



PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Township Officials Recognized for Dedication, Service to Their Communities

Local leaders don't often get the praise they deserve. That changed 32 years ago when PSATS started recognizing those who have truly made a difference in their communities. Every year since, PSATS has presented the President's Leadership Award to two hard-working township officials whose accomplishments have made their townships better places to live and work.

BY BRENDA WILT / ASSISTANT EDITOR

Richard "Dick" Balas, a supervisor for Cornplanter Township in Venango County, and Greg Primm, manager of Allegheny Township in Westmoreland County, were honored with PSATS' 32nd Annual President's Leadership Awards.

Presented during the Excellence Awards Ceremony at the Annual Business Meeting in Hershey October 15, the honor recognizes township officials whose outstanding projects and programs have benefited their community and whose service to township government exhibits the highest standards of dedication, leadership, and creativity.

PSATS established the award, one of its highest honors, in 1990 and presents

it each year to a township supervisor and an administrator.

Richard Balas, Supervisor Cornplanter Township, Venango County

A supervisor for more than a dozen years and the township's chairman, Richard "Dick" Balas joins a stellar group of local government officials who have received this award.

In addition to his role as township supervisor, he is active in the Oil Region Council of Governments and several civic and community organizations, including the Venango County Museum of Art, Science, and Industry.

His "distinguished performance and exceptional service . . . is evidenced by his successful leadership in obtain-

ing funds for projects and seeing those projects through," state Rep. R. Lee James said. "Township residents are aware of Mr. Balas's service, and they appreciate everything he has done for them. I cannot think of a more qualified individual for this award."

Balas has a list of accomplishments under his belt, including starting a pension fund for the township; facilitating an agreement with neighboring Oil City for water service; spearheading construction of a garage and the upgrade of equipment; and leading the township's partnership with the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry, and Tourism to create a bike trail connector on a local road. The alliance named the board of supervisors "Partner of the Year for 2013" for its work.



Leadership Award winner Richard "Dick" Balas, right, a supervisor for Cornplanter Township in Venango County, is known for working with others to obtain the help and funds needed to get things done. PSATS President Marvin Meteer presented the award to Balas during the association's Annual Business Meeting in October in Hershey.



Greg Primm, left, manager of Allegheny Township in Westmoreland County, also received a Leadership Award for helping to put his township on solid financial footing, as well as mentoring and teaching municipal officials and employees. He also received his award from PSATS President Marvin Meteer.

"He is known to be someone who works well with everyone and ... works to get things done," Venango County Commissioner Albert Abramovic said about Balas.

His greatest achievement, however, may be the completion of a \$4 million water and sewer line project after it had stalled due to lack of funding. Balas spearheaded the successful effort to obtain a loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture when attempts to secure grants from state agencies failed.

This project was for a main corridor along a state route and included a neighborhood along an intersecting township road. There were no public water or sewer lines in the area, and new businesses have cropped up since the completion of the new lines.

Greg Primm, Manager Allegheny Township, Westmoreland County

Greg Primm has worked in local

government for three decades, including 12 years in Allegheny Township, and is involved with numerous civic and community organizations. He has also served as president of the local school board for the past 14 years.

"Gregory Primm is an exemplary community leader and would be an incredible representation of the type of dedicated public servant who is worthy of receiving [this award]," state Rep. Robert Brooks said. "[He] is a crucial part of his community, and he is also a mentor to other local leaders."

During his current tenure, this manager has racked up many accomplishments, including spearheading development of an 8-mile rail trail along the Allegheny River and creating a deep-well drilling ordinance that serves as a statewide model.

"Greg's leadership skills and willingness to create a better environment for not only Allegheny Township but also for all the communities across the

county cannot be overstated," said Jason Rigone, director of the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development. "In fact, Greg is one of the municipal managers I rely on for guidance and insight on addressing local issues."

His greatest impact, though, has been on the township's finances. By implementing a conservative fiscal plan that called for making double payments each month on mortgages and loans, he eliminated \$1.8 million in township debt . . . 10 years early. His efforts also turned a non-funded pension plan into a half-million-dollar fully funded plan in just five years.

Primm is also a long-time PSATS volunteer, having served on several standing committees and acted as a workshop teacher and moderator, as well as a sergeant-at-arms at the Annual Conference. ♦

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