

Austintown Township

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Trustee
David Ditzler



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Trustee
James Davis



Fiscal Officer
Michael Kurish

Austintown Seniors Matter

The first ever Austintown Senior Center officially opened its doors on October 26, 2010 at 100 Westchester Drive, in Austintown. This monumental undertaking came to fruition as a result of the hard work, dedication and partnership of the Austintown Township Trustees, Fiscal Officer and volunteers of the non-profit organization, the Austintown Generational Enrichment Corporation.

To date, the Austintown Senior Center boasts more than 500 registered members. Since January, more than 5,000 visitors have walked through the door and on an average day you would find more than 40 members socializing, enjoying free meals and participating in numerous activities at the center.

Some of those activities include: computer classes, scheduled bus trips, line dancing, painting classes, daily bingo, walking club, blood pressure screenings, Zumba, movie nights, health insurance seminars, "Ask the Social Worker", book discussion groups, card playing, Yoga, monthly birthday parties, Tai Chi, Wii tournaments, cornhole, holiday parties, "Ask the Attorney", veteran's corner, periodic visits from local and state officials, and planned dinner outings.



Faye Marciano



Fraternal Order of Eagles, Meander Aerie, presenting check to Senior Center. Left to right: Chuck Hefner, FOE Secretary, Bob Marshall, FOE President, James Hughes and Rev. Rick Stauffer



Jack Myers

Austintown Seniors Center On the Ballot

On the November ballot is a 0.5 mill levy for the purpose of providing services to Senior citizens. If passed, the levy will generate approximately \$309,000 in revenue. A home valued at \$100,000 will pay about \$17 a year and a home valued at \$75,000 will pay about \$12.80 a year. These annual amounts do not include if a homeowner is eligible for the Homestead Exemption. The maximum Homestead Exemption will reduce the annual payment on the \$100,000 home from \$17 to about \$12.80 a year and the \$75,000 home from \$12.80 to about \$8.50 a year. In 2010 township residents saved approximately \$579,000 as the result of the Homestead Exemption.

The reason all property taxes are reduced by the Homestead Exemption, which dates back to 1971, is because the exemption exempts or shields up to \$25,000 of the market value of your homestead from property taxation. That means a home valued at \$100,000 will generally be taxed as if it was valued at \$75,000. A "homestead" consists of a dwelling and up to one acre. Since 2007 the redesigned exemption offers all eligible homeowners, regardless of income, the opportunity to qualify. To qualify, Seniors, 65 and over, and totally and permanently disabled Ohioans must apply with their local county auditor in order to take advantage of the homestead exemption. Applications can be submitted in any year after the first Monday in January and on or before the first Monday in June.

LEHARPS ROAD IMPROVEMENT

This summer the Township completed installation of 300 feet improvement to the Meridian Road end of LeHarps.

Improvements included replacing the asphalt surface with a concrete surface, curb and gutter, storm pipes and a left turn lane onto Meridian Road. The concrete surface was necessary because of the heavy truck traffic from the neighboring businesses.

This project was feasible because of a \$100,000 State Issue I Grant.

LAURIE STORM SEWER REPLACEMENT



The Laurie Storm Sewer Replacement project completed last year and this spring increased the Township's total flood alleviation grant and township matching dollars spent since 1992 to approximately \$4,698,000. This \$323,000 project involved the installation of larger storm pipes in order to alleviate upstream flooding and sinkholes along Laurie Drive. An Issue I grant for \$271,000 funded 84% of this project.

BEXLEY SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT



BEFORE



AFTER

This spring the Township also completed the repair of sections of sidewalk along Bexley Drive (from Rhode Island to Woodhurst Drive), Woodhurst Drive (from Bexley Drive to Burkey Road), and Idaho Road (from Woodhurst Drive to Westchester Drive). This project was funded by a \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the County Commissioners. The great majority of the damage to the sidewalk sections that were replaced was caused by lifting from nearby tree roots. The project consisted of first removing the trees and root system followed by the removal of the damaged sections of concrete sidewalk that pose a possible safety concern and replacing these sections with 4" thick concrete in lawn areas and 6" thick concrete in driveway areas. Curb ramps were installed at each intersection to meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

AUSTINTOWN TOWNSHIP ENTERS 4TH YEAR OF LEAF PROGRAM

The Sixth annual Leaf Collection Program is scheduled to begin Monday, October 24, 2011 and end Thursday, November 17, 2011 for four weeks. The program is funded with a \$13,000 grant from the Mahoning County Green Team.

The township is divided into four sections: North, Central, Southeast and Southwest that cover all township, county and state roads within each section. Collection shall take place in the same section on the same day of each week.

