

COMMUNITY PROFILE
of
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
BUCKS COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

Location: Springfield Township is a growing rural township in northern Bucks County approximately 5 miles southeast of the Allentown/Bethlehem metropolitan area and 40 miles north of the City of Philadelphia. It is the second largest municipality in the county in land area (30.78 square miles) and is predominately rural in character. Nearly 83 percent of the township land area consists of three primary land use categories—rural residential (33.6 % of the total land area), agricultural (30.7 %) and vacant (18.6 %). A majority of the agricultural land is concentrated within the central portion of the township.

Governing body: Springfield Township is a Township of the Second Class under Pennsylvania law, and is governed by a 5-member Board of Supervisors who are elected at large for 6 year overlapping terms (one every two years during the municipal elections).

Staff: The current staff consists of 8 full-time positions including the Township Manager/Secretary/Treasurer and an administrative assistant. The public works duties are handled by a road department consisting of two full-time employees. The zoning and code enforcement responsibilities are handled by a full-time employee of the township. Police services are provided by the three full-time police officers and one part-time secretary. The Township solicitor and engineer serve on a contracted basis.

Sewer Authority: The Township had its own sewer authority , but their responsibilities were recently assumed by the Board of Supervisors. The current infrastructure consists of a small collection system which services the Zion Hill section of the township.

Water Services: the Township administers a small community water system in the Springtown area of the township.

Budget and taxes: The 2005 total Township budget is approximately \$1,200,000. Earned income taxes are the primary revenue source.

School District: The Township is part of the Palisades School District.

History: The first permanent settlers of Springfield Township were English and Scotch-Irish who moved up the Cooks Creek valley from the Delaware River. German colonists joined this settlement by moving up from Philadelphia to Quakertown and finally to Springfield. Most of the English were land speculators, while most of the Germans were settlers. Thus, it was the Germans who would have the largest influence on the development of the township.

Colonists first settled in Springfield Township along streams or near the many springs found throughout the hillsides. There they built their homes and cleared the land for farming.

Springfield Township was originally part of lands belonging to the Lenape Indians. William Penn, although already holding title to all land in the province under a grant from Charles II of England, still negotiated land purchases from the Lenapes. The areas composing Springfield Township were not acquired from the Lenapes until the Walking Purchase of 1737, when John and Thomas Penn secured the remainder of Bucks County, as well as lands composing present-day Lehigh and Northampton counties.

The township was officially incorporated in 1743. Springfield Township was named for its abundance of hill and meadow springs. As the agricultural economy of the township developed, schools, mills, churches, and general stores were built to serve the growing population.

During the remainder of the 1700s, villages developed at crossroads where waterpower was available to operate the grist and saw mills. Springtown became the largest of these villages. Springtown was located along a major road and surrounded by some of the best farmland in the area. In 1737 the town contained six to eight houses, a tavern, and a store. By 1896, the village contained two churches, a tavern, a store, mills, and 40 houses.

Springfield Township remained a largely agricultural-based community throughout its entire history, supplying meat, crops, and dairy products to the region. With the development of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Philadelphia as centers for manufacturing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the population of Springfield declined.

Today's Growth and Demographics: Between 1980 and 1990, Springfield's population grew slightly with a few single-family homes on a couple of acres. The township and its surrounding municipalities have grown by about 3,181 housing units and 7,002 people from 1990 to 2000, while Springfield itself only grew by 34 housing units while losing 214 residents in that same time period.

Area communities, such as Richland, Milford, and Upper and Lower Saucon townships, have begun to experience increased development pressures and Springfield Township may be next in line according to the comprehensive development plan. Due to its proximity to major highways (I-78, the Northeast extension of the PA turnpike, and PA Route 309), its wealth of natural and historical resources, and its large amount of open land, Springfield Township has the potential for a substantial increase in new development.

(For additional in-depth information about the Township, you may refer to the *Comprehensive Plan*, available in PDF and HTML formats on our website: www.springfieldbucks.org)