



# from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

I WAS RECENTLY TALKING TO SOMEONE who told me that this year marks the 20th year since James Cameron's blockbuster movie "Titanic" was released. This person obviously knew that I was a "Titaniac" and that every opportunity to read or see something about the Titanic, I do.

We all know by now that the famous story of how the Titanic sank after hitting an iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean. There were countless stories of heroes on the Titanic that helped save the lives of many, while losing their own. This made me think of a visit I had to New York City, just a few months after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. This visit, back in 2002, showed me something I did not know about the Titanic as well as a reminder about township government.

Having watched the horrible events of September 11, 2001 unfold in New York, I was not going to miss the opportunity to visit the site in New York known as "Ground Zero". The World Trade, a symbol of American pride and economic power, crumbled to a pile of debris and rubble in just about 90 minutes on September 11. I can still remember how the area looked. Metal hanging in trees, draped buildings with broken and boarded windows. Lined along nearby streets were pictures, flowers, and handwritten letters to those lost in the tragedy or while rescuing others. All of those lost while trying to save others became heroes just like those who helped others escape from the sinking Titanic.

After visiting Ground Zero I made a second trip a few blocks away to the South Street Seaport Museum. Right at the entrance to this museum is a memorial. The memorial is a small lighthouse dedicated to those lost on the Titanic when it sank in 1912.

There have been endless things to think about since the Titanic tragedy as well as the World Trade Center attack. Just like the heroes on board the Titanic, those folks involved in rescue efforts at Ground Zero did their best to come together to help save lives. The message for township government and township officials is very clear to me. I don't have to get on my soapbox because all of you have heard me say it before. With the Titanic tragedy and the World Trade Center attack, we witnessed countless people coming together in a unique way to help others. In township government

elected officials can put aside political (and personal) differences to help save and keep strong our form of government.

We may need assistance from time to time, but by working together in one united front, we can all be real "heroes". Keeping current and knowing what the law requires us to do will help us have a smoother journey should any "icebergs" or "attacks" occur. It will also prove that township government is the finest form of local government and that township officials are the true "heroes" in local government in Illinois.

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