



From Your Associate Director

THE FALL SEASON is fast approaching! With the changing season also comes the TOI Annual Conference. As you know, this year it is scheduled for November 8-10 in Springfield at the Prairie Capital Convention Center. This is the 102nd Annual Educational Conference and I am proud to say it will be better than the previous 101.

The 2009 Conference brings exciting educational programs and experiences for both newly elected and returning township officials. The theme this year is "Government For The People – The Lincoln Legacy" and I am confident that President Abraham Lincoln would be proud of the townships in Illinois for their attention to local problems and most importantly, maintaining a presence as the government closest to the people.

Additionally, the 2009 conference brings a new registration process. This year for the first time, conference attendees can register for the conference on-line (electronically) and pay with a credit card (VISA/MASTERCARD/DISCOVER) only. This is a new step for the conference committee and TOI staff. However, it is imperative that we streamline the process and work toward the "going green" nature of conference registrations. Therefore, I am calling on all of you to step up to the plate (I think that was a slogan used in 2005) and embrace the new innovative abilities provided by your association. *You will be provided an opportunity to register on-line after July 1, 2009.*

County Association Meetings

An effective way to network with neighboring townships is through your county association of township officials. As I have indicated before, out of the 85 counties that operate under the township form of government, we have about 42 counties with existing county associations. Reach out to your county association and help plan a meeting this fall. As township government has experienced significant turnover with the recent election, this may be an opportunity to generate support among new elected officials to township government. If you need assistance in scheduling a meeting or have any questions, contact me by e-mail at jerry@toi.org.

The following County Associations have contacted me regarding upcoming meetings:

July 16	McLean County
July 20	Greene County
July 21	Jefferson County
August 13	Fayette County

Support the New TOIPAC Raffle Fundraiser!

Again in 2009, TOIPAC is offering an outstanding raffle package fundraiser. Tickets are available from a TOI board member and at various association and individual division events this summer. Tickets are \$10 each or three for \$20.

The image shows a raffle ticket form for TOIPAC. It includes a header with "No 0751" on both sides. The main heading is "Win a Trip to LAS VEGAS" with a small airplane icon. Below this, it says "Plus a Second Drawing for a weekend in CHICAGO". The ticket price is listed as "\$10 per Ticket or 3 Tickets for \$20". The drawing date is "Tuesday, November 10, 2009" at the "TOI Annual Conference Banquet". There is a logo for "TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS" and a note: "Need not be present to Win. Details on other side." The form has fields for Name, Address, City, State, Township, County, Phone, Cell Phone, and Email.

Purchase your chance to win one of the following:

4 Days / Three Nights for two in Las Vegas. Price includes airfare and overnight accommodations (with applicable taxes) The winner may elect to forfeit the trip for a cash prize of \$1000.

Shop the Magnificent Mile! Overnight Accommodations for Two (Friday and Saturday night with a dinner gift card in Chicago.) The winner may elect to forfeit the trip for a cash prize of \$500.

NATaT Conference in September

If you have not made travel plans to attend the NATaT conference in Washington D.C. this September, now is the time. The annual conference is scheduled for September 8-11. Full details are available from the TOI website at www.toi.org and in *Perspective*. The NATaT registration materials were mailed to all township supervisors to distribute to their township boards the week of June 1. The message we deliver from Illinois is that—we are the government closest to

the people—township government! Mark your calendars and make reservations to attend today.

How to promote your township's story!

Have you ever wanted to inform your township residents about something done worthwhile by the township or a township resident? Have you struggled with the best approach to keep your community informed?

There is a media tool known as earned media. It is favorable publicity gained through promotional efforts other than advertising. This type of media is the quickest, most inexpensive way to get media attention for your township.

Although the cost of earned media is cheap, the time involved is considerable. However, the end result is well worth the commitment to improve your township through adequate exposure in the community. As some of you are new township officials with ideas toward promoting the value of your township, these innovative approaches to earned media will benefit your overall goals significantly.

An effective public profile is designed from a well-orchestrated earned media plan. As with other effective township strategies, it is the planning that can be viewed as one of the most critical components. It is after all your job as an elected official to communicate with your residents on the needs and praises of your township.

