

Why Every Community Needs a Grange TODAY

Every community needs a Grange today because every community has needs and interests that this versatile organization can address, nurture and advance. The Grange is the only community organization that provides leadership training, advocacy, public service, *and* a fraternal bond. Although it remains rooted in agriculture, today's Grange offers something of interest for everyone, regardless of what type of community one calls home.

The Grange developed as a grass-roots, family, fraternal organization that enabled farmers to collectively advocate for their rights, elevate their skills, and share in fellowship. Since the Grange was founded in 1867, agriculture and the communities of our nation have changed significantly; so too has the Grange! Yet even the traditional interests of the Grange touch every community today. Agriculture affects us all because every community needs food to eat, clothes to wear, land to live on and cultivate, minerals and energy for resources, and jobs for workers.

Most Granges are located in rural areas, but the Grange has always had a metropolitan face too. In fact, Oliver Hudson Kelley, credited as the father of the Grange, grew up in the city of Boston, Massachusetts, before moving west to become a farmer. And it was in Washington, D.C., where Kelley and the six other Grange founders launched the first local chapter, Potomac Grange, which still meets in the capital city. Hence, the Grange can serve the interests of all types of communities, especially today as suburban sprawl progressively blurs the line between urban and rural life.

Although the Grange itself is nonpartisan, the Grange can provide every community a forum not only to discuss issues relating to legislation and policy, but also to help shape them through advocacy. Today, the collective voice of 300,000 Grangers from 3,600 chapters in 37 states continues to carry significant weight with public and elected officials from the local to the state and federal levels.

Now, more than ever, every community has individuals and families looking to connect with their neighbors and serve their community. Nothing forges connections better than a fraternal organization, in which members see themselves as brothers and sisters, regardless of age or status. Fraternal rituals unite the members of each local Grange, while also creating a common bond with Grangers across the state and nation.

Every community has current leaders who can improve, and future leaders who will emerge, if given the opportunity to develop their skills. Every community has talents of all ages who seek a performance venue, and audience members who enjoy a good show. Every community needs a place where people of all ages can enjoy fellowship and learn from each other. The Grange is the unique organization that can provide all that (and more) to every community. Every community can benefit from the Grange and that is why every community needs a Grange today!

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