



from your Associate Director

By Jerry B. Crabtree

TOI Associate Director / Education Coordinator

MY THOUGHTS on the recent consolidation conversation ...

Summer is here! I was thinking on my way into the office today that we no longer see a gradual change in the weather it seems we jump from one season to the next on auto pilot. Time is moving faster than ever and the work load of so many disciplines is beyond exception.

This brought me to my next thought of the similarities of township government. We have for the past few years jumped from one hot seat to the next with regards to being forced to educate legislators and the media on the value of what we do on a day to day basis in local government.

Township officials from both large urban as well as rural townships are called into action even more today than in the past because of the short time frame within potentially drastic decisions are made. If we are to continue this battle of helping those who question what township government does better understand just what is done by township government we cannot let the auto pilot change impact our equal response of adaptability. The time to stay focused, organized and in tune with


the elected officials (state legislators) making these potential altering decisions is NOW!

Often, I get the opportunity to attend various events that discuss current topics in local or township government. Recently, I attended the citizen club of Springfield monthly breakfast event on the topic of local government consolidation. I will admit, I was there for one reason—that of township government and to have an ear to the floor to see just what was being discussed. Springfield is unique in that they are conterminous with Capitol Township.


As I predicted many of the comments seemed to be directly related to the thought that consolidation of townships would solve fiscal and accountability issues county wide once accepted by the voters. The association's platform has never negated that consolidation may be beneficial at times. However, we have strongly advocated that the fiscal savings needs to be proven first prior to any moving forward with a consolidation. The comments were to the effect that we can all agree that consolidation (when fiscally responsible) if inevitable. Further, if a significant cost savings is achievable the consolidation makes perfect sense. However, they

went on to clarify that when you look at the overall savings from the discussion point of an actual property tax bill the percentages in discussion are a fraction of what is needed to achieve any sort of fiscal impact change they are predicting. Superficially, to the property taxes in Sangamon county we are talking about 2.5 percent or less of a property tax bill. The voters are not provided with a complete picture of the financial and beneficial components of such a decision.

The percentages of the property tax bill that are currently NOT part of the discussion are the municipality and school components that total more than 70 percent of the burden currently faced by tax payers. So, we are a component of the problem but only looking at the fiscal responsi-




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