



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Citizens are the Real “Losers” in Consolidation

by Bryan Smith, Executive Director, Townships of Illinois

Thomas Jefferson once said, “The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” How true that statement has been for township officials over the last couple of months, as local government has come under attack. Effective democracy requires that units of government be small enough for voters to be in control. This is indicated by the fact that smaller local governments tend to spend less per capita on basic public services than larger government. Local governments, especially townships, know how to stay within their means. Townships in Illinois are particularly cost-effective because of their generally lower labor costs and the fact that they use part-time labor to a far greater degree than other levels of government in the state.

Proponents of eliminating local governments never tire of noting that Illinois has more state and local taxing jurisdictions than any other state. This is irrelevant. Government efficiency is indicated by spending, not the number of taxing jurisdictions. There is no relationship between tax burdens among the states and the number of taxing jurisdictions. Why would the state of Hawaii have the smallest number of local units of government, yet have among the highest tax burdens per capita in the nation? With only 18 units of local government and special districts, Hawaii taxes at a rate 15 percent above that of Illinois!

One of the principal reasons smaller local governments (townships) are more efficient is that they are closer to the people. This gives voters a far better chance to keep finances under control. As local governments become larger and more remote from residents, they are less accessible to voters and more accessible to special interests. This nearly always leads to higher taxes and more spending. Generally, voters have an interest in efficiency, providing a particular level of public services at the lowest cost. On the other hand, special interests have exactly the opposite objective as they routinely seek to increase spending. It is no wonder larger governments spend more and get into financial trouble more.

This ill-informed movement to forcibly eliminate local governments represents a serious threat to residents not only as taxpayers, but also in terms of service.

The voters of Perry County, a commission county in southern Illinois, experienced this firsthand. In 2004, voters approved by one vote a measure to eliminate the smaller road districts that had provided services for decades. They were told greater efficiency would be achieved if the road districts were replaced by one consolidated county entity. In turn, road maintenance suffered, especially in areas farther away from the central road facility. Voters indicated their disapproval in the November 2010 election by a 70 percent to 30 percent majority supporting the road districts re-establishment.

This year so far, Township Officials have responded admirably to our requests for contacting legislators when the need has arisen. For that, I give you my most heartfelt thanks. But now is not the time to let our guard down. We must, however, abide by Jefferson’s words and remain vigilant. In fact, it is more important now, more than ever before, to remain vigilant on promoting township government.

The local government elimination assault has many local governments and townships in its sights. But the real losers in the assault on democracy will be the citizens of the local governments forced to merge, who are likely to see higher taxes and reduced service levels.

Democracy and the “bigger the better” theory of government are simply incompatible.

From Supervisor Mike Stanula...

Hello Friends and Neighbors!

I am sure you read in our "Fall" newsletter that Washington Township once again won 1st place honors in not only one category, but in three statewide township categories: Best News Letter, Best Website and Best Event. I just wanted to give A BIG PAT ON THE BACK and THANK YOU to our Clerk JOE BURGESS for his outstanding work on those award winning events and a BIG THANK YOU to all those who frequent our website and attend our events. Please read on I am sure that you will find something of interest.

I also would like to THANK our Assessor Carol Ann Blume who has recently retired after over 32 years of service to Washington Township, good luck to her and God Bless her for all that she has done for us for the last 32 + years. Carol Ann you will be sorely missed. We are, however, fortunate to have a replacement that stepped right in and took over the duties of Township Assessor. Her name is Mary Tamez and she is the assessor for Crete Township. The County allows us to contract for the assessor position, if needed, so that there is no delay in services to our citizens. Mary is on board and is already automating the process of assessment. THANK YOU Mary.

Not to state the obvious but we live in the Midwest so one of the things that makes winter tolerable is the fact that it makes the anticipation of Spring that much more special. But I really hope that by the time you read our Township Newsletter, spring is in full swing and winter is well behind us.

Even with the emergence of warmer weather the reminders of Old Man Winter will still be hanging around for longer that we want it to. The deep freeze that we have had this past season has taken a toll on our Township roads. Until the frost is completely out of the ground the potholes will still be blooming on our roads. Rest assured that the Highway Department will do their very best to patch and repair our roads THANKS GUYS.

Many things will be happening in the next few months so follow our award winning website so you don't miss out on anything.

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From Road Commissioner Jerry K. Meyer...