The collection schedule is as follows:



MONDAYS: October 24 & 31, November 7 & 14
SOUTHEAST (south of New Rd. & east of SR 46)



TUESDAYS: October 25, November 1, 8 and 15
CENTRAL (south of Mahoning Ave. & north of New Rd. & east of SR 46)

WEDNESDAYS: October 26, November 2, 9 and 16
North of Mahoning Ave.

THURSDAYS: October 27, November 3, 10 and 17
SOUTHWEST (South of Mahoning Ave. & west of SR 46)

No collections on Friday
Collections will occur between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm. Only leaves in approved recycled paper bags will be collected and such bags are available at area hardware stores.

ZONING

The Trustees over the past number of years have taken an aggressive approach in attempting to maintain the character of the residential neighborhoods by declaring properties public nuisances under Ohio Revised Code 505.87 at the first sign of a problem. The great majority of these nuisance properties are vacant and the first sign of trouble appears in the spring when the grass is not cut. In many cases these same high grass properties may also contain garbage, junk or other debris that needs removed or open or broken windows or doors. Another sign that a property is probably vacant and lacking maintenance is the existence of an extensively damaged (missing wheels, tires, motor, or transmission) or apparently inoperable vehicle.

The nuisance resolutions are undertaken not only to avoid a health problem and improve the appearance of the neighborhood but also to reduce the probability of theft and vandalism from the structures and reduce the likelihood of squatters occupying vacant dwellings. The Township understands residents concerns that the longer homes stand empty, the more negative an impact they impose on the neighborhood and on property values. However, the Trustees are powerless to force foreclosures which now can take more than a year to process.

The increase in the number of vacant homes over

the past few years within Austintown Township has caused a strain on the township budget. This year one summer employee was hired and two fulltime employees from the township road department are assigned to nuisance abatement. The challenge in coming years is to maintain this level of service for our residents in an environment where it is estimated the township may lose approximately 1.8 million dollars in state funding between 2010 and 2014.

In addition to high grass, debris, abandoned vehicles and open or broken doors and windows nuisances the Trustees over the past three years have declared approximately 30 residential and commercial structures a public nuisance under Ohio Revised Code 505.86 thereby ordering their repair or demolition. About half of these structures were demolished at township expense with liens placed on the properties in the hope of recovering the funds if and when the properties are sold in the future. A number of property owners have undertaken the demolition themselves thus saving taxpayer resources. Two dwellings on South Four Mile Run Road near South Meridian Road are awaiting demolition by Mahoning County using Neighborhood Stabilization Funding. The zoning office anticipates three upcoming house demolitions this Fall. Again funding will determine whether the township can continue on this pace in the future.



AUSTINTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT ADDRESS RULES

The Austintown Fire Department would like the residents and businesses of Austintown to take a good look at their addresses on their respective buildings. But the department would like each resident and business to look at their addresses from the Fire department's perspective and other emergency responder's perspective. To assess how easy or difficult it is to see your address go outside any time after dark to the end of your driveway and look if you can see your numeric building numbers. If you have a difficult time seeing them so will a responding fire crew, police officer or ambulance crew. When looking at your address numbers remember that you already know their location, their color and the kind of numbers such as Script, Arabic or Block. Some of the largest delays in response time are due to the inability to see the numeric numbers on the residents or businesses.

The Austintown Fire Code and the Ohio Fire Code require address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. The numbers shall contrast with their background, such as Black numbers on White background or visa versa. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters. No Script lettering is permitted. Numbers shall be a minimum of four inches (4") high and minimum width of one half inch (1/2"). The numbers should be affixed to the residence on the driveway side of the building on a corner facing the street. Do not affix the numbers to the garage door because they will disappear when the garage door is open. Businesses should affix the numbers on their entrance door and include the suite number. The suite number is just as important as the numeric numbers. Signs, plants or anything else should not only not block your address but should not be located or positioned so as to prevent your address from standing out.

Finally, should you need to call 911 because of a medical emergency turning an outside light visible from the street off and on, especially when dark will help locate your residence or business much faster. If you have no exterior lights controlled by a switch go to the end of your driveway when you hear or see the emergency vehicle and flag down the emergency vehicles responding with a flash light. When reporting a fire emergency after calling 911 leave the structure with all occupants and meet the fire department at the end of your driveway **DO NOT STAY IN THE STRUCTURE**. Inform the fire officer of what is the problem if known, and where the problem is in the structure.

