



# THE GRANGE CELEBRATES NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

*-Benjamin Franklin*

January 15, 2021

## **Zoom Meetings**

*By Betsy E. Huber, National Grange President*

Here we are in a new year, with no sign of the pandemic abating anytime soon. Is your Grange meeting? I would not encourage you to meet in person during these times, but are you using other means like conference calls or Zoom?

You may have started out in April thinking, “We can skip a meeting this month; we’ll be back together in a few weeks.” Boy, did that turn out to be wrong! I sincerely hope your Grange has stayed connected through these ten months of being shut in. If you have not had a meeting or event in the last ten months your Grange is in extreme danger of never meeting again. It’s easy to get out of the habit of “Grange every other Friday night” or whatever night you meet. Our theme “Cultivating Connections” is carried over through 2021 because it is so important—even more important in these times to stay connected with each other and with our communities.

There can be great benefits from meeting virtually. My own Pomona met last Saturday via Zoom, and we saw members we had not seen in many years or ever! One member said it was the first Pomona meeting she was able to attend in 17 years since she moved away from the area. I hope you will consider keeping a Zoom option even after the pandemic, so members who are unable to be physically present can still participate.

Another benefit is programming. If you thought you had too few members to invite a speaker to your meeting, this is your opportunity. Anyone will be happy to join you from the comfort of their home to speak about their favorite topic for 15 minutes. You can even invite the public or the entire Grange community to participate.

Also if members are in their homes, they will be able to demonstrate a craft they like to do, or show off a collection or a hobby. Think of all the possibilities! Many people have picked up new hobbies during this time—ask them to share with the group.

If your Grange has not utilized virtual meetings yet, what are you waiting for? It appears that we may be restricted from in person meetings for months to come. There is no excuse for not meeting, at least by telephone, to keep your Grange members connected and in the Grange habit. It doesn’t matter if you are not the President, or even any officer. Take the initiative to volunteer to set something up. We are depending on you to save your Grange!

## **Difference of Opinion is no Crime**

*By National Membership Director Joe Stefenoni*

“We propose meeting together, talking together, working together and, in general, acting together for our mutual protection and advancement. We shall constantly strive to secure harmony, good will, and brotherhood, and to make our Order perpetual. We shall earnestly endeavor to suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices, all unhealthy rivalry and all selfish ambition. Faithful adherence to these principles will ensure our mental, moral, social and material advancement.”

These words, from the Declaration of Purposes of the National Grange, penned in the aftermath of the Civil War echo today with new resound. Over the last month we have watched events in our country unfold that are simultaneously shocking, unimaginable and unlike anything most of us have ever seen. The fabric of the American experiment is being tested and it is the responsibility of us all to ensure its strength. With the uncertainty these events have created, the Grange today is a place for communities across our county to find stability, just as they were in the decade following a time where brother took up arms against brother.

“We acknowledge the broad principle that difference of opinion is no crime, and hold that ‘progress toward truth is made by differences of opinion,’ while ‘the fault lies in bitterness of controversy.’”

These principles which create the foundation of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry can serve to create a roadmap for Granges on how they help their communities heal and move forward. Welcoming new people into our fraternal circle where they can feel the goodness and kindness of those who are their friends and neighbors is what our country needs. It is especially important to strengthen the fabric of our national life that we bring together groups of people with a variety of opinions so that we can make the “progress toward truth” hoped for by our founders over 150 years ago.

As we begin a new year, Community Granges should look at how they can work to bring their community together for good fellowship, healthy debate and positive healing that will help to ensure our mental, moral, social and material advancement.

## **2021 Youth Programming**

*By Mandy Bostwick, National Grange Youth Director*

What a crazy year 2020 was. I was deeply saddened that I wasn’t able to spend time with youth, young adults, and other Grangers at the regional conferences in 2020. It proved to be a time that, as Grangers, we must persevere through whatever is thrown at us.

