



NORTH TOWNSHIP ADVOCATE



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

TRUSTEE TALK



North Township Trustee Adrian A. Santos addresses a crowd gathered at a NIPSCO rally in Hammond, where he reminded consumers about the utility assistance the township offers residents. NORTH TOWNSHIP PHOTOS

ADRIAN A. SANTOS
NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

We are welcoming spring with news that North Township should not be impacted by a new state law created to reduce the number of Indiana townships from 1,008 to about 700.

I have seen how much townships – both large and small – do for the communities we serve and traveled downstate to fight for township government.

We are confident that North Township will remain as it has for more than 100 years. We are located close to the residents who need services we are uniquely positioned to serve. Township government was created by lawmakers who understood that assistance to help with such needs as rent or utilities was most effective when residents could access that help close to home.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about us at NorthTownshipTrustee.com.

MORE RESIDENTS SEEKING ASSISTANCE AS UTILITY BILLS CONTINUE TO SOAR

Cash strapped by hefty increases in the cost of both electricity and natural gas for residential customers is driving more residents to seek help.

North Township Trustee Adrian A. Santos was one of the first to grab flyers created by the township to let people know assistance is available.

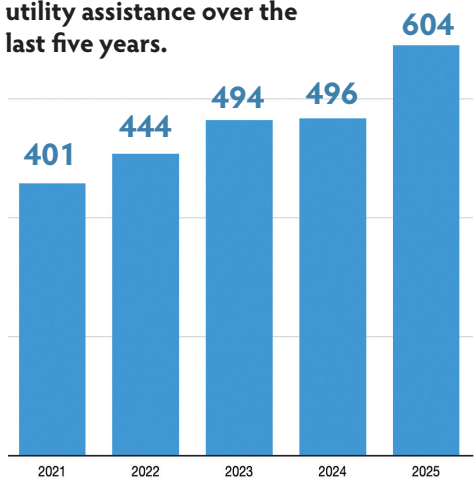
“Back-to-back increases – nearly 20 percent for electricity and 16 percent for natural gas – has hit township residents hard. The timing could not have been worse,” Santos said.

“We had an early – and punishing – winter with dramatically colder temperatures and longer durations of sub-freezing temperatures than we have been used to.”

SEE ASSISTANCE, PAGE 2

NIPSCO - TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE

As gas and electricity costs continue to rise, more and more township residents are turning to the North Township Trustee's Office for utility assistance. Here's a look at the increasing number of households that received utility assistance over the last five years.



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, Member

Richard J. Novak, Secretary

Lisa Salinas-Matonovich,

Chairperson

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.

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN ENTERS NEXT PHASE OF DESIGN, PLANNING

With a legacy that has graced the corner of Indianapolis Boulevard and Ridge Road for nearly a century, North Township is moving forward to create a vision for Wicker Memorial Park that will serve residents for the next 100 years.

What began with an inventory of park assets and draft master plan for the 228-acre park remain a work-in-progress.

"We meet bi-weekly to discuss design, make changes to structures on the property and determine how we can renovate by phasing construction," Chief of Staff Nikki Ramos-Mika said.

Buildings that could benefit from upgrades include the clubhouse, social center, pro shop and park office.

"We know we need to expand parking where we can, but it needs to be done

LEARN MORE

Visit WickerMemorialPark.com to learn more about the master plan as well as key findings and recommendations.

without disturbing the canopy of trees inside the park road that is synonymous with Wicker Memorial Park," she said.

First on the list will be relocating the park office to provide easy access and expanded space for residents to conduct business at the park, whether that is securing park permits, dog park access or reserving a picnic shelter.

"It's exciting to be planning for this generation – and the next – and the one that follows," Ramos-Mika said. "This park is a wonderful gathering place for all residents of North Township."

ASSISTANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

By the numbers, requests for utility assistance were already on the rise – even in Highland and Munster – before the NIPSCO increases went into effect. A stagnant job market is expected to increase the number of residents who qualify for help as will people carrying NIPSCO balances when CoAction closes out its winter assistance program in April.

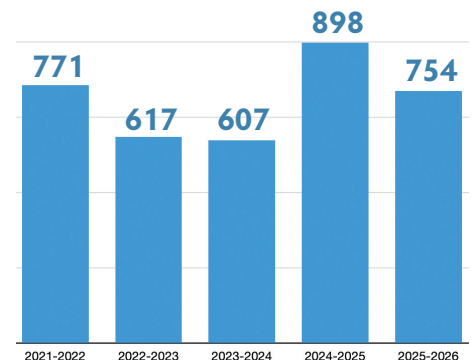
"Poor relief – what we now call Township Assistance – is one of the primary reasons townships were created nearly 200 years ago," Santos said. "It's why we're here today – to do everything we can to help people weather these lean times."