2011 79' AERIAL

The Township took delivery this spring of a new 79' aerial fire truck. The aerial replaces a 1982 75' ladder that was deemed unsafe because of frame and structural deterioration. The new truck was purchased through a 90% Homeland Security/FEMA Grant at a cost of \$502,000. FEMA's share of the truck was \$450,000 and the Township's commitment was \$52,000. The truck was purchased on a State Bid Contract from KME Fire Apparatus through Warren Fire Equipment in Lordstown Ohio.

The new Aerial is identified as "Ladder 3" and will be housed at the newly renovated #3 Fire Station on South Raccoon Rd. The truck has a 79" aerial/ladder with a 3" piped waterway that is capable of delivering 1,500 gallons per minute. The truck contains 136' of ground ladders, 1650' of hose, 6 self contained breathing apparatus, Jaws of Life and can carry 6 firefighters.



2011 79' Aerial

FIRE STATION #3 ADDITION AND RENOVATION COMPLETED

In August the Fire Department reopened the newly renovated and larger #3 Fire Station located at 2650 S. Raccoon Rd. This station has received a face lift and a small addition to the rear of the station. This Station Renovation was funded 100% through an ARRA (American Recovery and Re-Investment Act also known as Stimulus Money) from the Federal Government. Total cost of the renovation and addition is \$333,000.

The original Station built in 1959 was in need of repair to the point of having to close it without renovation. The flat roof was beginning to fall in at the center of the Station over the living quarters. The roof was non-repairable and was causing mold to grow and ceilings to collapse inside the Station from the water leaks.

The remodeled Station has a pitched roof, male and female sleeping rooms and restrooms, training rooms set up for computer simulation training, decontamination facilities and an internal and external face lift. The Station will house the new 79' aerial truck, a pumper truck and will also house a Lane Lifetrans Ambulance and crew.

The Austintown Township Fire Department was one of only five Ohio Fire departments awarded a stimulus grant to use either to expand station coverage, replace equipment or renovate stations.

Presently, the station is used by part time firefighters when they are called from home in response to a structure fire to complement the crew on duty around the clock. In addition, Lane Ambulance leases space from the township for 7-day 24 hour use of the building for an ambulance crew.



BEFORE



DURING

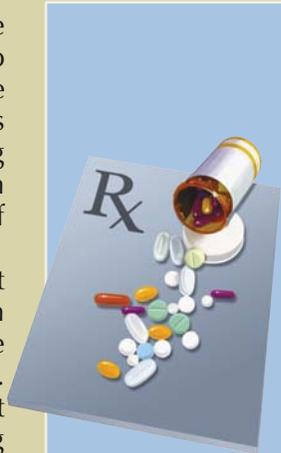


AFTER

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Austintown Police Department is committed to establishing close ties with the public and responding to the needs of the community by providing many services. The most common service is to provide protection of life and property but there are many more services the department provides. These services start with the Prescription and Over the Counter Drug Take Back Program. The Austintown Police Department was a local pioneer for removing old, unused medication from the medicine cabinets to avoid abuse by children and adults and protecting the environment from water contamination. Since 2009 the police department has provided 10 take back events open to all Austintown residents and all Mahoning Valley residents. A total of 1,067 lbs. of medication was brought in by over 700 people to the department which was disposed of properly by incineration. The department recently applied for a grant from the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators. The grant will provide a prescription drug take back container to be installed at the police station. This secured receptacle will allow our residents to anonymously drop off unused/expired or unwanted prescription medication.

The Child Passenger Seat Certification program began in 2001. The Officer who is a certified Child Safety Seat Technician will check and install all infant, children and booster seats in your vehicle. We care about kids and want to protect them with proper installation of child car seats to prevent serious injury if the child is an occupant during a crash. Another program dealing with vehicle safety is the 3rd Grade Seat Belt Program in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Public Safety.



During the past 11 years this program was taught in 3rd grade as part of the D.A.R.E. program. Students meet Vince & Larry (seat belt dummies) and sing along with Officer Toth in the classroom to buckle up. At the completion each student is "sworn in" as a seat belt Deputy and receives a stick on badge to wear.

During the past 11 years, the Austintown Police Department was awarded grant money from the Ohio Attorney General's Office to provide a D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Officer in our schools. Currently Officer Toth teaches kindergarten, first, third, fifth, seventh and tenth grades in all our schools, both public and parochial. Each year more than half of our 5,000 students receive drug and violence/ bullying prevention in the classroom.

Senior Citizens in the township are provided with a Senior Watch Program in cooperation with the Mahoning County Sheriff's Department. An Austintown Township Police Officer is assigned to a number of seniors to make regular visits to their homes. These Officers check on the safety and well-being of the senior. They will also help them seek assistance to any number of needs or problems that they are facing.