Create your township media plan as soon as you can. Start by inviting your local newspaper to your township event. I located information on earned media from a neighboring state that effectively operates township government as we do in Illinois. Resources indicated that there are available opportunities that provide great opportunities to carry your township's message.

Township Open House

Hold an open house event in your township. Promote a meet and greet opportunity for both new and old elected officials. Create a special day in your community to promote the use of township government. Many residents are unaware of who their community leaders are, and the services that are available from their townships.

Recognize Achievements

Recognize when your township officials attend, complete or obtain certification from TOI and division sponsored events. Learning through continuing education opportunities is an excellent way to improve the

knowledge of your officials. Recognize them with local media outlets for their achievements.

Access to Township Staff

Promote consistent office hours of the township. Most important is to make yourself available as an elected official to the residents of the township. Many may feel intimidated to schedule an appointment. Hold open office hour opportunities where no appointment is needed.

Sponsor a Community Parade

If your community does not have a parade for a particular event over the spring or summer, create one. Everyone likes parades. Work with other local community leaders to have a township-sponsored parade. The success of a parade is providing a visible presence in the community as a local government community leader.

New Officials


Promote the new township officials in your township. Many residents of townships do not know who their local government leaders are. Schedule a meet and greet reception for newly elected officials. Hold a new term open house event where residents are providing an opportunity to see who the officials are for the current township term.

Embrace web technology

Utilize web-based technology to enhance your presence in the community. The Township Officials of Illinois provides an outstanding web program for townships. For a monthly fee of \$12.50 (paid annually), townships are provided an opportunity to create a web site to promote their township and its activities. This program currently provides web site opportunities for more than 60 townships.

Understand your local media

It is important for you to realize that local media is not your enemy. Take the time to figure out how they work, who to contact and who can make the final decisions regarding the communicative task at hand. Through effective open communication, your local media can prove to be very beneficial to your township's goals and objectives. Remember that the story



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can happen with or without you. Your job is to make sure the story that is told is the right and most accurate account of the message being delivered.

Make Sure the Township tells your Story Accurately

Remember to keep your story simple. Do not over-explain the issues you are communicating with your residents. Utilize the opportunity of communication to your advantage.

Notify the Media with Good News Opportunities

Alert the media when opportunities are present to promote good things occurring in your township. Notify local media outlet of upcoming township events. Providing enough advance warning will make this a free media coverage event.

A media checklist to consider:

Message Development:

1. What are the township's objectives?
2. Who are the primary audiences the township is trying to reach?
3. What do we want them to do?
4. What is the key benefit they will get from this activity?
5. What are three major points or core messages that need to be conveyed?

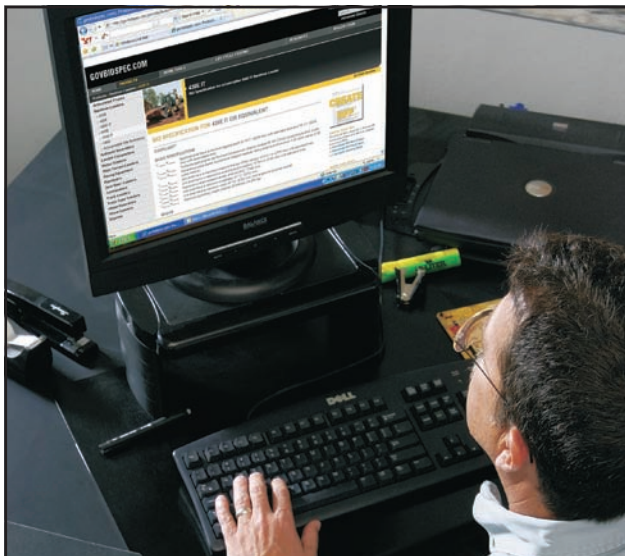
6. Have we answered the five W's (who, what, when, where and why)?

Logistical Considerations:

1. What media does this township want to target with its message?
2. Do we have contact names, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses to reach them?
3. Can the township partner with any community groups to help attract more interest?
4. What approaches should we consider to deliver the message?
5. What timeline is being considered?
6. Who is responsible for creating the media contacts as well as follow-up?

In Illinois, our townships are both large and small. They are also rural and urban. Regardless of their size, it is important to generate support among our township communities for the services available. In Illinois, township government is the oldest form of government.

Source: Michigan Township News / May 2009



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