Is spring here to stay or is it just giving us a taste of what is to come? As I am writing this article, the weather is supposed to be 70 degrees today, but they are still calling for snow flurries in the middle of the week. We are hoping that they are wrong; I am ready for the warmer weather. To recap this past winter, we had 22 winter weather events. An event is the Township either plowing or salting the roads and most of the events were salting the roads.

That brings us to the season after winter, pothole season, and it is a bad year for us with potholes. We have gone through over 130 tons of cold patch, one shovel at a time. I just did the math: over 13,000 shovel-fulls were put into holes in the roadway. We are trying to keep in front of all the potholes, but they still keep popping up. We will try to get all of them done in a timely manner, weather permitting.

This summer's bigger projects will be continuing on the upgrade of Klemme Road, north of Brunswick Road, along with seal coating 3 to 5 miles of tar and chip roads. On some of the bad portions of the roads, we will be doing some deep patching and digging out the poor base and adding stone and chipping over the patch. Many of the roads we are dealing with were built when there was a lot less traffic and the size of the trucks and farm implements were not as big as today's equipment. We are doing what we can with the resources we have.

Here are some informative facts and some of the costs associated with road repairs in Washington Township:

- ◆ We maintain over 71 miles of roadway in the Township
- ◆ Out of the 71 miles, 65 miles are hard roads (either tar and chip or blacktop) 5 miles are gravel roads and ½ mile is dirt road.
- ◆ Washington Township is the second largest township in Will County, just under Crete Township with 81 miles of road.
- ◆ Our annual tax income is \$599,000.
- ◆ With this tax money, we have to maintain and construct all of our roadways, bridges and ditches
- ◆ The Washington Township Road District has NOT raised your taxes for four straight years
- ◆ Out of your tax bill, the Washington Township Road District receives about 6% of what you paid.
- ◆ We use over 10,000 gallons of fuel per year
- ◆ It costs about \$150,000 per mile to blacktop over tar and chip surfaces
- ◆ One mile of tar and chip costs \$12,500 for material. Washington Township employees, along with Will and Peotone Townships, supply the labor.
- ◆ We try to overlay a mile or two of road every 3 years. It takes the district that long to save up the money for that type of project.
- ◆ One ton of stone costs \$13.50 delivered. It takes over 6000 tons of stone to make one mile of new road
- ◆ One ton of cold patch costs \$120 (130 tons used so far!)
- ◆ One ton of salt costs over \$64
- ◆ We try to do most things for the roads with our own equipment and labor.
- ◆ The Road District has 3 full time and 2 part time employees



One more thing! When you are driving and you see construction workers, remember they are working for you, to make the road you are driving on better and safer. So give them a brake and slow down. We all want to go home and be with our families.



From Assessor Mary Tamez

With the thawing of winter approaching, we have the start of a new season.... spring! This is the time for new beginnings and renewing life! The flowers and trees will start to bud, animals will begin peeking out, and we can take time to enjoy the outdoors again!

Speaking of renewal, on April 1st Rhonda Novak, the Supervisor of Assessments, sent out the annual exemption forms to be renewed. Included will be a list of dates the County will be offering their help with filling out the forms.

The date for Washington Township is Friday, May 31 from 10-2!

These forms include:

- Senior Freeze Exemption
- Disabled Person Exemption
- Disabled Veterans Exemption




Spending more time outdoors means it's project time!! When pulling a permit to have work done or adding any additional amenity to the property, you will likely get a visit from our field staff!! If you are unavailable we will leave a blue card on your door to let you know we visited. If any of the changes to the property qualify for a Home Improvement Exemption, I will fill that form out and send a copy to you for your records.

Also, don't forget the tax bills will be sent to you from the Treasurer's Office on May 1st. It is the responsibility of you as the tax payer to take the time to check to make sure all of the exemptions you qualify for are listed and that you have received one bill with two payment coupons. If for some reason you do not see an exemption you may qualify for, please contact my office as soon as possible.

I am looking forward to another great season with you.

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Safety Tips for the Grill - Protect Yourself & Your Family

Grilling Facts: July is the peak month for grillfires and roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.

Hundreds of fires are started every year by using barbecue grills, and there can be extensive damage. Careless grilling cost millions of dollars and often destroys more than property.

