



# from your Associate Director

By Jerry B. Crabtree

TOI Associate Director / Education Coordinator

**A**s I WAS THINKING ON what to include in this article, I am called to reflect on my previous 16 years as the Associate Director and Education Coordinator of the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI). From my calculations, this is my 193rd article published in the *Perspective* magazine. I went back and read my first article (2005) published and so much has changed since that year. The past 16 years have been filled with opportunity, fear, amazement, and most of all appreciation for the members, board of directors, and fellow staff members at TOI.

The associations member services have increased so much using the internet, creation of websites, use of email for all sorts of information and the enhancement of members services through electronic means. All to provide services to you our members in the best way possible. Information and resources are more readily available than they ever have with the use of e-government. TOI will continue to meet these challenges as we move toward the future.

On September 1, 2021, I will become the fourth Executive Director of the Township Officials of Illinois in its 114-year history. What an awesome honor and opportunity. I am the longest serving Associate Director (16 years) and I owe that to an amazing boss and friend, Bryan Smith. Bryan took a chance on me back in 2005, and I will always appreciate the opportunities he allowed be to become a better



administrator in all aspects of association management.

When considering applying for the position in 2005, I can remember that it was the only job interview I had ever experienced not being anxious or nervous. It felt like it was meant to be. Perhaps that is why it has been such a rewarding position for the past 16 years.

I have experienced many changes at TOI. We have had some great board members along my journey and lost just as many who live now in our memories. I started with my eyes wide open and remain committed to our mission to preserve, advocate, and educate for township government in Illinois.

September will bring some changes. I am looking forward to implementing a transition plan that further enhances the goals and objectives of the association. I plan to work with the TOI Board of Directors on ways to take the association into the next generation of elected township officials.

I would like to thank everyone

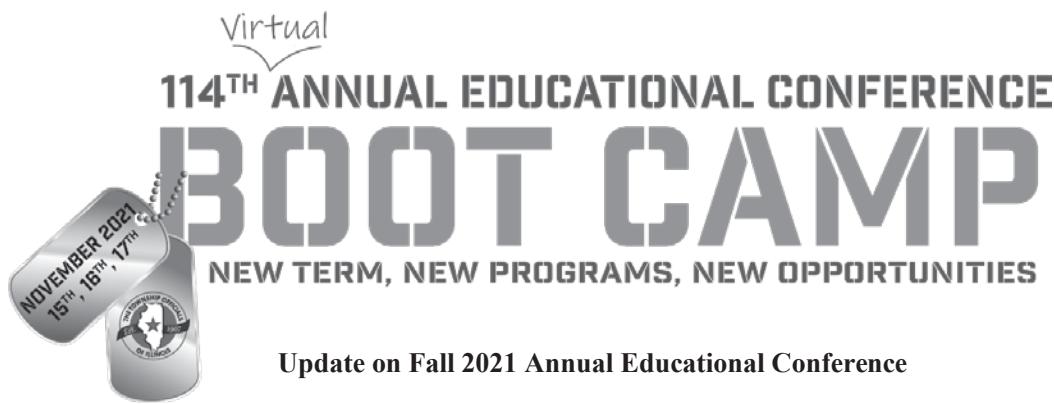
for your kind words, emails, and letters over the past few months. Your continued support and encouragement as I enter this new role as Executive Director is greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with all of you.

To Bryan Smith, I appreciate your confidence, friendship, and most of all belief in me. For sixteen years you have mentored me for this moment, and I appreciate all that you have done to make sure that I succeed. One thing I have always appreciated is that you allowed me to try new things and were there to discuss any shortfalls that occurred. The mentorship and opportunities you have given me to grow professionally will always be appreciated.

To all our new and returning officials, I cannot wait to begin working on ways to make your role as an elected official even better. I commit myself to working diligently to direct the associations goals and objectives toward even better advocacy and education programming.

Let's get started.





### Update on Fall 2021 Annual Educational Conference

To Our Members:

In June of this year, all of Illinois Township Officials celebrate the re-opening of the State of Illinois by transitioning into Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois plan by Governor Pritzker. This is a celebration for us all as it has been quite a year.

However, some of the transitions leave unpredictable situations of re-opening or ramping up to the same level of service we are familiar with post pandemic.

The Annual Fall Educational Conference scheduled for November 2021 is the largest event of year for the Association. We plan all year long for this amazing event benefiting YOU, our members. This year, (2021) being the first year of the term of office, is usually the largest attended for the four-year term. We anticipate attendance at just under 1,000. The planning and accommodations for an event of this size takes a great deal of planning and orchestrating of the hotels, education programs, meals, refreshments, and overall accommodations.

Staffing levels in the hotel and hospitality industry continue to be struggling with ramping up to their capacity prior to the pandemic. We all see this in our own areas of the state. This combined with meal restrictions, room cleaning services, and other behind the scenes details just did not calculate to being fully able to provide the conference experience that you all expect.

There is time between June 11<sup>th</sup> and November 2021 to gain full capacity, but we still have the threat of attendees not coming to the conference because of fear and non-vaccinated attendees causing additional threats to those in attendance. TOI Staff and the Board of Directors decided in April 2021 to cancel this year, move to a virtual platform, and come back fully in person in 2022. Please understand that we want nothing more than to be in person like we are all familiar with. However, we also want your experience and health to remain safe as well.

Thank you for your patience during these cancelations. We all cannot wait for the 2022 Schedule of events, and we look forward to seeing everyone in person in 2022.

**Jerry B. Crabtree**  
Associate Director  
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