

SUPERVISOR

HALLOFFAME

You could say roads have been a theme in the life of Washington Township supervisor **Roy Dengler**. He worked as a long-distance trucker before he became a roadmaster for the township 36 years ago. Today, as his long-running service as a supervisor winds down, the township's roads remain his pride.

Road Warrior**Roy Dengler**

Washington Township, Lehigh County
36 years of service

BY AMY BOBB / CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Roy Dengler knows roads. He drove them for 18 years as a long-distance trucker. When that job ended, he spent the next three and a half decades building, repairing, and maintaining them as a working supervisor in Washington Township, Lehigh County.

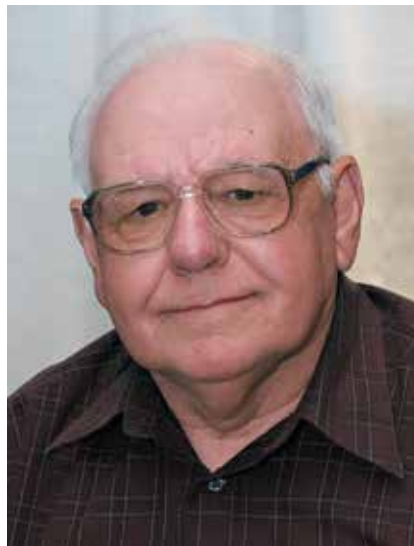
Ask him what makes a good road, and he replies, "It has a solid footer with a good foundation that is regularly resurfaced."

Dengler, who retired from road labor about two years ago, may no longer physically work on the township's roads, but he continues to keep tabs on them as the vice chairman of the board of supervisors.

"I miss working on the township roads, though," he says. "It was a good job."

Dengler decided to run for the position of supervisor in 1980 after the company where he worked as a truck driver went out of business.

"The community wanted me to be a township supervisor," he says. "I ran for the position, and I have been here ever since."



After 36 years as a supervisor and many of those years as roadmaster, Roy Dengler has left his mark on Washington Township, Lehigh County.

Now 83 years old, he says his time as a supervisor may soon be coming to a close.

"My term ends next year," he says. "It may be about time to wind this down."

A farmer's work ethic

As the secretary-treasurer of Washington Township for 25 years, JoAnn Ahner has worked the longest with Dengler. During that time, she has had a front-row seat to all that he has helped accomplish for the township.

"He takes a lot of pride in the town-

ship and its roads," she says. "He always worked with the roads and took care of our Superpave projects. He made sure the shoulders were neat and trim and that our building and yard were tidy, too."

And although he no longer physically works on the roads, he continues to play a part in prioritizing their maintenance. He drives the township's 68 miles of roads each spring to develop an inventory of which ones need to be repaired or repaved and what pipes need to be replaced.

"He has a good knowledge of our roads and knows what he is doing," Ahner says. "He manages to get everything done that he starts."

Dengler grew up on a farm in nearby Lowhill Township — "I was one of five boys," he says — where he was instilled with a work ethic that Washington Township has certainly benefited from. During his three and a half decades of service with the township, he has sweated and toiled at numerous projects, including the development of a 17-acre park.

Justifiably proud

When the Eagle's Nest Park was first proposed nearly 20 years ago, it was not a particularly popular project among residents in this rural township, Ahner says, but that opinion changed once the park was developed. Residents discovered the recreational opportunities

the park provided, including volleyball, tennis, and basketball courts; baseball, softball, and soccer fields; a pavilion with a snack bar; a playground; and wetlands with an observation deck.

"Residents love it now, and the park is packed every weekend," Ahner says. "Roy played a big part in developing the park, including cleaning up the wetlands and helping to get grant money. He is justifiably proud of what they accomplished there."

The same could be said about the township's latest recreational opportunity, a 3.3-mile rails-to-trails project, Slate Heritage Trail, completed about five years ago. The township constructed and maintains the trail, which connects with the larger Delaware and Lehigh Trail.

"People weren't crazy about it in the beginning," Dengler says, "but now it's used a lot by people who walk, run, bike, and ride horses on it. I have walked it a few times myself."

Dengler moved to Washington Township in 1955, and over the next six decades, he and his wife have lived,

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worked, and raised five children there. His son, Tom, started working on the township road crew in 2003 and took over the job of roadmaster a few years ago after his dad retired.

"He really cares about the township and the people who live here," Tom says about his father. "When he is no longer a supervisor, he is always going to worry and care about this township."

As both a long-time resident and township supervisor, the elder Dengler has naturally become the go-to source on local history.

"We go to him anytime someone

needs to know something related to the history of our township," Ahner says. "He knows all about the township and the slate quarries in the area."

She admits that now that he no longer comes to work at the township building on a daily basis, she misses his sometimes feisty but always dependable and knowledgeable self.

"All those years, I could go to him whenever I had a question," she says. "Now he may only be a phone call away, but it is not the same as when he was here working day to day. He is missed for sure." ♦

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