

HALLOFFAME

Ronald Poska has seen plenty of changes during his 36 years as a township supervisor. One thing has remained the same, though: his willingness to offer help without a second thought.

Making the township a better place

Ronald Poska

Clinton Township, Wayne County
36 years of service

BY JENNIFER L. FLORER /
ASSISTANT EDITOR

When anyone calls for help, Ronald Poska answers — whether it's 2 in the morning or afternoon, fair weather or foul.

His fellow supervisors will tell you that, and so will his wife, Kathryn. More than once, she says, the family has been heading out the door when the phone rings, duty calls, and he's on his way to lend a hand.

"He's always given his time," she says, and that's a statement that Poska's fellow supervisor Ken Coles affirms.

"He's a good guy and would give the shirt off his back to help you," Coles says. "This township is definitely a better place for him putting his heart and soul into it."

It's something Poska has been doing for 36 years, ever since some residents first urged him to run for office. You might say it's been a way of life for this farmer and family man.

"I was happy to do it, and I've learned a lot while I've been in office," he says.



Changing times... sometimes

Some things have stayed the same over the years in this community of about 2,000, Poska says. For instance, many of the township's 33 or 34 miles of roads remain unpaved. Poska served a pretty long stint as roadmaster and has continued to work on the roads part-time ever since.

One change, however, is the way the township deals with dust control. It's a growing issue that requires a better solution, he explains.

In fact, many of Poska's township memories are tied up with roads — and

specifically, with roads and weather. "I remember the blizzard of 1993 when we had so much snow," he says. "Also, the flood of 2006 was wicked here. I saw two PennDOT bridges washed out in our township that I never dreamed would give way. Then, a few years ago, we lost another bridge and have a temporary one in there now."

Poska has seen other changes, too, such as the influx of new residents. The community, nestled in Pennsylvania's northeastern corner, has been a part-time destination for quite a few New York and New Jersey residents over the years. Some of those have now made the township their full-time home.

"I knew a lot of people when I was first elected, but now people have moved in that I don't know," he says. "We've had a lot of new houses, and we're growing."

And while Poska sees the positives that can come with change, such as advanced technology, he's been working to make sure some things stay the same — taxes, for instance.

"We've had a couple of minor tax increases but haven't really raised taxes in quite a few years," he says.

The township also had an opportunity to boost its budget by placing a cell

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tower on its property. Ultimately, two supervisors voted against it, and one recused himself from the matter.

"There have been some hard decisions on the board," Poska admits, "but I've always tried to take the people's view into consideration."

He's stuck to a pretty simple philosophy over the years — one that clearly has worked: "Use your best judgment and common sense," he says.

Making a move

After serving six terms in office, Poska has decided it's time to make room for a newcomer on the board of supervisors. He'll be retiring at the end of the year.

"I've kind of backed down and let the younger guys take over," he says. "They have some new ideas that are really good."

Old habits can be hard to break, though, and Poska concedes that he might think about working for the township part-time. For now, however, he's focused on finishing out his term

and making sure those around him know how much he has appreciated their support.

"I'd like to thank all the members of the board that I've worked with because I've had a good relationship with all of them," he says. "I also thank my family for supporting me because there were times I put the township first and missed out on some other things."

Despite the balancing act of trying to answer every call, Poska says being a township supervisor has been rewarding.

"I've enjoyed my terms with the township and really enjoyed working for the people and with the people," he says. "I think everybody should try to get involved with their local government if they can. I learned an awful lot about how townships work." ♦

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