalm 39:7.

My dear friend, Carolyn Lane, recently sent me a copy of her book, *The Wonder of Advent*, that she wrote for her church. With permission I quote, "Hope is an essential part of faith. Hope in the Lord gives us strength, teaches us patience, and changes lives. When you do not know what the future holds, remember who holds the future. God's fulfilled prophetic Word gives us assurance from the past, peace in the present, and hope for the future." Amen. Also remember, Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you HOPE and not evil."

We have the certainty of God's promise in His word, "It is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure," Hebrews 6:18-19. Remember that God's mercy and grace gives us hope everyday. For 2022, "May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit," Romans 15:13.

I close with some of the words from an old hymn, "My Hope is Built." If you know it, sing it, and it will help cheer you up to keep a song in your heart and face the uncertain times.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.
On Christ, the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

In Memoriam

Ned Hudson
Mary Helen Smith
Kenneth Corriher*
Albert Everson
Gene Moore

St. John's Grange
Corriher Grange
Corriher Grange
Beaufort County Grange
Clay County Grange

The North Carolina General Assembly has been relatively quiet since the New Year began. The long, negotiated biennial 2022-2023 budget was signed November 18. Since that time, both the Senate and the House continue to hold skeleton no-vote sessions making it one of the longest “long” sessions in history. Because of the redistricting lawsuit contesting the redrawing of the maps, the General Assembly chose to stay in session in case it was necessary to reconvene. However, on January 11, a three-judge Superior Court panel voted to let the legislative and congressional redistricting maps stand as drawn. Everyone now awaits action by the Supreme Court.

Speaker Tim Moore and President Pro Tem Phil Berger have announced committee members to the Joint Legislative Committee on Access to Healthcare and Medicaid Expansion as well as all other interim committee members. Interim committees are established to study and/or investigate certain matters between annual or biennial legislative sessions and to report back during the next regular session.

Following are excerpts, courtesy of *McGuireWoods Consulting*, on two important legislative actions that have the potential to affect all North Carolinians.

Clean Energy Order

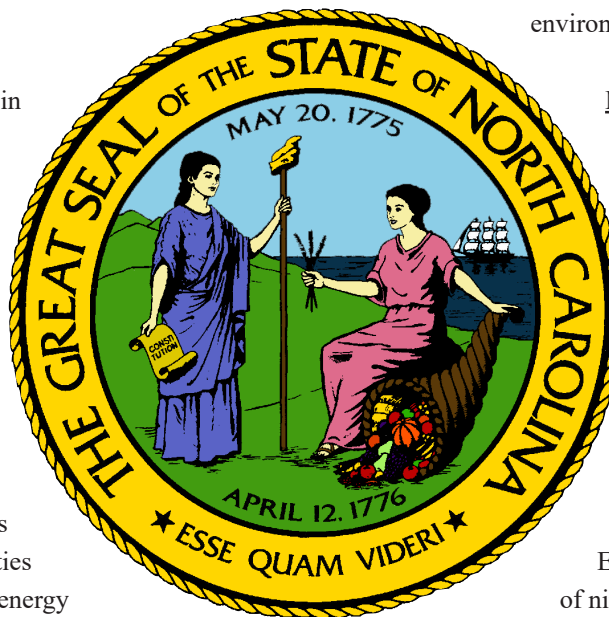
Over the last year, a major priority in North Carolina state government, shared by both the Republican-led General Assembly and Democrat Governor Roy Cooper’s administration, has been reforming the state’s energy sector to be more resilient and accommodating for a clean energy future. The swiftness in which both branches of government have moved on this priority is aided by energy utilities who have advocated for renewable energy resources. Earlier in the month, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order No. 246 to direct his agencies to undertake steps in the state’s plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and create “green jobs” throughout the state. In 2021, the Governor signed House Bill 951, a bipartisan law that implements steps for utility providers

to reduce carbon emissions by 70% from 2005 levels by the year 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

The Executive Order mostly targets the Department of Transportation. It directs NCDOT to develop a North Carolina Clean Transportation Plan for decarbonizing the transportation sector through reductions in vehicle miles traveled, and an increase in zero-emission cars, trucks, and buses. The Order calls for an increase in registered zero-emission vehicles to at least 1,250,000 by 2030 and for 50% of sales of new vehicles in North Carolina to be zero-emission by 2030. NCDOT can do this by collaborating with transportation experts, auto manufacturers, auto dealers and utilities to develop a strategy. The Order specifically includes a focus on transitioning medium and heavy-duty vehicles to zero-emission vehicles.

