

The official publication of the NC Grange

July | August 2025

GRANGE NEWS



**GRANGE
CAMP
2025**

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On The Cover: Kaitlyn Wood at a Great Grange Challenge game on Monday night of Grange Camp.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

September 11-14	State Convention Charlotte, NC
November 8-15	National Convention Carnival Cruise
March	Family Conference Asheville, NC

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

Because we are a membership organization, we all know how challenging it can be to achieve growth. During the last couple of years, we have been fortunate enough to have achieved statewide growth in our organization. This means that local Granges have been growing. Each year at State Convention we recognize those Granges that grew during the year. For this article, I want to list things that I have learned over the years that can contribute to growth in local Granges.

1. Activity

No one will want to join an organization that is doing nothing – no projects or activities. Good activities can lead to interest in your Grange.

2. Fun

Everyone wants to have a good time. All Granges will have some serious business to conduct but also build in some fun activities.

3. Help

Projects to help others are meaningful and provides your members an avenue to serve. There are many individuals who get satisfaction from knowing that they are contributing in a good way.

4. Grow Leaders

Involve members in taking leadership positions so they can develop their skills. Create an environment in which there are many who can lead rather than a situation in which you cannot

find people to take leadership positions.

5. Partnerships

There are many other organizations and agencies with which you can partner with on particular projects. Partnerships not only add strength and quality to efforts but also build new relationships.

6. Youth

Provide opportunities for youth participation and help them to develop leadership skills in a fun way.

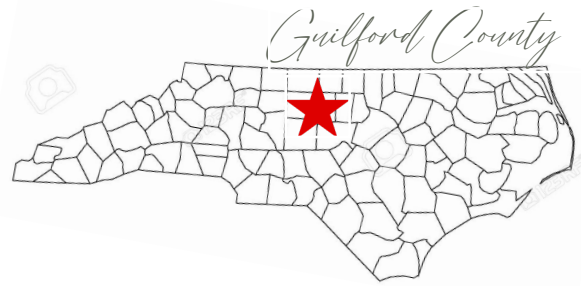
7. Voice

The State Grange has a strong legislative program and so should your local Grange. Build relationships with your School Board, County Commissioners, State Legislators and members of Congress who represent your area. There is no shortage of issues in every county, and your Grange could be a force in helping to impact policy.

I want to see NC Grange to continue a pattern of growth and the items listed can help. While growth is a good thing, the impact you are having on your community is vitally important. You have the opportunity to be an important part of your community through the good works that you do.

GUILFORD GRANGE

by : Diane Everhart



Guilford Grange, located in Greensboro, made several donations to various non-profit organizations in the community in the first six months of 2025.

On March 10, 2025, Guilford Grange Board members met with Candice Terrell, the leader of the Re-Cover Project, to donate \$1,500. The Re-Cover Project is a new non-profit that was founded around October 2024 due to the disaster in western North Carolina caused by Hurricane Helene. Volunteers spend countless hours sorting through good quality clothing that has been donated to be used for people impacted by the hurricane and other disasters in North Carolina. This wonderful organization helps support people when devastation has impacted their area.

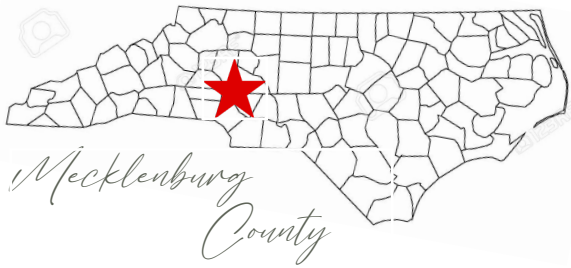
On April 10, the Guilford Grange Board sent a check to the Second Harvest Food Bank for \$500. This has been an organization Guilford Grange has supported through the years. This organization provides food assistance to 18 counties in Northwest NC through a network of partners.

Another organization the Guilford Grange supports regularly is the Servant Center. On April 11, a donation was made for \$5,000 to support their efforts. The Servant Center empowers the homeless and disabled, particularly veterans, through housing, healthcare and restorative services. It is a United Way agency which serves over 2,000 people every year with housing, benefits assistance and resources for breaking cycles of homelessness.

On April 28, a \$500 donation was made to Western Guilford Middle School to support Teacher Appreciation at the end of the school year. The check was presented to Chase Arrington, Principal of the school, who is also a Board member of the Guilford Grange.

The Guilford Grange Board members have a passion for helping veterans, the homeless, those with food insecurity, and students in lower socioeconomic areas. With the help of matching money from the NC State Grange, we were able to donate a total of \$7,500 so far this year to help those in our community in need.





