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Local Entrepreneur Receives 2026 Young Retailer of the Year Award

INDIANAPOLIS, May 8, 2026—Grant Raynor, store manager of Town and Country in Benson, North Carolina, was recently named one of the independent home improvement industry's 2026 Young Retailer of the Year honorees by the North American Hardware and Paint Association (NHPA).

This year marks 30 years of the Young Retailer of the Year program, which identifies and promotes the next generation of aspiring independent home improvement, paint and decorating retailers. It recognizes individual achievement by industry retailers age 35 and younger throughout the U.S. and Canada. Honorees are chosen based on a number of criteria, including professional milestones, community engagement, continuing hardware industry education and extracurricular activities, and fall into one of three categories: multistore, under \$3 million sales volume and over \$3 million sales volume.

Sponsors of the 2026 Young Retailer of the Year program include: American Hardware and Lumber Insurance (AHLI), ECI Software Solutions, Midwest Fastener and The Wooster Brush Company.

Cody Goeppner, NHPA director of education and training and 2020 Young Retailer of the Year honoree, says the recognition was a turning point for him as it highlighted the hard work he had poured into his career and introduced him to a broader community of passionate, forward-thinking retailers.

"As someone who grew up in my family's hardware store and spent years as a retailer myself, I know firsthand how much heart, grit and innovation it takes to succeed in this industry," Goeppner says. "It truly is full circle and an incredible honor for me to support and celebrate the next generation of leaders. This program shines a spotlight on the people who are shaping the future of independent retail, and based on this year's class, the future is bright."

Grant Raynor's story is one of quiet leadership, genuine customer care and the kind of steady, behind-the-scenes excellence that makes a retail store not just successful, but truly special. Grant started his career with Town and Country in September 2015 as a floor sales associate. After providing excellent customer service and learning the business quickly, he accelerated in his career and was promoted to a store manager in less than two years. He first took over the McGee Crossing store for Town & Country when he was just 21 years old. At the time, the store was viewed as a leap of faith, but fast-forward nearly a decade and that same store is now one of Town & Country's top-performing locations in return on sales.

When it comes to running a store, Grant focuses on what really matters: the people who walk through the door. Every customer is greeted, listened to and treated with respect—whether they're spending \$5 or \$500. If a customer needs something the store doesn't have, his team will find a way to get it. If they aren't sure what they need, Grant's team will walk them through it until they do. That culture of service has created a loyal following, many of whom are greeted by name when they come in.



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Grant is also thoughtful about what goes on the shelves. In a smaller footprint store, space is everything, and Grant has a real knack for reading sales trends and rotating out slower movers to make room for better-performing items. He's not afraid to make tough calls if it means serving customers more effectively and driving results.

Since Grant started as the store manager at his location in early 2017, his efforts have grown top-line sales by an average of 15.9% year over year. In addition to driving sales revenue, his focus on expense control has positioned the location among the top five most profitable locations in all of CNRG, based on dollars per square foot. When looking at his total time in the store, he has grown the business 123%.

Grant has completed training through Stihl University and earned Silver Certification, giving him a solid foundation in product knowledge that he's passed on to his staff. He is passionate about the product and this allows him to be the subject matter expert for his peers. In addition, Grant has been through training with Ben Moore, Valspar and other various manufacturers, attends industry conferences and spends time watching how others manage their stores. He also keeps a sharp eye on competitors—not to compete for the sake of it, but because he wants to make sure his customers are getting a fair deal. If another store down the road is selling the same product for less, Grant wants to know why. He actively seeks out how he can stay competitive without sacrificing service or quality.

Grant understands that a good store is more than just a place to buy things—it's part of the fabric of the community—so he's made it a priority to stay connected locally by supporting school and church fundraisers, donating products for raffles and letting groups set up booths at the store.

After Hurricane Florence hit western North Carolina, Grant didn't wait for someone else to step in, he went straight to his district manager and asked if they could donate supplies for the cleanup effort. Within days, pallets of water, tarps, chainsaw chains and fuel were on their way to help those in need. For the days leading up to the storm, Grant ignored the closing hours of the store and stayed open until the last customers were served. Many customers who did not get off work until later in the evening were fortunate and grateful for the service that Grant and his team provided in that sensitive time. That's the kind of leader he is—someone who sees a need and acts on it.

The 2026 Young Retailer of the Year honorees will be recognized as part of the Independent Awards Gala at the 2026 Independent Home Improvement Conference in Orlando on July 29. For more information on the Young Retailer of the Year awards program, honorees and more, visit YourNHPA.org/yroty.

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