
◆ The TAX TIMES ◆

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LIP SERVICE

We as taxpayers have been getting lip service from our government for a long time. It happens at all levels and there seems to be more of it as we reach election time. We as taxpayers need to call attention to this lip service and search out the truth for ourselves.

At the federal level, lip service is apparent in the "tax cut." What was touted as a meaningful reduction in tax doesn't take full effect for ten years and will only be 25% implemented by the time the current presidential term is up. This isn't a tax cut; this is lip service for a tax cut. Already we hear the current shortfall in the federal budget is due to the "tax cut" rather than increased spending. Lip service for a tax cut is not what we need.

Or what about the talk of campaign finance reform? The bill passed doesn't have any money changes until after the next federal election, yet, starts now with restricting comments on current electors. Already we are seeing political action committees as a way to get around the new procedures. Again we have lip service for campaign financing reform.

At the state level we have lip service when the deficit is discussed. The Governor asks the legislature to reduce spending by \$1.2 billion. Restrictions are placed on what cannot be cut so that it is almost impossible to cut \$1.2 billion from what remains. One potential solution is to separate the cost of education into operational and capital and then cut \$1.2 billion from the capital portion. This will insure that the cost of education is shared at the 2/3 level and leave the cost of the buildings to the local school district. Even though this idea was passed by the legislature a couple of years ago, the senate never took up the issue. Local control is what the state says we should have; yet, that concept would appear to be only lip service. Reduce the shared revenue with the Counties. Good ways for the State to lower there expenses and pass these expenses onto the Counties. This is just another form of lip service.

At the local level we have the cost of medical insurance for county employees. Despite this item being a concern over the past eight or more years, very little has been done to lower the cost of health care. The employees still pay 5% of the cost and have the best coverage available. We as taxpayers foot the bill of over \$12 million for county employees. Again we have lip service at the County level.

The cost of the Brown County library system born by the taxpayer exceeds \$5 million. Just recently we assumed \$2 million in debt and added ½ million in operating cost for the village of Howard to have a unique building for its library. It would have been less costly to have the County Library branch added to the new Bay Port high school. Then we as taxpayers would be funding one library with all the access needed rather than two library systems and the associated cost for labor and materials. We are about to make a similar decision in DePere. The two school systems for DePere have added new facilities and could better serve taxpayers with a joint library system in the school buildings rather than build another \$4 million building along the Fox River. Lip service at the County level is directly visible in the increasing dollars on our property tax bill.

It's time to start looking at where governments are spending our money and what we are getting in service. Lip service is one service we can do without.

Frank Bennett
President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government

ALLOUEZ BOARD REJECTS CITIZEN APPROVAL.

The Village of Allouez has always had a reputation for frugal, responsible government while satisfying the needs and concerns of its citizens. Like other communities, they have indicated concern over high property taxes recently complicated by reductions in state aids, and have publicized all the services and projects they would be forced to cut if there was any short-fall in revenue. In years past, larger expenditures have been made with a pay as you go philosophy that has kept their property tax levy at a more or less acceptable level.

The Allouez village hall is a recycled burial vault factory which is shared with the public works facilities. It has been fairly well documented in the media that there was considerable deterioration in the village hall portion and it was time for something new. No problem, the need was established and would be addressed by the village board. Up to this point, however, discussion seemed centered on the need and cost for the village hall portion only.

However, at the May 21, village board meeting, it was decided by the board to proceed with the new village hall, **plus** a new \$3.7 million public works facility to be built on property yet to be purchased at a total cost estimated at \$5.8 million. In other words, it appears the board unilaterally decided to undertake a \$5.8 million dollar project while previous discussion to the public had prepared them for the need for a village hall costing \$1-1.5 million.

We acknowledge that the present public works facilities is somewhat obsolete and deteriorating. No one would deny their public employees adequate facilities in which to work and maintain their equipment - no more or less than anyone else with a job to do. However, the need for such an expenditure could and should have been better established. Especially at a time of economic uncertainty when cuts in municipal services are being threatened and citizens are already taxed to the limit. Although the \$3.7 million figure seems to be rather high and approaching the cost of a new elementary school, the board should be willing to share their reasoning on such an expenditure at this time.