GRILLING SAFETY

In order to help you enjoy safe delicious grilling remember to always do the following:

- Always use flame-resistant barbecue mitts and barbecue tools with long, heat-resistant handles
- Have proper lid or grill top
- Keep barbecue grills in a level position at all times. An unstable unit can easily be tipped over.
- Place barbecue grills at least five feet away from any combustible material.
- Place your grill so that sparks and smoke won't fly toward buildings, furniture or people.
- Use only enough charcoal to last for the time it will be needed.
- Properly attach your ash catcher to the kettle grill.
- Douse the coals thoroughly with water after grilling.
- Transport, store and use the propane cylinder in an upright position.

Here are some grilling behaviors that should be avoided to help protect you and your family against injury.

- Never leave infants, children or pets near an unattended hot barbecue grill.
- Never add liquid lighter fluid too hot or even warm coals.
- Never wear loose clothing around a hot barbecue grill; it could catch on fire.
- Never grill on a wooden deck.
- Never barbecue in a confined space.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, alcohol or a cigarette lighter to start a fire.
- Never move outdoor barbecue indoors. Smoldering charcoal will produce lethal concentrations of carbon monoxide.
- Never store briquettes outside where they can get wet. When they are dry, they become a flammable solid creating a fire hazard.
- Never discard used briquettes in a cardboard carton or any other combustible container.

Thank you to Beecher Fire Department Fire Chief Joe Falaschetti for contributing this important information!



Your Township Officials:

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Mike Stanula

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Joe Burgess

clerk@washingtontownshipil.com

Assessor

Mary Margaret Tamez

assessor@washingtontownshipil.com

Highway Commissioner

Jerry Meyer

[commissioner@](mailto:commissioner@washingtontownshipil.com)

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Trustees

Paul Goldrick

Tracy Heldt

Mark Herlitz

George Obradovich

Office Coordinator / General Assistance

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Community Building Board of Managers

Ronald Mazurek

Teresa Peterson

Dan Waterman

Newsletter Editor:

Clerk Joe Burgess

News From the Community Building Board of Managers

The Washington Township Board of Managers would like to thank everyone that attended and helped support our 2nd Annual Holiday Bazaar last December. We had over 20 vendors and the day was a great success! Plans are already underway for our 3rd Annual Holiday Bazaar and we will be sharing more details as plans are confirmed. Special thanks to Kellie Karstensen for all of her coordination and hard work!

Work on updating and repairing the Washington Township Community Hall continues. The broken and cracked block windows upstairs have all been replaced and upgraded, which has stopped water damage to the window areas and has provided greater temperature control. All exit signs and emergency lights have been replaced to help ensure the safety of the building, as well as those using the building for their events.

We are continuing to work on the upstairs and over the next several weeks will be having the walls repaired, ceiling and walls painted and the wood flooring refinished. Some other projects that are in the initial planning phase are to repair/replace the sidewalks, replace the 2 doors on the west side of the building and explore cost-effective options for making the upstairs more accessible.

A reminder to Washington Township residents that the Community Hall is a great place to hold family events and parties. We encourage anyone interested in seeing the building or reserving a date to contact Kellie Karstensen, Community Hall Manager at 708-417-6403 to check availability and details.

Springtime Means Planting Season - Safety Tips for Sharing the Road with Farm Equipment

Washington Township is an agricultural township with hundreds of farms within our boundaries. We thank our farmers for all they do to feed our nation and ask everyone to use caution during the planting season. Farming equipment has become much larger over the years and according to the National Safety Council, approximately 1/3 of fatal tractor accidents occur on public roads. In order to decrease the chance of a collision, motorists should follow these five rules of the road:

1. **Slow down when you see a piece of agricultural equipment** - Most farm equipment is designed to travel at speeds of only 15-25 mph
2. **Watch for Slow-Moving-Vehicle (SMV) signs** - SMVs are required for vehicles traveling less than 25 mph.
3. **Watch for hand signals** - Just because a tractor veers right does not mean the operator is pulling over to allow someone to pass. The size of farm equipment often dictates the necessity of wide turns.
4. **Pass farm equipment cautiously** - Even when passing safely and legally, the turbulence created by a vehicle may cause the machinery to sway and become unstable. Do not always expect operators to drive their equipment onto the shoulder of the road. Driving with one set of tires on loose-surfaced shoulders substantially increases the risk of overturning.
5. **Watch for flashing amber lights** - This type of light often marks the far right and left of farm equipment. Also watch for reflective tape marking extremities and sides of equipment.

Remember that agricultural operators have a right to drive their equipment on the road. Please be alert and exercise patience when driving near or passing farm equipment on the roadway. Help us to make this year's planting season a safe one!