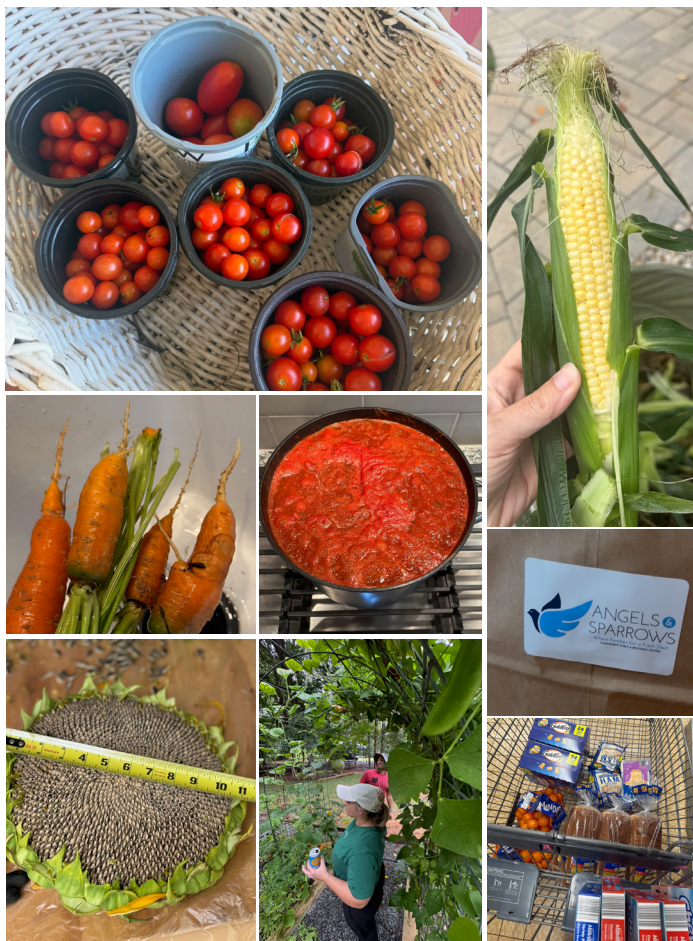
VILLEWORTH GRANGE

by : Jessica Horton

VilleWorth Grange continues to meet and discuss gardening. We have been sharing our wins and losses and making plans for the future seasons at our large garden.

We have partnered with SkillPop for an upcoming class this fall. With the help of a Rural Life Initiative Grant of \$1000, we will be conducting a fall seed starting class this September as a partnership with them. We look forward to teaching others in Charlotte about starting fall gardens!

We also assisted Angels and Sparrows, a local non-profit, with their backpack lunch program. We provided 50 lunches for thier students.



HIS PRESENCE IN THE JOURNEY

It's Summer and that can mean vacation time! This usually entails taking a road trip to somewhere away from home, maybe to a new place, even to another state or another country, or somewhere more familiar. Wherever the journey, fun and excitement await.

On this journey, God is omnipresent, meaning He is present in all places at the same time, as is from Jesus' birthname, Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." We are reminded of this in Joshua 1:9 which states, "The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." What an awesome God we serve to always have His presence with us.

As we travel on our vacation journey or on our journey of life, we may be fearful of our safety and what lies ahead. The words in Deuteronomy 31:8 promises us, "The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged."

God lovingly gives us protection with angels who surround us and act as our warriors. Exodus 23:20 states, "See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared." Other angel verses are Psalms 91:11-12, Psalms 103:19-22, Matthew 18:10, and more. I have experienced angels being with me as I travel that I know without a doubt prevented me from having an accident or being in an accident ahead of me. Praise the Lord! I'm sure many of you can relate how God's presence and angels were with you as well.

Let us not forget that whenever we are on a new journey of any kind in seemingly hopeless situations in our lives, "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth," Psalms 145:18. This verse reminds us that God is near during our darkest moments even when we fear that God left us to the wolves. But we can know His presence is there to travel with us and take us through the battles. We will have victory at the end of our journey through His grace and mercy. God does not abandon us to navigate life on our own. Instead, He sent us His Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, and intercede for us. Let's give Him thanks.

Remember that God's presence has no boundaries. Our journey's mile marker says, "God is with us near and far." "And behold, I am always with you, to the end of the age," Matthew 28:20. Amen.



GRANGE CAMP 2025

Grange Camp is, by far, the favorite event of the year for the kids in our organization. I hear this often from them and even hear it from their parents, which of course makes my heart soar because I felt the same way when I was their age growing up in camp. There is something very special about Grange Camp, where friendships grow to become family and where lives are changed. Or 79th

year of camp was held July 6-12 at the beautiful Eastern 4-H Center in Columbia, NC, on the Albemarle Sound. This year marked another incredible year for our campers who learned about leadership, team building, and the Grange through fun, exciting activities. This truly was a tremendous week which was described by many of our campers as “the best week ever.”

