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# ◆ The TAX TIMES ◆

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Volume 14, Issue 8

Tax News and Views in Plain English

June, 1999

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## **BCTA OPPOSES USE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS TO FUND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS.**

*The Brown County Taxpayers Association recently sent the following letter to our state representatives in opposition to proposed expansion of the use of taxpayer dollars for political campaigns. We feel it is self-explanatory. As usual, your comments or suggestions are welcome.*

Dear State Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

The Brown County Taxpayers Association strongly opposes the use of taxpayer dollars to fund political campaigns. I am enclosing with my letter a resolution unanimously supported by the directors of the BCTA which articulates our position.

The purpose of my letter is to assure that every state legislator representing Brown County knows our position and the importance we ascribe to this issue. We are alarmed over some recent developments which suggest that taxpayer interests in this matter are not being represented. These include:

The Governor's budget proposal to add 750,000 taxpayer dollars to the election campaign fund.

The action of the Joint Finance Committee which kept that \$750,000 in the budget. (We do wish to compliment Rep. Gard for opposing this.)

A separate proposal, spearheaded by Senator Ellis, which would fund campaigns with tax dollars.

BCTA members do understand the concerns voiced in the press about problems with campaign finance. Our state/federal committee would be happy to discuss ideas to remedy those problems. The solution is not, however, the use of taxpayer money.

Every year the State "polls" Wisconsin taxpayers on this subject by asking them, on their Form 1, whether they wish a dollar of their taxes to be used for funding politicians' campaigns. And, every year over 90% of Wisconsin taxpayers say "NO". Could the message be more clear?

The BCTA will view any sponsorship of or vote for legislation which puts tax money into political campaigns as an act hostile to the taxpayer. This would include a vote for a budget which contains such provisions. Similarly, we would hold the same view of legislators who failed to act in opposition to such legislation when the opportunity afforded itself.

We respectfully ask that you vigorously support taxpayer interests in matters of campaign finance reform.

Very truly yours,

**BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**

*Frank S. Bennett Jr.*  
President

**The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**

**GOVERNMENT SAID TO BE CONSIDERING MORE INTERNET REGULATION.**

The Americans for Tax Reform Foundation, one of America's leading taxpayer groups issued a warning alerting consumers that multiple federal agencies are on the verge of greatly increasing regulation of the Internet, threatening to stifle its development while raising costs for consumers.

The Federal Trade Commission is poised to create new regulatory bureaucracies to oversee the Internet. Other agencies, such as the Federal Communications Commission and even the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, may also have a hand in flooding the Net with red tape.

Alarm bells rang among groups opposed to expanding federal regulation of the Internet when the Federal Trade Commission signaled it would establish an entire new division within the agency to regulate electronic commerce. According to the U.S. Commerce Department, \$3 billion in trade was conducted over the Internet in 1997, \$9 billion in 1998, and may grow to \$30 billion in 1999. The move is seen by many on Capitol Hill as yet another attempt by a federal agency to reach beyond its legislative mandate and regulate any activity, even when it can only remotely justify doing so.

Meanwhile, the Federal Communications Commission is under increasing political pressure from some pro-regulatory quarters to craft an entirely new set of rules regulating access to new high-speed, "broadband" cable networks that promise to greatly expand the Internet's usability for the average consumer.

Smaller government agencies are also getting into the act. The U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board is poised to issue new rules ostensibly designed to make websites more "handicapped accessible." The rules, however, are expected to include a ban on any audio without simultaneous text and even restrictions on animated graphics. The

rules would apply to the government's websites and the sites operated by certain companies doing business with the government.

Not all of the drive to regulate and tax the Internet lies in Washington.



Some local governments are attempting to set restrictions on Internet access through local cable franchises.

"I can very easily see this spinning out of control," said Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform. "With so many government agencies ready to compete with each other for which agency can regulate the Internet the most, we could see prices rise for goods sold through e-commerce, content micromanaged from Washington, and a change in the entire culture of the Net."