Washington Township Food Pantry - Helping Those in Need!

The Washington Township Food Pantry was created in 2009 and what started with only a few shelves of non-perishable food such as soups, rice and canned goods has now grown in size and scope, while providing those residents in need a place to go for life's basic necessities.

Under the guidance of Trustee Paul Goldrick and his hard working staff of volunteers, the pantry has expanded over the years and now offers a variety of rotating foods including frozen meats, fresh foods, dairy products and even turkeys and delicious desserts for the holidays. The township has received many cash donations from our caring residents and recently received 1800 pounds of frozen pork sausage from an anonymous donor. The dedication of all the people involved with the pantry resulted in the Food Pantry distributing over 18,500 pounds of food to help feed 347 local families (1134 individuals) in 2018.

The pantry is available for any Washington Township individual or family that is in need of help and is open on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month from 9am - 10am AND from 6pm - 7pm. Please call Trustee Paul Goldrick at (708) 516-2594 for additional details or if you need assistance. Once again, many, many thanks to the volunteers who assist at the pantry!

"People Helping People!"



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Washington Township Senior News

BEWARE OF IRS SCAM CALLERS

With the 2018 tax season nearly over, the IRS reminds seniors to remain alert to aggressive and threatening phone calls by criminals impersonating IRS agents. The callers claim to be IRS employees, but are not.

These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They use fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. They may know a lot about their targets, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling.

The victims are told they owe money to the IRS and must pay it promptly through a preloaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are often threatened with arrest. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting. Alternately, victims may be told they have a refund due to try to trick them into sharing private information. If the phone isn't answered, the phone scammers often leave an "urgent" call-back request.

The truth is the IRS or it's authorized agencies will NEVER:

- ❖ Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. The IRS does not use these methods for tax payments. Generally, the IRS will first mail a bill to any taxpayer who owes taxes.
- ❖ Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.
- ❖ Demand that taxes be paid without giving the taxpayer the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.
- ❖ Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

If you ever receive one of these calls, REMEMBER:

Never give out personal information and hangup immediately!

For information about Will-Ride or our own Dial-a-Ride transportation program, call the township offices at (708) 946-2026.

Senior Bus Trips!

Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

- **June 13 - Chicago White Sox vs. NY Yankees**
- **August 13 - Joliet Slammers Baseball**

Call us at 708-946-2026 for more information or to reserve your tickets!

Important dates for our Seniors:

May 31 - 10Am - 2PM

Senior Assessment Freeze Assistance Program

August 21 - 6:30 PM

Senior MOVIE Night - Come and watch "Instant Family". Refreshments will be served!

September

Senior Breakfast and Flu Shot Program. Enjoy a free breakfast and schedule your "flu shot" at the same time!

September

Senior MOVIE Night! Refreshments will be served!

November 13 - 6:30 PM

Senior MOVIE Night Refreshments will be served!

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UPCOMING TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING DATES

The Washington Township Board meets on the **FIRST** Monday of every month (except on holidays or as noted) at the Washington Township Center located at 30200 Town Center Road. All meetings start at 7 pm and the public is urged to attend our meetings!

Public commentary is always welcome. Please call Supervisor Mike Stanula at 946-2026 if you need assistance.

- May 6, 2019
- June 3, 2019
- July 1, 2019
- August 5, 2019
- September 5, 2019 - Thursday
- October 7, 2019
- November 4, 2019
- December 2, 2019



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UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

- * **June 6-8** - Beecher Chamber of Commerce Garage Sale Days
 - * **July 3-6** - Annual Beecher "4th of July" Celebration at Firemen's Park
 - * **July 4 @ 8 AM** - Freedom 5K Run/Walk sponsored by the Beecher Lion's Club
 - * **Aug 3** - Beecher Lion's Club "Summerfest" Celebration
 - * **Sept.** - Washington Township "Flu Shot" program - Receive a flu shot for a discounted rate or free if you bring your Medicare card
- Chamber of Commerce Car Cruise Nights** - 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month from June thru September

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The Will-Ride "suggested" donations for rides outside Washington Township are \$4 one way or \$8 round trip

You MUST register with Washington Township to be eligible for Will-Ride

Restrictions Apply

Your Right To Know

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides that all government bodies make public records readily available for inspection. You can access our agendas, minutes, recent budgets and many other items by visiting our website and clicking on the "Public Information" button on our homepage.

Don't see what you're looking for? Contact Clerk Joe Burgess at (708) 946-2026 Ext 1176



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