



NATIONAL GRANGE

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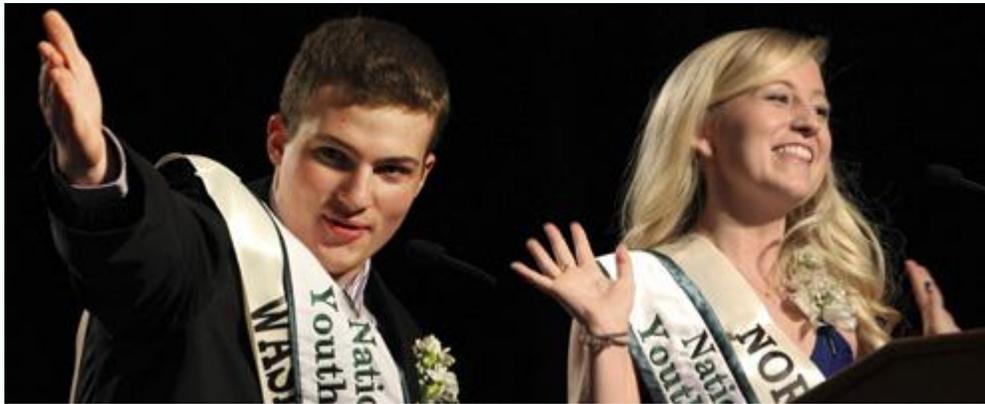
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Washington man, North Carolina woman selected as National Grange Youth Ambassadors at 146th Annual Convention



BOISE, Idaho - The National Grange is pleased to announce the two new Youth Ambassadors, Jimmy Smith of suburban Seattle, Wash., and Courtney Gray, of Cary, N.C.

Smith and Gray were selected after all six participants were interviewed, and their appointment was announced at the 146th Annual National Grange Convention at the Boise Centre on Friday, Nov. 16 during the Evening of Excellence talent show.

Smith is a member of East Hill Grange No. 736. He is a student at Western Washington University, majoring in history. In 2011, he served as Lecturer of the National Grange Youth Officers Team and has been a part of the Washington State Grange Youth Officer Team since 2007.

Gray is a member of Southern Wake Grange No. 1295 and is studying communications and broadcasting at Winthrop University. She has competed in competitive speech, debate and mock trial contests for eight years.

The National Ambassador program, which is in its tenth year, allows a youth to assist with

the national youth department programs and services, and help plan for the next annual convention - the 147th that will be held in Manchester, N.H., in early November of 2013.

Participants interviewed were all State Youth Ambassadors who attended the National Convention and worked hard throughout the year in their states to assist and promote the youth program for the Grange.

Some of the duties of being a Youth Ambassador are speaking at state functions, participating in youth camps, planning youth activities, and filling out an Ambassador application. There is also a Trivia Challenge, to make sure that the Youth Ambassadors applying for the National level really know their facts and history about the Grange.

States generally select ambassadors through an application process. State Youth Ambassadors then have an opportunity to compete for the National Youth Ambassador. They are judged on Grange knowledge, leadership and communication skills.

Espnshade said the selection was difficult as all the State Ambassadors that competed were excellent candidates.

"Jimmy and Courtney were just a hair above the rest, but all of the youth were really stellar," Espnshade said. "This program is about giving Grange youth the chance to lead. This program is a springboard to other Grange opportunities."

The other competitors were Elijah Bright, of Huntersville, N.C.; Jennifer Lanstrum, of Geauga County, Ohio; Adam Hinshaw, Darke County, Ohio; and Brittney Oliver, of Tacoma, Wash.