Assuming a population of 15,000, \$5.8 million would equate to an investment of almost \$400 for each and every person. Interest could add another 50-100 % depending on financing. Unfortunately the population of Allouez includes Reformatory inmates, nursing home residents, and a lot of children who don't pay taxes so this "new village hall" could end up buried in the property tax bills of homeowners as a significant item for some time to come.

At the May 21, meeting, the board did discuss putting this project to a referendum in order to obtain taxpayer and voter approval. This motion was defeated 4-2. Village President Cameron McCain was quoted in the "Press-Gazette" saying "Allouez residents had a history of voting no on referendums, including three referendums that voted down construction of an Allouez High School." He felt that "Allouez couldn't afford another community wide no vote." (*These referendums occurred about 40 years ago before Allouez became part*

of the Green Bay School District.-JF). We point out that historically many spending referendums in this area have been approved by voters, assuming the need for the project is established and taxpayers feel their money is spent responsibly. Also, Allouez recently voted with the rest of the county in approving spending referendums for the Packer Stadium and Technical School improvements, and with the Green Bay School district to upgrade a number of schools including high schools. Perhaps Mr. McCain's fear was that voters have reached some limits on how much they are willing to be taxed.

To what extent was the need for a new public works facility even discussed with potential voters? For example, trustee Patricia O'Neill said that "the village board members, as representatives of the people, already voted to move to a new village hall." Nothing about the new public works facility however. Trustee Patrick Collins was quoted as saying the argument of "The people are educated - let them decide" is unfair. "The people have decided - they elected all of us."

While we certainly agree that we elect our representatives to run our governments and protect our interests, it does not necessarily mean giving them a blank check book. When a family is already spending a good portion of their income to simply own and maintain their residence they would like to have some control over their costs rather than have someone else decide for them. The people of Allouez are quite capable of determining if a new village hall plus a new public works facility are in order, and at what price. The present facility and its condition are quite visible. It really shouldn't take a lot of effort by the Village to convince residents to approve or disapprove if presented the options and consequences. Just give them a chance.

Most of the village board was just re-elected in April, but we doubt that any of them ran on a platform of pushing through a \$5.8 million expenditure first thing. If I recall, some of the main issues by all of the candidates were fiscal responsibility in government and more open communication with the taxpayers.

The bottom line seems to be that if you are concerned about the amount of taxes you pay, you have to know what your elected officials are doing.

Jim Frink - BCTA

"Everything I say, you know, goes into print. If I make a mistake it doesn't merely effect me, or you, but the country. I, therefor, ought at least try not to make mistakes."

. . . Abraham Lincoln

Articles and views appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We want to 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. E-Mail Frink@ExecPC.Com.

Social Security and The Wisconsin Budget.

Social Security has long been known as the “third rail” of politics – touch it and die, politically speaking.

Those who understand the program know that it’s far past time to “touch” Social Security, though. What’s needed now is a complete makeover.

In a new report on Social Security’s problems, The Cato Institute’s June O’Neill writes “...the problem is not that we may raid the trust fund next year or that we have failed to provide a ‘lock box’... Social Security is essentially funded on a pay-as-you-go basis, meaning that the benefits of current retirees are paid by the taxes of current workers.”

That will come as a surprise to far too many Americans. For all the talk about “keeping Social Security solvent” and the “lock box,” Social Security is essentially an empty bank. Today’s benefits are funded by today’s taxes. Unless major reforms take place, tomorrow’s taxes will fall far short of funding tomorrow’s benefits.

Here’s an example: I have two daughters, and I want to save for their college educations. So I decide to put \$100 a month for each of them into a shoebox.

But I don’t actually put \$100 in there: instead, I spend the money, and put an IOU into the shoebox.

Am I really saving for my daughters? When the time comes, their tuition will have to come out of whatever I’m making at that time – no Ivy League schools for them.

That’s essentially the case with Social Security. The “trust fund” we keep hearing about is empty. The taxes you pay aren’t saved for you: they’re paying for today’s retirees. When you retire, if the program still exists, someone else’s taxes will pay for you.

It’s not that there isn’t enough money going into the program. Social Security has had surpluses nearly every year since its inception in 1937. Unfortunately, those surpluses haven’t been saved – they’ve been spent, underwriting more government programs.

That’s not going to be possible much longer. Accord-

ing to O’Neill, “...the worker-to-beneficiary ratio will fall from its current level of 3.3 covered workers per retiree to about 2 workers per retiree in 2030.” The number of retirees in our country is going to grow rapidly over the next few decades, with a relatively smaller number of workers paying for their benefits. Goodbye surpluses.

