



ADRIAN A. SANTOS
NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

I hope you enjoy learning more about Brian Martinez, our head groundskeeper at Oak Hill Cemetery in Hammond and about the role Indiana townships play when cemeteries are abandoned or become insolvent.

After a proud beginning and more than a century of private ownership, Oak Hill went from owner to owner before finally being lost in a poker game. In 2012, North Township took ownership.

As township trustee, I take the law that makes insolvent or abandoned cemeteries our responsibility seriously.

It is one of the lesser known township responsibilities, but one we consider just as important. Everyone deserves a final resting place where they are treated with dignity and respect.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about us at OakHillHammond.com.

NORTH TOWNSHIP ADVOCATE

YOUR NORTH TOWNSHIP GUIDE TO ASSISTANCE, SERVICES AND RECREATION
IN EAST CHICAGO, GRIFFITH, HAMMOND, HIGHLAND, MUNSTER AND WHITING



Dozens of Hammond's notables and thousands of residents are buried under a canopy of shade, tended by groundskeeper Brian Martinez (above). Today, Oak Hill is a working cemetery with several burials each month and hundreds of plots still available. For more information about our burial services, please contact Cemetery Manager LaToya Price at (219) 932-2530, ext. 335. [photo provided]

LONGTIME GROUNDSKEEPER ENSURES OAK HILL CEMETERY'S BEAUTY SHINES

Brian Martinez looks out over the well-manicured landscape at Oak Hill Cemetery proud of what he and fellow groundskeeper Jerry Rodriguez have helped rebuild in Hammond.

From the waist-high grass, overgrown cemetery plots, toppled gravestones and weedy overgrowth and vines that obscured the view from Holman Avenue, the head groundskeeper for Oak Hill was hired to create order from the 25 acres of chaos.

That was 14 years ago when the North Township Trustee had just taken ownership of the cemetery that had been in – and out – of private hands for more than a century.

Change didn't happen overnight.

Martinez and Rodriguez took it one section at a time. Weekly mowing in the summer followed by an autumn mulch to keep the grass, plants and trees healthy.

SEE GROUNDSKEEPER, PAGE 2

ADRIAN A. SANTOS

NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

(219) 932-2530 or info@ntto.net

HAMMOND OFFICE

5947 Hohman Ave.

Hammond, IN 46320

Phone: (219) 932-2530

Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F

NorthTownshipTrustee.com

EAST CHICAGO OFFICE

2100 Broadway

East Chicago, IN 46312

Phone: (219) 398-2435

Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. M-F

NorthTownshipTrustee.com

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK

8554 Indianapolis Boulevard

Highland, IN 46322

Phone: (219) 838-3420

Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F

WickerMemorialPark.com

OAK HILL CEMETERY

6445 Hohman Avenue

Hammond, IN 46324

Phone: (219) 932-0206

Gate: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily

Office: 8 a.m.-4 p.m. M-F

OakHillHammond.com

NORTH TOWNSHIP BOARD

Peter Katic, Chairperson

Richard J. Novak, Member

Lisa Salinas-Matonovich, Secretary

RADIO SHOW

Join us at 7:30 a.m. the second and fourth Thursday of the month on WJOB Radio + JEDTV to learn about the latest North Township news and events!

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Advocate is mailed quarterly throughout the township on a rotating basis. Please note that you may not receive a newsletter each time it is published. Hard copies are available at our offices and online at NorthTownshipTrustee.com.



When Oak Hill Cemetery was acquired by the North Township Trustee in 2012, gates and fences were in disrepair. Vandals had toppled headstones and scattered grave markers. While they were creating order out of chaos, cemetery staff created a master directory of all known burials along with those who had been soldiers in the Civil War. Head groundskeeper Brian Martinez (above) is proud of the work he and fellow groundskeeper Jerry Rodriguez have done to restore its beauty. [photo provided]

GROUNDKEEPER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Fast forward a dozen years: The final resting place for thousands of the region's proudest and finest has been restored as its founders had intended.

On any given day, Martinez meets up with dozens of families of the deceased during his work day. They know him by name just as he knows theirs.

They've become friends. Some of the regular visitors bring treats and know Brian well enough to know he fancies a vanilla Long John and coffee from Dunkin' Donuts.

"I never imagined a career as a groundskeeper at a cemetery, but I know this is where I belong," he said. "People used to be afraid to visit, but not anymore. This is a peaceful place, a quiet place where people come to remember and reflect.

