

GRASSROOTS

The Official Newsletter of the Indiana Township Association

AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

2014 Trustee of the Year - Kathryn Martin, Knight Township

The Indiana Township Association is pleased to announce the recipient of the “Harold ‘Gene’ Stofer 2014 Trustee of the Year” as Kathryn Martin of Knight Township, Vanderburgh County.

Each year the Association presents several awards for exceptional service in township government during the educational conference held in Indianapolis every year. Hundreds of township officials and employees from across the state attend the three-day event to learn best practices and requirements set forth in Indiana state laws.

The presentation of the award to Kathryn Martin was made by the 2013 Trustee of the Year, Julie Roush, from Fairfield Township in Lafayette. Trustee Roush described Kathryn as “a very determined, caring and savvy individual who has not only faced incredibly stressful township dilemmas, but also a gut wrenching personal tragedy.”

Despite the advice to shut township doors after a scandal caused by a previous trustee, Trustee Martin was able to turn around a struggling township that was operating in the red, was able to pay delinquent bills, and earned the respect of the community by building meaningful relationships with vendors, government officials and others.

She demonstrated determination to serve the public despite their financial issues; the township completely turned around in less than a year and is now financially stable.

Kathryn also endured personal tragedy when she lost three family members, including her 2 year old son, in a tornado. Instead of giving up, she fought to make sure no one else would suffer in the same way. “C.J.’s Law” was passed and signed by Governor Mitch Daniels. It mandates that every mobile home manufactured in the state of Indiana be equipped with a NOAA weather radio which would alert residents to impending severe weather threats. “C.J.’s Home Protection Act” has also passed in the United States Congress.

Of Mrs. Martin, one nomination stated, “Kathryn has risen up and become a dedicated public servant and an asset to her community. She will always hold a special place in the hearts of those she has helped.”



ITA President Mary Hart & Trustee Kathryn Martin

**2015
Convention &
Legislative
Conference
March 1-3
Hilton Hotel**

Township of the Year - Portage Township, Porter County



Trustee Brendan Clancy and Staff Members Nina & Eva

Some of those endeavors were:

- Becoming an Energy Assistance site
- Becoming a Nutrition Site for the Senior Center
- Establishing a Community Garden
- Providing low or no-cost festivals and concerts
- Launching free park programs including Kids' Fishing Workshop and the Archery Program
- Building a winter ice rink available to residents at no charge

Portage Township reports that these programs have been made possible by engaging local businesses and service organizations.

Portions of Portage Township endured severe flooding and the Trustee's office worked to help the displaced victims by establishing a volunteer community group to rebuild the homes that are currently uninhabitable.

Kay Walker concluded her remarks with, "Portage Township, Porter County has a great team that has made a difference in their community!" Brendan Clancy invited those employees who were present to accept the award with him on behalf of Portage Township.

Board Member of the Year - Shane Weist, Fairfield Township

Among the recipients for 2014, was Shane Weist, who was awarded the "Charles Bogden Memorial Township Board Member of the Year" on September 23rd in Indianapolis. Mr. Weist serves as the Chairman of the Fairfield Township Board in Tippecanoe County (Lafayette).

In 2013, Fairfield Township acquired an old abandoned cemetery, with around 10,000 graves and Shane immediately began working on ways to help raise funds, desperately needed to maintain and restore the badly neglected cemetery. He spent "endless hours" personally working at the cemetery, recruiting volunteers, hauling in dirt, repairing and cleaning headstones, planting grass, cutting limbs, and picking up debris, according to his letter of nomination. He has been successful in writing for grants for the project and devised an implemented a fundraising event, called the Blue and Gray Ball, to be held in November.

Story continues on page 3

The 2014 Township of the Year was bestowed to Portage Township, Porter County, Brendan Clancy, Trustee.

Through community outreach, education and programming, citizens are quite aware of the role township government plays in the community of Portage. The award was given to Portage Township for "going above and beyond simply performing mandated duties," according to Debbie Driskell, Executive Director of the Association.

The award was presented September 23rd in Indianapolis by the 2013 Township of the Year recipient, Kay Walker (Center Township, Muncie).