With the pandemic still looming in the background, some of our events may be altered or canceled. It is with regret that we must cancel the 2021 Washington DC Experience. Last year’s event was a huge success, and I was looking forward to seeing how many more young faces we could bring to Washington DC. It will be continued in 2022. The Grange Inter-State Youth

Exchange (GISYE) will continue, but there may be stipulations put in place because of the pandemic. As we move forward with this unpredictable time, there may be changes or modifications to all programming. I will keep you all updated if those changes arise.

I am excited to announce the introduction of Grange Debate to this year's program. It will be a contest held at regional conferences only. The Code Reading contest will also be held as a regional conference. I hope that with these contests being held regionally, it will garner more interest since there are fewer travel costs to stay within the region rather than travel to National Session, and it will also allow more time at National Session for building our young Grange leaders.

The National Grange Youth Department remains committed to recognizing Youth Achievements through its Youth recognition programs- National Youth Officer Team, Horizon Leadership Program, and the John Trimble Legislative Experience. Please review the guidelines for each of these programs because there have been some changes made for these programs as well.

I will be hosting bi-monthly zoom meetings on the 3rd Sunday of even-numbered months for directors and anyone interested in youth programming. Join me for the first "Youth Yammerings" on Sunday, February 21 at 9 EST/8 CST/7 MST/ 6 PST. Use the direct link: <http://bit.ly/NationalGrangeYouthYammerings>

I look forward to working with all of the youth, young adults, and state directors across the country as we go into 2021 with new programming that will help guide us into the future of our organization. Continue to strive to "Be Proud. Be Leaders. Be Grange Youth."

## **My Grange Mentor**

*By Derek Snyder*

Each of us has benefitted from having at least one mentor in our lifetime. Mentors come from all walks of life and offer advice, guidance, experience, and wisdom among other things. These people are often our friends, family, colleagues, or other individuals that have a compassion and interest in helping us develop into being better humans.

I first met Dan Greer back in 2015 when I visited Durango, Colorado during my time as National Grange Youth Ambassador. Within 30 minutes of Dan picking me up at the airport we had developed a bond that quickly turned into a lifelong friendship. Since that time, Dan has become one of my most valued mentors, as I have learned from him the importance of things like family, faith, confidence, intuition, and the importance of laughter and humor in everything I do. I am motivated and inspired by his success in his own life, whether it be starting his own company or raising a wonderful family.

Dan would tell you the credit for his accomplishments belong to God. He would also tell you that he has had his own share of mentors within his life, I am sure his father Harry (or Old Man Greer as some Grange Youth Adults affectionately call him) being one of them. Dan has continued to provide me with advice as well as support in times of need. Had it not been for the Grange or my time as youth ambassador I do not think I would've had the privilege to meet and build a

friendship with my lifelong mentor and friend. Dan continues to encourage and advise me in our ever-changing world and for that I am deeply thankful.

Despite living nearly 2,000 miles apart, Dan and I still find time to get together at least twice a year, once at a Grange event and when I become an adopted member of the Greer family, usually for a family vacation (sorry again for that time I threw up in your car). The other 50 weeks of the year, I often find myself talking or texting Dan and getting advice on all aspects of my life. I continue to cherish our friendship, his mentorship, and look forward to whatever comes next for both of us on our Grange journey.



## **Chairman Pai's Farewell Address**

*By Kennedy Gwin*

In a farewell address with the National Grange and MMTC, Chairman Pai took the time to outline the FCC's accomplishments in the last four years as well as addressed the rural urban digital divide. Chairman Pai said that his number one priority since day one has been the expansion of rural broadband and its deployment to underserved communities.

The two main strategies and reforms Pai discussed were the changing of the Universal Service Fund so that they could provide companies subsidies for investing in rural and underserved communities. The second reform was the repealing of current regulations to strengthen the case for business to invest in rural America.

One of these strategies included the reverse auction format for companies bidding on networks and spectrum. These auctions were a massive success as they produced competitiveness in the market and allowed private business to fill the gap where taxpayers' dollars previously were tapped. This saved taxpayers 3.5 billion dollars and created a new market for internet and cell phone providers to enter.