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of over 90,000 taxpayers and taxpayer advocacy groups who are opposed to tax increases at the state and federal levels. **Contributed by Mike Riley, Taxpayers Network, Inc.**

**Editors Note:** While most of us would probably have no problem with some type of effective control over the internet such as more restricted access to pornographic material, endangering national security and the like, we certainly do not want restrictions on free trade, or used as a source of tax revenue which

"The governments view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."  
 . . . Ronald Reagan

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- **Information on the BCTA.**
- **A library of past "TAX TIMES" Articles.**
- **A new feature "Special Stuff".**
- **Links to other taxpayer organizations and information.**

**Computer Ownership Grows.**

Related to the previous article regarding potential regulation of the internet, a recent article in the "Wisconsin Taxpayer" reports that households owning computers grew from 15% in 1990 to 35% in 1997, according to a U. S. Department of Labor study. In 1997, persons between the ages of 45 and 54 were most likely to own a computer (45.8%). The same age group experienced the biggest jump in computer ownership between 1990 and 1997 (25.8% increase.)

The least likely computer own-

**State-Owned Lands.**

The Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources, (DNR) managed a total of 1.3 million acres of land in 1998, or 3.7% of the states total land area of 35.8 million acres.

Since 1991, the DNR has acquired over 200,000 acres of land for forests, parks, trails and wildlife management at a total cost of \$137.4 million.

(Source - Legislative Fiscal Bureau and Wis. Taxpayers Alliance.)

**Why Unexpected Tax Revenues?**

Both federal and state tax officials have been surprised in the past year or two by unexpectedly strong growth in personal income tax collections. A study from the U. S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) sheds light on the source of the growth. The CBO underestimated fiscal year 1998 federal income tax collections by \$60 billion. Of that, about \$8 billion was due to better-than-expected economic performance.

Most of the "unexpected revenues" resulted from a surge in tax revenues concentrated in the "top" brackets (adjusted gross incomes of \$200,000 or more) subject to the highest rates.

Preliminary 1997 data indicate these taxpayers filed only 1.5% of all returns, but earned 19.9% of total income and paid 37.2% of total tax liability. The CBO also reports that the total tax liability for this group rose from 29.5% of all income taxes paid in 1993 to 37.2% in 1997. From the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance *"The*

*This essay, written by Robert Miller a member of the BCTA, does not necessarily reflect the official opinion or position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. The BCTA does however encourage independent thought, and solicits yours to be published, if appropriate, on our web site (WWW.BCTAxpayers.Org) or in the official news letter of the BCTA. I have a dream speech&quot; of Dr. Martin Luther King as revised and updated by Robert J. Miller)*

### I STILL HAVE A DREAM

I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed of taxation with representation.

I have a dream that one day on the plains of Ashwaubenon an Arena shall arise that does not put the property taxpayers of Brown County at risk for higher taxes and that has free parking for all ( or at least Brown County residents).

I have a dream that even the state of Wisconsin, a state sweltering in the heat of tax oppression ( No. 3 in the U.S.), shall be transformed into an oasis of lower taxes and smaller government. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character, except, of course, for those who shall be exempt from certain state sales taxes and gambling regulations because of their racial heritage.

I have a dream that one day the state of Wisconsin, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of increased spending and higher borrowing, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and little white girls at the school of their parent's choice, not the choice of the reigning government monopoly.

I have a dream today that every IRS regulation shall be made understandable, that every tax collecting agency shall be made humble, and that the City of Green Bay's potholes and substandard sidewalks shall be repaired before destroying perfectly good streets to add striations and buried lights. That our populace not our bridges become illuminated. That our schoolchildren, not our trees, become enlightened.

This is the faith with which I return to Green Bay's Broadway district, where the eight hundred dollar honey locust tree shall live in eternal happiness with its brother, the three thousand dollar gingko tree. Where we will hew out of the mountain of blighted taverns, faceless perverts, and feckless drug dealers, stones of hope with sides of brick, on which shall be affixed street names. Where shall come forth property tax breaks for the few (Gallagher's and Tiletown) , paid for by the

many. This is our hope.

