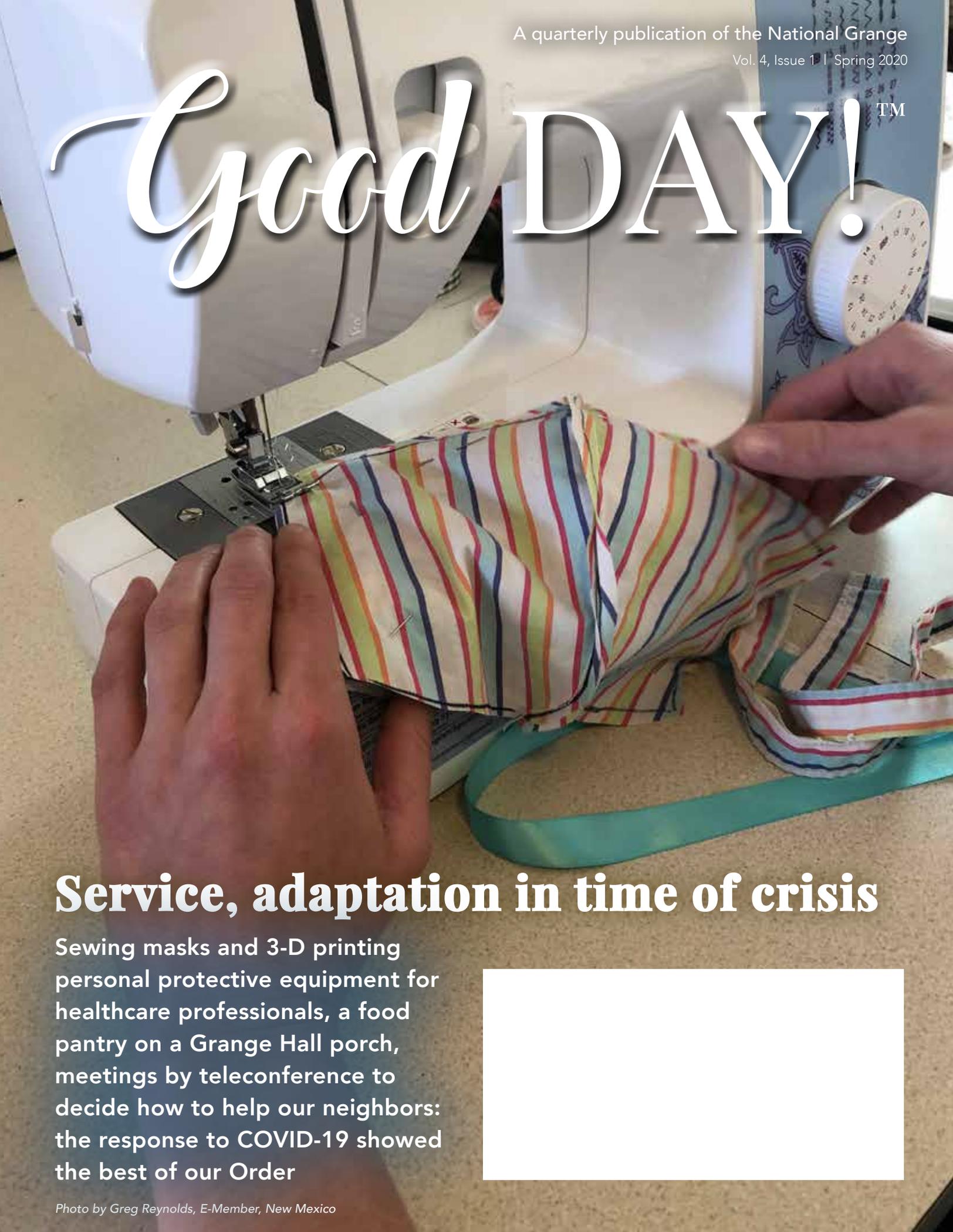


Good DAY!™



Service, adaptation in time of crisis

Sewing masks and 3-D printing personal protective equipment for healthcare professionals, a food pantry on a Grange Hall porch, meetings by teleconference to decide how to help our neighbors: the response to COVID-19 showed the best of our Order



Iowa caucus shows why paper option is still essential

We all need the option to choose paper over digital

Lessons from the Iowa caucuses and a consumer-friendly move by telecom giant AT&T

Everyone reading likely remembers the vote counting debacle like it was yesterday, happening in our own backyards. Poorly designed digital technology was rushed into service, and it failed spectacularly. And lo and behold, it was good old paper that saved the day.

Now imagine being given the choice of using the defective caucus voting app for free, or paying \$6.50 to ensure your vote is accurately counted on paper. Worse yet, what if you couldn't even choose paper as an option?

Those are precisely the false choices that major corporations are now giving their customers when it comes to critical communications, including bills, statements and payments on account. But before you despair, there is good news - the Keep Me Posted campaign is working tirelessly to ensure we all have a choice and a voice.

Whether we like it or not, we have all been receiving more and more of our service provider documents electronically. Increasingly, the opportunity to choose between receiving a statement on paper or digitally is disappearing. The needs and preferences of millions of customers for paper bills and statements are frequently being ignored.