As Trustee Walker announced the winner, she read a list of the recent accomplishments by Portage Township.



Trustee Julie Roush & Shane Weist

3 GRASSROOTS

Board Member of the Year, con't.

According to Fairfield Township Trustee, Julie Roush, Shane's "leadership, ambition, sacrifice, tireless efforts and loyalty to the causes of the township are just some of the reasons that he deserves this award. His dedication and passion have positively impressed me, my staff, and others who have witnessed his hard work as he involves himself with the community and with the township."

Roush further stated, "Shane has done extraordinary things for our township." It was in recognition of the qualities shared by Trustee Roush, that the Indiana Township Association found his service to be exemplary and worthy of the award.

Employee of the Year - Roxanne Stallworth, Columbus Township



***Roxanne Stallworth & Steve Anderson,
Awards Committee Chair***

The ITA is pleased to announce the selection of Roxanne Stallworth, Columbus Township Chief Deputy Trustee, as the Association's 2014 "Township Employee of the Year".

Roxanne Stallworth has served the residents of Columbus Township for 26 years through the administrations of Ed Hudachek, Shirley Handley, Fred Barkes and Ben Jackson. Throughout this time, she has assisted residents joyfully with a firm but kind hand. In addition to serving at the Trustee's office, Roxanne has also served at the Columbus Housing Authority, Healthy Communities, San Souci, Family Self-Sufficiency, NAACP, Housing Partnerships, Legal Aid, DSI, Love Chapel and as a Trustee, Choir Member, Women's Ministry President, and Deaconess at Second Baptist Church.

In nominating her, Ben Jackson, Columbus Township Trustee said, "Roxanne is truly the jewel of Township government in Indiana, and I know of no one more deserving of the award of ITA Township Employee of the Year." Others described her as "the perfect example of servant leadership", "a dedicated student of her responsibilities", "sets the highest standard for herself", "genuine, knowledgeable and dedicated", "the dignity and respect she shows is unmatched", and "her tireless efforts for residents of Columbus Township is evident in her long hours, relationships with those she helps and her service on countless committees and boards in the community."

OUR CONDOLENCES

We are sorry to have recently lost these township officials...

Ron Spencer - Trustee of Whiskey Run Township, Crawford County

Billie Jobe - Trustee of Washington Township, Wayne County

Sandra Knobby - Former Trustee of Laughery Township, Ripley County

Willard Neil - Former Trustee of Highland Township, Greene County

Cindy Roser - Former Trustee of Chester Township, Wabash County



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November 11, 2014

Dear Indiana Township Officials,

local levels of government and more specifically at the township level.

I, as State Examiner, am very concerned about State Board of Accounts (SBOA) reduced staffing levels. In the last eight years alone, the SBOA staff has declined from 315 to 208. Our reduced staffing level is causing a reduction in our services to state and local governments. The services we provide to the State and local governments required by IC 5-11-1 have been affected.

Above all we here at the State Board of Accounts advocate quality over quantity. I have therefore had to focus the State Board of Accounts available resources to reviewing governmental entities that could be adversely affected by their examination not being performed, and utilize available resources to ensure that they are performed with the quality expected. Currently that need is focused on those units that receive \$500,000 or more in federal funding, those units that have a need based on bonded debt and those units that have a high risk of error and/or fraud may have been detected.

To assist local units on an ongoing basis, I have committed to have resource centers available at all meeting that the local government associations have. I encourage each of you to attend your association meetings and utilize these resource centers. I also have two people that are accumulating data as submitted on the annual financial reports and they are running data analytics on them to help me determine those units that may be of a higher risk.

I am also actively working with the State administration and the legislature on ways to address our funding issue. Hopefully through a spirit of cooperation between the administration, the legislature and the general assembly we can come up with a solution that can work for all of us.

At this time I would like to schedule an examination sometime next year. I would however not expect it to be performed this year. I would encourage all of you to enhance your safeguards at the local level to ensure proper accountability as we move forward.

Please work with us as a partner as we move forward. If you have any questions you may call me directly at 317-232-2511.