At that point, we’ll have three choices: raise taxes (by 35%), cut benefits, or cut other spending to pay for the program.

These are the facts, but they’re not widely known. Another little known fact: it didn’t have to be this way.

The federal government could do a lot to make Social Security more efficient: provide more incentive for private investment; stop spending the surpluses; or best of all, let individuals invest at least a portion of their own Social Security taxes.

None of those things have happened, though, and any news story about Social Security is likely to contain some warning about how difficult reform will be. Why is that, when the program is so obviously in trouble?

Because people aren’t getting honest information about Social Security. Some politicians and interest groups find it useful to scare large segments of the public, telling them that real reform will threaten their benefits. That means lots of people (read: voters) will oppose it.

That alone explains why we haven’t had Social Security reform. It’s too hard.

If Wisconsin’s budget problems have proven anything, it is this: politicians are like water – they follow the path of least resistance. We don’t have Social Security reform for the same reason fiscal responsibility in Wisconsin is so elusive: every real attempt at reforming our state’s finances has met with opposition, and our politicians haven’t had the will to stand up to it.

O’Neill’s closing paragraph could be written about many subjects, Social Security and Wisconsin’s finances included: “Whatever the final shape of reform, it is time for Congress to stop playing verbal games over what are essentially accounting gimmicks and get down to serious work.” I agree.

Rep. Frank G.

Lasee

National Debt Passes the Six Trillion Mark!

As of June 4, the national debt stood at **\$6,013,266,380,905.00**.

This is an increase of \$262 billion plus a couple of hundred million from when we last reported it in April at **\$5,751,008,558,938.00**.

The national debt clock is speeded up or slowed down constantly to reflect new spending initiatives, tax revenues and the condition of the general economy.

About all we can say is,

“Congratulations Big Spenders.”

Where Do Your Federal Tax Dollars Go?

The following is an estimate of how each \$1,000 of Federal Tax Dollars are spent.

National Defense	\$160.00
Medicaid	70.00
Medicare	110.00
Unemployment, etc.	140.00
Social Security	230.00
Interest Payments	120.00
Other expenses	170.00

TOTAL 1,000.00

Most (tax revisions) didn’t improve the system. They made it more like Washington itself; complicated, unfair, cluttered with gobbledygook and loopholes designed for those with the power and influence to hire high-priced legal and tax advisers.”

... Ronald Reagan

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.BCTaxpayers.Org

The 2002 Congressional Pig Book Summary. Or how your money is spent.

Each year, the private nonprofit and nonpartisan organization group, "CITIZENS AGAINST GOVERNMENT WASTE", publishes its "PIG BOOK" summary, which this year contains 602 examples of prime pork spending projects authorized by our representatives in Washington. Copies of this year's book were distributed to those in attendance at the May BCTA meeting by Mike Riley, President of Taxpayers Network, Inc.

This year's nominees accounted for \$9.29 billion in taxpayer money, and had to have at least one of the following criteria in order to qualify:

- 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 or the previous years funding.
- Not the subject of congressional hearings; or
- Serves a local or special interest.

Obviously members of congress and the senate know how to work the system as all states shared some of the booty. The average expenditure for each U.S. Citizen was \$32.21. The highest per capita spending was in Alaska with \$710.88, followed by Hawaii at \$363.34 and West Virginia at \$215.68.

One of the reasons always given for taxes in Wisconsin being so high is that we send more money to Washington than we get back. That may be true, but as far as pork spending goes, we are right in the middle and closest to the US average with \$172,776,184 in "pork" spending for the year or \$32.68 per capita. Who knows where the money went.

Examples of some of the more questionable expenditures include \$6.8 million for various bicycle paths, \$2 million to refurbish a statue in Alabama, \$50,000 for a tattoo removal program in California, \$2.25 million for winter recreation facilities in Alaska and \$15 million for a courthouse project in Miami. It all adds up.

National Taxpayers Union Rates Congress.

Every year the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), rates U. S. Representatives and Senators on their actual votes – every vote that significantly effects taxes, spending, debt, and regulatory burdens on consumers and taxpayers. Unlike other organizations which publish ratings based on specific items of interest that suit their specific agenda, the NTU considers all votes on all issues. They claim it is a completely unbiased accounting of votes, and that they have no partisan axe to grind.