Additionally, the Executive Order takes steps to emphasize environmental justice and equity in the state’s transition to using renewable energy sources. Cabinet agencies will be required to consider environmental justice and identify an “equity lead” who will work with leads in other agencies to coordinate on activities and increase awareness among agency

leadership and staff on the current impacts of environmental, economic, and racial justice.



Medicaid Expansion

A top priority for North Carolina Democrats did not end up in the final budget passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor this year; however, it is not the end of the road for Medicaid Expansion. While the budget did not include expansion, it does create the Joint Legislative Committee on Access to Healthcare and Medicaid Expansion. The committee is made up of nine members appointed by Speaker of the House Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) and nine members appointed by Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger (R-Rockingham).

The nine House members appointed to the committee are Rep. Kristin Baker (R-Cabarrus), Rep. Wayne Sasser (R-Stanly), Rep. Donna McDowell White (R-Johnston),



Rep. Keith Kidwell (R-Beaufort), Rep. William Richardson (D-Cumberland), Rep. Brian Farkas (D-Pitt), and Rep. Charles Graham (D-Robeson). Rep. Donny Lambeth (R-Forsyth) has been appointed as Co-Chairman and Rep. Larry Potts (R-Davidson) has been appointed as Vice Chairman.

On the Senate side, the nine members that have been appointed to the committee are Sen. Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell), Sen. Danny Britt (R-Robeson), Sen. Lisa Stone Barnes (R-Nash), Sen. Kevin Corbin (R-Macon), Sen. Michael Lee (R-New Hanover), Sen. Dan Blue (D-Wake), Sen. Kirk deViere (D-Cumberland), and Sen. Mike Woodard (D-Durham). Sen. Joyce Krawiec (R-Forsyth) has been appointed as Co-Chair.

The committee will be tasked with studying various ways to improve access to health care and health insurance for North Carolinians, including, but not limited to, Medicaid Expansion. The committee will meet this year during the interim and will be allowed to propose legislation. (McGuireWoods Consulting)

Following is a 2021 Congressional wrap-up from National Grange.

Manchin Opposes Build Back Better Act

Shortly following the end of the congressional session for 2021, on Saturday December 18, 2021, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), the most conservative Democratic Senator, made the surprising declaration that he would not vote for the Build Back Better Act. The \$1.75 trillion bill, which includes spending on climate and social programs as well as tax increases on corporations and high-income households, had been passed by the House of Representatives in November and had been stalled in the Senate while Democratic Senators negotiated over the specifics of the bill. Up until his announcement, Manchin had indicated that he was interested in passing the bill following negotiations which addressed his concerns over programs like the expanded Child Tax Credit and green energy subsidies.

Following Manchin's announcement, many Democrats in Congress and the administration issued tersely worded statements expressing their disappointment that the Senator was no longer willing to negotiate, but also hope that they may still be able to find a compromise on some provisions of the bill. As of writing, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has indicated that he still intends to bring a vote on the Build Back

Better Act to the floor in January, forcing Manchin to vote on the record in opposition to the proposal. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, many Democratic Senators are seeking to work with Manchin on a paired down bill which includes only those provisions that he would be able to support. While this is the most significant headwinds the Build Back Better Act has faced so far, it remains possible that some key Democratic priorities within the bill will be able to be passed.

Congress Completes Housekeeping Before Winter Recess

Before officially departing for winter recess, Congress was able to finally come to agreements which allowed key bills and appointments to move forward. In mid-December, Senate Democrats and Republicans agreed to change the rules of the filibuster to allow for a simple majority of the chamber to raise the debt ceiling, which Democrats subsequently did, thereby allowing the government to avoid defaulting on its debt. As part of the deal, the National Defense Authorization Act, the bill which funds the armed forces, was also able to proceed and passed through an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Finally, just before Senators left town for the holidays, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) was able to force Republicans to relent on blocking many key appointments within the Biden administration.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD and IMMIGRATION

