



from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

Thankful for Another Year

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that we are quickly approaching the end of another year. With Thanksgiving later this month, the weather is starting to change rapidly, and it seems like only yesterday 2018 was starting. And now it's almost over!

I always look forward to November because it means our Annual Educational Conference and the opportunity to see so many of our members face-to-face. It is a great way to finish out the year. On a personal level, I look forward to November because I get to spend a little time with my children and my parents in a little warmer climate for a few days. Again, another great way to finish out the year.

The year 2018 has been eventful in many ways, and as we approach Thanksgiving 2018, I'd like to share with you some of the things I'm thankful for this year:

- I'm thankful for my health, my family, and the fact my children are active and happy. I'm also thankful for the patience and willpower I've had in the last year to lose 60 pounds and to exercise more.
- I'm thankful for the more than 10,000 dedicated supervisors, clerks, highway commissioners, trustees, assessors, and tax collectors who serve more than 8 million people in the 1,428 townships across Illinois and go above and beyond in serving their neighbors in township office.
- I'm thankful for the 633 officials who attended our Education District meetings in 2018. I'm especially thankful for the numerous officials in Western Illinois who came out in such big numbers in Mt. Sterling that we had to schedule another—very successful—event in Macomb during the summer.
- I'm thankful for an involved TOI membership that makes my job both interesting and enjoyable.
- I'm thankful for a very supportive and encouraging TOI President and Board of Directors that “get” what we are all about.
- I'm thankful for the friends that TOI has in the Illinois General Assembly that “get” what townships and local government is all about.

- I'm thankful for the many township employees and devoted volunteers I come into contact with across the state. They are dedicated and help make the many township activities/programs possible. This includes food programs, senior and disabled programs, youth activities, and many other activities/programs that are too numerous and diverse to list.
- I'm thankful for Jerry, Pam, Taylor, Letitia, Kayla, Kristen, and Barb, the TOI staff, for doing such a fantastic job and going the extra mile in everything they do. They have made my 32 years with the association most enjoyable.

Finally, I'm thankful for this country we live in, for our veterans, and for the men and women currently serving us in all branches of the military. They have served and are serving so that we many continue to enjoy the freedoms that we do in this great country.

As we approach and celebrate Thanksgiving, I hope you will take the time and think of all the things you are thankful for from the past year. If you do, I'm sure it will certainly make you feel tremendously blessed!

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