



from your Associate Director

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Congratulations!

THE NEW TERM for elected Township Officials will soon be underway. **May 15, 2017** (Assessors and Collectors take office on January 1, 2018) is that great day when the official duties are underway—You are elected now what? You can be confident that your association is with you to answer all of your questions. Whether you are a new, first-time township official or a returning member, know that you have a resource available to you.

I would like to challenge all of you who are returning as well as the first-time officials to take some needed inventory of your township procedures practices. Most importantly, take some time to make your township more efficient and effective in the local government community. I am recommending the following suggestions to consider as you continue through the spring/summer.

Do you have a township resource library?

Many publications are available from the TOI store (www.toi.org). We recommend that you have the most recent edition of the Laws and Duties Handbook (2015). A new edition will be released in 2017/2018. The 2015 edition can be purchased at a reduced rate.

We have several publications for your responsibilities as an elected official. Everything can be ordered on-line.

Have you reviewed the TOI Calendar of upcoming events?

You will or should be receiving the monthly publication of *Township Perspective*. Note the Calendar of events in this publication or view the calendar on our website at www.toi.org. We have scheduled the educa-

tion district programs this year in July/August to promote our **Township Boot Camp**. Register for the event closest to you. We will be in Lisle, Mt. Vernon, Rockford and Normal. Plan to attend our Annual Educational Conference as well scheduled for November 12-14. Registration for the annual conference starts on July 1, 2017. Sign up for the webinar lunch and learn program as well as the Professional Development Program.

Do you have an active e-mail address for your township duties?

Email communication is imperative to relate to all aspects of doing business in local government. There was a time where having an email address was an option but that period is long gone.

To be efficient, you need an email address dedicated to your responsibilities as an elected township official. TOI recommends that you **not** combine your personal and township email accounts. Your correspondence with email in relation to your official duties as an elected township official may be subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Illinois Attorney General has not issued an opinion specifically to the use of township email but we anticipate that at some point this could become an issue. However, we encourage separating township and personal email activity.

TOI recommends that you create an email with one of the free email services (i.e.: Gmail or Yahoo or AOL). It is simple and easily managed.

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

The Association needs to have access to your email address for several reasons.

First, we use this contact to promote your participation and attendance in TOI-sponsored events. This is an effective way to send event registration to you at no cost to the association. Second, we use this as an effective way to communicate legislative need. When needed, we can email you legislative status on a bill and ask you to contact your

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local legislators to express a position on such initiatives.

Contact Pam Butler of the TOI staff today and let her know your email address. She can be reached at Pam@toi.org or by calling the office at 217.744.2212.

Does your township have a website or social media accounts?

In the current communications environment, social media and websites are an additional component that all townships need to consider. No township is mandated to have a website by state law or any form of social media. No posting of a meeting agenda currently replaces the statutory posting requirements of the Open Meetings Act or eliminates publication requirements. However, these methods of communication can be obtained for no cost and have proven to be very effective in communication with townships.

TOI provides a web services program available to all townships for a very low cost. Information on this program is available at www.toi.org. A website with no hassle, no needed software, and no updates is available for approximately \$13 per month. TOI encourages all townships to have a website available to their constituents. It is very effective in communicating the programs and contact information of all elected township officials. Additionally, it serves as a community message board.

TOI encourages townships to participate in social media if access is manageable by a volunteer of the township board. Many townships and road districts utilize social media. We caution that some of the activities of social media use in local government may be subject to the Open Meetings Act. Therefore we promote the professional use of these communication venues.

County Association Status

Are you participating in a County Association of Township Officials? Of the 85 counties in Illinois that operate under the township form of government, there are approximately 45 active county associations. As a new term commences, we encourage all county associations to meet with an effort to kick off the four (4) year term with a meeting. Hosting a countywide association meeting allows all townships to participate in one meeting location. TOI can assist with planning efforts and even meeting notice and agenda distribution. If you would like our assistance, please contact me (jerry@toi.org). County Associations are an effective way to promote the local government environment (township government) in counties across Illinois. We need these activities to assist in the education of the value and efficient operation of township government.

We welcome you to the township term (2017-2021).

Please take note of your responsibilities and help us promote together the efficient and effective uses in township government. We encourage you to attend as many of the TOI hosted events as you can. Together, we will continue the promotion of the government closest to the people – TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT!

2017 Fall Conference Education Program Speakers needed

If you have attended a program or would like to recommend a program speaker, please forward the program information as well as speaker contact information to the TOI education program. Our sessions of the fall conference are 60 minutes in length. We are always looking for new, efficient and effective educational programming. I look forward to reviewing your recommendations.

TOIPAC FUNDRAISER KICKS OFF

The 2017 TOIPAC fundraiser raffle has started. The tickets were first available at the 2017 TOPICS DAY event on April 26. All TOI Board of Directors have tickets. Additionally, tickets will be sold at the four (4) education program district events. All proceeds benefit the legislative and lobbying efforts of the association. The raffle is for a \$2,500 travel voucher or \$1,000 cash (some restrictions apply). The winner is being selected at the fall conference banquet.

2017 FLAG PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP

If you are interested in participating in the 2017 parade of flags at the opening ceremony for the 2017 Annual Educational Conference, please submit your contact information to the TOI office at jerry@toi.org. This is the fourth year for this great program. Promoting the community and unity of your township by participating in this parade of flags shows great support for the association as well as townships across Illinois. We look forward to even more townships participating this year.





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