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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GOVERNOR THOMPSON TO SPEAK AT GIRLS STATE

CHARLESTON, IL.--Governor James R. Thompson has been invited to speak to more than 570 Illinois high school girls attending the American Legion Auxiliary Illini Girls State June 12-18 on the Eastern Illinois University campus.

Thompson will speak at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 14 in Dvorak Concert Hall. He will also inaugurate Girls State citizens who have been elected to a mock General Assembly.

"Girls State is a program that was established for young people with an interest in government," according to Marybeth Revoir of Chicago, director of the 48th annual session of Illini Girls State.

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"It is truly a patriotic experience," said Revoir, who added that the girls spend much of the week campaigning for state, county and city offices. The girls experience the complete election process from filing petitions for office to voting in primary and general elections.

"They perform the function of actual electors and office holders," she added.

The program is designed using mythical cities and counties and two hypothetical political parties. Besides electioneering, the girls are required to attend seminars on the various aspects of government operations.

The week will also be highlighted with speeches by Secretary of State Jim Edgar, Attorney General Neil Hartigan and Charleston Mayor Murray Choate.

Other speakers include Rantoul Mayor Katy B. Podagrosi, Sangamon County Clerk Maralee I. Lindley, 11th Judicial Circuit Judge James Knecht and Lake County Coroner Barbara Richardson.

Additional activities through the week include organizing a Girls State chorus, variety show, flag disposal ceremony and a memorial service for Boys Staters killed in the service.

"Members of the housing staff at Eastern go out of their way to make us feel comfortable. Eastern has also helped the American Legion keep the cost of Girls State where it is, yet enabled us to maintain the integrity and quality of the program," Revoir said.

To be eligible for Girls State, a girl must be between her junior and senior years. She must be interested in government and political science and be in the top half of her class.

The president of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit, which directly sponsors or obtains sponsors for girls, works closely with high school principals and counseling staffs to select qualified candidates.