



from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

BY THE TIME our readers get around to reading this month's magazine, the Certification of the April 6, 2021 Consolidated Election will be history, and preparations for the new term of office will have begun.

With the election, there were undoubtedly changes in the ranks of elected township officials. Some of that change may have been voluntary due to retirements, but some, I'm sure, were involuntary due to losing the election. For whatever reason it may have been, the voters decided they wanted change. Prior to the election, I've been "guesstimating", based on previous election cycles, that this year's turnover rate would be between 18-25 percent. Once all the results are given to us by the County Clerk's throughout the state, we will know for sure!

Those of you who will no longer be serving in township office, THANK YOU for your service. You have made a contribution to the grassroots government movement. It takes a special kind of person to stand up and run for township office. It takes someone with genuine concern for their community and the people who live there. It isn't always easy working for/dealing with the public, but you did it and are to be congratulated for your service.

Township government has changed dramatically for those who have served a long time. For those of you who will be retiring, it is now a time of turning the responsibilities over to someone new and to return to maybe spending more time with family without worrying about some township issue. Someone else's phone will now ring if a problem arises.

Having been a former township official myself, I know that the transition from being a "regular" citizen to that of a public official (and vice versa) can be sometimes overwhelming. I'm sure most township veterans can attest to that!

For some, it might be tough to let go because of their dedication to their township and position. You must keep in mind though that now the torch has been passed to someone new and they are the ones who will

shoulder the awesome responsibility of governing in your township.

Anyone who accepts the responsibility of serving in a township office deserves respect because serving in a public office is not an easy job today. I for one certainly respect and admire those who serve or have served in township office.

For those who were re-elected or elected for the first time, each person must take an "Oath of Office" before they assume the office. An Oath is defined as "a solemn or formal promise". This is very important, and I don't believe that any official should ever take the Oath of

Office lightly. You are making that promise to abide by the law and perform your duties according to them. That's major! I know that every time I've ever taken an Oath of Office that when I raised my hand to take it, I felt so grateful to the voters who had entrusted me with the office I was about to assume. It's a great feeling! I've even included a picture of the first time I took the Oath of Office as a Township Clerk back in 1985 at age 19 (Boy, have I CHANGED!!).



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Bryan Smith taking the Oath of Office as Long Creek Township (Macon Co.) Clerk in 1985.

For those of you who are retiring from township office, I thank you for your service and salute you for a

job well done. You have made our form of government work well and our township a better place to live. You are living proof that township government works, and you are now a part of township government's history.

For you officials who have won re-election, the challenges of the 2021-2025 term of office have already begun. Your association, the Township Officials of Illinois, wants to work with you to help meet those challenges and to improve your capabilities. This association's staff is available to guide and help you as we face the challenges ahead.

Thank you and when you take the Oath of Office remember that you are there to work for those who put you in the position. Good Luck!