Food Prices Continue to Surge

Supermarket prices jumped 6.4% over the past year, marking the largest increase for a 12-month period since 2008. Grocery price increases are a major reason the Consumer Price Index is up 6.8% over the past year, the largest increase since 1982. Food suppliers blame inflation for price hikes, but lawmakers wonder if they are padding the bill. Supermarket sales increased by 11% last year over 2019, and that trend has continued into 2021. Labor shortages, shifts, and surges in consumer demand as well as supply chain snarls have stressed production and distribution channels over the past 18 months, but some lawmakers accuse the food industry of excessive profit-taking during that time. Meat processors in particular are coming under scrutiny by the White House which says processors are increasing prices way above costs they are incurring due to inflation.



House Passes Bipartisan Beef Market Transparency Bills

The House of Representatives has approved two pieces of legislation critical to providing producers greater transparency in the cattle markets. H.R. 5290 passed, a 418-9 vote, and extends livestock mandatory price reporting through September 2022. The Cattle Contract Library Act tallied a vote of 411-13 and creates a market contract reference data base to assist producers with price discovery. A comprehensive compromise market transparency and price discovery bill in the Senate is cosponsored by Senators Fischer (R-NB), Tester (D-MT), Grassley (R-IA), and Wyden (D-OR) and has support of the National Grange.

School Lunch Gets \$1.5 Billion for Supply Chain Challenges

USDA is allocating \$1.5 billion to the school lunch program to help operators deal with supply chain issues that are driving up costs. This assistance is expected to reach up to 100,000 schools across all 50 states to purchase domestically produced fresh fruit, milk, cheese, frozen vegetables, and ground meat.

Funds to Address Ag Stress

USDA will distribute \$25 million in grants to 50 state ag departments to support projects aimed to alleviate stress around finances, work, family, and other issues exacerbated by the pandemic. Programs include retreats; resettlement help targeted to Latino, Hispanic, Hmong and African workers; farmer-to-farmer networks; financial counseling and more.

Fewer Immigrant Workers Slow Economy

Fewer immigrant workers are coming to fill jobs as the U.S. economy suffers. More than a million immigrant workers are missing from the current job market as America struggles with roughly 11 million open positions. Aside from agriculture, industries feeling acute worker shortages include food service, health care, trucking and warehousing.

Technical Assistance and Cover Crop Incentives

Senate Democrats have dramatically increased funding for farm conservation in their version of the Build Back Better spending package. The legislation authorizes an increase of \$21 billion for farm bill conservation programs and creates a new \$5 billion program to pay farmers to plant cover crops. Their package also extends authorization for the

conservation programs through 2031. Under the 2018 farm bill, conservation program authorization is due to expire in 2023 in anticipation of a new farm bill being written.

HEALTHCARE

Medicare Part D Should Pay for Essential Immunizations

One of the best and most cost-effective ways to protect our nation's seniors is to ensure they are vaccinated against common infectious diseases. That is the message the National Grange carried to fifty members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and House members of the Congressional Rural Caucus in mid-December. Congressmen were urged to cosponsor H.R. 1978, the bipartisan Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act of 2021. The bill would make vaccines for shingles, pneumonia and several more diseases available at no cost to seniors under Medicare Part D, the same as other essential vaccines covered by Part B. The data tells us that the more seniors must pay, the less likely they are to get vaccinated.

New Medicines to Treat Rare Diseases

Nearly 800 new innovative treatments are in the development stage to combat rare diseases, which is good news. These diseases include rare cancers, genetic disorders, neurological disorders, blood disorders, and autoimmune issues. Roughly 30 million Americans are living with a rare disease.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Funds Delivery May Slow Broadband Progress

Rural America may have to wait longer for high-speed broadband. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo says the majority of the \$65 billion for broadband deployment in the recently passed infrastructure package may not be distributed until 2023. Raimondo is waiting for the FCC to update its controversial broadband access maps by the middle of 2022. The Commerce plans to set up a process for states to apply for broadband money by May 2022. Fortunately, some rural broadband funding is already available from the FCC and USDA which will allow ongoing expansion of high-speed rural broadband connectivity in many areas. A high priority for the National Grange next year and the years following will be to ensure the congressional mandate is followed which is to serve the unserved first, the underserved second, then everyone else.