"We love what we do," Martinez said. "I'm sure God must have put me here to take care of these souls' resting places and their loved ones. They know we are here to take care of them."

OAK HILL CEMETERY TOUR

Join the Hammond Historical Society for a guided walking tour honoring the 140th anniversary of Oak Hill Cemetery, created in 1885 by Hammond's founder and first mayor, Marcus Morton Towle.

Since the time period of its founding was the Gilded Age, the tour will highlight some of the industries built by the Hammond founders interred here. Be prepared to be on your feet for 30 minutes or more.

WHEN: 1-4 p.m. Sunday, **October 5**

WHERE: Oak Hill Cemetery, 6445 Hohman Ave., Hammond. Entrance and free parking is located on Kenwood Street, east of Hohman.

FEE: \$5 per person, ages 18+.

Attendees under age 18 are free. Local history books and water will be for sale. Credit cards accepted.

INFO: Call (219) 931-5100, option 5 or email contact@hammondhistoricalsociety.org.

Thank You VETERANS

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

MEMORIAL RIDE SUPPORTS VETERANS BUILD

A portion of the proceeds from this year's Victory for Veterans Memorial Ride will go to Habitat for Humanity. The \$10,000 donation will help build homes for veterans in the Riverwalk neighborhood in Lake Station.

North Township Special Events Director Kelly Bridges said the Wicker Park Memorial Fund, a 501 (c)(3) that hosts the ride in partnership with the North Township Trustee, is proud to support this valuable veterans' cause.

Habitat for Humanity Executive Director

Dawn Michaels said the group is grateful for the donation.

"At Habitat, we designate one build a year for veterans and are always looking for more veterans to qualify for the program," Michaels said.

"We are always working to support our local veteran's community," she said. "Currently, we are building a home in Lake Station for a veteran. Anyone who wants to donate a home or property that will eventually go to a veteran can make that ask and we will honor it."

THANK YOU FOR ROUNDING UP!



Thanks to shoppers who rounded up while shopping at Strack & Van Til, the **NORTH TOWNSHIP VETERANS ROUNDTABLE** received \$17,110.43 to help local veterans in need. Pictured from left: NTVR Treasurer Len Sherwinski, NTVR member Joe Kwasny, Strack & Van Til President and CEO Jeff Strack, North Township Trustee Adrian A. Santos, North Township Chief of Staff Nikki Mika and NTVR Vice President Jim Grauvogi. The Veterans Roundtable, a 501(c) (3) through the Legacy Foundation, meets the first Wednesday of the month to discuss issues facing today's veterans. **INFO:** Call (219) 313-3934.

MEMORIAL RIDE TICKETS & INFO

This year marks the 26th Annual Victory for Veterans Memorial Ride at Wicker Memorial Park.

Tickets are available online at victoryforveteranswickerpark.org or you can purchase the day of the event. Single riders are \$25, double riders are \$40. Cost includes food/beverage tickets, pin and live entertainment.

WHEN: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

September 28 – registration and check-in is from 9-11 a.m. Police-escorted victory ride kicks off at 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park

INFO: (219) 313-3934

VET & FRIENDS COFFEE SOCIALS

Our Vets & Friends Coffee Socials, which take place on the second Tuesday of the month, bring veterans and their families together to establish meaningful connections through camaraderie and resource sharing.

WHEN: 9-11 a.m. **October 14** and **December 9**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Club House, 2215 Ridge Road

INFO: (219) 313-3934

VET & FRIENDS THANKSGIVING

Join us for a special Vets & Friends Thanksgiving on Veterans Day! Part of our monthly coffee social series, this special gathering will feature a complimentary dinner for veterans and active military members, who are allowed to bring one guest.

WHEN: 5-7 p.m. **November 11**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Social Center, 2215 Ridge Road

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED:
(219) 313-3934

Autumn

AT WICKER MEMORIAL PARK

Scenic Trails

The 2.5-mile trail along the perimeter of the park is perfect for the avid walker, runner or bicyclist. The half-mile inner trail takes you on a scenic tour of the shelters and playground. **HOURS:** 5:30 a.m.-10 p.m.

Outdoor Fitness

Take your fall exercise routine to the next level. Open year-round, the handicapped-accessible equipment includes an elliptical machine, leg press, rower bike, vertical press and pendulum.

