



# from your Associate Director

By Jerry B. Crabtree

TOI Associate Director / Education Coordinator

## Township Investing in Training Pays Big Dividends

**T**HE EVER-CHANGING local government landscape includes additional responsibilities for every elected township official, as well as the employees of the individual townships in Illinois. Training is key to keeping abreast of new laws and opportunities. This does however involve an investment of time and financial resources for both the township and the individual. The return on investment (ROI) is guaranteed. The benefits of participating far outweigh the negatives of not keeping up to date on changes in your role as an elected township official.

As the education coordinator for the Township Officials of Illinois for over 10 years, I can positively say that from all of the township officials I have worked with since 2005 they share one common reaction regarding education programs provided by the association—Great Experience! All of the attendees at our events realize that training for both elected officials and employees is a high-yield investment with no risk. It increases productivity, reduces expenses, and provides a boost in confidence, morale, and loyalty to the township. Participation is key. We must continue to build momentum regarding participation from many different levels.

So, you ask, “Why would you pass up an opportunity to learn?” Two prominent excuses are discussed normally: cost/township board approval and the time involved. Missing a training opportunity is not serving your constituents and role as an elected township official in Illinois. The benefits of the training far exceed the cost of participating.

TOI recognizes the justification when a rural township contemplates spending the money to participate in one of the programs provided by the Township Government Education Network provided by TOI. Travel, overnight accommodation, and expenses can add up quickly. The roadblocks of available finances and geographic location are real.

TOI promotes that training and educational opportunities help individuals do their job and provide confidence in doing it to the best of abilities. Providing employee training and development opportunities is a powerful motivator and contributes to a successful organization.

It is an objective of every township to set training goals for elected officials and employees on an annual basis.

### Five Tips for looking to make the most of Township Training Opportunities

1. **Budget Funds:** Annually discuss opportunities as a board and include all events provided by the Township Government Education Network that benefit your townships. The January issue of *Township Perspective* annually provides a complete program guide for the upcoming year. This allows you to plan ahead.
2. **Set Goals and Objectives:** Discuss common goals and objectives among your fellow board members and employees. Together set objectives for the targeted goals for the upcoming year regarding new programs or possible services to offer in your township.
3. **Discuss and Share Learning Opportunities:** At the end of each year provide a review and sharing opportunity.
4. **Don't limit yourself to in person classroom training.** Take advantage of webinars and online training activities provided by many media outlets. Browse through magazines, search the web, and locate information to help you in your role.
5. **Step Outside your job description (a.k.a. comfort zone):** Learning about topics you may not normally handle can make you an even more valuable elected official or employee.

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## LAST CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE FLAG PROGRAM

We are bringing back the TOI FLAG PROGRAM for the 2019 Conference. This is an excellent opportunity to show collaboration and unity with your townships adopted flag. Email Kayla Jeffers at [kayla@toi.org](mailto:kayla@toi.org) with the flag carrier's name to reserve your spot!

## ASSOCIATION DATABASE UPDATE

TOI staff continue to implement the new database management system. We continue to encourage all of our members to provide us with an individual email address for each member and township in our database. This effectively adds you and your township into the record system. As an individual contact you are able to track all of your individual activities as they relate to services and programs provided by the association. This system benefits you our members and we are committed to making sure that the implementation is a success.

## COUNTY ASSOCIATION NEWS

I recently attended the Marion County Township Officials Meeting in Salem Illinois. This was a great meeting with over 40 officials in attendance from the 17 townships in Marion County.


If your county association has events coming up, please let us know if you need assistance in securing a speaker for your event. We look forward to meeting officials out in the field and look forward to contributing to each individual program across the state.

## CALL FOR PROGRAM IDEAS

If you have an idea or would like to recommend a session or program speaker for the 2020 educational district program please forward the information to the TOI office at [Jerry@toi.org](mailto:Jerry@toi.org).



**SPEAKING AT** the Marion County Township Officials Meeting.

We are in the process of generating ideas and content for the March 2020 program. We welcome any ideas or suggestions from our member townships. The complete 2020 program will be provided in the January 2020 *Perspective* magazine. 

## Your assistance is needed ...

To make sure that you, or the officials in your township, receive their issue of *Township Perspective*, please make sure that TOI is notified when there is a change of official or address. We are receiving several address changes from the postal service and sometimes is after we have already sent out another mailing.

Please call the TOI Office toll free at 1.866.897.4688 and ask for Pam or Kayla, or email your change to [pam@toi.org](mailto:pam@toi.org) or [kayla@toi.org](mailto:kayla@toi.org).

**Your assistance is much appreciated!**

