Local Government Consolidation Would Not Work as Advertised

By Bryan E. Smith

It’s easy to look at the state’s high numbers of taxing bodies and think that townships are just another reason for Illinois’ financial crisis, but as the executive director of the Township Officials of Illinois, I can tell you that townships are an extremely efficient and cost-effective unit of government.

Many people in the world are denied the opportunity to communicate directly with those they elect to office. We live in a state and nation where we can communicate with lawmakers by phone, mail, fax, or email. Letter writing or communication is not the sole responsibility of the voters it should be a cooperative effort between the voters and those that represent them in local government.

We in township government have a great opportunity to change the course of our own communities. We can do it, not by just being militant, but by being aware and by communicating what our needs are to our state and federal leaders and what the needs of our constituents are. We need to work towards equal recognition for townships in all parts of the state. We can do all of these things, but only if we try. If we don’t make the effort, our future certainly is gloomy. The future of township government is not based on “gloom and doom.” Our combined efforts have produced a golden history. The right kind of effort by everyone can make the future even brighter.

Government works best when it is closely connected and accountable to its constituents. Townships are a great fit for that motto, don’t you think?

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