

Pennsylvania State Grange to Host Panels at the 2023 Pennsylvania Farm Show

The Pennsylvania State Grange is pleased to offer two informational panel discussions at the 2023 Pennsylvania Farm Show. The topics addressed in the Grange programs will address challenges facing many Pennsylvanians and the agricultural community.

**“SCAM-dalous”
Identifying and Avoiding Scams
Wednesday, January 11th
Lancaster Farming Stage
3:00pm -4:30pm**

It seems we hear of a new scam targeting Americans every day as we watch or read the news. These malicious schemes are getting more sophisticated. It is becoming increasingly difficult to know if calls, messages, and emails are being truthful or trying to steal your hard-earned money.

The Federal Trade Commission has estimated that Americans were swindled out of \$68 million in the first quarter of 2022 alone. The truth is, no one should feel ashamed if they fall victim to these hoaxes. After years in the development stages, widespread broadband deployment is finally moving forward. However, we must also be aware that criminals will be targeting individuals who may be able to access the internet for the first time.

The Pennsylvania State Grange is not immune to these scammers. Our members have seen an increasing number of emails, texts, and calls from individuals falsely representing themselves as leaders within the organization. Common tactics include asking members to buy gift cards to be given to other members, or asking members to open Zelle or Venmo accounts for the good of the organization. These criminals are preying on members' kind and generous intentions.

To combat this epidemic of criminal activity, the Pennsylvania State Grange will host its first ever panel on the Lancaster Farming Stage on Wednesday, January 11th from 3:00pm to 4:30pm. The purpose of this program is to address these increasing online threats to our mental and financial well-being.

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (PA-28) and her office will lead the informational session to give participants an inside look into how she and her colleagues have been working to address these issues to protect Pennsylvanians. In addition, the panel will consist of experts within local and state law enforcement. A prominent investigative reporting team from a local television station will share their individual expertise in taking on these scammers. Mark your calendar to attend, and get tips and information from experts on how to protect yourself from being the victim of cybercrime. The Lancaster Farming Stage will be located in Main Hall.

Workforce Development in Agricultural Industries
Thursday, January 12th
Monongahela Room
10:00am -12:00pm

Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding will open this important discussion on how the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the General Assembly, and agricultural organizations can work together to highlight and lead workforce development in agriculture.

Farming is a key sector within the state's economy, and it relies on an extensive support system. Today, the industry is challenged by a critical shortage of mechanics, veterinarians, skilled tradesmen, machinery operators and CDL drivers. In a profession where timing is crucial, extensive delays due to supply chain issues and job vacancies impede profitability on the farm.

It is imperative to work in a collaborative fashion to highlight underserved vocations and rewarding jobs that are available in Pennsylvania without having to necessarily get a college degree. The Pennsylvania State Grange feels it is important to garner enthusiasm for these jobs at the middle and high school levels, especially as the workforce in agricultural industries begins to retire.

State Representative Torren Ecker (PA-193) is a tireless advocate for workforce development and the Grange is pleased he will lead the discussion. He will be joined by representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Stakeholder groups and educational groups to discuss ideas and tactics of how Pennsylvania can move forward by having young talent enter the workforce.

Both panels are sure to have productive conversations on moving Pennsylvania forward. For more information, please contact Carrie Nace at 717-424-5832 or carrie@nsallc.com.