Felix Dziuba got involved in township government because he wanted to help his community. Over the past three decades, the lifelong resident of Tuscarora Township in Bradford County has helped the municipality with everything from acquiring land for a township building to preserving a piece of history.

A ‘helping hand’ guy
Felix Dziuba
Tuscarora Township, Bradford County
29 years of service

BY BREND A WILT / ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It’s not every day that helping pull out a stuck vehicle will start you on the path to township governance, but that’s exactly what happened to Felix Dziuba. A lifelong resident of Tuscarora Township in Bradford County — in fact, he still lives in the house where he was born in 1932 — Dziuba was just being neighborly when he used his bulldozer to pull the township grader from where it was stuck near his farm.

“The road worker said to me, ‘Why don’t you run for supervisor?’” Dziuba recalls. Not entirely sold on the idea, he talked to another township employee and decided to give it a go. That was a Friday, and he had the following Monday and Tuesday to circulate a petition and submit it to get on the ballot. He managed the feat and was elected to office.

“I thought I could help make the township better because it was in pretty bad shape financially,” he says. “Another man had joined the board two years before and was working hard to make things better, and I thought I could help, too.”

Building for the future
That helpful spirit came in handy when winter weather struck. At the time, the township did not have a truck to spread antiskid, so Dziuba used his. As a lifelong dairy farmer, he had a lot of his own equipment.

“Back then, we would plow the roads one day and spread cinders the next,” he recalls. “The township didn’t have a garage, either, so all the equipment was stored outside.”

That might still be the case if it hadn’t been for another helping hand from the supervisor.

“The geographic center of the township was on my farm,” Dziuba says. “I sold the township three acres of land to build a township building that sits about 300 feet from the actual center of the township.”

Dziuba is quick to credit the two supervisors who held office before him for the possibility of even constructing a municipal office.

“They saved up the money to build it and pay for it,” he says. “Now, we have a meeting room, offices, and a garage in a building about 40 feet by 140 feet.”

The township building isn’t the only one Dziuba can point to as an accomplishment. He was also instrumental in the preservation of the one-room school that he attended as a child.

“It closed in 1943, and the Ladies Aid Society bought it for their purposes,” he says. “The group later disbanded, and the township bought the school about five years ago. It doesn’t have any restrooms, so we only have one supervisors meeting there each year. We really bought it to preserve it.”

Dziuba’s helpful nature and his will-
ingness to seek an answer if he doesn’t know something accounts for the good relationship he has with the residents.

“I’ve known Felix all my life, and I’ve never heard anyone say anything bad about him,” says Susan Berkley, who has served as the township’s secretary since 2000. “He’s good to work with and is there for the people.”

‘The township will be OK’

Like many Bradford County communities, Tuscarora Township has been impacted by Marcellus shale natural gas development. The township has about 10 well pads, including one on Dziuba’s farm.

There has been little controversy here about the natural gas development, the supervisor says.

“People have had questions about the wells, but one of the supervisors is in close contact with the gas drilling and can answer most of them,” Dziuba says. “Everything has gone pretty smoothly, with no controversy.”

Natural gas impact fees will also ensure that the township, which is now on a firmer financial footing, will remain that way for the foreseeable future.

“With the impact money coming in, the township will be OK,” Dziuba says.

Having come full circle, in a way, the farmer-turned-supervisor says that he doesn’t plan to run for re-election when his term ends next year.

“I’ve always enjoyed it, even though it was difficult at times. Now that we have the building and more help, it’s not as difficult, but I think it’s time for someone younger to take over,” he says.

It’s probably a good bet, however, that even after he leaves the board of supervisors, Dziuba will still be around to lend a helping hand.

“‘I thought I could help make the township better because it was in pretty bad shape financially.’

Valk Manufacturing Company offers a complete line of snowplows and replacement cutting edges, including carbide blades, rubber blades, grader blades and heat treated blades.

Valk Manufacturing Company, located in New Kingstown, PA has been manufacturing snowplows for over 50 years. Snowplows like the one shown in the photo have been provided to state, municipal & contractor accounts across the country. Reversible, One-way, & Expressway plows in sizes ranging from 9’ to 16’ are the most common in our product selection. For more information on our products please see us on the web at www.valkmfg.com or call (717) 766-0711. For all your plowing requirements you need Valk “Out In Front”.

Turn page for more Newsworthy ➤

www.psats.org