State Grange Heads To Carlisle For Annual Session

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) - Antitrust legislation, generic drug substitutions, food handlers certification and a dairy price support program are a few of the 70 topics to be discussed at the upcoming Pennsylvania State Grange Session, Oct. 21-24 in Carlisle.

The 2000 session marks the 128th annual meeting of the Pennsylvania State Grange.

About 800 Grange members from around Pennsylvania will gather at the Clarion Hotel, formerly The Embers, for the state convention to examine resolutions and potentially develop new policies as voted on by the delegate body. The session is being hosted by the Grange members of the 34 Granges in Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Mifflin, Perry and York counties.

"The Grange is a grass-roots organization which gets its policies from the local Granges in the forms of resolutions," said Pennsylvania State Grange Master (president) Bill Steel. "Over the years the Grange has successfully lobbied for such issues as rural mail delivery,

establishment of rural electric cooperative and fairer prices for farmers. More recently, the Grange has been instrumental in battling cumbersome federal regulations and created a pilot program for stray voltage on farms. All these policies started at a local Grange and were then passed to the state level."

Highlights of the five-day convention include the State of Agriculture Address from Secretary of Agriculture Sam Hayes Jr., which is tentatively scheduled for Monday afternoon, distribution of community

service projects in the local area, and presentation of various departmental awards.

Awards to be presented Monday evening at the All-Granger banquet include: community service awards to the top three subordinate (local) and Pomona (county) Granges, the teacher of the year, police officer of the year, and firefighter of the year 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

and junior Grangers (ages 5-14) will take center stage Sunday as they compete in the public speaking and sign-a-song competitions beginning at 1:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Clarion Hotel. The sign-a-song contest showcases the ability to utilize sign language to popular music and help raise awareness of deaf and hard of hearing issues. Deaf and hard of hearing awareness has been the state's Grange community service project since the mid 1960s.

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