



From Your Executive Director

“Civil wars” hurt all township governments

IDON'T REALLY CONSIDER MYSELF a historian, but I do enjoy history. It was always my favorite subject in school and the one I always did best in.

This past month was one of historical significance when we celebrated President Lincoln's birthday on February 12 and then Presidents' Day February 21. Of course, working in Springfield on a daily basis, I am constantly reminded of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln.

The year 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. Because of this, I've been reading a lot of different things about the Civil War. Some historians have said that Lincoln's election in 1860 triggered the hostilities for the Civil War. Thinking about this made me think of how sometimes township officials act like they are in another “Civil War”!

When I hear of township boards fighting among themselves to the point of physical violence, I think of the Civil War. When I hear of a township board cutting all the money from a highway commissioner or assessor's budget for much-needed equipment, I think of the Civil War. When I hear of individual officials going off and doing their “own thing” with no regard for the law, I think of the Civil War. When individual groups or divisions want to go off and do their “own thing”, I think of the Civil War. When some of our members “shoot themselves in the foot”, they really have “shot” the rest of us too!

Any time I hear of a “township civil war”, I think of the fact that there are still people out there who want to get rid of township government. I certainly

don't want to see that anti-township monster rear its ugly head!

In fact, the State of Indiana probably faces the biggest challenge to eliminate township government. Other states are facing similar “anti-township” efforts. However, these little “civil wars” that keep popping up certainly don't help matters any. Anytime I hear of

one of these mini-civil wars, the anti-township talk starts making its way through the grapevine.

What we must do as individual township officials and as divisions and as an association, is to make sure our members function and perform their duties according to state statute and to quit having “civil wars” among ourselves. Pointing fingers and blaming others for problems won't help. We **MUST** strive to work together, no matter how much we

may not like it, to face the challenge and keep township government moving forward. Township government will only continue to survive if we are all committed to doing that.

The Old State Capitol in downtown Springfield is where President Lincoln said “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” How true that statement is today when it comes to township government!



Bryan E. Smith

