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townships in the spotlight



Augusta Charter Township



Founded in 1836, **Augusta Charter Township** (Washtenaw Co.) received its name from Judson Durkee, who petitioned the government to split a portion of land from neighboring **Ypsilanti Charter Township** (Washtenaw Co.). The original name was Augusta Center, after Durkee's former home in Augusta, New York. Early township residents numbered around 559, and raised livestock including cattle, hogs, sheep and horses.

Today with more than 6,700 residents, Augusta Charter Township officials are focusing on community events, "curb appeal" and local improvements. The township has made it a priority to modernize ordinances to control blight and bring homes and properties in to compliance after many years of neglect. In 2018, six blighted houses and one barn were removed, with more to come in 2019. Residents have happily noticed the positive improvement in the appearance of their township and their neighborhoods.

In an effort to reignite community pride and spirit, residents took part in a revival of the Spring Cleanup event. It was topped off with a potluck-style cook-out in which everyone enjoyed pitching in to prepare and share.

The township held its first Halloween Trunk or Treat, which had a great turn out, thanks to community members who worked hard to put the event together. Santa came to the township this Christmas, and children and adults alike enjoyed a little holiday cheer. Volunteer firefighters brought a fire truck to the event, and participants had fun sitting in the truck for photos and talking with the firefighters. They handed out many fire hats, answered questions and enjoyed spending time with residents.

Volunteers coordinated the second car show at Lincoln Consolidated Schools, which boasted a great community turnout.

Augusta Charter Township also recently assumed the responsibilities of restoring and maintaining Stony Creek Cemetery, which contains 907 graves, including Civil War soldiers and one Revolutionary War soldier. The township was one of the first to allow African-American soldiers from the Civil War to be buried in its cemeteries.

Supervisor **Brian Shelby**, who serves as sexton, was joined by numerous volunteers to organize a rededication ceremony of the cemetery in 2017. With cannon fire, Civil War reenactors dressed in historic Civil War outfits, Shelby presided over the event, and all watched as a new U.S. flag was hoisted for the first time at the cemetery. Shelby explained, "In 180 years, there was never a flag pole on that land." It was a proud day for Augusta Charter Township and its residents.

In an effort of township beautification, the sheriff's work program removed 60 tons of trash from area roads and ditches. With the help of area residents, they also stained decking, painted and landscaped around township buildings.