With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our city into a beautiful symphony of 250-decibel rap music arising from decrepit cars with expensive sound systems. Where the paint police shall turn ugly neighborhoods into idyllic scenes of contentment using only the threat of fines. Where the landlord shall walk with his tenant and the tenant with his landlord, ever careful not to place garbage out more than 24 hours before pickup. Where all the homes shall have sump pits; where all our cormorants shall be blessed and have less than three eyes; and where we shall all live in a Superfund of joy.

Robert J. Miller

### APPLETON COUNCIL MEMBER ADDRESSES MAY B.C.T.A. MEETING

Regular monthly meeting held May 20, at the Days Inn-Downtown. Appleton City Council Member Jo Egelhoff addressed the meeting explaining how and why Appleton passed a city referendum limiting property tax levy increases to inflation (CPI) plus a percentage for new construction. The referendum passed by a 2:1 margin two years ago and remains in effect today.

Ms Egelhoff, who is beginning her fourth term on the Appleton City Council, explained that taxes come from spending. The state's Expenditure Rate Program (ERP), created to reward cities that limit general fund spending, has not been effective. To stay under the ERP limits and receive their bonuses for fiscal restraint, city governments have been innovative, shifting many expenditures out of city budgets to off-budget programs. Appleton even created a storm sewer utility to shift storm sewer expenditures out of its budget.

When the state legislature passed the law shifting two-thirds of school costs to the state, it created a spending vacuum, which local governments attempted to fill. In response to city property tax increases, the Appleton tax referendum passed with 63 percent of the vote in March, 1997, despite vigorous opposition from the mayor and the city attorney.

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) districts are another big spending loophole, Ms. Egelhoff explained. Appleton doesn't use 27 years for TIF recovery. It limits TIF programs to only ten years. She cautioned that there is a bill proposed that would extend TIF districts to towns.

"Governments don't like advice or spending limits," Ms. Egelhoff noted. All aspects of local government spending must be carefully watched: tax levies, bonding, and shifting costs to utilities.

Presentations were also made by Mike Riley of Taxpayers Network, Inc., who distributed copies of the "1999 Congressional Pig Book Summary, and Don Kristopeit and Frank Kirshbraun from the Federation of Wisconsin Taxpayers Organizations, who reported on Assembly Joint Resolution AJR33 requiring that state and local referendums be held only on the same date as elections for public office.

David Nelson - Secretary

**The 1999 Congressional “Pig Book” Summary. Or “how your money is spent.”**

Each year Citizens Against Government Waste, a 600,000 member private, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the American public about government waste publishes a book listing the more incredible spending measures included in the approved federal budget.

This years edition lists 366 projects, costing us as taxpayers a total of \$1.4 billion. However, the total of these projects in the 1999 budget is 2,838 with a total price tag of \$12 billion. The criteria for listing is that the expenditure must meet at least one of the following:

- Requested by only one chamber of congress.
- Not specifically authorized.
- Not competitively awarded.
- Not requested by the President.
- Greatly exceeds the President’s budget request of the previous years funding.
- Not the subject of congressional hearings; or
- Serves only a local or special interest.

A review of this years expenditures indicates that both Democratic and Republican lawmakers are equally responsible for these “Pork Barrel Projects.” The one common thread seems to be that the appropriation is directed to their home district, does very little for the country as a whole, and is more than likely a payoff of a campaign promise or a political debt. Most of these spending appropriations are inserted into the 3,000 page Omnibus Appropriations Act at the last minute. Members of the Senate and House had 24 hours to digest the bill before the final floor vote.

Much to the credit (or discredit) of the Wisconsin congressional delegation, I was only able to find one request for funds for Wisconsin. \$3.35 million for Rep. Obey’s district to fund a technology-enhanced learning program at UWStevens Point, after school programs at Chippewa Falls and Wausau schools, and a dislocated worker project at UW-Superior.