“Making Waves” was this year’s camp theme, created by our Youth Leadership Team. This theme encouraged campers to live their lives big, full of happiness and joy, to dream big and to make a difference by standing out and enjoying all that life has to offer. The team used quotes and personal stories to teach this positive message daily, inspiring campers to enjoy every moment of both Grange Camp and their lives.

Throughout the week, campers enjoyed a variety of daily activities such as kayaking, group games, ropes courses, giant swing, gaga ball, 9-Square, crabbing, wall climbing, swimming, archery, crafts, team building, leadership, and more. They also participated in a service project by making tie blankets for the Ronald McDonald House which houses families for children who are receiving long-term care in local hospitals.

The week included the traditional “Battle By the Bay” competitions in which groups competed in a wide variety of activities with one group emerging as the week’s champions. Some of those activities included Family Feud, Music Trivia, 9-Square, Gaga Ball, Archery, Wall Climbing, skit performances and more. The winning team for youth this year was group Charity, led by counselors Dewayne Craft, Anna Liles and Cole Settle and by Youth Team members Nick Cameron and Taylor Rogers. The Blue Group was named the Junior champions, led by counselors Sadora Hayes, Charles Howerton, Rylee Grissom, Pam Walker, and Junior Team members Raegan Hartsell and Laci Liles. The winning team members received the coveted championship t-shirt.

After daily activities, campers joined each evening for camp’s traditional events. Sunday night brought fun get-acquainted games led by the Youth Team. Monday night, our famous Great Grange Challenge was held where campers raced in a





round of messy team building activities on the sports field. Imagine jumping in a pool of slime; getting water dumped on you during relays; playing water balloon volleyball; spitting watermelon seeds onto a target; and throwing cheeseballs to stick on someone's head covered in shaving cream. You can see why this is a long-time favorite activity for our campers!

On Tuesday night, campers enjoyed the annual Talent Show and ocean-themed costume night. The evening was emceed by the Youth Team who opened the show with a dance routine dressed up as the Bubble Guppies. Stand-out costumes of the evening included sharks, mermaids, surfers, Ursula, Neptune, and the creative “she sells seashells.” More fun was had the next evening at our traditional Skit Night when each group performed hilarious skits. It is always amazing to see how much our campers get into their skits and perform them so confidently.

Thursday night, campers demonstrated their leadership skills at Model Grange Night. State Youth Officers performed their duties by opening and closing the Grange meeting in ritual form. Our State Youth President, Taylor Rogers, led the youth officers in the Grange opening with Nick Cameron and Anna Hahn leading the drill as the Assistant and Lady Assistant Steward. The Junior Officers also performed the Junior Opening and Closing of the Grange led by State Junior



President Raegan Hartsell. The Junior Officer Drill was led by Avery Furr and Sawyer Randall. All officers truly demonstrated incredible leadership skills. Two special guests were also presented during the ceremonies: Taylor Rogers, National Grange Youth Ambassador, and Laci Liles, National Grange Junior Ambassador, both from NC. They spoke about the impact that Grange can make on young people's lives and how grateful they are for the opportunity to represent the National Grange this year. The evening also included square dancing, a long-time tradition at camp!

Our Awards Ceremony on Friday evening is also a tradition of Grange Camp to honor our campers with awards and celebrate the week. Each Junior Camper receives a trophy representing a superlative chosen by their group counselors. Counselors also selected special awards that will be presented at September's State Convention. The Junior Counselors Award was given to Tye Furr and Dorothy Roten. The Junior Director's Award was presented to Brody Sigmon and Paisley Walters. The Junior Grange Leadership Award was given to Ethan Almond and Sarah Anderson, and the highest honor, the Hunt Best All Around Camper Award, was presented to Micah Kaufman and Sawyer Randall. Jack Spratling and Laci Liles were crowned this year's Junior Camp Prince and Princess.

Youth Awards were also presented, starting with superlatives which were selected by their peers. Clayton Cameron and Taylor Rogers were crowned this year's Grange Camp King and Queen. The full list of youth superlatives is included with this article. Counselors also selected special

youth awards that will be presented at the State Convention. The Counselors' Award was given to Ethan Morris and Isabelle Welborn, and the State Youth Director's Award went to Clayton Cameron, Taylor Rogers and Ian Perry. The Grange Leadership Award was given to Cade Howerton and Caroline Barber, while the highest honor, the President's Best Camper Award, was presented to Nick Cameron and Kayla Laws. The evening ended with dancing, a special candlelight ceremony, and a slideshow of the week full of pictures taken by Jessica Horton. It was a very special night to end our incredible week together.