As the National Grange continues to highlight issues affecting rural America, we have forged a partnership with Rural Minds, LLC to help make the National Grange's voice on the Hill even stronger.

Rural Minds is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with the mission to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. Rural Minds collaborates with other organizations on initiatives to help end the silence, stigma, and suffering that surround mental illness.

Rural Minds was founded by dairy farmer Jeff Winton. In 2012, the suicide of his beloved 28-year-old nephew was a wake-up call for Jeff. In the eulogy he delivered, Jeff shared his family's continuing struggle with mental illness. After the service, many local families shared their own experiences and thanked Jeff for finally giving them the permission to talk openly and freely. He realized that so much more needed to be done.

He founded Rural Minds, a nonprofit organization to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. Rural Minds serves the mental health needs of rural Americans by:

- Listening to and providing forums for courageous people to share their experiences with mental illness;
- Connecting rural Americans across the country with existing mental health resources, including crisis and suicide hotlines, via www.RuralMinds.org;
- Identifying gaps in mental health information and services;
- Partnering with community leaders and organizations on mental health initiatives;
- Collaborating with individuals and organizations to improve rural mental health including rural residents, donors and volunteers, large and small nonprofits, and socially responsible corporations with a strong interest in the health of rural Americans; and,
- Developing new educational resources and support services to address the unmet needs for mental health in rural communities throughout the United States.

NEW FOUNDATION CHAIR

by: Jimmy Gentry

David Allen, Vice President of the NC Grange, has been elected as the new Chairman for the NC Grange Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1999 as a 501c3 organization, which means that contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible. The articles of incorporation allow the Foundation to support education, rural development, agricultural research as well as charitable efforts.

Allen is a member of Corriher Grange where he is a past President. He is a retired Police Chief and now operates Tranquility Farm along with his wife, Crystal. Other members of the Foundation Board of Directors are Jimmy Gentry, Julia Stack, Deb Welch, and Melanie Hudson.

GENTRY PRESENTED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

by: Jimmy Gentry

On January 11, 2022, Jimmy Gentry was presented with a Distinguished Service Award during a banquet held by the NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation. Gentry has been actively involved in a partnership with the association on behalf of the NC Grange. The NC Grange is a Platinum level sponsor for the Soil & Water Association, specifically sponsoring the Conservation Farm Family of the Year Program. In addition, Gentry serves as President of the NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation, providing him with the opportunity to serve as a partner through two organizations.

Gentry stated, "I love partnering with the Soil & Water Association. They are great people that are providing a vital service to protect these valuable natural resources for North Carolina."

NC Grange has been sponsoring the Conservation Farm Family program since 2011, and in doing so a close partnership has been built between the two organizations.



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

This article piggybacks on the theme of what I wrote in the last issue of Grange News, challenging all of us to pick up those unfinished tasks and move forward. As I think about the importance of moving forward, I reminisce on a vital life lesson that I was taught as a kid when I learned to ride a bicycle.

We had very few neighbors around the farm where I grew up, but one neighborhood boy was about my brother's age, and they often hung around together. They rode their bikes up and down the dirt road and around the farm while I walked. It just so happened that my brother's friend had a small bike that he outgrew some time before, and it was sitting around in the garage. He and my brother decided they were finished with me nagging about how badly I wanted to ride as well, so they decided to teach me to ride his outgrown bike. The neighbor's yard became my training ground.

My brother and his friend would give me a starting push and set me on my own. The grass stains on my cloths verified that training wheels were non-existent, and I was not a child prodigy of bike riding. This routine continued for some time in their front yard that fall. They continued to tell me to stop looking at my feet and look where I was going! I need to add here that the neighbor's house was the typical brick ranch with a full basement, a style of the early 1960's. However, the basement was not a walkout basement. It was a dugout basement with a full set of formed cement steps exiting from the end of the house and ascending to ground level. There were cement block retaining walls on each side of the stairwell that ended just one cap block high above ground level to protect it. However, there were no guards to keep anyone from just stepping off into that abyss of a staircase. To my young mind, it appeared thirty feet deep – dark and scary!

