

SUPERVISOR

HALLOFFAME

Being a township supervisor may be challenging, but **Duane Rape** says the job has given him something he'll always value: an education.

The Learning Never Stops

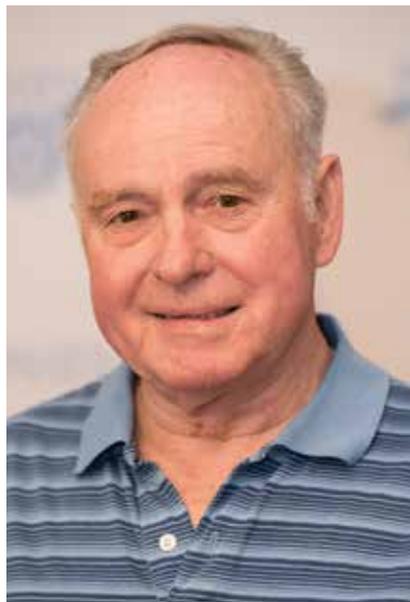
Duane Rape
 New Sewickley Township,
 Beaver County
 29 years of service

BY JILL ERCOLINO / MANAGING EDITOR

Duane Rape's thirst for learning has taken him to all 50 states. It's at home, though, in New Sewickley Township, Beaver County, where he's gotten the best education.

For nearly three decades, Rape has been a township supervisor, a job that feeds his need for knowledge every day. Serving on the front lines of his community, the supervisor says he has not only learned about state and local government but also about what it takes to be a good leader.

"You know, I guess I could have chosen to stay in my own little corner," Rape says, "but being a supervisor is so much bigger than that. I like getting out and talking to people and helping them. To me, that's the most rewarding thing."



Finding the right balance

The funny thing is, Rape, a lifelong township resident, didn't exactly jump at the opportunity to become a township supervisor.

"A former supervisor asked me to run, but I didn't," he says. "Then I started attending meetings and paying attention and that's when I decided to

Although initially hesitant about becoming a township supervisor, once Duane Rape joined the board of New Sewickley Township in Beaver County, he embraced the opportunity to help residents and keep learning.

give it a try. I thought I could make a difference."

Winning as a write-in candidate, Rape has developed a reputation for frugality. He also has a mind for numbers, township manager Walt Beighey Jr. says. "He can add things up in his head faster than I can punch them in on a calculator," the manager says with a laugh.

While he doesn't deny that he likes to save a penny here and there, Rape says his long-term vision is focused on creating a community where people want to live. That means that the supervisors are open to growth but keen on managing it, too, to preserve the community's rural way of life.

Several years ago, for instance, New Sewickley was at the heart of natural gas production in Beaver County. Rather than resist the new industry,

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Rape says the supervisors stayed in front of the issues so that everyone, including township residents, could benefit from the growth of natural gas.

Along the way, Rape, a past president of the Beaver County Association of Township Officials, has placed a lot of value on honesty, and when tax increases were necessary, he laid out the reasons why.

“I don’t bluff people,” he says, “because if you’re honest, you can live with yourself, and people will eventually figure out you did the right thing.”

‘I love being a supervisor’

Rape, a retired machinist, has one more year left on his term and won’t be running for re-election.

“Over all of these years, we’ve built an extremely nice place for people to call home,” he says, “but it’s time to bring in some new blood.”

And while it’s likely that Rape will continue traveling with his wife of 54 years, Diane, he’ll never be far from the township in body, mind, or spirit.

“I love being a supervisor, and I’m going to miss it,” he says. “You know people ask me all the time, ‘Why do you want to put up with the B.S. of being a supervisor?’ And I tell them this: ‘It’s not B.S. It’s an education; The world can be dull, or it can be bright — it’s all in how you look at it.’ ♦

How PSATS has helped this Hall of Famer

Since becoming a township supervisor nearly 30 years ago, Duane Rape has been a regular at the PSATS Annual Conference. “It’s been so educational and so informative,” he says. “Every year, I meet someone new and learn something new. It’s invaluable.”

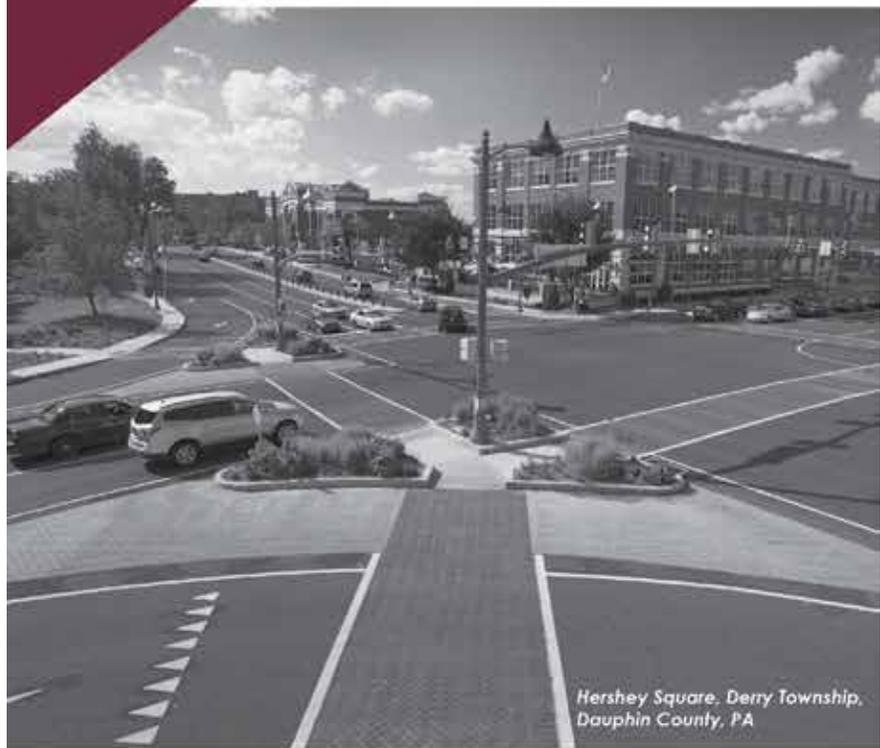
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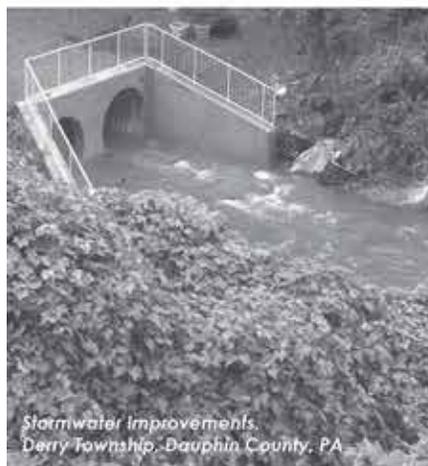
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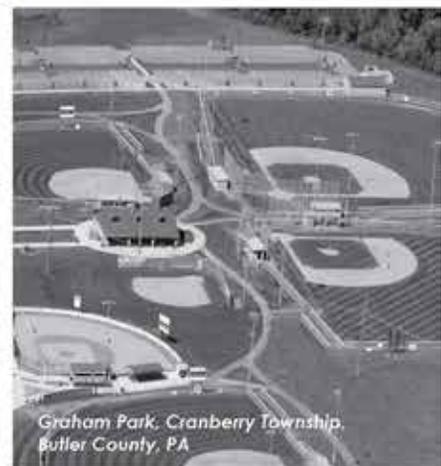
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