

## Sen. Wenger Challenges Farm And Home Foundation To Continue Ag Support

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provide a facility that serves so many needs," said Luke Brubaker, president of the Foundation that oversees the center. The Foundation conducted its annual banquet at the center on Monday night.

According to Larry Weaver, vice president, numerous maintenance projects were conducted to the building and on the grounds. The parking lot was expanded and macadamized, and a new roof was put on the building.

The money to upgrade the building came from the \$200,000 received from the state for the 1.7 acres condemned due to the Route 30 bypass.

Brubaker said a substantial amount of revenue is earned from the advertising billboards placed on the Farm and Home Center's property.

"We are fortunate to have one of the most valuable spots in the county for advertising," Brubaker said of the location.

One of the ways the Foundation promotes agriculture education is by providing annual scholarships to college freshman entering ag or family science-related fields. This year, the board voted to increase the individual scholarships to \$1,600.

Last year seven scholarships were awarded. To date 385 scholarships with a total value of \$310,000 have been awarded. The amount of scholarships awarded annually is dependent

on the interest earned from a trust fund.

Pennsylvania Senator Noah Wenger said that he remembers his daughter was one of the first to receive a scholarship. The increase from \$300 to \$1,600 shows what can be accomplished when people work together, Wenger said.

As the banquet speaker, Wenger told the audience that his incentive for going into politics 23 years ago was to become chairman of the ag committee. As a farmer, he wanted to have input into the laws enacted that affect farming.

Because of the need to obtain seniority before being appointed to the ag committee, Wenger never had the opportunity as a member of the house. He moved on to the senate where he was appointed as chairman of the Labor and Industry Committee and later as Republican Caucus chairman, a position he continues to hold.

"There was never anything that brought me more satisfaction than working on ag issues," Wenger said.

Wenger said in his 23 years in legislative work, he knows that issues should serve as the basis of decisions, but politics and personalities play heavily into the legislative process.

One of the most pronounced changes in the political scene since Wenger first went to Harrisburg is that few people understand agricultural workings.

Wenger said, "When I first

went to Harrisburg, it was easy to win support for ag issues because many people had agricultural ties."

Times have changed. Environmental and nutrient management issues have thrust ag issues into the limelight often pitting the non-farming community against the farming community.

Nonetheless, Wenger said that he is proud that Pennsylvania is a leader of all states in ag environmental issues. Other states are now looking to Pennsylvania for direction in nutrient management.

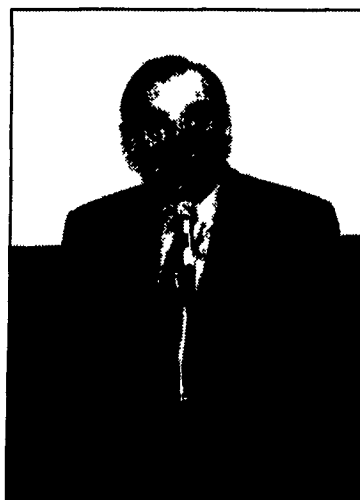
Wenger said that environmental legislation must depend on sound science and not emotionalism and fears.

Pennsylvania leads the way in farmland preservation. The recent additional millions allocated by the state will help reduce the 166 farms on the waiting list, but Wenger said, "While society may want to preserve farmland, they are prone to restrict modern ag practices and want to keep farming as it was years ago."

Wenger said that several years ago, he sponsored the Right to Farm bill to limit public nuisance action and to protect farmers and their livelihoods.

Wenger pushed for drought relief to aid farmers who suffered heavy losses from last summer's weather and financial aid for orchardists who are tackling the plum pox virus.

Although the funds have been



Sen. Noah Wenger

allocated, Wenger said that farmers who have had losses must sign up at the county Farm Service office by Feb. 25.

"The ag community needs to abandon its laid back approach and become proactive," Wenger said.

"The past successes of county agriculture are numerous and diverse and enviable in rank. But the challenges of the new century are different than the past. Agriculture deserves support of legislative from the non-farm community and on the federal level. Farmers should get involved. Write letters and visit elected officials. The significance can not be overly estimated."

Of the present 50 senators, only two are farmers and they are retirement age.

"Where will ag influence in legislature come from in the next 23 years?" Wenger asked.

"Not everyone is inclined to be state senators but all should be inclined to get to know those in office," Wenger said.

The following were elected directors of the Home and Farm Foundation: Dorothy Charles, Lancaster; Linda Esbenschade, Mt. Joy; Larry Groff, Lancaster; Jim Kettering, Manheim; J. Robert Kindig, Conestoga; Lloyd Welk, Quarryville; and Paul Wolgemuth Jr., Elizabethtown.

Other board members include Ruth Aker, J. Leroy Esbenschade, Guy Eshelman, Joyce Graybill, Cheryl Hess, Raymond Witmer, Edward Hess, Donna Kreider, John Moose, Gregory Musser, Harold Rohrer, and Alan Strock.

In other business, Paul Wolgemuth Jr. reported net assets of \$749,464.

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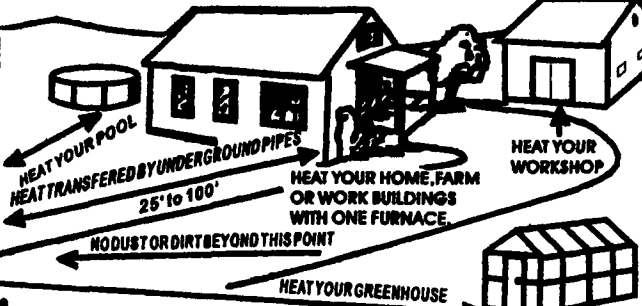
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