You probably imagine the rest of the story at this point. As I practiced again in the front yard, just about to get the hang of things, I found myself nearing the end of the house and needing to make a right turn before I ran out of yard. I WAS RIDING, sorta! I made that right turn, wobbling as I went, and I saw that monster of a dark hole looming ahead. Uh Oh! That monster staircase activated its

retractor beam, captured my glazed eyes, and it drug me in with the greatest of effort. Thankfully, I was closest to the ground level of the steps. I hit the eject button and bailed off in the grass just before the front tire went over and the rest of the bike tumbled into that bottomless pit. My brother and his friend followed quickly behind and asked, "WHY did you do that? You have to watch where you are going!"

Shortly after that experience, I earned my bike wings and continued to ride all over the community. As a side note, that little bike became one of my Christmas presents that year. I learned that the key to bike riding was to look, not only where I was, but also more importantly, where I wanted to go. Had I fixed my gaze on that fearful staircase, I may have avoided that experience all together.

This concept of looking where you want to go also applied to my learning how to drive vehicles, how to back the hay trailer up with the tractor, and in my college days, how to ride a motorcycle. The many times that I allowed a "distraction" to get my attention and failed to continue to look where I wanted to go, it did not yield the results that I desired. Sometimes, like the bike and stairwell incident, those distractions yielded bruises to the body and pride, as well as some battle scars to the bike.

As we look forward into this New Year, ask yourself, "What are you looking at?" Keep your sights fixed because many distractions will cross our paths in 2022. As the wind can blow an airplane off course, the pilot must continue to correct and adjust their course to arrive at the planned destination. We must also be vigilant to make sure that we do not succumb to life's distractions and continue to monitor our progress toward our goals so that we can adjust as needed to avoid our own "monstrous stairwells" of life.

Our insurance products can give you the tools to achieve your financial goals for yourself and your family with a broad array of income annuities or life insurance products. Our tools can also help veer your goals back on course when adversity strikes by utilizing our health insurance plans, disability, or Long Term Care products. Give us a call today if we can be of service to you or your family. We also appreciate when you refer your friends and neighbors to us as well!



New Programs Available

During the State Grange Convention, five new programs were approved that will prove to be of great benefit to local Granges across the state. Those programs are as follows:

Community Gardens Grant Program

Community Gardens have become quite popular as charitable projects to assist those who need fresh food. Through this program, grants will be provided to local Granges in an effort to defray costs for developing the gardens. This program is intended for local Grange member involvement. Application forms have been sent to Grange Presidents that include more detailed information.

Matching Grants for Fundraisers

The Covid Pandemic has made it more difficult for Granges to conduct activities including the ability to raise funds. This grant program is designed to help Granges get back on their feet financially following two difficult years. For fundraisers conducted during this fiscal year, the State Grange will match the net amount raised up to a limit of \$10,000.00. Application forms have been sent to the Grange Presidents with more detailed information.

Grants for Projects

This program is designed to assist Granges that conduct hands-on projects in the community. In this program the term “project” is being distinguished from the term “program.” Projects would be those types of activities in which the Grange is actively participating such as building projects, landscaping, repairs, etc. The application form has been sent to Grange Presidents.

Grants for Grange Hall Beautification

The intent of this grant is to assist Granges with enhancing the appearance of their buildings. It is important for all Grange Halls to leave a favorable impression in the community by looking attractive. The rules for this program are still under consideration by the State Grange Board, so the application forms are not yet ready. Once completed, the information will be sent out.

Grants for Small Farms

The intent of this program is to assist small farmers in the state to take on new projects. We will be assessing the needs of small farmers to help determine exactly the types of requests that we will support. Any farm receiving assistance would be required to join the NC Grange if they are not already a member. This program is much more complicated and has not yet been fully developed. Our new employee, Dewitt Hardee, will be managing this program and working with the Board to fully develop the parameters. Once completed, we will work through our Granges and our partners to get the information distributed.

All of these programs have budget limits and applications will be processed as they arrive in the Grange office. For the first 4 listed programs, a sub-committee of the Board will review the applications. This is likely a historic year for the State Grange in terms of support for local Granges. We hope this will help every Grange in the state to restore the lost momentum caused by the Pandemic.





North Carolina Grange
1734 Wilkesboro Hwy
Statesville, NC 28625
704-878-0000
ncgrange.com

PERIODICAL
POSTAGE
PAID

Mark Your Calendars:
Grange Camp
July 10-16