The Austintown Police Department is proactive with citizen assistance to prevent and deter crime in our community. The police department provides a Tip Line to leave a message or continue listening to a recorded message about criminal activity throughout the township. This program helps build awareness for residents and will help them prevent from becoming a victim of a crime. The Tip Line phone number is 330-270-5108. Security checks are also provided to township residents of their homes and to the owners of businesses in the township. An Officer trained by the Ohio Crime Prevention Association will come to the property by appointment to give suggestions on making the property more secure.

Vacation checks are provided to residents by the police department. The police department will visit your residence and do an outside security checks while you are on vacation. If you would like a vacation check call the police department. The dispatcher will need only to ask you a few questions to begin this service.

ROAD RENEWAL LEVY

A 1.5 mill Road RENEWAL levy is on the November ballot. The annual revenue from this levy is approximately \$415,000.

Although this Road levy was initially approved by the voters in 1981 for 1.5 mills the actual tax rate assessed against residential property is approximately 0.51. The result of this lower rate is that a \$100,000 homeowner pays



approximately \$15.50 annually in taxes instead of approximately \$46. This reduced rate of 0.51 is called the effective rate and is the rate used instead of 1.5 to reflect the inflationary increase in the total residential tax valuation of the entire township since 1981. The total township residential tax value today is over \$450 million and the total tax value of all property in the township is over 600 million. If the entire 1.5 mill rate was assessed against the present \$450 million of residential valuation the tax revenue collected would exceed \$860,000 instead of \$415,000.

PARK RENEWAL LEVY

A 0.8 mill Park RENEWAL levy is on the November ballot. The annual revenue from this levy is approximately \$309,000. Although this Park levy was initially approved by the voters in 1986 for 0.8 mills the actual tax rate assessed against residential property is approximately 0.42. The result of this lower rate is that a \$100,000 homeowner pays approximately \$13.00 annually in taxes instead of approximately \$24.50. This reduced rate of 0.42 is called the effective rate and is the rate used instead of 0.8 to reflect the inflationary increase in the total residential tax valuation of the entire township since 1986. The total township residential tax value today is over \$450 million. If the entire 0.8 mill rate was assessed against the present \$450 million of residential valuation the tax revenue collected would exceed \$475,000 instead of \$309,000.



TENNIS AND BASKETBALL COURTS RENOVATED AT TOWNSHIP PARK

This summer the renovation of the two basketball courts and tennis court fence replacement at Township Park on Kirk Road was completed. In addition to the tennis fence replacement the project consisted of resurfacing of the 2 basketball courts and replacement of the 4 basketball poles and hoops. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources awarded the township a \$15,975 NatureWorks grant for this project and this project was one of 93 projects funded from the 170 applications filed statewide in 2009.



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Fax: 330-793-9919

Hours:

Monday-Friday 8 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Voice mail also available

Website:

www.austintowntwp.com

Austintown Phone Numbers:

Emergency911

Trustees.....330-792-8139

Police: Non-Emergency

.....330-799-9721

Fire-Business330-799-8502

Road:.....330-792-2602

Park Pavilion Rentals

.....330-792-2602

Park Department ...330-793-0718

Zoning330-799-3241

Trustees Meetings 2nd & 4th

Mondays of each month at 6 P.M.

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**NEW FIXED RATE FOR
NATURAL GAS AGGREGATION PROGRAM**

Residents currently in the township's natural gas aggregation program supplied by Vectren Source will pay a Supplier Base fixed rate. The new rate for the November 2011 to October 2012 billing cycle is \$5.51 per Mcf or approximately 14% lower than the present fixed rate of \$6.38 per Mcf good through the October 2011 billing.

The new \$5.51 price obtained was based on the commodity price on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) on August 19, 2011 when the buy order was placed by the township's energy broker. As a result, a binding contract was entered into between the township and the energy supplier, in this case Vectren Source. Contrary to what some people believe a negotiation with a supplier or suppliers does NOT take place. Instead, the township, together with the township's energy broker, closely tracks the wholesale price on the NYMEX and makes a purchase when the township's energy broker is of the opinion that the price is as low as it will go prior to the township's 60 day deadline. That is, the purchase or "buy Order" must occur no later than approximately 60 days before the new rate is to go into effect. The procedure is similar to a stock broker purchasing stock for a client based on the price of a share of that stock on the New York Stock Exchange or on the NASDAQ.

Participation is completely voluntary. In addition, there is no penalty for leaving the program unlike many offers available to the individual consumer. If you find with your November billing that you are not included in the township's aggregation group you should contact Vectren Source at 1-866-224-7163 or e-mail them at customer care@vectrensource.com in order to enroll.

Please visit Austintown Township Website at www.austintowntwp.com

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