

# Incentive Tax League of Pennsylvania

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## NEWS RELEASE

for immediate release as announcement  
suitable for news coverage July 16-18

### NATIONAL TAX REFORM CONVENTION CHEERS PITTSBURGH

The National Council of Georgist Organizations will be holding its annual convention at Chatham College from July 16-18, so that it can honor the City of Pittsburgh for its pioneering efforts to establish an ethical local tax system.

The three day conference will include workshops, lectures and discussions on land monopoly, statements by local political leaders on the land value tax, and an unusual bus tour illustrating Pittsburgh's problems as well as its achievements. (see yellow sheet)

The council's member groups advocate decreasing all other taxes--especially property and wage taxes--and increasing taxes on those who hold land and natural resources out of use.

The first major victory for the land tax in the last 60 years in this country came in 1978 when Pittsburgh City Council rejected increases in wage, business privilege, mercantile, deed transfer and parking taxes and instead doubled the land tax.

Since that time, McKeesport, Scranton, Harrisburg and New Castle followed suit, opting for heavier taxes on land than on buildings. Today other Pennsylvania cities are looking at the idea of shifting from property tax to land tax. The most notable is Philadelphia, which recently introduced a bill to change its property tax to a tax graded toward land values.

According to Congressman William Coyne, who introduced the reform while serving on City Council, there were two outstanding advantages that convinced his colleagues to opt for the land tax. One was that land tax was found to cost area homeowners 30-40% less than property tax and 60-70% less than wage tax. The other was that cities in other countries consistently had building booms after shifting from property tax to land tax.

Congressman Coyne will be the featured speaker at the Georgist banquet Sunday evening. Robert Stone, finance chairman of Pittsburgh city council, will be addressing the group Saturday evening, and Bill Robinson and possibly other Pittsburgh councilmen will be at a panel event Friday evening, where any questions about the land tax in Pennsylvania will be entertained.

Most notable conference participants (other than Coyne and Stone) will be available for a news conference and for media interviews immediately after the Friday conference. This office will also make every effort to assist the news media in getting access to what it needs.

CONTACT Dan Sullivan, regional director 687-5263

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Friday, July 16

7:00 PM

FREE

Land Value Tax in Pennsylvania City council members from Pittsburgh, McKeesport, New Castle and Philadelphia talk about why they have taken steps to tax idle landowners more while taxing workers and homeowners less. ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT--PLEASE COME

Saturday, July 17

9:30 AM

FREE\*

Who Owns Appalachia? The Commission on Religion in Appalachia reports their findings on corporate land and resource monopoly and its impact on the people of Appalachia, followed by...

Why are the Mills Closing? The Tri State Conference on Steel shows the impact of decisions by U.S. Steel (one of Appalachia's most aggressive land and resource monopolists) to abandon area mills and lay off thousands of employees in the Monongahela Valley.

11:00 AM

FREE\*

How to Get Results Steve Cord, editor of Incentive Taxation, explains how the issue of taxing land monopoly can be proposed in terms that local politicians can relate to.

12:00 Noon--Lunch

\$4.00

2:00 PM

FREE\*

Reports of Georgist Organizations on their efforts to bring an understanding of the economic philosophy of Georgism to people's attention, followed by...

Difficulties of Teaching the Moral Argument, by Stan Rubenstein, director of the Henry George School of Long Island, followed by...

Simultaneous Workshops "Assessing Land Values," led by Phil Finkelstein, director of the Center for Local Tax Research; "Georgist Education," led by George Collins, director of the Henry George School of Philadelphia; "Media Strategies," led by Richard Noyes, editor of the Salem Observer, and "Organizing Local Groups," led by Mitchell Chanelis, director of the Incentive Tax League of Massachusetts.

4:30 PM Social break--pool & other facilities open to participants

FREE\*

5:30 PM Dinner

\$5.00

7:00 PM

FREE\*

Craig Cringan on Land & the Federal Government, James L. Busey on The Meaning of Political Action, and Robert Rade Stone, Pittsburgh City Council finance chairman, with comments on The Land Tax in Pittsburgh

Sunday, July 18

must be reserved in advance \$10.00 including lunch

9:30 AM An Honest Tour of Pittsburgh A bus tour showing the growth and development as well as the slums and degradation in the "Renaissance City"

2:00 PM

FREE\*

Land Monopoly and Warfare film, "The last epidemic," followed by an analysis and discussion on the relationship between land monopoly and militarism

3:15 Open agenda space for ad hoc workshops

FREE\*

5:30 PM Social Hour

BEVERAGE FEE

6:30 PM

\$8:00

Annual Georgist Banquet with Congressman William J. Coyne as featured speaker.

PLUS showings of the film "For the Land is Mine" before and after each session, and ample opportunity to discuss land monopoly issues with concerned people from across the country.

\*sessions have been offered free to encourage participation. If you are enthused by what you see and would like to help defray expenses, a donation of \$5 for a session, \$10 for multiple sessions or \$15 for the entire conference would be appreciated. Meals and rooms are available at cost if reserved in advance.

NEWSWORTHY PARTICIPANTS

William R. Robinson, councilman, Pittsburgh Friday evening

Joseph Bendel, jr., former finance chairman, McKeesport council (Fri.)

William Tallman, business manager, City of New Castle, Friday evening

Phillip Finkelstein, former finance chairman, cabinet to Mayor

Lindsay, currently director of the Center for Local Tax Research,

--will be present for entire conference (on "Assessing properly")

Steven Cord, editor, Incentive Taxation,--entire conference

various directors from across the country--entire conference

Robert Scrofani, director of Henry George School of N. California,

on "The aftermath of prop. 13," and Land Monopoly in America."

--entire conference

Joe Szakos, researcher, Commission on Religion in Appalachia, on

"Who owns Appalachia." --Saturday

representatives of the Tri State Conference on Steel, on land and

mill closings--Saturday (available at other times on request)

Robert Rade Stone, finance chairman, Pittsburgh City Council--Sat eve.

Congressman William Coyne--Sunday evening

Walter Rybeck, assistant to Congressman Coyne, former assistant to

Congressman Henry S. Reuss of California (who described Prop 13

as "a loose cannon on the deck.", and former organizer of

"Citizens for better assessments," which succeeded in bringing

property tax assessment reform to Arlington VA and Washington DC.

--Saturday through Sunday

## HELPFUL INFO FOR TV

The evening with the most excitement and energy will no doubt be Friday evening, and it will be easier to get solid, concise, newsworthy quotes that fit well into a TV news format.

The bus tour Sunday morning provides an opportunity to visually illustrate what the goals of land tax are, and helps you get away from "talking heads." Free bus passes and priority seating will be given to media personell who request it, and route information can be given and arrangements to meet media people en route can be made.

There is good material for feature stories here. The economics editor may find a relationship between "Who owns Appalachia" and "Why are the Mills Closing?" that is particularly interesting.

We have an excellently illustrative full color film "For The Land is Mine" which can be run through a film chain, and we have personell who can be present at the studio to describe the visual content and the location of footage you may want to use. (This would be more useful for feature material than for news coverage.)

CONTACT Dan Sullivan, regional director 687-5263