

Hiller Set To Open 123rd Pa. State Grange Convention

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The president of the Pennsylvania State Grange is to open the 123rd edition of the Pennsylvania State Grange convention by reviewing the past year's accomplishments while offering a vision of the future to an expected audience of more than 1,000 Grangers, during the first full day of the State Session, Oct. 23.

The Pennsylvania State Grange convention runs Oct. 22-26 in West Middlesex, Mercer County.

Hiller said one of the strengths of the Pennsylvania State Grange, with more than 33,000 members, is its legislative branch and grass-roots policies that govern the Grange and influence decisions on Capitol Hill.

"It is in Grange meetings where good legislation has had its begin-

nings," Hiller said, "and where it will continue to influence our legislators as we protect Grange interests while serving the agricultural and rural communities."

Grange-influenced legislative accomplishments in 1995 include passage of the Ag Education bill and underground storage tank legislation, dismantling of the Department of Environmental Resources (DER), and lowering the over-order premium with the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board.

"There are many areas where Grange policy must be inserted and sustained," Hiller said. "Grange influence and integrity remain high, and we must continue to expand our list of legislative accomplishments while maintaining our vigilance in Harrisburg and Washington."

Hiller said the accomplishments of the past with a vision toward the future will guide the organization as the Grange continues to tackle issues facing communities and the agricultural industry. "The Grange must continue to be a leading force, in partnership with organizations of similar views, and recognize that agriculture is now, more than ever before, a business - big business - and more than a way of life, for that way of life means simply to exist. We must do more than that."

As a grass-roots organization, policies are formulated at the local and county level and then passed to the state Grange in the form of a resolution.

Once passed, the resolution becomes Grange policy and those policies, which have federal implications, are submitted for consideration at the National Grange convention in November.

There are about 75 resolutions that will be discussed at the State

Grange convention this year. Some issues facing this year's delegate body are the 1995 Farm Bill, strengthening the Agricultural Security Act, water use regulation, passage of the Delaney Clause, building code regulations and rural education reform (School Choice).

This year's session is being hosted by Beaver, Lawrence and Mercer counties.

"The Grange is a grass-roots organization which gets its policies from the local granges in the form of resolutions," said Hiller. "Over the years, the Grange has successfully lobbied for such issues as rural mail delivery, establishment of rural electric cooperatives and fairer prices for farmers. All these policies started at a local grange and were, then passed to the state level."

A highlight of the five-day con-

vention will be the State of Agriculture Address from Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brosius on Tuesday afternoon, and the presentation of the various departmental awards on Tuesday evening.

Awards to be presented Tuesday evening at the All-Granger banquet include the State Master's Award for Excellence in Community Service and Membership Growth, community service awards to the outstanding subordinate (local) and Pomona (county) Granges, past officer awards and the Granger of the Year award, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual for service to the organization.


Youth members, ages 15-35, will take center stage Sunday as they compete in the Public Speaking, Sing-A-Song and Knowledge Bowl competitions beginning at

6:30 p.m. in the West Middlesex High School auditorium.

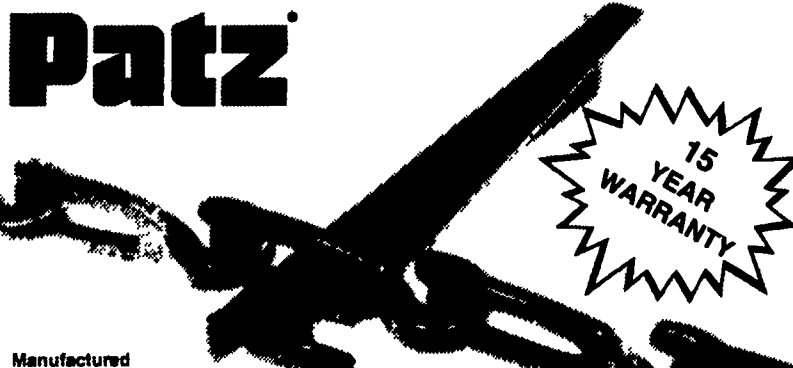
"The competition in these events is tough and the talent is outstanding as youth members battle for statewide honors and the right to perform against their peers from around the country at the National Grange convention," Hiller said. "These youths demonstrate skills and abilities that they have

learned as Grange members. Many are leaders within their own granges and will one day be the leaders of our nation."

The Pennsylvania State Grange is a 123-year-old family fraternity that offers its members benefits such as insurance, a credit union, lobbying efforts, community service, and social activities.



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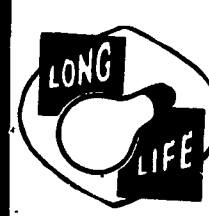
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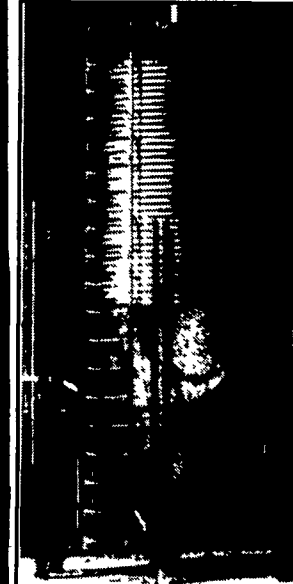
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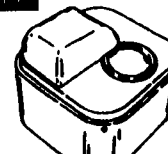
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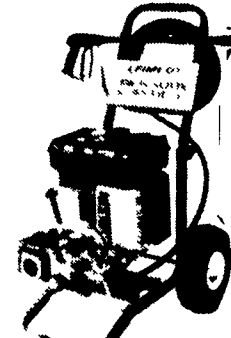
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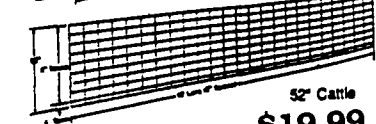
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