



from your Associate Director

By Jerry B. Crabtree

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Spring is here.

IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT IN TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

The time is now more than ever to engage your elected officials as well as residents on the importance and value of township government!

Our Illinois townships provide many services to residents across the state. Township Government is both rural and urban and although the size and population may be different the mandated services and scope of additional services available are the same. To consolidate or eliminate is NOT always the best solution. I have been working with the Illinois General Assembly most of my career and find it interesting that township government is at the top of the list of achievable consolidation attempts to take on such a major issue like property tax reform. Perhaps townships are the current low hanging fruit and an easy target for legislators that are unable to take on major local government reforms aimed at saving tax payer's money. There are many more units of local government equally considerable and possibly options to save more tax dollars.

The Illinois General Assembly has taken the initiative to make township government among local government in Illinois, the spotlight as a consolidation success. The association has a different interpretation of the benefits of consolidation. There may be some just cause in certain situations when considering township government consolidation. TOI has consistently maintained the position that if you can prove financially that the consolidation or elimination will benefit the residents and services provided then such consolidation is supported. Most important, is that final decision be given to the voters who benefit from the services provided by township government. However, our position has not been taken seriously when referenced on recent legislative measures being considered among the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate. We have consistently maintained that a financial analysis be conducted on any and all consolidation suggestions. Additionally, that the ultimate decision be put before the electors/residents to approve such a consolidation or elimination. Let the residents make the final decision. Simply not being done.

It is true that Illinois is a state with a large number

of governmental units. However, not all of those governmental units are revenue to tax producing units. Remember, that township government is both rural and urban. Therefore, that must also be addressed when labeling the active units of government. Secondly, with townships being primarily funded via Illinois property taxes, the percentage is less than 3 percent generally. Yes, less than 3 percent of an average property tax bill. It is a tax cut, but not one that will produce significant savings in my opinion.

The association is asking all members to aid our mission and objective of promoting township governments benefits through education of state elected officials. Yes, the elected officials making decisions in Springfield on Townships and Road District issues across the state. These—often new—members of the Illinois General Assembly need to be educated on what they are suggesting to consolidate or even eliminate. They often include in their statements that the services can be provided by the county unit of government. However, I am not confident that the county structure is ready to accommodate the expenditure. Often times, these consolidations result in increased wages and additional staff hires. Your help in conveying these issues to our state elected officials is appreciated.

If you have attended our recent Education District events or are registered to attend the upcoming regional meetings in Danville, Mt. Vernon or Macomb we look forward to having you. The programs that are part of the regional meetings provide insight into the benefits of leadership qualities and understanding your role as an elected official.

COUNTY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

If your township is part of a county association planning a meeting over the summer or fall and would like to have an educational program, please contact TOI to see how we can assist. These are great opportunities to have the elected township officials in attendance from an entire county. Most importantly, benefiting attendees with a valuable education program. Please contact the association office if you would like assistance in scheduling a meeting or need help in securing an education program.

UPDATE ON TOI DATABASE CONVERSION

The Association continues efforts of converting our membership database for the 2020 membership year. We are asking that all current members look at creating an email address or contact email to participate in this new database development. The software requires a single point of contact for all entries in the database. TOI will offer paper submittals but are working toward establishing a single email point of contact for all township in Illinois.

As we move toward membership renewal time in

May 2019, please make time to determine how you can assist in ensuring that TOI has a single email point of contact all townships. Updates will be provided in the *Perspective* magazine as we move forward with this valuable transition. A special thank you to Pam Butler of the TOI staff for her countless hours and dedication to ensuring that the data and conversion are kept intact and successful.

I hope that you all have a great Spring / Summer 2019 and I hope to see you at future educational events.



Cover Page Appearances start clockwise.

IMAGE 1: Lisa Hodge (Clerk, Kane Co./Blackberry Twp.); Katy Dolan Baumer (Clerk, Cook Co./Hanover Twp.); Sherry Tite (Clerk, Madison Co./Wood River Twp.); Senator Rachelle Crowe (56th District); Sandy Shaw (Assessor, Madison Co./Wood River Twp.); Carla Sloan (Supervisor, Cook Co./River Forest Twp.).

IMAGE 2: First row: Greg Menold (Highway Commissioner, Tazewell Co./Morton Twp.); Joe Stanfa (Highway Commissioner, Cook Co./Bloom Twp.); Karen Reese (Assessor, Vermilion Co./Newell Twp.); TOI Executive Director Bryan Smith; Sherry Meadows (Assessor, Jefferson Co./Mt. Vernon Twp.); Rudy Piskule (Assessor, Livingston Co./Dwight Twp.). Second Row: Scott Weaver (Highway Commissioner, Tazewell Co./Washington Twp.); John Gardner, Jr. (Supervisor, Franklin Co./Frankfort Twp.); TOI Associate Director Jerry Crabtree; Patricia Rosenbaum (Supervisor, Livingston Co./Dwight Twp.); Janice Masching (Clerk, Livingston Co./Dwight Twp.). Third row: James Anderson (Trustee, Winnebago Co./Pecatonica Twp.); Arnold Vegter (Highway Commissioner, Whiteside Co./Union Grove Twp.); TOI President Danny Hanning (Highway Commissioner, Schuyler Co./Huntsville Twp.); Ruth Stanley (Trustee, Whiteside Co./Sterling Twp.). Fourth Row: Gary Wood (Highway Commissioner, Jefferson Co./Field Twp.); Susan Curtiss (Supervisor, Livingston Co./Esmen Twp.); Paul Putnam (Trustee, Rock Island Co./Blackhawk Twp.). Fifth Row: Edgar Mooney (Highway Commissioner, Jefferson Co./Rome Twp.); Sherrill Knorr (Supervisor, Will Co./Reed Twp.); Chuck Layer (Supervisor, Rock Island Co./Blackhawk Twp.); Randy Wlaskolich (Trustee, Rock Island Co./Blackhawk Twp.). Sixth Row: Kenny Hayes (Highway Commissioner, Jefferson Co./Mt. Vernon Twp.); Amanda Bean (Supervisor, Jefferson Co./Mt. Vernon Twp.); Nicholas LeMay (Trustee, Jefferson Co./Mt. Vernon Twp.); Mary Rob Clarke (Trustee, Cook Co./Riverside Twp.).

IMAGE 3: Allison Richards (Anderson Legislative Consulting, Ltd.); Rep. Emmanuel "Chris" Welch (7th District); Wanda Sharp; Letitia Anderson (Anderson Legislative Consulting, Ltd.).

IMAGE 4: Selected: Taylor Anderson (Anderson Legislative Consulting, Ltd.); John Dabrowski (Assessor, DuPage Co./Bloomingdale Twp.); Rep Daniel Didech (59th District); and other officials from DuPage County.

IMAGE 5: Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford (4th District) and TOI President Danny Hanning (Highway Commissioner, Schuyler Co./Huntsville Twp.).