The second strategy was the removal of dated regulations that were slowing the process of deployment and no longer relevant to the modern market. This meant getting rid of regulations that were passed in the 1930s and clearing the bureaucracy for today's providers. The repealing of these regulations had a direct impact on closing the digital divide in rural America by cutting the number of underserved nearly in half.

Another program the FCC continues to roll out and hopes to be continued into the next administration is the creation and implementation of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. This fund has set up auctions for providers and has generated 11 billion dollars for rural broadband in hopes that 99% of rural individuals will be served 5G and broadband within the next 5 years. Pai also highlighted the direct action he took to expand broadband to Puerto Rico as well as the US Virgin Islands in aggressive actions unprecedented by previous FCC administrations. The belief that all Americans deserve access to broadband continued to be a goal of the FCC.

Despite the pandemic the FCC was on top of the crisis and created the Keep Americans Connected pledge that asked providers to not cut off broadband service for nonpayment for 60 days and assist low-income families during these troubling times. This pledge was later extended to June. After June Congress took direct action to provide funding and keep families connected for both school and telework.

Moving forward into the next administration Chairman Pai says he "looks forward to phase 2 of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and that we look forward to seeing the 11 billion dollars spent to support the continued expansion of broadband in rural America". For those who would like to read his address go to <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-369186A1.pdf> or check out the YouTube video on the National Grange YouTube Channel.

## **A FEW GREAT MENTIONS**

*This is a new section we will include each week with a few of the links to articles in which the local, State or the National Grange have been mentioned or our statements have appeared.*

- Technology Drives the Sustainable Practices Needed to Meet 21st Century Food Demand, Washington DC, <https://morningconsult.com/opinions/technology-drives-the-sustainable-practices-needed-to-meet-21st-century-food-demand/>
- Interview: National Food Program Defunded, Sacramento, CA, <https://fox40.com/morning/interview-national-food-box-program-defunded/?fbclid=IwAR1vIxvFN8GYYk0F1B4fqhVyOINjiAdj-vDMxWivk0az2kYgC6pmjhQh4>

## GRANGE COMMENTS ON WEEKLY ITEMS OF INTEREST

*This is a new section we will include each week with at least one quote from the week prior made about a policy issue or current event by National Grange President Betsy Huber or other Grange leaders for inclusion by media or to spark interest in the rural perspective.*

- Betsy Huber Hosts Chairman Pai's farewell address followed by a Q&A with MMTC



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**National Grange HQ | 1616 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20006 | (202) 628-3507**

**Publisher** Betsy Huber, National Grange President, available to members at [betsy@nationalgrange.org](mailto:betsy@nationalgrange.org) or by phone at (484) 459-1957

**Editor** Amanda Brozana Rios, National Grange Communications & Development Director. Contact to renew your subscription to Good Day! magazine, submit a story idea or request assistance with publicity by email at [abrozana@nationalgrange.org](mailto:abrozana@nationalgrange.org) or call/text (301) 943-1090

**Membership Recognition, Sales and Benefits** Loretta Washington, National HQ, ext. 109 or email [sales@nationalgrange.org](mailto:sales@nationalgrange.org) or ext. 109

**Free Grange Websites, Emails, and Membership Database** Stephanie Wilkins, National HQ, ext. 101 or email [swilkins@nationalgrange.org](mailto:swilkins@nationalgrange.org)

**Leadership/Membership** Joe Stefenoni, (707) 328-0631 or send an email to [membership@nationalgrange.org](mailto:membership@nationalgrange.org)

**Lecturer** Chris Hamp, [lecturer@nationalgrange.org](mailto:lecturer@nationalgrange.org) or (509) 953-3533

**Community Service** Pete Pompper [communityservice@nationalgrange.org](mailto:communityservice@nationalgrange.org) or (609) 820-6239

