

## **Caring for the Community**

**Terry Gingerich**

**East Manchester Township,**

**York County**

**30 years of elected service**

BY JENNIFER L. HAWBAKER / ASSISTANT EDITOR

Some people are wanderers. They can't wait to leave their hometown and sow their seeds in foreign lands.

For others, like Terry Gingerich, the place they want to be is the place where they were born and raised.

"It's my community," the 30-year township supervisor turned township manager says. "I was born here, lived here all my life, and have always been concerned about what happens here."

That's why he found himself pitching in to help East Manchester Township when Hurricane Agnes blew through York County in 1972. Little did he know that the storm would also blow his life in a whole new direction.

Gingerich had his own electrical business at the time but was happy to help with the local cleanup efforts. He must have made an impression because the supervisors asked if he would consider running for office. In 1975, he decided to give it a go — and kept on going for the next three decades.

“The best part about those years was serving the community,” Gingerich says. “We dealt with issues as they arose and tried to help the residents through difficult times.”

Those difficulties included a lot of growing pains. All the dairy farms disappeared, he says, and industrial and residential development took their place.

“It was a learning experience for all of us,” Gingerich says. “We had a neighboring township that had been going through that growth process long before we did, and it gave us the chance to see what we had to do to try to control growth in our community.”

Other tough times, he says, revolved around the weather: hurricanes and snowstorms, to be exact.

“That’s when you get the most complaining,” Gingerich says, “when people can’t do what they want to do. You just have to let them know that you’re doing as much as you can with what you have available.”

During his years as supervisor-roadmaster, Gingerich became the go-to guy for the township manager. Gingerich was on-site, accessible, and able to deal with any questions that came up. When the manager retired, the board appointed Gingerich the secretary-treasurer to take over the day-to-day township operations.

And then, in 2005, he made one final transition in his township career.

“We had a change in the board,” Gingerich explains. “They said, ‘We want you to make up your mind. Either you’re a supervisor or a manager.’”

“I had served my community for 30 years as a supervisor. I figured I could serve it a little longer as a manager.”

The transition was an easy one, he says, and also very gratifying.

“I feel as if managing the township was a big accomplishment,” Gingerich says. “When I first came in, nothing was very well-organized. I feel that things are running pretty well now.”

Administrative assistant Judy Deveney couldn’t agree more. She’s worked with Gingerich for the last eight years, and his dedication was apparent from the start.

“He’s very conscientious about what goes on in the township,” she says. “He tries to keep everything running smoothly and in the best interest of the residents, and he keeps abreast of everything that’s happening. It’s been a pleasure working with him.”

Change is brewing, however. After 36 years of weeks and weekends filled with township business, Gingerich retired at the end of 2010. He plans to take the winter off and see what opportunities arrive with the spring. Re-entering the business world is a distinct possibility.

As he considers his options, Gingerich hopes that people who care about their communities — just like he did — will continue to seek local office.

“I like supervisors to come in to serve their communities, not themselves,” he says. “Anybody who would like to run for township supervisor should be running for their community.”