For example, some customers have difficulty accessing online technology, and some have security concerns about online fraud. Others require paper communications for practical reasons such as older adults who are not comfortable with online documents, people with disabilities who find it difficult to access their files, low income households without computers or broadband service, and people in rural areas where unreliable internet access is common.

About 37% of rural Americans in 2019 said they did not have broadband internet at home and were 12% less likely to have internet access at home compared to Americans overall. Less



THE CONSUMER'S
RIGHT TO CHOOSE

WWW.KEEPMEPOSTEDNA.ORG

than half of lower income Americans, who earn below \$30,000 per year, do not have access to home broadband internet (44%) and do not own a laptop (46%) or tablet computer (64%). People are also increasingly relying on smartphones to make online payments, but their small size and formatting makes them unsuitable for record keeping and reviewing statements.

Keep Me Posted North America (KMP) is celebrating its first anniversary as a non-profit organization addressing these issues. As a vibrant coalition of consumer groups, charities and businesses, KMP has been working to ensure that every consumer in North America can choose, free of charge, how they receive important information – on paper or electronically – from their service providers.

The KMP initiative makes it clear that digital-only communication is not for everyone. A 2019 North American consumer survey on preferences and attitudes toward print and paper revealed that an overwhelming 86% of U.S. consumers want a choice when it comes to how they receive important information – on paper or electronically – from their service providers.

The survey also shows that 56% of U.S. consumers find it easier to manage their finances when printed on paper and 74% of respondents are concerned that their personal information held electronically is at risk of being hacked, stolen, lost or damaged. These concerns may explain

why 73% of respondents keep hard copies of important documents filed at home, as they believe this is the safest and most secure way of storing their information.

About 45% of consumers would consider switching to an alternative service provider if they were forced to go paperless. Service providers might want to consider the risk they take when switching their customers to digital without their consent.

KMP has published several fact sheets and compiled testimonials from consumers who have voiced their opinions about why paper documents are so important to them. The organization hopes that when companies are armed with the facts, they will better understand and respect their customer's right to choose. Infographics for social media use can be downloaded at <https://keepmepostedna.org/download-the-latest-infographics-from-keep-me-posted>

If you have concerns about corporations removing consumer choice and charging extra for paper statements, please contact info@keepmepostedna.org with details of the case. To support the KMP campaign or share your thoughts on paper vs digital communications please go to: <http://keepmepostedna.org/what-can-i-do/>

About Keep Me Posted North America

Keep Me Posted North America (KMP) is a coalition that includes the National Grange as well as consumer groups, physical and mental health charities and trade unions. KMP believes every consumer should be able to choose, free of charge and without penalty, how they receive important information - on paper or electronically - from their corporate service providers (ex: banks, telecoms, insurance and utility companies). KMP seeks to champion the cause of the millions who prefer paper-based communications or are disenfranchised by increased digitization and lack of choice, including many key sectors of society such as seniors, people with disabilities, low-income families, and those without the Internet or computer skills.



Great news: Major companies are listening!

Keep Me Posted's direct efforts changed the messaging used by AT&T following several complaints received from consumers in the fall of 2018. AT&T had sent an email to their customers saying that they were "going paperless" by a certain date and that, if they preferred paper statements, they would have to "opt-in" to paper via their website. Essentially, AT&T customers would be automatically switched to electronic billing without their consent.

KMP, which includes the National Grange, contacted AT&T requesting that it give their customers a clear option to choose between paper and online billing and in 2019, AT&T changed its message so that customers who did not respond with an email address would not automatically be switched to online billing. The default would be paper billing.

National Grange Legislative Director Burton Eller said the Grange's long-standing relationship with AT&T was a part of the success.

"Our relationship with AT&T, that stretches back decades to address issues related to rural America, helped the Keep Me Posted coalition broach this issue because AT&T has an insight into challenges those in rural communities face," Eller said.

"While many corporate service providers are aggressively pushing paperless billing to help save on costs, it is good to see that some leading corporations like AT&T are listening to their customers and no longer making paperless communication the default option," says Phil Riebel, Campaign Director for Keep me Posted North America.





THE CONSUMER'S
RIGHT TO CHOOSE

PAPER OR DIGITAL? IT'S YOUR CHOICE.

90% of people believe they should have the right to choose how they receive communications.

83% of consumers believe they should not be charged more for choosing to receive a paper bill or statement.

27% of American adults do not have internet access at home (33.5 million households).

34% of those over 65 do not use the internet.

Sign up for our newsletter:
keepmepostedna.org/sign-up



WHO WE ARE

Keep Me Posted North America is a coalition of consumer groups, charities and businesses that advocate for the right of every consumer in North America to choose, free of charge, how they receive important information - on paper or electronically - from their service providers.

JOIN US

We invite consumer groups, charities and businesses that value paper-based communications and consumer choice to join our coalition.

For more information, go to:

keepmepostedna.org

✉ info@keepmepostedna.org

☎ 855-896-7433