**Legislative and Policy Issues** Burton Eller, National HQ, ext. 114 or email [beller@nationalgrange.org](mailto:beller@nationalgrange.org)

**Grange Youth** Mandy Bostwick, [youth@nationalgrange.org](mailto:youth@nationalgrange.org) or (785) 250-7606

**Junior Grange** Samantha Wilkins, [junior@nationalgrange.org](mailto:junior@nationalgrange.org) or (210) 838-7892

# COVID-19 RELIEF PACKAGE: \$7 Billion in New Broadband Funding

The \$900 billion COVID-19 relief package – included within the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 – **appropriates \$7 billion for broadband related efforts**. The new funding for broadband initiatives can be used by local, state, and federal entities to purchase connectivity and devices to support education, telehealth, and broadband expansion.

## BROADBAND PROVISIONS

A large portion – **\$3.2 billion** – will go towards creating the *Emergency Broadband Benefit Program*, which will help low-income individuals purchase connectivity, as well as connected devices, during the pandemic. This program, administered by the FCC, will reimburse broadband internet service providers for connecting eligible low-income households.

### ► Discounts available for qualifying households include:

- Up to \$50/month for eligible service (up to \$75/month for Tribal)
- Up to \$100 for connected devices – specifically laptops, desktop computers or tablets

**The relief package also includes funding for the following broadband projects:**

**Broadband Connectivity in Tribal and Unserved Areas.** The package creates and appropriates **\$1 billion** to the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will make grants to eligible entities to increase broadband access and adoption on tribal land.

**Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Program.** The package allocates **\$300 million** for NTIA to provide competitive-based grants for covered partnerships to deploy fixed broadband infrastructure in unserved communities.

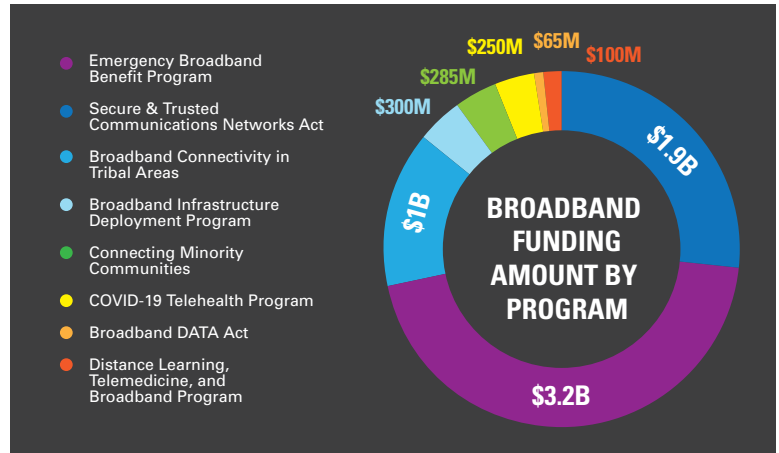
**Connecting Minority Communities.** The package appropriates **\$285 million** to (1) establish an Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives within NTIA, and (2) establish a Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to expand broadband access in low-income communities.

**COVID-19 Telehealth Program.** The package appropriates **\$250 million** in additional funds for the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program, which was originally established under the CARES Act.

**Broadband DATA Act.** The package provides **\$65 million** for the FCC to implement the Broadband DATA Act, which requires the FCC to collect granular data regarding broadband internet access and create maps determining the availability of broadband internet access service across the U.S.

**Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program.** The package provides over **\$100 million** in additional funds for the Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program administered under the Department of Agriculture Office of Rural Development.

**Secure & Trusted Communications Networks Act.** The package provides **\$1.9 billion** for telecommunication providers with fewer than 10 million subscribers to rip-and-replace Huawei/ZTE equipment with secure equipment.



## EDUCATION & ONLINE LEARNING

The stimulus bill also provides nearly \$82 billion of additional funding to the Education Stabilization Fund established by the CARES Act. State, local and education officials have discretion to apply some of this money to online learning technology and connectivity.