Examples of some of the items included in your federal budget include funds for shrimp raising research in Arizona to research \*on how to raise blueberries in Maine. We will be paying for bike trails, courthouses, various visitors centers, historic renovations, sports competitions and school improvements. All items that are normally taken care of at the local level. The senator from South Carolina is getting \$10 million for a border patrol academy even though they are a thousand miles from any border. \$5 million was appropriated for a “child-development” center at a military base in California. \$3.5 million for a visitors center at the Fort Necessity Nat. battlefield even though \$8.5 million has been spent already since 1993. \$7 million was added for an environmental study at a soon to be closed correctional facility in Virginia, and \$1 million added by Sen. Robert Byrd for construction of the Robert Byrd locks and dam in West Virginia.

There was \$75 Million added for a “Teacher training in technology program” despite the fact that there are 86 teacher training programs already in place. Sen. Inouye of Hawaii was able to obtain \$185 million in new spending for his state, and Sen. Shelby of Alabama was able to get \$192 million. No wonder there isn’t anything left for Wisconsin. Unfortunately it seems that the system and method used to pass the federal and for that matter, the state budgets only encourages approval of these last minute appropriations. Also, questionable expenditures are often included with other items of more merit. It seems that no matter what is said about controlling spending when running for office, it is soon forgotten at budget time. You will note that state and federal budgets are often approved at the last minute, when lawmakers are anxious to return home to campaign for re-election, with little time spend analyzing a 3 or 4,000 page budget document.

If interested, copies of the booklet are available from **Taxpayers Network, Inc. Cedarburg, WI 53012-2634, or phone (414) 375-4190.** Find out how your money is being spent. **JF**

**THE TAX BITE ON EVERY-DAYPRODUCTS.**

The mericans for Tax Reform Foundation, a Washington based coalition of over 90,000 taxpayers and taxpayer advocacy groups reports that your electric power bill is something that neither you or the government can avoid. State sales taxes, gas import taxes and other surcharges add an average of 11.2% to your monthly bill for state taxes alone, or an average of \$206 per customer annually. Another \$266 goes for the taxes that the utility pays directly to government, for a total of about one fourth of your bill.

It is estimated by many experts that this figure would more than double if the proposed Global Warming Treaty (see article elsewhere in this TAX TIMES) is ratified.

The average bottle of beer costs 77 cents per bottle. Of that, an average of 15 cents, or 20% goes for state and federal sales and excise taxes. However, that is only the beginning. The producer pays federal and state income taxes, payroll, unemployment and workmans compensation taxes, local property and other hidden taxes so that all told, the price of the average bottle of beer includes 43%

**Federal Government Wants to Raise The Tax on Your Phone Bill.**

The National Taxpayers Union reports the government plans on doubling the tax on your phone bill for the purpose of connecting schools and libraries to the internet.

This initiative is being sponsored by vice-president Gore, and is often referred to as the “Gore-Tax”.

So far, only 4 percent of the \$2 billion appropriated for this purpose has actually gone for internet access. The rest has gone for overhead and construction not related to internet access. Also, it is reported that over 70% of U. S. schools already have internet access.

“We might come closer to balancing the budget if all of us lived closer to the ten commandments and the golden rule.”

## THE BONDING TRAP

By Dave Nelson

We should pay for things as we use them. Makes sense, doesn't it? That's the rationale behind a lot of local government bonding we have seen lately.

When inflation was high, there was a semi-credible argument that it made sense to borrow lots of money and repay the debt with ever cheaper dollars. With inflation slowed to a crawl, future dollars won't be a lot cheaper. This justification for borrowing doesn't hold water any more.

"We should pay for assets, roads and buildings, as we use them." In principle, this is logical. Unfortunately, habitual borrowing leads to a point of no return.

Let's look at an example. What happens if a unit of government embarks upon a policy of borrowing \$10 million per year for capital improvements? Let's assume a low interest rate of four percent, compounded annually, with ten years for the term of the bonds.

The debt service for \$10 million at four percent simple interest is \$1.233 million each year. In the first year, that splits into \$400,000 for interest and \$833,000 going to reduce the principal. In the second year, after borrowing another \$10 million, the annual debt service rises to \$2.466 million. The third year sees the annual debt service increase to \$3.699 million. These are the good years. The annual \$10 million borrowing is much larger than the annual debt service. We have plenty of money for new projects.

However, good things don't last. The debt service keeps increasing by \$1.233 million each year. For Year 10, the debt service will be \$12.33 million.

