

Pride, Hope Central To Outgoing, Potential Incoming Pa. Governors

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In a way, Schweiker spoke about accomplishments, hope, and of course, gave a going-away speech that left many standing and clapping.

When the water crashed into the Somerset County mine in July, Schweiker saw hope in the "might of those miners," he said. "The hardy, determined people that they are, just like you. And those nine people never gave up.

"It's that grit and that determination and that never-say-die attitude, whether you're 240 feet below the earth's surface or making your living in the soil of God's green earth in Pennsylvania at the top. It's a blessing. They were blessed by the good Lord and the hard work of 200 people that made up that rescue team. And I realized then, and it's worth mentioning now... as they brought those nine people up, we are a successful people, too.

"You know, there are countries and societies that would die for that ethic, die to be raised that way, they would fight for the opportunity to enjoy that atmosphere, that running room of behaving that way, being entrepreneurial, that we've got in the U.S.A."

Schweiker commented on the work he's done in the eight years in office.

"I wouldn't be doing my job, friends, if I didn't look you in the eye in light of this tremendous eight-year experience, and watching those nine men come up, to know that Pennsylvania has a built-in advantage, the way we were raised, a system nurtured in our children. It's a privilege. I've always felt it, but never so strongly than in my eight years as lieutenant governor and governor."

Schweiker noted the importance his administration has put on looking out for "number one" — the state's agriculture industry.

"Yours is our predominant industry," he said. "In 2002, we will take the impressive step of preserving the two-thousand-and-second farm in counties with ag preservation. And your Pennsylvania remains the number one preserved state in the Union.

"That's an accomplishment and that's to your credit."

Schweiker has visited Poland, Australia, and Japan, he said, and relayed the importance of the administration's agricultural directive, "Products For the Planet." For the first time in 2001, the state reached more than \$1 billion in ag exports, he noted.

Schweiker also spoke glowingly about the \$90 million spent on new Farm Show Complex construction.

Visitors to the 2003 Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg "will see one of the finest, most attractive facilities that any state can offer to its farming and horse-loving community," said Schweiker.

He also noted the stress caused by the drought.

"I must acknowledge the concern that I feel for this drought, ravishing as it has been and can be," he said. Even in the northwest-

ern part of the state, grape growers have been devastated. Corn crops in the midstate are bleak.

"We're losing a good deal," he said. He has asked for federal disaster money, and waits for an answer. "We hope it's a positive answer, we hope it's a supportive answer. Because we've got to get some financial help to avert the financial impact of those losses to farmers."

The state, the governor noted, is looking at a potential 50 percent crop loss, and it could be a lot higher. "I'm sure you can't walk too far here at Ag Progress Days to hear about that concern."

About \$2 million remains in the budget for crop insurance assistance, he noted.

Taking care of the state's number one industry remains key.

"It's our job. It's my job," he said. "This will be the last time I stand here as your governor for these wonderful ag days."

For all the work, "I'm proud of that," he said.

At the luncheon, candidates for governor shared the podium. The text of their comments was included in the following information from press releases.

Rendell Reviews Agenda For Rural Pennsylvania

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Ed Rendell reviewed the "Rendell Plan for Pennsylvania's Rural Communities" during a

news conference Wednesday afternoon at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Center in Rockspring.

The "Rendell Plan for Pennsylvania's Rural Communities" recognizes that while many of the concerns of families in our rural and agricultural communities are the same as the families in our biggest cities — steady, high wage jobs, good schools, safe streets and access to affordable, quality health-care — ensuring their ability to survive and thrive will take more than recognizing their unique attributes.

"The Rendell Plan for Pennsylvania's Rural Communities" builds upon and expands the policies Rendell announced during the primary to revitalize mid-sized and smaller communities, reform our education system and increase access to and affordability of health care. Among other things, the plan also:

- Supports the agricultural industry: Agriculture remains Pennsylvania's single largest industry and as Governor, Ed Rendell will support this important sector by protecting valuable farmland, promoting profitability for all farms, expand domestic and international markets for Pennsylvania agricultural products, emphasize animal health care services, and train the next generation of Pennsylvania farmers.

- Encourages development of

the heritage and "eco-tourism" industries. As he did as Philadelphia's mayor, Ed Rendell will support the continued growth and health of Pennsylvania's tourism industry.

Rendell's Proposals

As Governor, Ed Rendell noted he plans to:

- Protect valuable farmland. Ed Rendell will work to bring more dedicated funding for the purchase of conservation easements. He will pursue more flexible funding mechanisms for easement purchases, such as a plan to pay farmers by installments over 30 years rather than a lump sum. He will work with the federal government to promote and expand the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, allowing farmers to preserve their land for farming and for the enhancement of the commonwealth's environment.

As Governor, Rendell will direct commonwealth agencies to adhere to Executive Order 1997-6, regarding agricultural land preservation policy. In 1999, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) had to be sued to prevent the agency from building a highway interchange without a hearing before the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board. That will not happen with Ed Rendell as governor.

- Promote profitability for all

farms. Agriculture in Pennsylvania is very diverse. Mushroom farms of Kennett Square, grape growers in Erie County, green-wrap tomatoes in Lackawanna County, tobacco in Lancaster County, poultry and hogs in the southeast, and dairy farms everywhere. The commonwealth ranks among the top five in the nation in the production of mushrooms, Christmas trees, milk and apples, which in recent years has led to exports of more than \$1 billion of agriculture products worldwide.

As Governor, Ed Rendell will open important economic development tools to production agriculture, allowing access to special funds like the Small Business First Fund. Today, Pennsylvania spends some \$500 million on economic development programs, yet most of those dollars are closed to the largest industry in this state: agriculture. Ed Rendell will invest economic development dollars in agriculture.

Modern farming is dependent on expensive equipment. This is true of dairy farming, the state's principal agriculture enterprise. A dairy farm must have a herd of at least 200 to 300 cows to be viable with an investment of thousands of dollars per stall for efficient production with robotic milkers, automatic washers and so forth. Yet, the Commonwealth's Ma-

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