The week could not have been made possible without the excellent leadership and creativity of our 2025 Youth Leadership Team, who helped plan the camp activities and theme. Made up of Caroline Barber, Nick Cameron, Ryleigh Hartsell, Cade Howerton, Kayla Laws, and Taylor Rogers, this team truly stood out as outstanding, charismatic leaders who made a strong, lasting impact on our campers.

The team also assisted this year's Junior Leadership Team who helped lead camp activities such as vespers, flag raising and meal-time songs. They cheered on their teams during every challenge, encouraged their peers and supported their counselors. The Junior Team this year was made up of 10 young ladies, all rising 7th and 8th graders, who did a great job serving in this unique leadership opportunity.

Our incredible Grange Counselors also work very hard and attributed to the week's success. We thank them for volunteering their time to help make a difference in our campers' lives. Without their nurturing, loving hearts, camp would not be the amazing camp that it is. Special thanks are also given to all our local Granges and individuals who helped



sponsor and pay for campers to attend this inspirational week.

There are always so many special moments that happen at camp, like watching a kid who never gets up in front of a crowd share a special talent, cheered on by the camp. And watching a shy girl being cheered on by all her teammates, giving her the confidence to try new things because of the love and support her team gave her. And watching the incredible sportsmanship during group challenges, and the impact the Youth Team members make on their peers, as well as the love and respect these campers show for each other. I also cannot forget the child who, after her first year this year, came to me asking, “Can you call my mom and tell her to send me back again next year?!”

Grange Camp is such a unique, life-changing experience for campers whose lives are positively impacted in so many special ways. Campers develop very close friendships,

with many referring to those friends as their “second family.” Camp gives kids a place where they gain confidence, break out of their shells, build relationships and work together. Most importantly, it is a place where campers can completely be themselves and learn how to dream big and make waves as they journey through life.



2025 YOUTH SUPERLATIVES

King:	Clayton Cameron
Queen:	Taylor Rogers
Best All Around:	Kayla Laws Nick Cameron
Best Role Model:	Isabelle Welborn Gavin Hall
Grange Spirit Award:	Ryleigh Hartsell Aidan Kibbey
Mr. & Miss Congeniality:	Gentry Wilson Ian Perry
Best Personality:	Anna Keeter Ethan Morris
Unsung Hero:	Kendall Henderson Cole Sandy
Most Outstanding Leader:	Caroline Barber Cade Howerton
Most Unforgettable:	Kaitlyn Wood Noah Mackie
Most Fun to Be Around:	Anna Hahn Zeke Simmons
Best 1st Year Camper:	Isaiah Bell Cole Reed
President's Best Camper Award:	Kayla Laws Nick Cameron
Grange Leadership Award:	Caroline Barber Cade Howerton
Counselors Award:	Isabelle Welborn Ethan Morris
Youth Director's Award:	Clayton Cameron Ian Perry Taylor Rogers



YOUTH CARAVAN

by : Jennie Gentry

Every summer, the Grange's State Youth Leadership Team participates in several events to promote our organization's youth program and encourage new students to attend Grange Camp. This includes a week-long trip called Caravan which takes these young leaders to various places across the state. This six-person team also engages in leadership training to prepare to lead Grange Camp and other events.

Caravan first started in 1958 with the same focus that has lasted since that time: promoting the youth program and offering leadership development. This year's trip was held June 7-14 with the team staying in Troutman and Raleigh to engage in activities to strengthen skills in public speaking, professionalism, leadership, and talking to people about the Grange. They also worked to finalize activities for Grange Camp to help make it a success.

This year, we held a more traditional Caravan in which the team visited three different Granges, giving a presentation on the youth program and sharing their personal experiences on the impact Grange has made on their lives. They enjoyed a cookout at Corriher Grange, playing bingo at St. John's Grange, and tasting Wade Fowler's barbecue at Cape Fear Grange. The team greatly enjoyed meeting members of all ages at these meetings as they enthusiastically shared what the Grange offers young people.

The team commented on the delicious food and desserts at every meeting they attended, but what stood out the most was the kindness and generosity of our members at each of these Granges who welcomed the team, encouraged them, and

enjoyed interacting with them. We thank these three Granges for taking the time to host these wonderful meetings to support our youth.

Two weeks after Caravan, the team reunited in Raleigh to attend the FFA State Convention where we set up a booth in the expo and spent long hours talking with students and teachers about the Grange. The team's enthusiasm drew many students to our table to learn about our programs. We also attended the last morning session of the convention where the team joined me on stage as I spoke about our partnership with the FFA. Taylor Rogers also spoke inviting students to become involved in the Grange, a great testament since she was involved in both FFA and Grange in high school. The group then threw Grange t-shirts into the crowd, which has become an annual tradition.