The trap is starting to close. We are in the habit of spending \$10 million each year for capital projects. Do we

want to stop the annual borrowing and pay off the \$48.2 million of debt remaining? This would require an unbelievable amount of fiscal discipline and courage from a number of elected officials.

We have two other choices that are much more politically expedient. First, we can continue the \$10 million annual borrowing. The good news is that the debt service will plateau at \$12.33 million. The bad news is that for \$12.33 million a year, we can have \$10 million of new projects for as long as we want to continue. Our debt service is 23.3 percent of our annual benefit. What a deal! If we don't like it, we can quit any time and pay off the \$48.2 million of debt remaining. Is there any quitting now? No, the trap is closed.

The second alternative is to increase the annual borrowing each year to cover our increasing debt service costs. The outstanding debt and the annual debt service costs will explode with this alternative. This is how Congress is handling the national debt. A fine example, indeed.

Let's consider a six percent, \$10 million per year borrowing example. With a six percent interest rate, the debt service plateaus after ten years at \$13.4 million for continuous annual borrowing of \$10 million. For \$13.4 million a year, we can have \$10 million of new projects each year for as long as we want. Annual debt service is now 34 percent more than our spending for new projects. What a legacy to leave our children and grandchildren!

These are clear examples of how chronic borrowing actions, even at relatively low interest rates, lead to debt levels that are unlikely to ever be reduced, and debt service costs that grow to become significant percentages of total expenditures. These examples support a policy of very disciplined spending for capital projects, avoiding bonding for all but the very larg-

**Be Wary of Global Warming Treaty (AKA/Kyoto Protocol).**

The Heartland Institute, a Chicago based nonprofit public policy research organization has published the "Instant Expert Guide to Global Warming", which we would recommend to anyone concerned.

Some of the conclusions and observations they make are that the U.S. alone would be required to reduce certain gas emissions to 7% BELOW 1990 levels by the year 2012. As a result, the price of electricity would increase by at least 55%, and home heating oil by 70%. They estimate 2,400,000 jobs would be lost and the average household income would FALL \$2,700. The cost of producing farm commodities would increase dramatically, also affecting farm exports.

Vice-President Gore has gone on record as strongly supporting this treaty. We realize there are many different viewpoints on this matter, but still we are all concerned with protecting our environment. In the future, we may be forced to conserve dwindling energy reserves and natural resources, whether we want to or not. However, that does not seem to be the purpose of this treaty. The consequences are rather frightening either way.

The booklet also concludes that **#1 - Most** scientists do not believe human activities threaten to disrupt the Earth's climate. **#2 -** The most reliable temperature data show no global warming trend, and that 1997 was the seventh coolest year since satellite measurements began in 1978. **#3 -** Global computer models are too crude to predict future climate changes. **#4 -** The Panel on Climate causing global warming. **#5 -** A modest amount of global warming, should it occur, would be beneficial to the natural world and to human civilization. **#6 -** Quickly reducing our greenhouse gas emissions would be costly and would not stop global warming. **#7 -** The best strategy to pursue in one of "No Regrets." Invest more in atmospheric research to determine whether a genuine threat exists, and to invest in reducing emissions only when they make economic sense. The booklet justifies each of its conclusions with supporting data. Copies of the booklet **"INSTANT EXPERT GUIDE TO GLOBAL**

**More Social Security Facts.**

When the program was established in 1937, there were 42 workers for every beneficiary, and life expectancy was below 65. Today, there are three workers per beneficiary soon it will be only two) and life expectancy is nearing 80. That's a demographic head-on collision just waiting to happen.

Meanwhile, Social Security suffers from an abysmally low rate of return. For an average family of four, it's around 1.23 percent per year - less than many checking accounts.

The ugly facts: By the year 2010, Social Security will begin running in the red. By 2032, it will only be able to pay 75 cents on every dollar of benefits promised, a gap of literally trillions of dollars thanks to the size of the baby boom generation.

Closing the gap with tax increases is out of the question. The FICA tax has mushroomed by nearly 1,500 percent since 1937, even adjusting for inflation, and is now at a burdensome 12.4 %. It would eventually have to reach 18 %.