For More Information

Visit wickermemorialpark.com to learn more about the our amenities and what Wicker Memorial Park has to offer.

Tree-lined Fairways

Our 18-hole, par-72 course offers beautiful tree-lined fairways, practice greens and a driving range. Enjoy great golf at some of the most competitive rates in the region.

INFO: Call our Pro Shop at (219) 838-9809 for rates or to schedule your tee time.

All-Inclusive Playground

Check out our all-inclusive playground equipment for individuals of all abilities. There's so much for your young ones to explore. Mulch has been replaced making the entire playground ADA accessible.

Delightful Dog Park

Our fenced-in dog park features plenty of space to run around. Annual fee is \$25 for township residents, \$60 out-of-township and \$100 out-of-state. **INFO:** Call the park office at (219) 838-3420.





Join us at Wicker Memorial Park Pavilion for an afternoon of trunk-or-treating, DJ, decorated cars, candy, food and the most awesome costume contest!

1-3 PM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

VENDOR REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Vendor registration is limited to businesses and organizations, not individuals. Deadline is October 22.

For more information: Please email info@ntto.net or call (219) 932-2530, extension 327.

LAST CRUISE NIGHT

Check out the coolest classic cars and trucks during our final summer cruise night from 4-7 p.m. Wednesday, **September 24** at Wicker Memorial Park. Our DJ will be spinning tunes and food will be available for purchase. Bring a blanket or lawn chair for comfortable seating.

INFO: (219) 313-3934

FALL JOB FAIR

North Township is hosting a fall career fair from 3-6 p.m. Thursday, **October 16** at the Wicker Memorial Park Social Center, 2215 Ridge Road.

INFO: NorthTownshipTrustee.com for participating employer updates.

FOUR WINDS CASINO

Roll the dice and let Lady Luck guide you to fame on this 55-and-over bus trip to Four Winds Casino from 9 a.m. -4 p.m. **September 16, October 21** and **November 18**. Check-in begins at 8:30 a.m. Fee is for \$30 township residents, \$35 non-township residents and includes transportation to/from Wicker Memorial Park, \$15 slot credit and \$10 food credit.

RESERVATIONS: (219) 313-3934

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Tickets go on sale Monday, **October 27** for our coach bus trip to see The Phantom of the Opera Wednesday, **December 17** at the Cadillac Palace Theater in downtown Chicago. Showtime is 7 p.m. Check-in at 4:30 p.m. at Wicker Memorial Park. Bus departs at 5 p.m. and returns after play. Nonrefundable tickets are \$110 per person, which includes round-trip transportation to/from Wicker Memorial Park. Must pay in advance.

RESERVATIONS: (219) 313-3934



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5947 HOHMAN AVENUE
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

PICTURES WITH SANTA

Bring your little ones for a visit and free photograph with Santa Claus, who will be visiting our East Chicago office this year.

WHEN: 3:30-5 p.m. Thursday, December 4

WHERE: Township Trustee's East Chicago office, 2100 Broadway.

INFO: (219) -398-2435

SENIOR LUNCHEONS

North Township seniors enjoy great food, entertainment, guest speakers and door prizes for only \$7 at our luncheons on the second Wednesday of the month through December at Wicker Memorial Park Social Center. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Lunch is served at noon. Meals include hot tea and coffee.

RESERVATIONS: Call the trustee's office at (219) 932-2530, ext. 2. Reservations close 10 days prior.



RADIO SHOW

Join us at 7:30 a.m. the second and fourth Thursday of the month on WJOB Radio + JEDTV to learn about the latest North Township news and events!

Join North Township Trustee Adrian A. Santos in giving the gift of warmth this holiday season!



17th Annual NORTH TOWNSHIP COAT DRIVE

New winter coats will be given to children of North Township. Children must be with parent/guardian to receive a coat. Recipients must be township residents with valid ID.

WHEN: 9-11 a.m. Saturday, **NOVEMBER 15**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Pavilion

INFO: Call (219) 932-2530 or email info@ntto.net.

**SPONSORED BY
NIPSCO**



DONATE GENTLY USED ADULT COATS BY NOVEMBER 7 AT THESE LOCATIONS:

East Chicago Office
2100 Broadway
East Chicago, IN 46312

Hammond Office
5947 Hohman Avenue
Hammond, IN 46320

Wicker Memorial Park
8554 Indianapolis Blvd.
Highland, IN 46322