The team is made up of Caroline Barber, Nick Cameron, Ryleigh Hartsell, Cade Howerton, Kayla Laws, and Taylor Rogers. They did a phenomenal job representing the Grange on Caravan and at the FFA Convention and exemplified great professionalism. Because of their enthusiasm for Grange, their efforts paid off and they recruited several students from both events to attend this year's Grange Camp. Although each year's team is made up of different young leaders, one thing that remains the same is that these events continue to be an excellent tool for promoting our youth program and for building strong leaders in the Grange.





JUNIORS

by : Emily Hartsell



Another unforgettable week of Junior Grange Camp is officially in the books! This year, we welcomed 55 enthusiastic Juniors for a week filled with friendship, adventure, and Grange spirit. A heartfelt thank you goes out to our dedicated counselors who gave their time and energy to make this experience possible.

Throughout the week, campers built lasting friendships—both new and old—and participated in a variety of engaging activities. From teambuilding exercises and cheering each other on during the climbing wall challenge to kayaking, gaga ball, and 9-square, the fun never stopped. The memories made this week will surely last a lifetime.

A favorite tradition returned: Battle by the Bay, where campers competed in the Great Grange Challenge on Monday night. Competitions ranged from skit night and Grange Trivia to kickball, crab catching, best bunk, and climbing wall races. The four junior groups brought their best teamwork and spirit, but once again, the Blue Group emerged victorious. Special congratulations to Charles Howerton, who remains undefeated and proudly claimed the BBB Belt once again!

We were honored to have 10 outstanding Junior Leadership Team Members this year: Raegan Hartsell, Laci Liles, Sawyer Randall, Vivian Nappier, Sloan Walker, Neveah Comer, Kinsley Eudy, Maddi Hagler, Paisley Walters, and Anya Willis. These young leaders served as mentors and role models throughout the week, guiding their teams, leading morning flag-raising quotes, and ending each day with vesper reflections. Thank you to this remarkable group of young ladies for your leadership and heart.

During Model Grange, our Junior officers demonstrated leadership and poise, guided by Lady Assistant Steward Sawyer Randall and Assistant Steward Avery Furr, who led an impressive drill.

OUR 2025 JUNIOR GRANGE OFFICERS ARE:

President: Raegan Hartsell

Vice President: Sloan Walker

Chaplain: Laci Liles

Program Director: Ahnika Blake

Steward: Anya Willis

Secretary: Kinsley Eudy

Treasurer: Brooklyn Blake

Gatekeeper: Jack Spratling

Ceres: Neveah Comer

Pomona: Sarah Anderson

Flora: Vivian Nappier

Executive Committee: Micah Kaufman, Maddi Hagler, Paisley Walters, Leyna Simmons, and Tye Furr

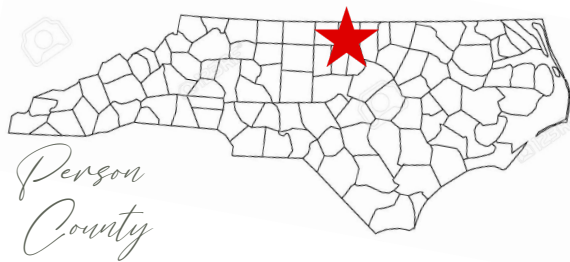
In a moving performance, the non-officer juniors presented a sign-a-song using sign language under the direction of Melanie Hudson. A big thanks to Lisa Anderson for her dedication in preparing the march and Melanie Hudson for helping with the sign-a-song.

Every year, we recognize campers who stand out for their spirit, leadership, and service. Selected by the counselors, this year's award recipients were: Hunt Best Camper: Micah Kaufman and Sawyer Randall, Leadership Award: Easton Almond and Sarah Anderson, Counselor Award: Dorothy Roten and Tye Furr, Junior Director Award: Brody Sigmon and Paisley Walters. These exceptional Juniors will be recognized at the State Convention this September.

Lastly, we crowned our 2025 Junior Prince and Princess: Jack Spratling and Laci Liles. Congratulations to both. Grange Camp 2025 was truly special, and I'm already counting down the days until we gather again for Grange Camp 2026!







BUSHY FORK GRANGE

by : Beverly Moore

Bushy Fork Grange #1073 proudly hosted its 2025 awards banquet, celebrating outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to Person County.

The evening commenced with a warm welcome from Charles Howerton, who introduced guests to the Grange. Given the diverse audience—including friends, family, and non-members—the program began with an overview of the organization, addressing key questions:

What is the Grange?

How was the Grange founded?

What has the Grange accomplished historically, currently, and locally?

