2027 NORTHEAST LEADERS CONFERENCE
BEYOND 250

January 8–10, 2027

Growing Leaders • Strengthening Granges • Preparing for the Future

Join Grange leaders from across the Northeast for a weekend of learning, collaboration, fellowship, and forward-looking conversations. Together, we will explore how we can develop stronger leaders, build stronger Granges, and prepare our organization for what lies Beyond 250.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8

5:00–7:00 PM — **Registration & Community Service Activity**

Arrive, check in, reconnect with friends from across the Northeast, and take part in our opening community service activity.

6:00-7:00 PM — **Big E Grange Building Trustee Meeting**

7:00–7:15 PM — **Welcome, Introductions & Beyond 250 Overview**

A brief welcome and look at the weekend ahead as we begin thinking about leadership and the future of the Grange.

7:15–8:00 PM — **Leadership Without a Title**
Sherri Horner - NYS Grange Junior Director

You do not need to hold an office to be a leader. Explore how initiative, communication, reliability, service, and influence can help every member make a difference.

8:10 PM–? — **Department Time**

Lecturers, Chaplains, Youth, Family Activities, Membership/Leadership, Community Service, Juniors and other groups will gather to reconnect, share what is happening in their states, and discuss common interests and challenges.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9

8:30–9:15 AM — **Know Yourself, Know Your Team**
Elaine Smith - NYS Grange Executive Committee

Explore leadership and communication styles and how understanding yourself—and the people around you—can help build stronger, more effective teams.

9:25–10:10 AM — **From Member to Leader: Building Your Leadership Bench**
Juleah Tolosky - Director NYS FFA

How do we move beyond relying on the same few people? Learn ways to identify potential leaders, mentor members, share responsibility, transfer knowledge, and prepare the next generation of Grange leadership.

10:20–11:05 AM — **Conflict Without Casualties**
Walter Hartley - Rhode Island State President

Disagreement is inevitable; damaged relationships do not have to be. Consider practical approaches for handling conflict, difficult conversations, personality differences, and generational perspectives while keeping the Grange mission at the center.

11:15 AM–12:00 — **Tell Your Story, Build Your Connections**
Mel Phelps - NYS Grange Vice President

Learn how to clearly communicate the value of the Grange and use that story to build meaningful partnerships with FFA, 4-H, agricultural education, community organizations, prospective members, and others.

12:00–1:30 PM **Lunch on Your Own**

1:30–2:15 PM **Engagement with Intent**
NYS FFA Leadership Training Foundation & Camp Oswegatchie

Leadership development can be active and fun. Explore purposeful group activities and learn how effective debriefing can turn a simple activity into a meaningful leadership lesson.

2:25–3:15 PM **Featured Workshop — Ethics First: Responsible AI**
Phil Vonada - National Grange Communications Director

Phil Vonada will explore responsible uses of artificial intelligence for leaders and organizations, including its opportunities, limitations, ethical considerations, accuracy, and the continuing importance of human judgment.

3:15–3:30 PM **Break**

3:30–4:15 PM **Department Time — Northeast Planning & Collaboration**

Departments will come back together with a forward-looking purpose: What can we accomplish together as a Northeast Region? Groups will be encouraged to identify ideas, resources, projects, or priorities for regional collaboration.

4:15–5:00 PM **Beyond 250: Is Your Grange Ready for What's Next?**
Tom Lawton - NYS Grange

A conference-wide conversation that puts the weekend's ideas into action. Together we will consider what the Grange should preserve, what may need to change, and what we should begin doing as we move Beyond 250.

5:00–6:00 PM **Break / Free Time**

6:00–7:15 PM **Dinner**

7:30 PM **Saturday Keynote — The Future of Agriculture and the Northeast's Place in It - Liam Brody**

Liam Brody will look ahead at changes in agriculture, shifts in domestic and international food production, changing growing conditions, and the potential for the Northeast to play an increasingly important role in the future of food production.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

8:30–9:15 AM **Devotional Service - Kelly Frost - NYS Grange Chaplin**

9:15–10:00 AM **Beyond 250 Takeaways & Conference Wrap-Up**

Departments will share highlights from their regional conversations, and participants will reflect on a final question: After everything we have heard this weekend, what is one thing the Grange needs to do to remain relevant Beyond 250?

10:00 AM **Northeast Connection Meeting**

BEYOND 250

Look Forward • Develop Leaders • Strengthen Our Granges • Work Together • Prepare for the Future