As trustee, Santos is always trying to anticipate and plan for the next fiscal crisis.

"Our goal is to do everything we can with the tools afforded us by Indiana law," he said. "Anything we can do to help with the dollars we have, we will."

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Energy Assistance Program (in partnership with CoAction) offers assistance to households that make 60 percent of the state median income or less. Here's a look at the number of applicants over the last five years.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Need help with your utilities? Call the North Township Trustee's Office at (219) 932-2530 for more information.

Wicker Memorial Park

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 more information or visit – wickermemorialpark.com – to view our rates or schedule your tee time.

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 park, shelters and playground. Motorized vehicles and E-bikes are prohibited. Open from dawn to 10 p.m.

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 at noon. Meals include bread, butter, hot tea and coffee.

RESERVATIONS: Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 2. Reservations are required.

Shelter & Picnic Rentals

The park is now accepting reservations for the 2026 season (May 1-Sept 30). Reservations must be made in person only. The 2026 township rates are:

	WEEKEND Friday–Sunday	WEEKDAY Monday–Thursday
PICNIC AREA	\$150	\$100
PAVILION	\$600	\$450
SHELTERS	\$225	\$150
BREEZEWAY	\$400	\$250

Reservations are available for out-of-township and out-of-state residents at a higher cost. Discounts are available for nonprofit organizations, veterans, police officers and firefighters who are township residents.

INFO: Call (219) 838-3420 or visit us online to view our facilities and a complete rental fee schedule.

Delightful Dog Park

Our fenced-in dog park features benches and plenty of space to run around. Annual fee is \$25 for township residents, \$60 out-of-township and \$100 out-of-state.

INFO: Download forms at wickermemorialpark.com.



Earth Day Park Cleanup

10 AM - NOON | SATURDAY | APRIL 25



DUE TO LIMITED SUPPLIES, WE KINDLY REQUEST THAT PARTICIPANTS BRING THEIR OWN GLOVES AND RAKES.

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK PAVILION | 2215 RIDGE ROAD | HIGHLAND

VETS & FRIENDS SOCIALS

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

UPCOMING: 9-11 a.m. **April 14, May 12 and June 9.**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Club House, 2215 Ridge Road

INFO: (219) 313-3934



VETERANS ROUNDTABLE

Under the leadership of North Township Trustee Adrian A. Santos, veteran organization leaders meet on the first Wednesday of the month to discuss and collaborate on issues facing today's veterans.

UPCOMING: Noon-1:30 p.m. **May 6, June 3, July 1 and August 5**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Social Center, 2215 Ridge Road.

INFO: (219) 932-2530



CROSTOWN CLASSIC

Join us for a trip to the South Side to watch the Chicago White Sox take on the Chicago Cubs in this year's Crosstown Classic series.

WHEN: Friday, **May 15.** Game time is 6:40 p.m. Check-in at 4 p.m. Bus departs Wicker Memorial Park at 4:30 p.m. and returns after end of game.

WHERE: Guaranteed Rate Field (White Sox ballpark)

FEE: \$130 per person includes game ticket (Box section 148) and round-trip coach bus transportation to/from Wicker Memorial Park.

RESERVATIONS: Call Special Events Director Kelly Bridges at (219) 313-3934 or online at eventbrite.com. Must pay in advance, nonrefundable.

Memorial Day Flag Ceremony

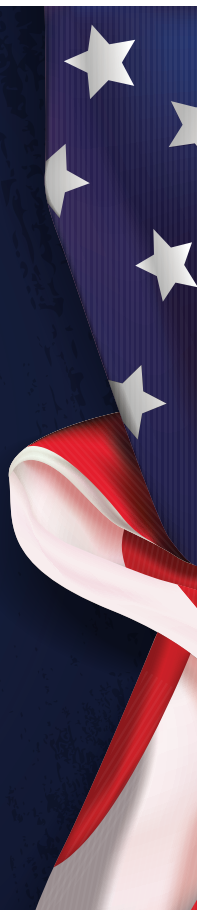
10 AM - NOON | SATURDAY | MAY 23

North Township Trustee Adrian A. Santos will honor the memory of more than 500 veterans during a flag ceremony Memorial Day weekend at Oak Hill Cemetery.

"Putting flags at the graves of these brave men and women is an honor," Santos said.

Please join us and our guest speaker Sgt. Spencer Framke of St. John, a five-year Marine Corps veteran. The Paymaster Adjutant and past Commandant of the Calumet Detachment of the Marine Corps League will pay tribute to the fallen.

OAK HILL CEMETERY | 6445 HOHMAN | HAMMOND



"I think being suited for a job, liking what you do and enjoying your co-workers is key to happiness. I found that at North Township."