Admittedly, reform of the most popular government program in U.S. history is an enormous and complicated task. For one thing, those nearing retirement under the current system must receive the benefits to which they are entitled, at the same time that younger generations begin saving for their own golden years. And, of course, we must maintain a basic safety net against poverty in old age.

The current federal budget surplus supposedly provides us with the opportunity to accomplish all of the above, while laying the groundwork for a brighter future. One possibility is "carving out" part of an individual's current FICA tax for a personal retirement account, and leaving the rest for a modified version of the current system.

However, Mike Riley of Taxpayers Network, notes, there actually was no "federal budget surplus" in fiscal 1998. It only looks that way because Congress & the President took about \$104 Billion of Social Security cash flow and dumped it into the general revenue fund leaving behind some IOUs."

**States Cut Taxes.**

A strong economy and stock market have boosted state tax collections and made tax cuts both feasible and politically popular. A recent study of 1998 state tax actions by the National Conference of State Legislatures found that 36 states reduced net tax collections by a combined total of \$7.1 billion, or 1.6% less than 1997.

Twenty-one states cut taxes by 1% or more, while nine (Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio) cut taxes by more than 3%. Colorado was the most aggressive tax cutter; its \$564.2 million tax cut represented a \$10.7% reduction.

According to the study, Wisconsin enacted \$123.5 million worth of tax cuts for a 1.2% reduction, which placed us in the middle of the pack. It also explains why Wisconsin retains its high tax ranking insofar as other states were able to reduce their taxes more.

The study did not explain, however, what was meant by "tax cuts" as we assume that total tax collections and overall spending were all higher.

Source - Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance.

"The wheel that squeaks the loudest is the one that gets the grease."

. . . **Josh Billings**

"Why does a slight tax increase cost you two hundred dollars and a substantial tax cut save you thirty cents?"

. . . **Peg Bracken**

"Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other."

. . . **Oscar Ameringer**

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**Things That Make Us Wonder.**

While we strongly support public referendums authorizing new school construction and approval of excessive school district spending, we also support having these items voted upon at the same time as regular primary and general elections for public office. This is when the largest number of voters will exercise their rights as to who will represent them and how their money will be spent. Special elections are expensive and not always effective. For example, the recent DePere School District referendums, (which were defeated), had a turnout of only 4 voters in one district and 20 in another. Hardly a mandate.

The Green Bay School District is planning a referendum for later this year with a yet to be determined price tag. We all realize the need for adequate and improved school facilities and acknowledge that most people place these expenditures at the top when prioritizing how tax dollars should be spent. However, it seems that often these projects gain public favor by dramatizing supposedly crowded or otherwise sub-standard conditions, placing an unjustified price tag on the solution, and then building a monument that somewhat exceeds the problem. Referendums usually do not take into consideration, nor do their sponsors tell you that interest on the borrowing, or that staffing for additional classrooms and their administration will also be a taxpayer expense.

The fact remains that when the necessity for a project is well documented and the projected price justified, the voters will give their approval.

In other words, it seems that often public agencies could do a better job of justifying the numbers they throw at us when then want approval for a project. Do you agree?

It still seems that if we dump millions of taxpayer dollars into the downtown and near west side of Green Bay, some of that money should go to making more reasonably priced parking available. I feel sorry for merchants who invest their own funds only to have potential customers discouraged by parking meters. There may be spaces available, but few people will plug a meter while

patronizing a restaurant which seems to be the type of business that is being encouraged. I recently visited a merchant on North Broadway, and was the only person parked in the entire block. The revenues from parking meters in this area have to be far less than the cost to the city for development. It doesn't make sense.

Sooner or later we will somehow have to pay for the cleanup of the Fox River. Hopefully the experts will decide upon a better plan than hauling the contaminated river bottom one truckload at a time and dumping it in someone else's back yard. What the results will be after a few hundred million bucks have been spent remains to be seen.

