

DuPage County
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“Our aim:
 To fear God,
 tell the truth
 and make money.”

H.C. Paddock
 1852-1935

Persistence and consolidation

Efforts proceed in DuPage, Kane counties, elsewhere because of committed local officials

If there is one thing we learn about reform from watching government in Illinois, it is that persistence is a required ingredient for success.

It took more than 20 years of battling in fits and starts to finally make modifications to the state's inadequate school funding formula. The highly popular goal of getting politics out of the legislative redistricting process has seen two promising drives tripped up in the courts over the past decade but remains an active matter of debate and development. Workers' compensation reform made some notable progress in 2011 but the issue remains still an active topic of concern among those who want to fix the system all the way.

Our View

And consolidation among Illinois' nation's-highest 6,700-plus units of government? It plods and crawls, but still manages to make periodic



ROBERT SANCHEZ PHOTO/bsanchez@dailyherald.com

DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin, left, and county Clerk Paul Hinds announced plans more than a year ago to merge the clerk's office with the DuPage Election Commission.

progress. A key reason for that: local leaders who refuse to let the issue go away and won't shy from the heavy lifting sometimes required even to

make the most apparent efficiencies come to pass.

An immediate — and prominent — case in point is DuPage County,

where board Chairman Dan Cronin has been a constant advocate of combining units of government and promises still to make elimination of the DuPage Election Commission a top goal for the coming year.

A move that would have created a new bipartisan panel to oversee elections under the auspices of the county clerk was moving with deliberate speed last year until it stalled in the legislature. In an interview with our Robert Sanchez, Cronin said he's not going to let the issue drop and wants to push to make election duties a responsibility of the county clerk in DuPage, as they are in nearly every other county in Illinois.

DuPage County residents will have an opportunity to help the process along through an advisory referendum in March. And next door in Kane County, thanks to board Chairman Chris Lauzen and other local leaders, voters may get the chance to eliminate another outmoded

bureaucracy by disbanding the Aurora Election Commission if a judge permits it this week.

DuPage County's efforts in conjunction with a new state law already foresee the possibility of eliminating as many as 13 redundant agencies. A sanitary district that manages operations for just 465 properties in Lombard will be disbanded this year, and officials are working on plans to consolidate a fire protection district that serves just 561 parcels.

Efforts like these should be encouraged to continue all across the suburbs and state. But they only occur because of the persistence and commitment of local officials to hear the public's call for less redundancy and more efficiency in the operations of local government.

Congratulations to those leaders and governments that are keeping the drive going. And for any others who haven't been looking into the possibilities, what are you waiting for?