



From Your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

Make no mistake...the threats are real

AS I SIT TO WRITE THIS ARTICLE, we are preparing to begin in earnest the new legislative session. A lot of things are on the table for legislators as this session begins and with 2012 being an election year, that is going to make things even more interesting.

The past year saw legislative efforts that could harm or eliminate not only township government but local governments in general. It is a threat and something we need to take very seriously. In my opinion, it is a threat that is not going to go away. Every time I hear of a threat against townships or local governments, it is based on the false notion that there is going to be substantial "cost savings" if local governments, or some of them, are eliminated. Obviously, nothing could be further from the truth.

Not only in Illinois, but in states across the country, we are hearing the cry from "do gooders", the media, and academics that if we eliminate the thousands of unnecessary local governments and turn their duties and responsibilities over to another, larger government, all the financial woes we face in our country will be solved! As we have seen and heard this, there is nothing to back up the claim! A report commissioned last year by TOI, by Professor Wendell Cox, has the data and facts that prove that township government is the most cost effective form of local government we have here in Illinois. Yet we have those out there that want to eliminate us and turn every-

thing we do over to a larger form of government!

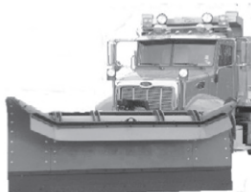
In my own mind, the "cost savings" is only part of this whole issue. The other part, and probably the most important, is that if township government is eliminated, we will lose our ability to govern ourselves. When our nation's founders determined our government today, they based it on the fact that the people would participate in the governing process. This is what has happened exactly at the township government level since 1850. Now there are those who want to "further remove" our government from us by eliminating township government and letting our services be handled by some other government much farther away with less access.

With the threats we saw last year, and the likelihood of more to come this year, it is time for every township official to stand up and take notice. The future of township government lies with every elected township official in Illinois. I want to challenge each of you to take pride in our form of government and to help "fight the fight" when those seeking to eliminate us speak up. The future of township government depends on each one of us. We can't afford to sit back and think that it will never happen; we must defend township government because the threats are very real.

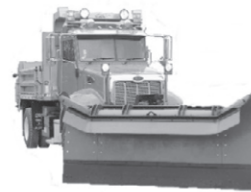
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