

DuPage towns asking state to restore funding



Steve Chirico



Frank Trilla



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A group representing DuPage County municipalities is urging lawmakers in Springfield to restore local tax revenue that the state has used to fill gaps in its budget.

Local governments have long received a share of the state income tax revenue collected in their areas. But several years ago, Illinois reduced the amount of such revenue municipalities and counties receive from the Local Government Distributive Fund.

DuPage municipalities and county government lost millions of dollars as a result. Officials say it's money that could have been used to pay for important services, including police and fire protection, road repairs, garbage collection and snow removal.

Now the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference says it will lobby to get that money back during the 2020 legislative session.

"They still are taking 5% more than they were four years ago," said Naperville Mayor Steve Chirico, who is president of the conference. "So our top priority is to try to get that back."

If successful, Chirico said Naperville could receive roughly \$700,000 in lost revenue. Restoring the funding could return roughly \$80,000 to the coffers of a smaller town such as Willowbrook.

"This is the kind of money that goes into snow removal and things that people actually see," said Willowbrook Mayor Frank Trilla, who is vice president of the conference. "It's money that should be coming to us."

As part of its 2020 legislative action program, the conference also is advocating for:

- Preserving local authority, including removing the distinction between home rule and non-home rule communities.
- Improving Illinois' infrastructure to bolster the state's economy, create jobs and attract new businesses.
- Preserving public safety pensions for local police and firefighters while reducing the burden on municipalities and taxpayers.

- Making "common-sense" changes to the state's workers' compensation law.

Chirico said he's "optimistic" because of progress state lawmakers made last year, including the approval of a capital spending plan.

He said the governor has made "a genuine effort" to listen to all parties and try to get consensus on some big issues.

"That type of effort works best," Chirico said. "So if the governor continues to consider all the parties involved, I think that we'll hopefully get some good things done this year."