



from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

TOI MEMBERSHIP provides our members with significant benefits. Eighty-five of our 102 counties operate under the township form of government with 1,431 townships. TOI membership dues are based on valuation (EAV) obtained from each county clerk's office and on population figures provided by the U.S. Bureau of Census from the latest census.

As a TOI member, you become part of a large, state-wide organization that speaks on your behalf with your best interest as its primary focus. By speaking with one voice for township government, we are able to change things for the better for everyone.

The Township Officials of Illinois serves as an information clearinghouse to member townships and road districts, the media, state and federal elected officials and agencies, and the public at large. TOI serves as an advisory organization, NOT a law enforcement agency. We have no enforcement authority to "force" any township official to do anything. When established in 1907, TOI's principal function was lobbying on behalf of membership townships. Today, TOI's function is threefold:

- ✓ EDUCATION of township officials
- ✓ LOBBYING on behalf of Illinois townships and road districts
- ✓ PROMOTION of township government

TOI assists its members through letters, emails, phone calls, and office consultations. TOI also produces several educational publications. The *Township Perspective* magazine is published 11 times a year and mailed to all member officials, Illinois State legislators, the Illinois Congressional delegation, and many state and federal agencies and interested parties. *Township Perspective* is our biggest tool for getting information into the hands of our members and we just celebrated 75 years of our magazine last month.

TOI's fiscal year ends August 31, and while the 2015-2016 year has seen many good things happen, we have continued to see township government come under attack. During the current fiscal year, TOI has continued to take the lead in providing services and

educational programs for its members. TOI's educational programs are doing a fantastic job of providing our members with the very best and up-to-date information available. November 13-15, 2016 will be TOI's 2016 Annual Educational Conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. You won't want to miss this opportunity to come together with township officials from all over the state to better educate yourself and help us as we celebrate "**Township Government – Neighbors Serving Neighbors.**"

The TOI lobbying effort is led by our Legislative Consultant Tim Bramlet, who works to promote pro-township legislation. The TOI Legislative Committee is comprised of members of the TOI Board of Directors and they help generate grassroots support for or in opposition to specific legislation, as well as informing the membership on legislation affecting township government. TOI holds an annual Topics Day to promote townships' involvement in the legislative process and promote our message at the State Capitol.

TOI's legislative efforts continue to go well. However, once again this year, township government has come under attack from some members of the General Assembly. This year alone, over two dozen pieces of legislation have been introduced that are aimed at making it easier to consolidate or eliminate townships/road districts. Because of these challenges, it is more important than ever before that we continue to work together to inform our legislators of the many good services and programs that townships provide. We must show and promote a united front at all times to protect township government. If we are going to continue to succeed and flourish, we need total support of the state's nearly 11,000 township officials.

At the beginning of the year, TOI released the academic report "Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments" by know public policy researcher Wendell Cox. The report, available in its entirety on the TOI website, shows that local governments, including townships, drive greater efficiency, despite theories to the contrary.

During the past year, TOI's website at www.toi.org has seen record visits. It is easier for our members to navigate and provides more helpful information. I

would encourage you to visit our website and access the tremendous amount of information there, including the **Directory of Programs and Special Services** that townships provide. Our download center provides many forms that townships/road districts use and they can be printed at no charge. You can connect with TOI on Facebook and become a fan of the Township Officials of Illinois.

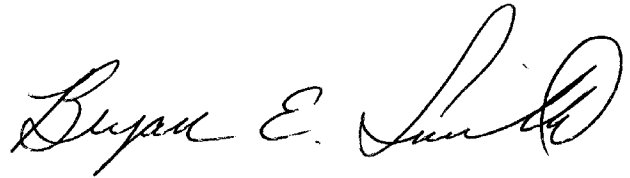
Your TOI membership also brings with it membership in our national organization, the National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT). NATaT is managed by the Ferguson Group, a lobbying group in Washington, D.C. NATaT does a great job of making sure the "township voice" is being heard in Washington, D.C. Our involvement in NATaT is very important because things that take place on a daily basis in Washington, D.C. have an effect on townships here in Illinois.

TOI is stronger now than ever. The association remains strongly committed to giving township officials the necessary tools they need to be successful. This does not cover all of TOI's activities of the past year, but it does, however, give you an idea of the broad range of interests addressed by your association in Springfield.

TOI is deeply committed to helping you do your job better by providing timely services, training and information. If we may ever be of assistance, please feel free to call us toll free at (866) 897-4688. Along with the Officers and Directors of the Township Officials of Illinois, we look forward to sharing even more beneficial experiences with you in the new fiscal year.

TOI's strength is determined by our membership, and to keep our form of government strong, we need the active participation of every township. This year, if you haven't already, when you and your fellow township officials are discussing your township's dues, think of it as a wise investment for your township and officials to be well informed and educated in these lean economic times.

Thank you for your active involvement and support of TOI. We look forward to another great year.



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OUR CLIENTELE IS FOUND IN COUNTIES, LARGE AND SMALL, OVER ROUGHLY 65% OF THE STATE.



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