



From Your Associate Director

FALL IS HERE! The temperatures this past month are a true indication that fall is present. We are working diligently to get things ready for the upcoming TOI Annual Educational Conference. We are proud to celebrate the 200th birthday of one of Illinois' finest politicians—Abraham Lincoln.

Government for the People – The Lincoln Legacy!

In researching Lincoln, one will find that as a young man he did not like to call attention to himself. He feared achieving success that would make men remember him. How ironic. Today, the 16th President is one of the most remembered and respected American politicians. The Township Officials of Illinois takes great pride in honoring his 200th birthday at the Presidential Museum as part of our Annual Educational Conference this year. Lincoln's legacy is most alive in our realization of our freedom, equality and opportunity. There is no doubt that he is one of Illinois' finest!

This year's conference, like so many in the past, will surpass what we accomplished last year. If you were unable to attend the 2009 Conference, I hope that you can make time to attend a 2010 education district event. These district events take our program out into the township field. Find the district that is closest to you. You are welcome to attend any one of the eight (8) district events. If your schedule does not accommodate the event scheduled in your county/district, register for the event that meets your needs. These events are not limited to elected township officials either. If you have township administrative staff that may benefit from attending the day long seminar, register them. In an effort to make the events more affordable for all, the registration fee has been reduced to \$40. It is a reimbursable township expense. It is our hope that with the reduced registration fee, we will have more than 1,000 officials/staff attend the 2010 education district program.

The January 2010 *Perspective* magazine will high-

light the 2010 education program opening speakers and educational sessions. The first event is scheduled for **Friday, February 19, 2010 in Quincy**. If you live in Education District 5, that includes the counties of: *Adams, Brown, Cass, Fulton, Hancock, Mason, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler and Tazewell*, this is your home district. Watch www.toi.org to register.

As Associate Director of TOI, I want to thank the entire Board of Directors, Division Presidents and Executive Director Bryan Smith for allowing me to work on an educational program that has a common goal—efficient, effective programs for township officials. The support of the entire Board helped make the vision a reality. As we move into 2010, and we are exploring new venues and processes regarding educational programming, I appreciate you, our members', support in attending the scheduled events. Most importantly, trying something new. The 2010 program includes the Association's regular district programming and adds what was referred to as the divisions' zone meetings to four of the eight district events. The divisions unanimously agreed to try a consolidated program approach in 2010.

It is my hope that you will answer the call of the joint program and embrace our efforts to bring you affordable and effective educational programming to perform your duties as an elected township official.

Registration for all eight (8) events opens on Jan. 1. You can register on-line at www.toi.org.

County Association Update

County Associations will be called upon to assist in promoting participation and attendance at the 2010 education program. We have been asked by a few countywide associations the past few months (Bureau, Douglas, Hamilton) to assist in organizing a meeting. As I have indicated before, meeting with county associations is a very effective way to deliver education programs to our members. If you are aware of a county association meeting coming up and you would like the assistance of TOI to schedule a dinner program, please contact me at jerry@toi.org.

OMA/FOIA Update

There have been several questions recently regarding the changes to both the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act. As you are aware, the Governor signed legislation that takes effect Jan. 1, 2010. TOI will be making all information we have available on the changes to these laws and how they impact township government as we receive it. I recommend that you check the web site www.toi.org regularly to see what is currently available. All training opportunities offered by the Office of the Illinois Attorney General will be made available.

As you return to your township office, I would like to offer again some follow-up guidelines as I did in 2008 that are an efficient reference point from your recent trip to Springfield. It is important to follow-up with any and all leads or contacts that you made during the conference. Utilize these points to make your conference experience worthwhile.

1. If you have not completed the 2009 Conference survey, visit www.toi.org and complete the survey on-line. Your feedback is vital to the success of future conferences.

The feedback that TOI staff review from your experience at the conference is utilized to make changes and improvements as we continue our mission of providing valuable educational experiences for Illinois township officials.

2. Deliver on what you promised. Review any promises you made during the meeting. If you told someone you would e-mail them or provide contact information, follow through on what you promised. You may find yourself utilizing these contacts on a regular basis regarding questions on common challenges and issues.

If you established a contact with a vendor or a fellow township official, keep good on your conversations to follow up with them. Spend some time to reflect on your overall conference experience. It is important that we further develop the information obtained while attending the conference.

3. If several of your fellow board members or staff from the township attended the conference, meet with them to discuss as a group your experiences. Consider providing your local newspaper with a briefing of the event. Talk to a reporter about your experience. This can benefit the overall image of township government in your area.

It is important that you provide the taxpayers with feedback on your educational and networking experiences. You can provide a report on your experience at the conference and how you plan to take what you learned or experienced and put it to work for the electors of your township.

4. Prepare a summary of your experiences at the conference sessions you attended, outstanding speakers you heard, interesting township officials you met, vendors you talked to, and the ideas you picked up. Use your notes and handouts you received to prepare a summary. This will help you jog your memory of important details when discussing the aspects with fellow township officials and others who were unable to attend the conference. Use the report to discuss the event at your next township meeting.
5. Take care of those business cards-file them. Scan them, file them, or transfer the information to your office contact listing. Do something with them right away. Those that you don't need, discard them to avoid confusion in the future.
6. Continue the learning experiences you liked. Search the Web for additional sites on speakers you liked, or a product you are interested in from the exhibit hall. Remember this is a fast way to find a contact when you have misplaced their contact information.
7. Make a folder of the most important information you collected at the conference and file it for future reference.
8. Make recommendations to the association regarding what areas you would like to see for additional educational opportunities provided at future conferences.
9. Promote the value of attending the conference to fellow board members and township staff. Convey the importance of knowing how to make your township prepared and updated on new local government trends.
10. Remember to utilize the skills you experienced to move your township into the future. Look toward new programs, services, enhancements to existing programs all for the betterment of the township.