

Thornburgh seeks penalty for dumping hazardous waste

HARRISBURG — Gov. Dick Thornburgh Monday announced plans to create a special criminal investigation and prosecution unit to combat illegal dumping of hazardous and toxic wastes in Pennsylvania, and said the administration has applied for federal funds to finance the project.

In a joint press conference with state Atty. Gen. Edward G. Biester Jr. and Environmental Resources Secretary Clifford L. Jones, Thornburgh called illegal transportation and dumping of hazardous chemicals and other toxic wastes "Pennsylvania's most serious environmental problem."

The governor said the state Department of Justice yesterday applied for \$50,000 in federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration funds to match \$72,000 in state funds to finance the new unit, which will include investigators and attorneys from the Departments of Justice and Environmental Resources.

The special interdepartmental unit would devote full time to the investigation and prosecution of individuals and entities who, as the governor put it, would make a mockery of our right to a Pennsylvania

that is free of poisons in its rivers, streams, and lands.

"The problem we face is so widespread," Thornburgh said, "that effective enforcement can be achieved only through a joint, concerted, cooperative venture such as that proposed in our grant application."

Noting that Pennsylvania is the third largest generator of hazardous-toxic waste in the United States, Thornburgh said that "the proposed unit represents the necessary blending of criminal law enforcement expertise with scientific expertise that is necessary to combat this problem."

The governor's announcement represented the latest in a series of efforts to better combat illegal dumping of hazardous and toxic waste throughout the Commonwealth. They include:

Submission of legislation to the General Assembly last October that would increase criminal penalties for illegal dumping, provide other tools vital to effective enforcement, and assure the proper siting of waste disposal facilities. That legislation is pending.

A request in the governor's recent budget message for \$644,000 to be used, along with federal matching funds, to more than double the size

of the state's hazardous and toxic waste enforcement team in the Department of Environmental Resources.

Successful investigation of illegal dumping at the Butler Tunnel in Pittston and an ongoing probe of similar offenses at the so-called "Iacavazzi" landfill near Scranton.

The commitment of more than \$300,000 to begin to clean up more than 2,000 barrels of hazardous wastes, including cyanides and

PCBs, on the shore of the Delaware River in Chester.

A similar commitment of state resources to stop the continuing flow of hazardous wastes from the Butler Tunnel into the Susquehanna River.

Empanelling of a statewide investigative grand jury, which last week recommended criminal charges against those allegedly responsible for the Pittston spill.

Berks Co.

Farm Women Meet

The regular monthly meeting of the Berks County Society of Farm Women was held at the home of Edna Angstadt, Powder Mill Road.

President, Verna Taylor gave an interesting report from the State Convention of the Farm Women at Harrisburg in January.

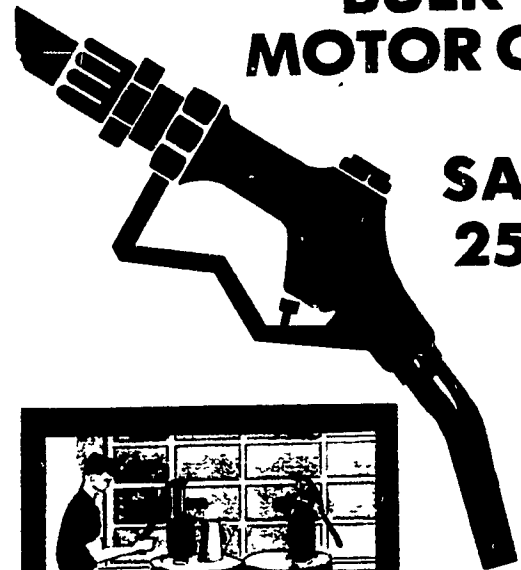
In a reply to a newsletter from Hamburg State School, the group will send three children to camp next summer. Future activities will be games at Berks Heim on April 10; Hoe-down at Hamburg Field House in April.

Fern Kulp received a Certificate of Achievement and Dorothy Rothenberger a Certificate of Appreciation from the county for their participation in various programs.

The reading of the new Official By-Laws and Constitution of the Farm Women was shared by each member reading an article.

The next meeting, on March 4, will be at the home of Jeanne Franz, 649 South Reading Avenue, Boyertown. There will be a talk on banking.

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