

All we want for Christmas is the trimming

Published: 12/21/2007 12:17 AM

Dear Santa Claus:

We, the good and reasonable citizens of Illinois, are writing to desperately request your delivery soon of a bit of holiday magic.

We've tried as best we can to be nice as often as we can. We wish we could report the same for several of our elected officials who are too often naughty, and very frequently nasty to one another. It leaves the rest of us struggling to believe in goodness, magic and common sense.

Here it is practically Christmas, with talk of recession in the air, and yet, many of our elected officials seem determined to dig ever deeper into our pockets.

An entire year has been wasted while Gov. Rod Blagojevich, House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate President Emil Jones -- Democrats all -- have been unable to sit in a room together for very long, much less solve transit and public works crises. Of course, higher sales taxes and diversion of gas tax revenue were their first suggested solutions to fund transit.

In Cook County, board President Todd Stroger still wants and is trying to pass a sales tax increase he admits is more than the county needs. What's up with that, Santa? He doesn't quite have enough votes yet on the Democrat-dominated board, but several of his fellow county elected leaders are saying they couldn't bear to trim even 10 percent from their budgets.

And in DuPage County, it's the Republicans who have been pushing for a sales tax increase. Republicans, Santa. In DuPage County, birthplace of the tax cap, no less. Get this, big guy. It's the DuPage Democrats protesting the higher taxes. What gives?

If we didn't know better, we'd swear the North Pole just flipped and headed South.

Even several of our local government officials are expecting us to be able to give, give, give. Officials in Des Plaines, Mount Prospect, other municipalities, and some of our school districts already are banking on us paying more to make phone calls, get rid of our garbage, air-condition schools, and use sewers and water and pay for other services.

Now, Santy Claus, really, we're all for the importance of a quality education and solid government services, and we've often been willing to pay more for them when tax increases are clearly justified. With gas prices rising and driving up the cost of everything else, pretty soon we're all going to have to increase our credit card debt just to support our elected officials' spending habits.

We need a little Christmas miracle here somewhere. As the guy we like to think put the "rein" in reindeer, Santa, won't you help us out?

How about delivering some of these officials a few doses of common sense? Or a copy of Ebenezer Scrooge's classic self-help book, "How to save a dime a minute?" Or, what about several pairs of finely sharpened scissors? Please? Pretty please with sugar on top?

Sincerely hoping,

We taxed-out citizens of Illinois.