

Wenger Expresses Concern Over Gov. Casey's Budget

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — "After listening to Governor Casey's budget address, I am concerned with some of the dangerous budgetary maneuver and accounting gimmicks the Administration has used in proposing its 1990-91 fiscal year General Fund Budget," said Senator Noah W. Wenger (R-36). "It appears that the administration is refusing to accept the current and projected fiscal realities and is instead using unconventional funding methods to meet current budget needs. The bottom line is that the budget picture is not as rosy as the governor has painted it."

Under the Casey budget proposal, the General Fund Budget would increase to \$12.26 billion, 2.3 percent or \$274 million more than last year's. "While the governor has touted a balanced budget, he is able to accomplish this only by using accounting gimmicks and transfers from special funds," explained Wenger. For example, the governor has proposed the transfer to the General Fund of \$207 million from the State Work-

men's Insurance Fund (SWIF) and proposed funding of \$114 million in economic development programs from general state revenues to bond financing. This would include funding for the widely recognized Ben Franklin Partnership and Tourist Promotion Assistance programs.

"Unfortunately, the governor has not admitted that Pennsylvania has some financial problems that can not be solved by cost shifting, robbing special funds, or leveraging our future through bond issuances," said Wenger. "The governor may also have to face the real possibility of a deficit situation, because as of January 31, 1990 there was a revenue shortfall of \$108 million."

In his budget address, the governor called for budget increases to basic and higher education; drug and AIDS programs; and human services programs such as prenatal and neonatal health care, Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program, and county and youth services. Wenger noted that these programs have been histori-

cally supported by the Senate Republican Caucus, and past budget increases have been a direct result of their influence.

The governor's budget proposal also includes an increase in the minimum teacher's salary from \$18,500 to \$21,000. "The governor touts this increase, but he does not indicate that the cost to school districts will be reimbursed by the state in the 1991-92 budget," the Senator said. "This means that those school districts with minimum teachers' salaries below \$21,000 will have to find money to meet this additional state mandate. Potentially, local taxes may have to be increased to absorb this additional cost."

Wenger also noted that agriculture -- the state's leading industry -- received little attention in the governor's budget. "While the governor states that agriculture has received 25 percent more in General Fund support over the last four years, he does not indicate that this increase is a direct result of Republican efforts," said Wenger. "Important agriculture pro-

grams received little or no funding in this budget proposal -- a disappointing fact to the state's 50,000+ farm families. In fact, funding for some agricultural programs such as mushroom promotion and the Future Farmers of America Foundation was completely eliminated."

Tourism -- the state's number two industry -- received no budget increase, according to Wenger. "I find it disappointing that an industry which generates thousands of jobs and much in state and local revenues has been ignored by the

Casey Administration," said Wenger.

"His budget address also ignored highways, an important issue particularly for my district which is experiencing rapid growth and facing a need for an adequate transportation network," noted the Senator.

"While on the surface, the governor's budget appears balanced and somewhat palatable, a detailed look raises serious questions about the direction this state's fiscal policy is taking and the consequences of that policy," Wenger concluded.

SW Regional Dairy Day Set

"Bio Technology and the High Producing Cow" is the theme of a one-day seminar and trade show organized by Southwestern Pennsylvania County Agents. The event is set for Thursday, March 8, at the Mountain View Inn, near Greensburg.

Program fliers and registration forms are now available from extension offices throughout



Dr. James Linn

western Pennsylvania or from the Butler County extension office.

This year's featured speaker is Dr. James Linn, professor and extension dairy nutritionist at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Linn has also served as extension dairy specialist at Iowa State University. His current responsibilities include nutrition of dairy cows, nutrition and management of replacement animals, and forage utilization. He is also doing research on protein feeding, BST, and feeding and management strategies.

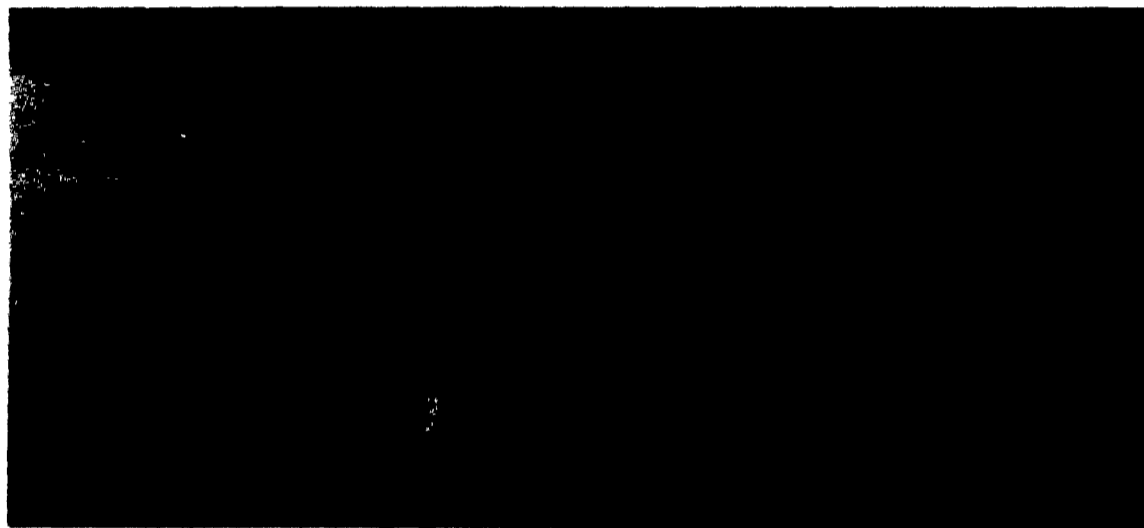
His topic for this seminar is "Nutrition and the High Producing Cow." Dr. Mike O'Connor, Penn State University extension dairyman will share the podium with Dr. Linn, covering the topic "Reproductive Performance Under Stress." Erie County dairy agent George Wilcox will give the group an "Introduction to BST."

The afternoon session should also include a panel of experts on "BST What If?" The panel includes producer retailer Sam Minor of Washington County; Ag industry representative Dr. Darwin Braund, director of research for Agway Inc., Syracuse, N.Y.; BST manufacturing interest representative Dennis Erpelding of Animal Health Institute; commercial milk procurement will be represented by Lou Terrill of Dean Foods; Westmoreland County extension home economist Patricia Long will represent the consuming public; and economic considerations for farmers will be addressed by Westmoreland County extension agent, Gary Sheppard.

The cost per person is \$8 and reservations are due March 1 at the Armstrong County Extension Office, R.D. 8, Armsdale Administration Building, Kittanning, PA 16201. Make checks payable to: Westmoreland County Extension Fund.

The trade show will feature a number of commercial dairy suppliers. Those who wish to obtain table space for the show should contact Indiana County Extension Director, Ward Stover, in Court-house, Indiana.

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