

Thornburgh addresses wine group

YORK — Gov. Dick Thornburgh has told a regional wine industry organization that a private liquor and wine system, such as he has proposed, "would provide for Pennsylvania consumers the full range of products that they have been denied for so long by the state's inefficient and mismanaged public liquor monopoly."

Addressing the Eastern Section of the American Society of Enologists at the Sheraton-York Inn, Thornburgh vowed to continue to press for enactment of legislation which would turn the government liquor and wine monopoly over to private enterprise over a five-year period.

"There are those in this state who would love to see this issue go away," said the governor. "I want

to assure you and those who have a vested interest in protecting the status quo that we will continue to keep alive our efforts on behalf of this long overdue reform."

Noting the Society's efforts to advance the cause of quality grape growing and wine-making, Thornburgh said, "It must be as frustrating to you as it has been to Pennsylvania consumers to be forced to deal with an organization such as the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (LCB). For decades it has ignored the interests of consumers with regard to selection and pricing, as well as store hours and locations."

"I urge members of this society to take whatever action possible to help me get this important message across to members of the General Assembly — the public is

fed up with Pennsylvania's outdated liquor and wine monopoly and wants a change," said Thornburgh.

"The principal thrust of my plan," he said, "is to allow Pennsylvania consumers to receive the benefits inherent in free enterprise which they have been unable to get from the indifferent bureaucracy which has operated the liquor system in this state for over 50 years. These benefits are enjoyed by virtually all of our sister states.

"For too long, the LCB has ignored the legitimate complaints of its customers. Monopolies, especially government-operated monopolies, are not included to be responsive to complaints about poor selection and service, inconvenient hours and locations, unattractive stores, illogical pricing policies and sales clerks who cannot offer advice to customers...and this monopoly is no exception."

Under the Thornburgh reform plan, wine could be sold in both liquor stores and in wine-only stores. The latter category would be limited to establishments which sell groceries and those devoted primarily to the sale of wine.

The plan also calls for the new

private liquor-wine system to be overseen by a new Alcoholic Beverage Commission (ABC) with five members to be nominated by the governor, subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the Senate. Enforcement and tax collection would be independently handled by a new Liquor Code Enforcement Bureau in the Department of Revenue.

Net revenues from the sale of retail liquor and wine franchises, estimated at \$150 million, has been earmarked by Thornburgh for the purchase of scientific, engineering and other technical equipment for public schools, colleges and universities, providing them with the "state of the art" capability they will need to counter what a national commission has called a "rising tide of mediocrity" in the classrooms of America.

The state Senate has thus far declined to allow the Thornburgh reform plan to be debated, although an increasing number of its members have pressed for floor action.

The governor also outlined for the enologists group the efforts being made to spur development of the Pennsylvania wine industry.

These include:

— Grants through the Ben Franklin Partnership to Mercyhurst College and the Behrend Campus of Pennsylvania State University, both in Erie, to study ways of improving the flavor of Pennsylvania wines and to determine the best sites for growing wine grapes.

— Vigorous promotion of Pennsylvania wines at food and agricultural shows by the state Agriculture Department.

— Commerce Department assistance in promoting state wineries as tourist attractions and permission by the state Transportation Department for wineries to erect highway directional signs under "educational attraction" category.

— Act 119 of 1981, which allows each Pennsylvania winery to sell its products at three offsite retail locations. As a result of these "satellite" stores, the wineries' sales have increased between 30 and 50 percent.

— A change in regulations allowing Pennsylvania wineries to ship their wines by a commercial parcel mailing service and to allow purchase of Pennsylvania wines with credit cards at wineries and their satellite stores.

Gas engine show planned

DOVER, Del. — The Delaware Agriculture Museum will host its first Gas Engine Show on Saturday, Sept. 29, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., rain or shine. Antique forms of farm power will be on display with an emphasis on gas power.

The regular admission charge will gain visitors admittance to the show as well as to the main exhibit building and outbuildings.

The museum is located just


south of Delaware State College on Rt. 13. For more information please call the museum, (302) 734-1618, Tuesday through Saturday and ask for Ms. Paula Schwartz, or call Crerar Bennett, organizer of the show, (302) 422-4837.

The Delaware Agricultural Museum is dedicated to the study, preservation, and collection of the region's farmlife past. The museum is a nonprofit, educational foundation and is not state supported.


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