There was an article recently in one of the leading news magazines concerning the large scale hog and chicken farms which supply most of our supermarket chains. These things are huge, and mostly located in North Carolina. Manure is dumped into 10 acre pits 3 stories deep, and allowed to seep into the ground water from which is has contaminated a number of rivers and lakes, causing numerous health and environmental problems. The article concludes that not much has been done to remedy the situation, possibly because the owners of these operations make sizeable and effective political contributions. My point is, as much as we are all concerned with preserving our environment, do the same standards, regulations, and financial resources apply to everyone?

If I recall, the most convincing argument from proponents of the new \$36 million county jail was that we were wasting \$2 million or so annually by shipping our surplus inmates out of the area. We can't argue that the labor, transpiration and administration for this is expensive, but wonder if the per diem costs elsewhere were much higher than they already were in Brown County. We are now being told that our new jail will require a considerable increase in staffing, and wonder just how the overall cost per prisoner, taking everything into consideration including present costs of transporting prisoners, bonding for the new facility including the cost of setting

taxpayer money aside, etc., etc., before ~~and after the new facility goes on line.~~

We note that the law firms which helped negotiate the tobacco settlement for the state are presenting a bill in excess of \$840 million. (Wouldn't that buy a nice stadium?)

This (20%) apparently is the normal fee in such matters and we assume it was negotiated in advance so there should be no surprise. The higher the settlement, the higher the fee. Attorney General Doyle says, "Not to worry, the taxpayers won't pay for this." Perhaps so, but any benefits received by us will be reduced accordingly if the tobacco companies actually do pay up.

Now the state wants to bill the tobacco companies for their own legal expenses which are only a fraction of what the big law firms would get their hands on. We realize his is a very complex issue requiring the best expertise. However, the Attorney General must have known in advance that certain law firms would profit immensely from this patronage. Is this different than any other private contractor making a huge profit from government contracts? In the past, it seems some of them have been prosecuted by the same Attorney Gener-

"The right to be heard does not automacilly include the right to be taken seriously."  
... **Hubert Humphrey**

"The whole art of government consists in the are of being honest."  
... **Thomas Jefferson**

"I shall on all subjects have a policy to recommend, but none to enforce against the will of the people."  
... **Ulysses S.. Grant**

**Articles and opinions appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We encourage discussion and input on current issues of taxpayer interest and invite your comments or articles suitable for future "TAX TIMES". Please send them to the BCTA, P. O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI. 54305-0684, or call Jim Frink at 336-6410.**

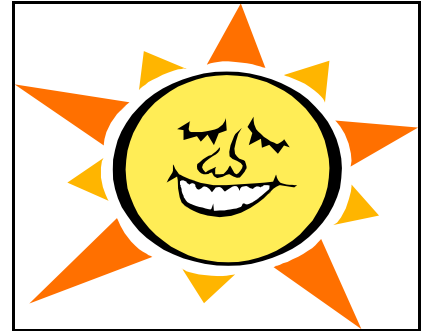
## **BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule**

- Thursday - June 17, 1999 - DAYS INN - Downtown  
12:00 Noon - BCTA Monthly meeting.
- Tuesday - June 15, 1999 - Federal and State estimated  
Income Tax Payments due.
- Thursday - July 15, 1999 - DAYS INN - Downtown  
12:00 Noon - BCTA Monthly meeting.
- Thursday - August 19, 1999 - DAYS INN - Downtown  
12:00 Noon - BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

*All members of the BCTA, their guests and other interested persons are cordially invited to attend and participate in these open meetings. Phone 499-0768 or 336-6410 for information or to leave message.*

*Regular monthly meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at the DAYS INN - Downtown. Price \$6.50 per person - includes lunch !*

*Check out our website! [www.BCTAxpayers.Org](http://www.BCTAxpayers.Org).*



### **Have a Nice Summer !**

"The basis of effective government is public confidence, and that confidence is endangered when ethical standards falter or appear to falter."

. . . John F. Kennedy

"You cannot influence a Political Party to do right, if you stick to it when it does wrong."

. . . John Bengough

"A government that is big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take it all away."

. . . Barry Goldwater

"Never smarten up a chump."

. . . W. C. Fields

## **The TAX TIMES**

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### **Inside This Issue**

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