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PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

news release

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Chester County Township Supervisor **Wins State Association's Leadership Award**

EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE: Award recipient Gary Elston can be reached at (610) 286-9722.

Gary Elston, a supervisor for West Nantmeal Township in Chester County, received the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors' 29th Annual President's Leadership Award this morning at the association's 96th Annual Educational Conference and Exhibit Show in Hershey. Today is the opening day for the conference, which has attracted attendees from every county in Pennsylvania except Philadelphia, which has no townships.

Each year, the association presents the awards, established in 1990, to a township supervisor and a township administrator, such as a secretary or manager, whose outstanding projects or programs have benefited their communities.

Elston, a supervisor for more than 30 years and the board's chairman, is among an elite group of local government officials to receive the award, one of the highest honors that PSATS bestows. He also serves on the township's road crew and building committee and is president of the Elverson-

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Honey Brook Area Emergency Medical Services and a volunteer with the Twin Valley Fire Department.

A model of leadership and public service, Elston has been described as a “fierce advocate for the community” and has been the driving force behind a number of projects that have enhanced the area’s quality of life.

“His passion for the community shows in his every-day interactions with residents,” says township secretary-treasurer Debi Kolpak, who nominated Elston for the award. “He has overcome personal obstacles, provided clear direction, and is a tremendous leader.”

Most notably, Elston brokered deals that led to the successful consolidation of the Elverson and Honey Brook Area Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the merger of the Elverson and Morgantown Fire Departments into the Twin Valley Fire Department. Throughout the process, the supervisor has provided steady leadership and helped the organizations find common ground on funding and other challenges. As a result, residents are benefiting from consistent and competent ambulance and fire services.

Stephen Bobella Jr., the current executive director of the EMS group, recalled the first time he met Elston, a lifelong resident of the township.

“A well-spoken man with a strong handshake, Gary opened the meeting and explained the situation: Elverson Ambulance was about to close its doors,” Bobella said. “He was truly concerned not only for the organization but also for the community it served.

“Since then,” he added, “it has been an honor working next to him and watching him believe in people who sometimes don’t believe in themselves. Gary is the definition of a true patriot and friend.”

Rep. Tim Hennessey agreed: “Gary has always been completely dedicated to the residents of West Nantmeal and shoulders his responsibilities with a determination ‘to get things done.’

“Whether it’s dealing with citizens’ complaints, riding the roads to ensure that they are kept in good condition, or pushing PennDOT to maintain state roads in the township, Gary stays on top of things and keeps moving West Nantmeal forward.”

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The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors represents Pennsylvania’s 1,454 townships of the second class and is committed to preserving and strengthening township government and securing greater visibility and involvement for townships in the state and federal political arenas. Townships of the second class cover 95 percent of Pennsylvania’s land mass and represent more residents — 5.5 million — than any other type of political subdivision in the commonwealth.