

Gov. Ridge Keynotes Dinner, Opens

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the largest event the Hilton will hold this year

"We welcome new friends and old to the warmth of our dinner table," Gov. Ridge said "We have broken bread together and hopefully developed rich and lasting partnerships and relationships with countries and peoples around the globe "

Ridge called the 2000 Farm Show the "greatest indoor farm show" in the nation and said this year's show was "a tribute to the generations of farm families that contribute to the welfare of the state. He said 800,000 people work in agriculture jobs and contribute \$45 billion to the state economy.

In the new state budget proposal next month, Gov. Ridge said he would ask for \$2 million to promote Ag products both at home and abroad. This part of the budget has been increasing three times faster than other parts of the budget and is a 10 percent increase over last year. One

million dollars is set for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to expand participation in trade shows and foreign trade missions. Another \$1million is for Pennsylvania commodity groups to match dollar for dollar their efforts to market their products.

State Ag Secretary Samuel Hayes Jr., introduced Gov. Ridge and coined the "Overrun with success" quotable quote. Hayes also presented the agribusiness awards and recognized farm-city award winners.

Stonehedge Farms Snacks, York County, and The Winery at Wilcox, Elk County, were the winners of the 2000 agribusiness achievement awards.

"These two companies have made significant contributions to the development and expansion of agribusiness in Pennsylvania and to their communities as well," Hayes said.

Stonehedge Farms Snacks manufactures a variety of caramel corn and gourmet corn snack products. It was recognized in the large business category.

The company, originally named Burkey's Snacks and founded in 1981, was purchased in January 1998 by John M. Hornick. Located in northern York County, Stonehedge employs 76 Pennsylvanians, contributed over \$7 million in total gross sales to Pennsylvania's economy in 1999, and is one of the largest caramel corn manufactures on the East Coast. In addition, Stonehedge also exports to both Canada and Japan, increasing the promotion of Pennsylvania products around the world.

With an aggressive hiring and retention policy, Stonehedge has been able to increase employment almost 320 percent in less than two years while making every effort to purchase trucking services, paper supplies, equipment, and engineering services and food inputs within 100 miles of the plant. Stonehedge recently introduced new products such as a school size caramel corn package and a gourmet line of chocolate drizzled and nut-laced popcorn products. The company also donates products to the York Food Bank and provides products to support the activities of the local fire department, boy and Girl Scout events and Pinchot Park Clean-Up Day.

The Winery at Wilcox, recognized in the small business category for the second consecutive year, was founded by Mike Williams in 1994. Using a severance package from his previous job, Williams began the winery in a converted custom meat processing shop. In its first year of business, the winery produced 1,100 gallons and grossed \$46,000. Since 1994, the winery has greatly expanded, producing 32,000 gallons and grossing over \$1 million in sales in 1999.

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The Winery at Wilcox, using Pennsylvania grapes and materials in its wine production, has become a significant contributor to the Commonwealth's economy. The winery employs 38 full and part-time workers and contributes more than \$850,000 to the economy each year. In addition, the winery also donates money, time and services to local schools, athletic and educational groups, fire and EMT service



Gov. Tom Ridge and First Lady Michelle Ridge with son Tom and Tom's friend Michael Reardon, and Ag Secretary Sam Hayes Jr., in the carriage that took them into the large arena for opening ceremonies.



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