Thank You,

Paul D. Joyce
Paul D. Joyce, CPA
State Examiner

Q&A with Peggy Welch, Director for Intergovernmental Affairs for Lt. Governor Ellspermann



1. How will your past experience as a State Representative help you in your new role?

Someone asked if my first few weeks in the new job were like drinking from a fire hose. I could honestly answer no since I had served 14 years as a state legislator. Because of those years at the Statehouse, I returned to public service in the position of intergovernmental affairs understanding the Statehouse culture and already having relationships with leaders and staff members of all three branches of government. Also over those years, I served on the Ways and Means Committee, the Health Committee, and the State Budget Committee—committees that gave me opportunities: to know our state's agencies and their purposes in serving Hoosiers; to gain an appreciation for the struggles of local governments and how state laws can help or exacerbate those struggles; and to travel across Indiana to see how tax dollars are being used and to hear from citizens about their expectations of their government. However, most valuable

is that I served for two years in the Indiana House of Representatives with Sue Ellspermann, and I witnessed her demonstrating the standards she holds for herself regarding integrity and performance of duty and service.

2. What message would you like to pass along to local government officials?

One of the highlights during Lt. Governor Ellspermann's first year of service was her 92-county Listen and Learn Tour. As she met with local officials in each county, she and her team gained a better understanding of our state's local governments and an appreciation of the dedicated officials serving Hoosiers. Because maintaining these relationships is important to the Lt. Governor, she appointed me to serve as her eyes and ears and point of connection with all parts of government, but most especially with local government officials.

3. What goals have you set for yourself in your new role as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs?

My first priority was to understand Lt. Governor Ellspermann's vision and goals for this position. And as I knew intuitively, the Lt. Governor's overriding passion is for Indiana state government to best serve Hoosiers efficiently and effectively. To help meet that objective, I am traveling around our state meeting with all levels of local officials to continue that listening and learning that the Lt. Governor initiated in 2013. I will bring back to her what I hear, especially about matters that need her special intervention with the executive or legislative branches. My goal is to use my legislative experience and an extensive contact list to assist our locally-elected public servants make immediate connections with the right people in state government and find answers for them to successfully serve their constituents.

4. What has been the highlight of your new position thus far?

Wow, in just a short-period of time, there are already so many highlights. I've been thrilled to be back in public service, especially at the statehouse. I love the variety of responsibilities, and it has been a delight to refresh my statehouse friendships and begin new relationships. And oh, working at the State Fair as a member of the Lt. Governor's team was a blast!

2015 ITA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The ITA Legislative Committee, Chaired by Ralph Flowers, has recommended to the Board of Directors that the following items and positions be placed on our agenda for the 2015 Session of the Indiana General Assembly. The following items were subsequently approved by the ITA Board. These are with the assumptions gathered by the committee and given with the understanding that as the actual bill are filed, there will likely be a need to reconvene and reconsider or develop positions.

1. Per the Indiana House publicized agenda, we will support the effort to be accountable to Hoosiers by:
 - a. Strengthening disclosure laws
 - b. Increase transparency
 - c. Safeguard the public trust
2. Per the Indiana House agenda to provide local government more tools and resources to combat public safety problems, the ITA will work to insure that townships are considered and included.
3. Work to retain Township Boards in their current form and with existing duties and responsibilities.
4. Support township Board salary caps
 - a. Support \$5000 salary cap per 2010 ITA Task Force recommendations adopted by the ITA Board.
 - b. Remain neutral on proposals for other plans.
5. Support changes to the current “insulin law” to require an application be made to the township for assistance as with all other medications and essential needs.
6. Support incentives for voluntary consolidation. Oppose forced consolidation of duties and/or townships.
7. Support increased accessibility requirements per the ITA 2010 Task Force recommendations:
 - a. Require each township to publish the office address & phone number in at least one local phone directory
 - b. Require each township to have an after-hour answering service that includes an emergency contact number
 - c. Require all trustees to respond to messages within 24 hours excepts weekends and holidays
 - d. Statutorily declare that, if a trustee does not provide and/or accept a completed application, it is deemed to be a denial and thus eligible for appeal
 - e. Statutorily declare that, if a trustee does not respond within the statutory time limit, it is deemed to be a denial and thus eligible for appeal
8. Support measures to increase accountability in line with the ITA Task Force recommendations:
 - a. Statutorily declare that, for a trustee to receive rent payments, the space in the home must be utilized exclusively for the township office
 - b. Require trustees to justify, on their annual report, that the rent paid to themselves is no more than it would cost to rent comparable square footage in the township, including utilities (if no comparable commercial office space exists within the township, comparison must be made to office space in the county seat)
9. Pursue the ability to file an appeal for township assistance based upon a uniform tax rate, allowing townships to adjust their levies based on each of their established needs.

