

# **WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP**

## **2011 State of the Township Report – The Year in Review**

*PRESENTED JANUARY 9, 2012*

**By Dale M. Berry, President  
Washington Township Board of Trustees  
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Washington Township Trustees take pleasure each January in reviewing activities and accomplishments from the past year. In that respect, this State of the Township address is no different. However, some key achievements in 2011 differ from past years because they revolve around revenue challenges and a changing financial landscape.

I'm proud to report that Washington Township rose to a series of financial challenges that took place on several fronts in 2011, successfully averting one loss in revenue while adapting to others through planning and cost cutting efforts.

By mid year, it was apparent that state funding reductions would have a profound impact on local government revenue and that the township's cumulative losses would reach about \$11.6 million by 2018. Elimination of the estate tax is the largest component, with an average loss of \$1.4 million annually starting in 2013. Late in the year, the township learned of a second challenge when the county reported a 3.6 percent decline in Centerville/Washington Township property values. Reduced valuation will lower township revenue by \$666,386 in 2012. Coupled with cutbacks in state funding, losses will total about \$1.3 million in the coming year.

While this is not good news, property values fell by less than half of the 7.5 percent reduction experienced by the county as a whole – proof that Washington Township remains a highly desirable community in which to live and work.

On another financial front, the township argued successfully against a City of Centerville petition that would take .7 mills of township property tax paid by city residents and reassign it to another taxing entity. All township residents pay .7 mills to fund township services that benefit the entire community, including administrative costs for fire and recreation departments. The township also maintains Hithergreen Center, Town Hall Theatre and two cemeteries in the city for the benefit of all residents and for the past nine years have set aside \$150,000 for joint projects with the City of Centerville.

Trustees were less successful at dissuading the city from offering Tax Increment Financing for a cancer center under consideration. In its plan, Centerville would earn income tax from the center, but take property tax revenue away from the township, parks, library, county and Sinclair and redirect it to the development project for the next 30 years. Our fire department stands to lose about \$1 million.

In response to financial setbacks, the township has looked at every area of spending. We have reduced six full-time and various part-time positions through attrition, delayed capital expenses, and reviewed overtime, bank fees, credit card rebates, printing, state bids for purchasing, memberships, subscriptions and more. We also have reduced membership fees to the

contributions in honor of their daughter, Yukta. The township is providing \$50,000 in seed money.

Also, our Zoning and Development Department is helping to keep property values high by focusing on enforcement activities in the areas of property maintenance and nuisance abatement. Inspectors are on the road and out in the community more frequently in order to identify many violations before neighbors need to call.

The Austin Pike interchange continues to provide development opportunities in the southern part of the township while existing businesses have invested in the community by making property improvements and updates. Washington Township supported local businesses by working with Montgomery County on the Business First Program, promoting the Think Twice! Buy Local campaign, and hosting an annual business breakfast.

The township entered 2011 with a new police services contract with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. In addition to paying the county for its services, the township provides cruisers, equipment, office space and office supplies for deputies at our substation. Contracting with MCSO enables residents to benefit from both local control and the economies of scale provided by a large department.

The sheriff's office has been a strong partner with the township, collaborating on child safety seat inspections and providing identity theft information at our Community Shred days. Our fire department also works with the sheriff's office on drug drop off days that take place at township fire stations.

Trustees believe it is critical to keep our citizens informed about our services, our accomplishments, and our challenges. A revamped and expanded web site is helping us do that, along with a new Facebook page that provides timely updates to about 600 users.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that Washington Township has been recognized again with an unqualified audit from the Auditor of State. Washington Township has continued to act as a conscientious steward of public money. We have budgeted conservatively; kept our organization lean; forecast capital expenditures five years into the future; and pursued cost efficiencies and supplementary sources of income.

We pledge to continue these practices and to be creative and resourceful in how we provide high quality services to the residents of our community.