One of the highlights of the evening was the recognition of Grange member Asheton Medlin, who collaborated with Rural Minds to advocate for mental health awareness. Her efforts were documented by a professional production team, capturing her message from a rural youth's perspective throughout Person County. The resulting video received a short film award and is available for viewing on YouTube by searching for the video title, Adolescent Mental Health in Rural Communities.

The program continued with insightful presentations by youth members, Kayla Laws and Cade Howerton, who outlined key Grange events at the local, state, and national levels. They also shared how their involvement in the Grange has shaped their personal growth and success.

Following these reflections, Charles and Bob Howerton announced the 2025 award recipients. Each honoree was presented with a certificate and a Grange-branded Yeti cup in recognition of their dedication and service.

Bushy Fork Grange is privileged to acknowledge these individuals, whose hard work and commitment have strengthened the community. This year's award recipients are:

- Teacher of the Year: Robbin Parrott, Oak Lane School
- Law Officer of the Year: Trooper Chad Campbell, North Carolina Highway Patrol
- Firefighter of the Year: Brian Arrowood, Hurdle Mills Volunteer Fire Department
- Fire Department of the Year: Hurdle Mills Volunteer Fire Department
- Farm of the Year: Garrett Whitfield, Whitfield Farms
- Military Person of the Year: SPC Aidan D. Allen
- Granger of the Year: Kayla Laws
- Secretary of the Year: Evelyn Duncan

Bushy Fork Grange remains dedicated to recognizing and supporting individuals who positively impact our community. Through continued engagement and shared values, we strengthen our mission and encourage future generations to contribute to the well-being of Person County.



EDNEYVILLE GRANGE

by : Wendy Henderson

I started to write this article months ago, and as things sometimes go, I got distracted. This is really a thank you from Edneyville Grange for all the support we have received as a result of Hurricane Helene. As we face the 10-month anniversary, things are much better, but there is still much to be done. The news sometimes makes it sound like recovery is in a “good place,” but that is not always the case. Several of our members are part of the hundreds that do not have bridges to their property or homes. Though road construction is on-going, many are still one lane or precarious.

Our community continues to recover, and a few businesses have recently opened. Local farmers are still navigating farming challenges. There is still a lot of work being done in Bat Cave, our neighbors to the south, and one must have a pass to enter the area. It will also take years for Lake Lure and Chimney Rock to be back to their “new normal,” despite what the news may say.

Because of the support from Granges across the State and Nation, we have been able to support so many folks in many ways. Some of those ways include providing Walmart gift cards for supplies, providing clothing, and projects such as helping with roofing or driveway grading. No matter how big or small, all these services are important. Thank you to everyone for your support and helping us to help others.



nourish up™
Lifting our community
through food.

Our 2025 community service project for State Convention is to support Nourish Up. They are an organization in Charlotte, NC, feeding those in need. Please bring all items to convention for donation! Below is a list of their priority needs.

Priority needs:

✓ Canned Meat – tuna, chicken, salmon

✓ Pasta – canned or dry boxed

✓ Canned Fruit – no sugar added or in juice

✓ Cereal – whole grain

✓ Canned Vegetables – no salt added or low sodium

We cannot accept food items that are unsealed, expired, loose without listed ingredients, unlabeled, or in glass containers.



CAPITOL NEWS

by : Laurie Barnhart

The 2025 North Carolina General Assembly long session has been a bit challenging this year for anyone involved in the North Carolina legislation. Whether you are a member, staffer, lobbyist, etc., it was at times extremely hard to figure out what the next move was going to be. The two chambers were not able to agree on a two-year spending plan for FY 2025-27 prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year which started on July 1. It remains to be seen if they will reach agreement on a new budget. Should they not, the last budget remains in effect for all recurring expense items. Any non-recurring items ended on June 30 and funding would need to be reappropriated by the General Assembly.

The Senate and House did come to an agreement on a “mini-budget” bill at the end of July when they passed HB 125: Continuing Budget Operations. In effect, this bill addresses a few bigger issues that are time sensitive since a biennial budget could not be agreed upon by the two chambers. It addressed funding issues for such things as school enrollments and Medicaid rebase which is an adjustment to account for population growth and actual costs for covering the mandated services for those eligible for Medicaid. It also appropriated funds and policy direction to deal with the issues at DMV. It remains to be seen if the two chambers will agree on a new budget if they will possibly pass an another “mini-budget” bill.

Both chambers officially adjourned on July 31 and are to reconvene on Tuesday, August 26, 2025. All the details of adjournment were laid out in Senate Joint Resolution 772.

