



From Your Executive Director

Let us help with challenges of the new term

BY THE TIME OUR READERS get around to reading this month's magazine, the 2009 township election will be history and preparations for the new term of office have begun. With the election, there were undoubtedly changes in the ranks of elected township officials. Some of that change may have been voluntary due to retirements, but some, I'm sure, were involuntary due to losing the election. For whatever reason it may have been, the voters decided they wanted change. Prior to the election, I've been "guesstimating" this year's turnover rate would be between 20-25%. There seemed to be a great deal of competition statewide for township offices, so we may see the turnover rate go even higher.

Those of you who will no longer be serving in township office, thank you for your service. You have made a contribution to the grassroots government movement. It takes a special kind of person to stand up and run for township office. It takes someone with genuine concern for their community and the people who live there. It isn't always easy working for/dealing with the public, but you did it and are to be congratulated for your service.

Township government has changed dramatically for those who have served a long time. For those of you who will be retiring, it is now a time of turning the responsibilities over to someone

new and to return to maybe spending more time with family without worrying about some township issue. Someone else's phone will now ring if a problem arises.

Having been a former township official myself, I know that the transition from being a "regular" citizen to that of a public official (and vice versa) can be sometimes overwhelming. I'm sure most township veterans can attest to that!

For some, it might be tough to let go because of their dedication to their township. You must keep in mind though that now the torch has been passed to someone new and they are the ones who will shoulder the awesome responsibility of governing in your township.

Anyone who accepts the responsibility of serving in a township office deserves respect because serving in a public office is not an easy job today. I for one certainly respect and admire those who serve or have served in township office.

For those of you who are retiring from township office, I thank you for your service and salute you for a job well done. You have made our form of government work well and our townships a better place to live. You are living proof that township government works and you are now a part of township government's history.

For you officials who have won re-election, the challenges of the 2009-2013 term have already begun. Your association, TOI, wants to work with you to help meet those challenges and to improve your capabilities. This association's staff is available to guide and help you as we face the challenges ahead.

Thank you and good luck!

On our cover ...

Dale Grapperhaus takes the oath of office in 2004 as Jarvis Township highway commissioner after being appointed. At left is his father, Jim, retiring from the post, while giving the oath is Jarvis Township Clerk Barbara Wright.

This 1895 Long Creek Township ballot allowed voters to choose pathmasters and constables. Pathmasters and overseers of the highway were responsible for having certain stretches of road kept in passable condition.