From Your
Associate Director

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The Conference Registration Is OPEN!

THIS EDITION OF *Perspective* highlights the upcoming 2015 Annual Educational Conference. The Education Committee and Conference Committee are pleased to announce the education program sessions that are tentatively being scheduled for November 8-10.

Registration is available online as well as by mailing your completed registration form included in this edition of *Perspective*. The directions and guidelines are with the form.

CONFERENCE APP TECHNOLOGY RETURNS TO CONFERENCE

The success of the conference app last year with over 300 downloads provided the foundation to bring it back. We have secured the sponsorships needed to provide access to this technology for you with the 2015 conference. We are encouraging early download of the app to your phone or tablet device. This will provide ease of registration access to the many benefits the app provides. Information will be on the TOI website (www.toi.org) and in upcoming editions of *Perspective*.

The conference app will be available for download on August 1 and works on any phone, tablet or device (including laptop/desktop computers). Follow these easy instructions for using the app:

- Log into the download center/app store on your device
- Find the app under the name "TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS"
- Download the app to your device
- Sign in and register with an email/password of your choice. This will connect you to the active conference app.
- Registering will automatically enter you in a drawing to win FREE registration at the 2016 Annual Education Conference.
- To experience the full benefits of the conference app, you MUST register (login). TOI will never share your personal information.
- We will also have an app kiosk set up at the conference for those who need assistance.

ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGY IS KEY

Township government's acceptance and adaptation to the overwhelming technology advancements in local government is part of the objective at this year's conference. We are encouraging attendees to think outside of the box and look at evaluative and innovative ways to incorporate small changes into their township programs and services.

We must remember that technology offers both opportunities as well as

challenges for our Illinois townships. Operations can be streamlined and local governments can be more accessible through technology. Officials will be replaced by individuals who communicate with advanced technology and it is important for townships to be informed and accessible by such trends.

The 2016 program year is looking at providing incremental practical ways to bring townships of all sizes the skills and abilities to utilize new technology in their day-to-day operations. Incremental steps can be made to provide new technology and communicative means to you and your township residents.

NEW COMMUNICATIVE TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE

Utilizing new technology can be a scary prospect for township officials. Our age demographics tend to be on the senior citizen end of the spectrum, but that is changing with each election. In order to stay competitive in a state that targets local governments, we must stay proactive. It is our objective to show users how the tools available to them enable them to do their jobs more easily and efficiently. Fear of new technology can be overcome. Providing a period of transition to learn and sample technology is key to success. Patience is key as well.

New technologies can be a learning curve for townships, but it should not be adopted as an end in itself or an effort to simply jump on the bandwagon. Technology only makes sense for township government to the extent that it helps perform a primary function. Delivery and promoting services as efficiently and cost effectively is the key ingredient to its success.

Overcoming the fear of Change …

You must eliminate from your vocabulary phrases like … "We are just a small township. … We do not need a computer to do our work. … My residents know how to get in touch with me. …"

At this point, it is about adaptation to what is required to communicate effectively in local government.

The 2015 program has been aiming to get townships thinking about your future plans regarding communication. It is a generational fusion of what you did before, what you do now and then what is required of you in the future. TOI recommends that you start with a discussion at your board meeting of what could be done to initiate incremental changes to prepare and be active in the future.
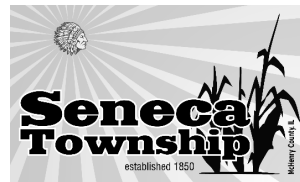
First, we promote the creation of an e-mail account to be used strictly for township business. It is important now to separate personal e-mail from township-affiliated e-mail. This can be done for free on any search engine of your choice.

Making meeting packets available to your township board members electronically is not a new idea. Board members can access the meeting information well in advance of a meeting and printing and postage costs for the township are eliminated. Some have commented that they like to receive the materials a week or so in advance to prepare for the meeting.

"It is new school and we are by default old school— we all like to have paper in front of us!"

Many experts say overcoming resistance to new operational ideas (the way we do business) takes patience, persistence and perseverance.

We have to recognize the value of technology and how it can help communicate the township message more effectively. Cell phones are no longer considered to be new technology. Society is allowing them to gain

popularity as a device to do so much more than just communicating. Statistics show that over 90 percent of adults in the United States have a cellphone and over 58 percent have a smartphone.

Technology offers both opportunities and challenges for our township governments when considering the age range that they communicate with. Additionally, there are different expectations of local government among the age range you address.

In order for townships to continue their successful presence in Illinois as the government closest to the people, it is almost imperative that they have a minimal presence online. This may be as basic as a simple website that provides basic information. In 2014, the World Wide Web celebrated its 25th anniversary. Over 87 percent of adults have access to the internet.

The TOI website program was launched in 2007. We currently have about 60 townships participating in the program. The objective when the program launched was to provide townships an opportunity to create a web presence without incurring all of the development fees and monthly charges. Our program costs just $14.50 a month and we handle all of the security, software and server access.

As the education coordinator, I hope to start providing easy step-by-step guidelines to assist townships of any size with their online needs. Our goal is to promote township government and allow an easy connection between individuals and government.

EDUCATION PROGRAM LINEUP

The tentative line up for the Conference is now available. We are finalizing contracts with speakers to bring you the following programs at the 2015 Annual Educational Conference in November.

FOIA and Compliance in Township Government
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Purchasing Procedures Policies and Possibilities
Social Security Program
ITASCSC
2015 Legislative Review
Record Retention in Township Government
QuickBooks
Underground Damage Prevention / Electric Safety in Road Districts
AITCOY
IMRF Question and Answer Incubator
Drug Program Participation film for supervisors of employees in the program
"Ask a Township Attorney"
Digital Government Strategy
TOIRMA Question and Answer Incubator
FACEBOOK 1,2,3… Building a Facebook page for your Township
Financial Facts, Forms and Follow Through
Affordable Care Act and its Impact on Township Government
Prevailing Wage / Intergovernmental Agreements
Road Use Agreements
Portable Scales in Illinois