Besides passing Senate and House bills the last week of July, the legislature also took up veto overrides of the fourteen bills that Governor Stein vetoed earlier in the session. In the House, Republicans need at least one Democrat to vote with them, or enough members to be absent to achieve the three-fifths majority that is required to override the Governor’s veto. The Senate Republicans have a super majority; so they do not need the Democratic vote. Both chambers have to override the veto for the bill to become law. The following bills have been overridden thus far by both chambers:

- H.B. 193 - Firearm Law Revisions.
- S.B. 416 - Personal Privacy Protection Act.
- H.B. 805 - Prevent Sexual Exploitation/Women and Minors.
- S.B. 266 - The Power Bill Reduction Act.
- S.B. 254 - Charter School Changes.
- H.B. 549 - Clarify Powers of State Auditor.
- H.B. 402 - Limit Rules With Substantial Financial Costs.
- H.B. 318 - The Criminal Illegal Alien Enforcement Act.

The following vetoed bill have not been overridden:

- S.B. 50 - Freedom to Carry NC.
- S.B. 153 - North Carolina Border Protection Act.
- S.B. 227 - Eliminating “DEI” in Public Education.
- S.B. 558 - Eliminating “DEI” in Public Higher Ed.
- H.B. 171 - Equality in State Agencies/Prohibition on DEI.
- H.B. 96 - Expedited Removal of Unauthorized Persons. (Note: a separate bill was passed that took out the Governor’s exception to the puppy mill piece that the Senate added in the original bill.)

The North Carolina 2025 Farm Act, SB 639, introduced by Sen. Jackson, was passed in the Senate after a controversial few months over the raw milk provision in the bill was removed. This provision has always been a bone of contention. It is against the law in North Carolina to sell raw milk for human consumption unless it is labeled as “pet milk” or “not for human consumption.” Because of reported pet cat deaths due to drinking “pet milk,” the raw milk issue again came to the forefront.

Another point of contention and alarm is in Section 19 of the Farm Act which allows for pesticide manufacturers to be protected from liability if their product has a label approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under FIFRA, the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

The North Carolina Grange has grave concerns over the continuum of lawsuits that have been filed countrywide against Bayer CropScience for not warning their consumers on the labeling of glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup that purportedly causes cancer. For years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in spite of a multitude of scientific research through the years, has never found evidence that glyphosate causes cancer. The EPA dictates the required wording on product labeling. Because there is no evidence of glyphosate causing cancer, the EPA does not allow Bayer CropScience to label it as such. Bayer CropScience has paid approximately \$10 billion to settle these disputed claims to date, with 67,000 further cases still pending. Bayer has had to put aside \$5.9 billion in legal provisions because of these pending cases. Farmers have been depending on Roundup to help control weeds for over 50 years. It is used throughout the country and has been found to be a highly effective herbicide. (Info from Reuters) Glyphosate is mined in two locations in the world, Idaho and China.

The 2025 North Carolina Farm Act, Senate Bill 639, sponsored by Senators Brent Jackson, Norm Sanderson and Lisa Barns supports the legislation to clarify package labeling in Section 19 of the bill. It reads as follows:
Section 19: Establishes that the duty of a manufacturer or seller of a pesticide to warn a consumer or the public about the risks associated with the pesticide under GS 99B-5 (failure to warn claims) is presumed to be satisfied if the pesticide bears the label approved by the US EPA under the Federal

Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the pesticide is registered with the Pesticide Board. Provides for rebuttal of the presumption, "Without this provision, North Carolina is opening a pathway for companies to be targeted by plaintiffs' attorneys for simply complying with federal law. The rigor of EPA requirements cannot be overstated, attempts to add a state-level of regulation to that process will increase lawsuits and bigger pockets for plaintiffs' attorneys, but it will not do anything for farmer safety. (NC Chamber of Commerce)

A House Agriculture Committee member was able to pass an amendment that affectively removed the language from the bill. The revised bill was passed out of committee; however when it reached the Senate, members voted to non-concur and conferees were appointed to negotiate a solution. It will more than likely be taken up again at the end of August.

In Congress, the much talked about "Big Beautiful Bill" passed the US House on July 3 with 218 yeas and 214 nays. It was signed on July 4 by President Trump.

The vote followed after an 8 hour and 44-minute speech by Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D(NY) which delayed the final vote.

News that North Carolina Senator Thom Tillis would not run for reelection

next year came as a shock to North Carolinians. Sen. Tillis has served in the US Senate for ten years, also serving previously in the NC House from 2007 to 2015, and as the House Speaker from 2007 to 2015. The NC Grange has worked with Sen. Tillis and his staff closely during his tenure. We will miss the relationship we established with his office.

