

DEP Secretary: It's Time For A New Way Of Thinking

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GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.) — Members of the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders gathered at the Holiday Inn Wednesday night for their annual banquet and the Pennsylvania Dairy-men's Association Awards Program.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Kathleen McGinty, secretary, Department of Envi-

ronmental Protection (DEP).

McGinty began her talk announcing that Gov. Ed Rendell announced his Water Resource Advisory Board Stakeholders.

McGinty said, "There is a strong representation from the agricultural sector" on the board. McGinty also stressed this group will have a lot of say in the planning of water conservation and use in Pennsylvania.

The 18-member statewide committee has 12 members ap-

pointed by the governor and six members to be appointed by the House and Senate.

In regards to the Conservation Resource Enhancement Program (CREP), McGinty noted that DEP had fallen behind an estimated \$3.25 million in payments.

"I have a good announcement, which is not 100 percent, but it is getting there. We were able, through trimming and rearranging, to shake out \$2.4 million," said McGinty. "We will dedicate that little 'Christmas present' to try make up for some of those arrears. Not to fully pay off our bill, but to hopefully get some money into your pockets."

The secretary calls this a "nice downpayment" for the CREP program and hopes to pay off the balance after the passage of a budget.

Pennsylvania needs to revital-

ize their way of environmental thinking, according to McGinty.

"The theme that has been guiding our work is that we need to change the debate on all things environmental.

"We need to develop a new way of thinking about environmental challenges that, instead of driving people apart, instead of pitting interests against one another, we need an invitation for all interests to come together and use creativity and ingenuity so that we both revitalize our environment and stimulate economic growth," said McGinty.

Several initiatives that DEP continues to develop to encourage thinking outside of the box include several new initiatives and ideas.

Working with the Department of Agriculture (PDA), together the departments continue to look

at ways that can stimulate economic growth, such as the Pennsylvania Energy Harvest initiative to develop clean energy, as well as clean up the environment.

McGinty noted that Pennsylvania agriculture has a role to play in the economic and environmental issues.

"We have a precious jewel here in Pennsylvania. We need to hold onto it as a real key to our economic and environmental life-blood," she said.

Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff was also in attendance and reaffirmed the administration's commitment to agriculture, environmentally and economically.

"Pennsylvania is a gem of a state. It has fertile soils, diverse topography, and some of the most scenic farms in the world.

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James Kennedy, left, is congratulated by Ken Teel, Vice President, Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association, for receiving the Charles Cowen Award.

All photos by Charlene M. Shupp Espenshade



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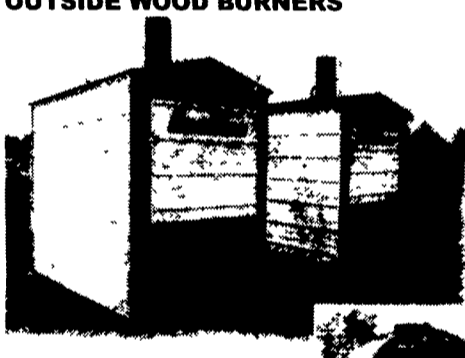
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