

Computer network need outlined at Extension banquet

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Council of Cooperative Extension Associations (PCCOA) held its seventh annual Legislative Banquet at the Penn Harris Motor Inn in Camp Hill on Feb. 28. The Council sponsors the dinner to express appreciation to state legislators for their support on Pennsylvania's Cooperative Extension Service programs.

"Cooperative Extension is shifting into a new type of communication technology which consists of electronics and computers," said Samuel H. Smith, Dean of Penn State's College of Agriculture and Director of the Cooperative Extension Service.

New information systems will transform the way Extension and Penn State operate. Smith explained that technology transfer is one of the keys to greater progress for Pennsylvania agriculture and for continued success in Extension programs.

Penn State's Commonwealth appropriation request includes \$2 million to establish a statewide computer network. Smith explained that this is in a category called "critical unmet needs."

This network will use microcomputers to link each of the Pennsylvania's 71 county and regional Extension offices with the main campus at University Park



Berks County legislators and delegates to the annual legislative banquet of the Pa. Council of Cooperative Extension Associations include, seated from left, Sen. David J. Brightbill and Rep. John S. Davies; standing from the left, Ernest Heckman, George E. Moyer, Roy O. Christman, Carol Dreisbach, Daniel Levensgood Jr. and Helen Readinger.

including all of the departments in the College of Agriculture.

Smith stressed that this is a one-time investment in new technology for Pennsylvania.

"Computers are vital in supporting Extension's educational needs at the county level. This investment also will help assure the economic growth of agriculture, the state's largest industry, and the state's largest

employer," Smith said.

Microcomputers in every county will provide access to computer-based information at the University Park campus for 95 percent of the state's population with just a local phone call.

The system will not only make more information available but also provide up-to-the-minute analysis possible for farmers, including such information as market and weather reports and insect and disease updates and alerts.

Microcomputers will aid accurate decision making for stuff and clientele by making it possible to access sophisticated computers at Penn State to aid decision making for home and business management like — budgeting

alternatives, business expansion, and projecting farm and garden production.

"One thing that we really have going for us is the Northeast Computer Institute," said Smith. This is a five year \$1.6 million Institute funded by the Kellogg Foundation and 11 Northeast land grant universities.

"Headquartered in Pennsylvania, at Penn State, the Institute is providing the expertise and the software essential to get the maximum benefits of the computer network. We are very proud that Penn State was chosen as the site for this institute," said Smith.

The dean said that the volunteer

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Attending the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperative Extension Associations Legislative Banquet from Adams County are, seated, Rep. John H. Broujos and Mrs. Mary Grim, East Berlin; standing left to right, Rep. Kenneth Cole; Mark Wilson, Biglerville; Daniel Hoffman, Gettysburg; Mark Wideman, New Oxford; and Miriam Zepp, New Oxford.

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