

from your. Associate Director

By Jerry B. Crabtree

TOI Associate Director / Education Coordinator

Y THOUGHTS on the recent consolidation conversation ... Summer is here! I was thinking on my

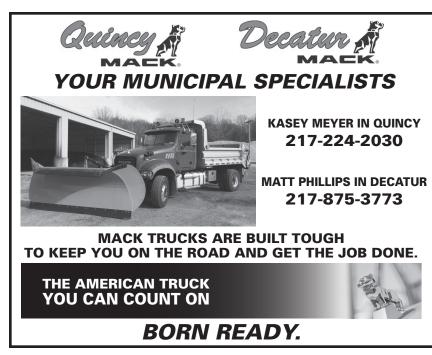
way into the office today that we no longer see a gradual change in the weather it seems we jump from one season to the next on auto pilot. Time is moving faster than ever and the work load of so many disciplines is beyond exception.

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 responsibilities or commitments of townships in some counties does not even address the real tax problem. Are we the complete or just a component of the excess that needs to be included in these recommended round table discussions?

I agree that we are a state in the union, 6th largest now I believe by population, and yes one with over 7,000 units of local government. Are we seriously looking at the make-up of those units of government that calculate to that large number? Are we looking at the financial burden caused by each of these units equally? Are we educating the decision makers on the issues they are so quickly like the weather change are hastily moving forward?

As an advocate for TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT I challenge all members of the Illinois General Assembly that prior to voting or even considering legislation that addresses the reduction of the property tax burden on the citizens of Illinois that it be a complete interpretation and not just a fraction of a local government issue within their legislative district that may or may not be providing critical services to the residents of the area on less than 2 percent of what school districts get at an average of more than 50 percent of the average property tax burden in Illinois. There are many beneficial components of the property tax bill that operate within the scope of their intended purpose. It is our job to make sure that those being considered for consolidation or elimination are provided equal consideration when being discussed.

2018 Annual Education Conference Update:

The following is the current list of education programs being scheduled for the 2018 fall conference. This is not a complete list. Session are being finalized with potential speakers and may be removed if needed.

Plans are underway for the 2018 Annual Educational Conference. The following is a shortened list of the topics being considered for the education program line up.

- How to lead when you must survive (provided by keynote speaker)
- Township Grants where do you get them.
- Township Cemeteries
- Have you adopted a Sexual Harassment Policy in your Township?
- Intergovernmental Agreements in Township Government
- I'm a Clerk I did not know we had to do that!
- FOIA/OMA in Township Government
- The Budget Process Explained
- TIFFS in Township Government
- My township does not have to do it that way!
- Prevailing Wage and what it means to township projects

- Finding grant opportunities in Township Government
- IDOT Programs
- How to run an effective Township Board Meeting
- Serving the People: How Township Government works
- TOI / TOIRMA Open Question Mic Session
- An overview of the GATI Program
- The Media (A township media tool kit)
- IMRF and Township Government
- The 2018 Legislative Agenda

YOU FOR ATTENDING TOPICS DAY 2018

A special thank you to the staff and you the elected township officials for taking time to attend this year's annual LOBBY DAY in Springfield to help spread the message of TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT. The turnout was great and we were able to effectively and efficiently take our message to Springfield. Advocacy at this grass roots level provides the foundation of many political issues. Knowing where your local communities are on the political landscape protects community needs growth regarding decisions made by the elected officials you send to SPRINGFIELD!

TOWNSHIP FLAG PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

2018 is the sixth year for the Township Flag Program. If your township has a flag we want you to promote it as part of the sixth annual parade of flags ceremony that starts the conference in November. Contact the TOI office at <u>jerry@toi.org</u> if you are interested in participating this year.

Calling all SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

If you would like to donate a silent auction item for the 2018 conference SILENT AUCTION please contact the TOI office. We are looking for paper items (certificates and travel packages) that benefit the Township Officials of Illinois Political Action Committee.