SUE TOKARZ, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



NORTH TOWNSHIP PHOTO

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE KEEPING NORTH TOWNSHIP IN THE GREEN FOR 47 YEARS

When there are questions about what North Township can afford, Trustee Adrian Santos is the first to say, "Ask Sue."

Sue, also known as Director of Finance Susan Tokarz, is a genius when it comes to township's finance. That's not all. Tokarz wears a second hat – assisting human resources with the township's regular employees and seasonal workers.

"There is no one like Sue," Township Trustee Adrian Santos said. "Anything we want to know about income, expenses or how we can spend certain dollars, Sue has the answer."

For her part, Tokarz says she came to North Township looking for a summer job between high school graduation and college. Her work was

so remarkable, then-Trustee Horace Mamala offered her a part-time job that worked around college courses.

Upon graduation with a financial accounting and management degree, she was offered full-time work.

Turns out, she had an affinity for the work. From doing intake and processing claims to double-checking fiscal reports and doing payroll.

It's been 47 years later and Tokarz enjoys coming to work every day.

"I love the challenge of it all. I love detail work and making sure everything we do is done well," she said. "I really like working here. It was convenient, but this job is so much more. I feel good about what I do. They've been good to me."

**WE'RE
HIRING**

BARTENDERS

Wicker Memorial Park

Our Pro Shop is seeking licensed bartenders who can verify IDs, prepare/serve alcoholic drinks, accept payment, clean glasses/bar utensils, balance receipts, drive a golf cart, prepare hot dogs, pizza and snacks. Applicants must have a valid Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission bartender's employee permit and driver's license.

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

Oak Hill Cemetery

Candidates must have a valid Indiana driver's license, experience using industrial weed trimmers and blowers as well as the physical ability to work outdoors.

SPLASH PAD ATTENDANT

Wicker Memorial Park

We're looking for individuals with excellent customer service skills who can greet visitors, accept payment, balance receipts as well as enforce pad and park rules.

SPLASH PAD SUPERVISOR

Wicker Memorial Park

We are seeking a supervisor to manage splash pad attendants, enforce park and splash pad rules, handle visitor concerns, oversee payment and maintain a safe and welcoming environment.

PARK LABOR

Wicker Memorial Park

We're looking for park labor to maintain the grounds. Qualified individuals must have a valid Indiana driver's license, the ability to lift 50 pounds and work outdoors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit wickermemorialpark.com for full job descriptions or to apply.

SPRING RESOURCE FAIR

North Township's spring resource fair features social service vendors, food assistance, educational opportunities and local providers. Learn more about AARP, CoAction, Ministering Hearts, Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, Veterans Affairs and many healthcare organizations, including Franciscan Health and so much more.

WHEN: 1-4 p.m. **April 16**

WHERE: Wicker Memorial Park Social Center, 2215 Ridge Road.

INFO: northtownshiptrustee.com



FOUR WINDS CASINO

Roll the dice and let Lady Luck guide you to fortune or at least a rollicking good time on this coach bus trip to New Buffalo, Michigan.

WHEN: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. **April 21, May 19, June 16 and July 21.**
Check-in begins at 8:30 a.m.

WHERE: Four Winds Casino

FEE: \$32 township residents, \$37 non-township residents includes transportation to/from Wicker Park. You'll receive a \$15 slot credit and a \$10 food credit.

RESERVATIONS: (219) 313-3934



TULIP TIME FESTIVAL

A palette of color awaits you as you wind along the entrance to Holland's treasured island. Tour five stories of the DeZwaan windmill, the only authentic Dutch windmill operating in the United States. From the top, you can survey the park's 36 acres of manicured gardens and natural areas. Open to all ages, the round-trip experience costs \$50 for North Township residents and \$55 for out-of-township residents.

WHEN: Check in at 7:30 a.m. **May 8.**
Bus departs Wicker Memorial Park at 8 a.m. and returns at 5 p.m.

WHERE: Holland, Michigan

RESERVATIONS: Call (219) 313-3934 or online at eventbrite.com.

ADRIAN A. SANTOS
NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE

5947 HOHMAN AVENUE
HAMMOND, INDIANA 46320

**NORTH TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE ADRIAN A. SANTOS
INVITES YOU TO OUR SPRING ...**



Job Fair

3-6 PM | THURSDAY | MAY 14

Local titans of business and industry are ready to meet with prospective employees at North Township's Spring Job Fair. This annual event draws a healthy crowd of job seekers eager to meet with employers representing the casino, health care, higher education, retail and corporate sectors.

WICKER MEMORIAL PARK SOCIAL CENTER
2215 RIDGE ROAD | HIGHLAND

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit WickerMemorialPark.com or follow us on social media for the latest updates on participating employers.