The NC Grange signed onto a letter this in July to Secretary Kennedy, Secretary Rollins, and Administrator Zeldin, urging them to ensure food and agriculture have a seat at the table during the development of policy recommendations related to the recent Make America Healthy Again (MAHA). The letter was signed by organizations representing millions of farmers, ranchers, food producers, and ingredient manufacturers. We are pleased to see the MAHA committee has since included farmers in their meetings.





HEALTH CARE INSURANCE CHANGES ARE A COMING!

July was a very active month for precipitating coming health insurance changes, both on a national and state level. Will those changes be good or bad? Only time will tell that answer. In the short time, there will be a lot of anxiety for individuals, insurance agents, insurance carriers, as well as county, state and federal employees as these mandated changes take effect, and processes of engagement are established and then acclimated.

So, what are some of the major changes cited in the “Big Beautiful Bill” that will affect us here in North Carolina?

For those Under 65:

The bill now requires all recipients of marketplace health insurance premium subsidies, also referred to as advanced premium tax credits, to verify their household income. This means that those wanting to renew their current coverage will need to provide a form of acceptable income verification prior to their renewal for continual coverage with subsidies applied. We anticipate that the insured could themselves or provide their agent with this verification for uploading to the Marketplace to satisfy this new requirement of everyone. In years past, the insureds were automatically re-enrolled and continued to receive their prior year's subsidy until either they updated their stated income or chosen by the Marketplace to submit current income verification. Pre-enrollment verification that the individual/family is eligible for subsidy is also a new twist to encounter in 2026. Previously, the insured had a limited time to provide marketplace verification, yet the subsidy always began on the policy's effective date. With the new provision the subsidy can only start post verification. Another major change revolves around the understating of household earnings. Previously, there was a limitation amount on the recapture of overpaid subsidy amounts that the government could collect. The new law eliminated this limitation, so it becomes imperative that the estimation of projected income be as accurate as possible and if there are changes occurring during the year, then an updated household income need reporting to the marketplace for a subsidy recalculation to avoid a significant recaptured subsidy amount.

This new requirement is going to create some additional workload for your agent, but it will also provide a great opportunity for the insured and the agent to review the current coverage levels and make sure that the insured has the best plan for their individual situation. However, schedule your review appointment early as the enrollment annual enroll-

ment period has rolled back to November 1 through December 15 as it was originally in the ACA legislation.

The effects of this bill are less pronounced on Medicare recipients. Upon reading the Senate Finance Committee notes on this bill, the major change is limiting non-citizen eligibility for Medicare benefits. Then new bill limits benefits to lawful permanent residents, certain Cuban Immigrants and Citizens of the Freely Associated States. Any prior non-citizens receiving Medicare benefits will cease, effective one year after the date of enactment of the law, if they are not in one or more of the above three classes.

Current and potential Medicaid enrollees will see the largest effects of the new law. A significant change is the requirement of “specified non-pregnant, nondisabled, child less adults, aged 19 through 64, to complete a minimum of 80 hours of qualifying community engagement activities.” There is a safety net for many individuals who have a significant disability, medically frail, caretakers of young children or disabled persons from this requirement. There are also “good cause” exemptions like natural disasters or excessive unemployment rates in their area. Examples of the required community involvement include work or participation in a work, community service, or educational program(s). Medicare enrollees will have at least three months prior notification before this becomes effective to document their case of exemption or compliance to this requirement. Recently a friend reminded me that this is not a new concept for Medicaid enrollees. In the 1990s, President Clinton proposed this as part of his welfare reform efforts.

Further changes include required eligibility redeterminations every six months versus annually and the required verification of citizenship, nationality or satisfactory immigration status for Medicaid eligibility. There is also an elimination of alien eligibility except for those lawful permanent residents, certain Cuban immigrants and individuals living in the US through the Compact of Free Association.

There is also a cost share requirement of up to \$35.00 for certain medical services, excluding but not limited to primary, prenatal, pediatric care, for Medicaid enrollees with certain income levels.

States must review death records as well as cross check for Medicare Enrollees possibly receiving benefits in another

state on a monthly or quarterly basis to eliminate unwarranted payments.

This bill introduces several changes that will take effect in the coming year and beyond. So, will it be beneficial to the citizens of North Carolina? I'm sure that there will be some individuals that suffer some adversity with the passage of this legislation, however, we normally do grow stronger as we go through hard times. We will have to wait to see what the long-term gains or losses will be. In the meantime, I'll encourage you to read the bill yourself to form your own educated opinion versus just listening to either party spin their opinions or taking their word as the gospel. Identify both the positive aspects and potential challenges and communicate your observations to your Federal and State Representatives. Here is the link to the Senate overview where I drew most of the information presented in this article. (https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/finance_committee_summary2.pdf)

SEARCHING FOR INSURANCE?

We've got options.

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

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St. John's:

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Schley:

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