***ITA Board of Directors Elections to be held during
the 2015 Convention - March 1-3!***

***If you are interested in participating as a member,
please know that the nominations are open and
made from the floor of the Convention.***

FREQUENT COMMENTS NOTED IN TOWNSHIP LETTERS

Some of you are aware that the State Board of Accounts has been attempting to address the backlog of Township examinations in the recent months. We wanted to list, as a training tool, some of the more common findings noted in these Township letters.

Salary Resolution

Comment – The Township Board has failed to pass a salary resolution that details the approved salaries and wages for the township officials and employees. Indiana Code 36-6-6-10(b) states, “The township legislative body shall fix the: (1) salaries; (2) wages; (3) rates of hourly pay; and (4) remuneration other than statutory allowances, of all officers and employees of the township.” Township Form 17 was created to document all of the requirements to meet IC 36-6-6-10(b) and a sample of the form can be found in the appendix of the Township Manual.

Certification of Nepotism and Contracting statutes

Comment – Each elected officer did not certify in writing that the officer had not violated Indiana Code 36-1-20.2 (Nepotism) or Indiana Code 36-1-21 (Contracting with a unit).

Indiana Code 36-1-20.2-16 states, “Each elected officer of the unit shall annually certify in writing, subject to the penalties for perjury, that the officer has not violated this chapter. An officer shall submit the certification to the executive of the unit not later than December 31 of each year.”

Indiana Code 36-1-21-6 states, “Each elected officer of the unit shall annually certify in writing, subject to the penalties for perjury, that the officer is in compliance with this chapter. An officer shall submit the certification to the executive of the unit not later than December 31 of each year.”

The two certifications must be completed by all Township Board members and the Township Trustee and presented to the Trustee prior to the end of each year. This is still true even if the Township has failed to adopt the two policies required by the statutes.

Township Assistance Standards not adopted

Comment – The Township did not have Township Assistance Standards adopted detailing the requirements for a township resident to be eligible for township assistance. IC 12-20-5.5-1 states, “(a) The township trustee shall process all applications for township assistance according to uniform written standards and without consideration of the race, creed, nationality, or gender of the applicant or any member of the applicant's household. (b) The township's standards for the issuance of township assistance and the processing of applications must be: (1) governed by the requirements of this article; (2) proposed by the township trustee, adopted by the township board, and filed with the board of county commissioners; (3) reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in the cost of basic necessities in the township and changes in the law; (4) published in a single written document, including addenda attached to the document; and (5) posted in a place prominently visible to the public in all offices of the township trustee where township assistance applications are taken or processed.” We would also encourage Trustees to review IC 12-20-5.5-2 for all of the specific requirements that must be included in the Township Assistance Standards.

LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS

AREA DIRECTORS

<u>Central</u> <u>C</u>	<u>Northwest</u> <u>NW</u>	<u>Northeast</u> <u>NE</u>	<u>West Central</u> <u>WC</u>	<u>East Central</u> <u>EC</u>	<u>South West</u> <u>SW</u>	<u>South East</u> <u>SE</u>
Mary Ann Powell Plesant Twp., Johnson Cnty. P.O. Box 73 Whiteland, IN 40184 317.535.7571 Phone 317.535.0049 Fax mapowell@embarqmail.com	Frank Mrvan North Twp., Lake Cnty. 5947 Hohman Avenue Hammond, IN 46320 219.932.2530 Phone 219.937.4412 Fax fjmrvan@comcast.net	Richard Uhrick St. Joseph Twp., Allen Cnty. P.O. Box 15337 Ft. Wayne, IN 46885 260.485.5993 Phone 260.486.2820 Fax trustydick@aol.com	Julie Roush Fairfield Twp., Tippecanoe Cnty. 718 Wabash Avenue Lafayette, IN 47905 765.742.7476 Phone 765.429.5084 Fax julieroush@fairfieldtwnshp.org	Marlyn Kay Walker Center Twp., Delaware Cnty. 1200 East Main Street Muncie, IN 47305 765.288.8876 Phone 765.289.4324 Fax kay@centertownshiptrustee.com	Steven L. Anderson Franklin Twp., Washington 7957 East New Philadelphia Road Salem, IN 47167 812.883.4746 Phone 812.883.4746 Fax franklintwprtrustee@blueriver.net	Edward F. Gindling Adams Twp., Ripley Cnty. 11603 N. Spades Road Sunman, IN 47041 812.623.2972 Phone 812.623.2972 Fax bgindlin@etczone.com

Bartholomew	Benton	Adams	Clay	Blackford	Crawford	Clark
Boone	Carroll	Allen	Clinton	Delaware	Daviess	Dearborn
Brown	Cass	Dekalb	Fountain	Fayette	Dubois	Decatur
Hamilton	Fulton	Elkhart	Greene	Grant	Gibson	Franklin
Hancock	Jasper	Huntington	Montgomery	Henry	Knox	Floyd
Hendricks	Lake	Kosciusko	Owen	Howard	Lawrence	Harrison
Johnson	LaPorte	LaGrange	Parke	Jay	Martin	Jackson
Marion	Marshall	Miami	Putnam	Madison	Orange	Jefferson
Monroe	Newton	Noble	Sullivan	Randolph	Perry	Jennings
Morgan	Porter	Stueben	Tippecanoe	Rush	Pike	Ohio
Shelby	Pulaski	Wabash	Vermillion	Tipton	Posey	Ripley
	St. Joseph	Wells	Vigo	Union	Spencer	Scott
	Starke	Whitley	Warren	Wayne	Vanderburgh	Switzerland
	White				Warrick	
					Washington	

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INDIANA TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

POSITION: TOWNSHIP BOARDS SHOULD BE RETAINED

Why should township boards be retained?

Township boards serve as the legislative body for townships, provide a check and balance on the actions of the trustee.

- Statewide, township board members make on average \$522 annually for serving their communities. According to studies conducted by the ITA, this amounts to as little as 7¢ on a homeowner's property tax bill (not 7¢ per \$100 of AV). To further demonstrate our commitment to serving the public in a cost effective manner, **the ITA supports capping township board salaries at \$5,000 per year.**
- Township boards **provide an invaluable service to their communities** for this low cost. In addition to adopting the trustee's budget and establishing tax rates for fire protection and township assistance, townships boards are also responsible for approving contracted entered into by the township, including contracts for fire protection. The board also approves annual standards for the delivery of township assistance, capital projects undertaken by the township, and any debt incurred by the township to meet the needs of the citizens.
- Because board members live in the communities that they serve, they are **more accessible** to the electorate and **can be held directly accountable** by voters for the actions they take in regards to township assistance delivery, fire protection, and other functions.

Why should these duties not be transferred to the county?

Because townships boards play such an integral part in the delivery of services at the local level at such a low costs, these functions should remain at the township level and not be transferred to the county council.

