PRESIDENT’S LEADERSHIP AWARD

Township Officials Recognized for Dedication and Service to Their Communities

It’s rare for public servants to get recognition. They do their jobs quietly, and while many people benefit from their efforts, local leaders don’t often receive the praise they deserve. PSATS decided 24 years ago to start recognizing those township officials who have truly made a difference in their communities, and the President’s Leadership Award was born. Every year since, PSATS has honored two hard-working township officials whose accomplishments have made their townships better places to live and work.

BY JILL ERCOLINO / MANAGING EDITOR

F rank Meloy, a supervisor for Logan Township in Blair County, and Robin Getz, manager of North Cornwall Township in Lebanon County, were honored with PSATS’ 24th Annual President’s Leadership Award at the Association’s Annual Educational Conference in Hershey.

PSATS established the award in 1990 to recognize township officials who have achieved outstanding accomplishments through projects or programs that benefited their community and whose service to township government exhibits the highest standards of dedication, leadership, and creativity.

PSATS presents two awards each year to recognize a township supervisor and a township administrator.

Frank Meloy, Supervisor
Logan Township, Blair County

Meloy received the Leadership Award, one of the highest honors that PSATS bestows, in recognition of his work on behalf of this growing municipality. He admitted the recognition, delivered on the final day of the PSATS conference, was unexpected but appreciated.

“I am tremendously honored and overwhelmingly humbled,” Meloy said, giving much of the credit for his success to his wife of 45 years, Lorrie, whom he called his “adviser and supporter.” He also praised the township staff and his fellow supervisors. “Professionalism, leadership, and teamwork: These are the things that make an organization successful, and we have a great team in Logan Township.”
Meloy has served as a supervisor for Logan Township in Blair County for the past 18 years and has been chairman for much of that time.

Before running for office, he chaired the Logan Township Fire Company Consolidation Study Committee, a group of 14 volunteers that was asked to recommend a system to deliver the most appropriate and cost-effective level of fire protection for the township.

As a result, two of the five local fire companies merged, giving the township four fire companies and five fire stations. The township was also able to purchase new equipment, including three pumpers, a 95-foot ladder truck, and a 105-foot aerial piece using accumulated savings, loans from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and a 20-year bond issue.

Under Meloy’s conservative fiscal leadership, Logan Township has had only two property tax increases in the past 18 years. One of those, in 2006, was a voter-supported referendum to levy 3 mills to support the volunteer fire service. Logan Township has the lowest tax rate of any municipality with a police force in Blair County and the second lowest tax rate overall in the county.

Meloy also encouraged the township to refinance its bonds whenever it could save significant money by doing so. The most recent refinancing, in 2012, will save the township more than $1 million over the life of the debt.

Meloy’s leadership has not been restricted to the township, however. He previously served on PSATS’ Publications-Public Relations Committee and is a member of the PSATS MS4 Work Group, which is looking at proposed state regulations for stormwater management.

He has also been recognized for his volunteer work, including being named Advocate of the Year in 2009 by Region 6 of the Pennsylvania Homeless Children’s Initiative and Person of the Year in 2010 by the Blair-Bedford Central Labor Council AFL-CIO. In 2012, Meloy and his wife were named Kiwanians of the Year by the Kiwanis Club of Altoona.

Although he retired in 2010 as the assistant superintendent of the Altoona Area School District, he remains an active volunteer there.

Over the years, Meloy has also served as:
• chairman of the Board for Skills of Central Pennsylvania;
• chair of the Blair County Drug and Alcohol Council;
• board member of the Blair County Easter Seals Society;
• member of the Blair County Hu-
Robin Getz, Manager
North Cornwall Township,
Lebanon County

Getz received the Leadership Award in recognition of her efforts to make North Cornwall Township a better place to live and work. Public service, she told the crowd, is a rewarding experience.

“Some nights you go home and realize you can’t make everyone happy. Other nights you go home and realize you’ve made a lot of people happy,” Getz said. “Local government is the basis of all government, and we do make a difference.”

Getz, who has worked for North Cornwall Township for 26 years and was promoted to manager in 1999, is considered one of Lebanon County’s leading experts on state and federal stormwater requirements for municipalities. To help neighboring communities comply with the regulations, she co-founded a countywide committee to address the issue cost-effectively.

To support local businesses, Getz worked to create the North Cornwall Township Business Alliance, which now has more than 200 members. And when developing the township’s website, she made sure it included a virtual marketplace, which also encourages support for local businesses.

On the transportation front, the manager was instrumental in creating a parallel road concept to connect housing developments and keep pass-through traffic off major and congested corridors. She also helped to secure state and federal funding for three bridge replacement projects that amounted to more than $2 million.

Parks and recreation have also benefited from Getz’s leadership. She helped the township adopt a master trail system and create the first township park, with two more in the planning process. In addition, the manager worked with the developers of the largest housing development in Lebanon County. Through this
partnership, Getz secured half a million dollars for recreation and a public trail head for the Lebanon Rail Trail, which includes parking and restroom facilities.

Getz also worked with the county, PennDOT, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a wetlands bank program to preserve natural habitats and promote natural stormwater management.

Public safety got a helping hand when Getz led an effort to purchase high-definition, on-officer video cameras for the township’s police department. This cutting-edge technology records activity from the officer’s perspective, and the North Cornwall department is only the second in the state to use these cameras. Getz has also secured two federal grants, amounting to more than $250,000 each, to offset police department costs.

In addition to her work in the township, Getz is a member of the PSATS Grassroots Lobbying Network and past chair of its Land Use Planning and Growth Management Committee. She is a member of many community organizations, including the Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance, the Lebanon Auxiliary Post 915, the Neversink Fire Company, the Lebanon County Managers Association, and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

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Do you know a township supervisor, secretary, or manager who has displayed exceptional dedication, creativity, and leadership to make their community a better place to live, work, and play?

Nominate him or her for the 25th Annual President’s Leadership Award, which will be presented at PSATS’ 2014 Annual Educational Conference, April 13-16.

Brochures and entry forms will be sent to townships in November and posted on www.psats.org.