- As we stated above, townships board members provide a wide variety of important services at very low cost. If these duties were transferred to the county council, it is fair to assume that the council would expect to receive increased salaries for taking on these additional duties. The key question is, **can county officials perform these duties and remain accessible to their constituents for less than 7¢ per year?**
- We believe some are underestimating the **workload** that would come with transferring these duties to the county level. For example, in Allen County alone, the county council would be expected to approve the budgets, fire contracts, annual reports, township assistance standards, and other important matters for 20 separate townships, in addition to their duties that they already perform. With these additional responsibilities, **how can we expect a county council to be familiar with and understand the specific needs of each township** in the county, especially when you consider there is a distinct rural, suburban, and urban demographic in almost every county?
- Finally, will county councils be able to respond immediately to **emergency situations** arising in outlying townships? Currently, a trustee can call an emergency meeting of the township board to respond to immediate concerns, such as a fire pumper going out of service or a natural disaster depleting township funds. Township boards must immediately approve a plan to borrow for the emergency. Will county councils be as responsive, and at such a low cost as township boards?

Tidbits

Interested in volunteering for the ITA? We have several opportunities to help with conferences and other committees. Please contact the office for details!

ITA Board of Directors will be elected during the 2015 Convention - March 1-3. For more information, please contact Debbie Driskell at ddriskell@indianatownshipassoc.org or 317.501.7222

Would you like to recoup township assistance dollars?

***The ITA offers an SSI Reimbursement Program
It's easy and it costs the township nothing!
Contact us today for details.***

Tie Vote?

In the case of a tie vote by the township board, the trustee

ITA OFFERING FINANCIAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Dear Trustee:

This letter is for Townships that operate, or contract for, emergency medical service (EMS). Most of you are aware that a portion of the cost of some EMS runs can be recovered from Medicaid. However, these payments are never enough.

The Affordable Care Act now allows Townships to receive annual lump-sum payments to cover more of the cost, but it is not automatic. An annual application is required.

We recommend every Township with an EMS service consider applying. You may need professional assistance because the application requires a detailed and technical summary of allowable, actual costs.

Consultants have approached many Trustees offering to prepare these applications. Some ask for contingent fees, which we have seen as high as \$60,000. Others ask for fixed fees, which we have seen as high as \$28,000. These fees paid for themselves because the amounts received were much greater than the fees. However, a Township does not need to pay that much.

At no charge to you, ITA will review your circumstances and confirm whether your EMS qualifies for the supplemental payment. Then, if you wish, ITA will prepare the application for you. If ITA prepares the application, there would be a service charge of \$5000.

What's the easiest way to use the links in this publication?

Use your mouse and highlight the link. Click the right mouse button and select "Copy".

Open your web browser (IE. Internet Explorer) and place your mouse cursor in the address line. Click the right mouse button and select "Paste". Hit "Enter" and you should be on your way!

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Mark You 2015 Calendars

**New Officials Training
January 10, 2015**

*Delaware Township Community Center - Fishers
Pre-Registration is Required by January 5*

*Registration Material can be found at
www.indianatownshipassoc.org*

**Annual Convention & Legislative Conference
March 1-3, 2015**

Hilton - Indianapolis

**Annual Educational Conference
September 20-23, 2015**

Sheraton - Keystone Crossing

ANNOUNCEMENT!

The Indiana Township Association Presents
2015 Convention & Legislative Conference

March 1-3, 2015
Hilton Indianapolis
120 W Market Street
1.800.315.1906

Make your reservations now!

Room rate: \$105
Cut-off date for negotiated rate: January 29
FREE Parking for overnight guests

Watch your email & www.indianatownshipassoc.org for
Conference Registration Packets in January!

Schedule:

Sunday, March 1st – 5 – 7 p.m. - Early Bird Registration
7 – 11 p.m. – Hospitality

Monday, March 2nd – Convention & Legislative Briefing, Briefings on the latest
news impacting our jobs, Special Guests, Area Meetings

Tuesday, March 3rd – Lobby the Statehouse / Evening Reception
(All state legislators will be invited by the ITA to attend the reception. If you plan to
attend, please make a personal invitation to your Representative and Senator and be sure to
set aside time to take your legislator to lunch on Tuesday.)

Thank you for your service...

In public service, many jobs are done without much thanks. The Indiana Township Association wants you to know that your service these past four years (and, many more years for some) is appreciated.

If you are retiring, we wish you well in whatever you plan to do.

We are hopeful that all involved in the transition to new leadership accomplish it in good order for the sake of respect for township government.