Their taxpayer score measures the strength of support for reducing spending and regulation and opposing higher taxes. Scores are determined with 100 being the highest possible. It was noted that average scores were lower this year than last, dropping to an average of 41 in the House from 45 last year, and 46 in the Senate from 47 last year.

The drop in the Senate was attributed to Hillary Clinton, who recorded a score of 3 %. This was the lowest score for a Senator in their first year of office that the NTU has ever recorded.

Wisconsin's senators scores were 17% for Feingold and 20% for Senator Kohl, which qualified them as being big spenders.

Wisconsin representatives had an average score of 40% which is close to the national average. Rep. Green had a 65% rating was given a 65% rating.

The report made no distinctions between Democrats and Republicans, and did not break down their votes on specific issues. It also didn't adjust for votes that were missed.

"Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please." . . . Mark Twain

May Meeting Notes.

Monthly BCTA meeting held Thursday, April 18, 2002 at the Glory Years.

The Water Supply Study Task Force gave an update on water supply negotiations: To meet Environmental Protection Agency requirements for December, 2006, the absolute deadline for the Brown County Central Water Authority (BCCWA) to decide whether it will join with the City of Green Bay or build a separate pipeline is December of this year. The BCCWA must have a plan for complying with the 2006 requirements submitted to the Wisconsin DNR by December 8, 2003. Aquifer storage and recover (ASR) is a critical component of the plan. A July study must be completed in August to verify that ASR will work in the Green Bay area.

A joint project for the second pipeline to Lake Michigan would save \$50 million to \$100 million. Green Bay water users might see reductions in their water costs. A conventional system would require a 66-inch pipe while ASR would reduce that the requirement to a 48-inch pipe, saving \$33 million. The BCCWA by itself would need to install 106,000 feet of pipe. With the City of Green Bay, 72,000 feet of pipe would be required. It is necessary to retain the big water users as 12 of them use 75 percent of the water.

Mike Riley of Taxpayers Network, Inc.(TNI), reported that Bloomberg's Personal Finance magazine identifies Wisconsin as No. 50 of the states for favorable treatment of retirees and No. 47 for families. A new report, "50 STATE COMPARISONS," just published by TNI communicates the same findings. This report uses data from the Tax Foundation comparing taxation, economic, demographic, government, and education statistics from the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

While retirees provide low burdens and high receipts to Wisconsin government, our taxation policies appear to be designed to drive retirees out of Wisconsin to states that understand the benefits of retirees and appreciate the positive cash flows retirees generate for them.

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau has published its Informational Bulletin #4, Individual Income Tax Provisions in the States.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 20. Details are on the back page of this **TAX TIMES**.

Dave Nelson – Secretary

TAXES AND GAMBLING.

Most industries are negatively affected by taxation – the higher taxes are, the slower growth will be. However, one industry seems to be impervious to those effects. In other states, this industry is taxed to a far greater degree than here in Wisconsin, and yet it continues to grow at a rapid rate, high taxes or not.

I'm talking about the gambling industry – specifically, Indian casino gambling (the PC term these days is "gaming." I will continue to ignore that).

According to federal law, states can't levy taxes on Indian casinos, but they can require agreements, or compacts," which do basically the same thing. In Wisconsin, the governor has the sole authority to negotiate those compacts – the Legislature has no say whatsoever – we gave it away before Tommy signed the first compact.

According to a recent report by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Wisconsin "taxes" Indian casinos at an effective rate of 2.2%, generating a little less than \$25 million in state revenues per year.

Other states have much better deals: Michigan Charges Indian casinos 10% of their slot revenues; New Mexico charges 8%; in Connecticut, Indian casinos pay 25% or \$100 million annually, whichever is greater; California uses graduated rates, depending on the number of machines – Wisconsin's gambling revenues would be increased by nearly 6 times (to \$150 million per year) under that state's plan.

Those are just some of the states with Indian casinos. Consider the effective tax rates on non-Indian gambling in other nearby states: 20% in Iowa; 29.5% in Missouri; 30.9% in Illinois.

Wisconsin's effective tax rate is 2.2%. Wisconsin's 16 Indian casinos gross over a billion dollars a year, and pay the state set annual amounts totaling less than \$25 million.

Two things ought to happen. First, before the current gaming compacts expire in 2003 and 2004, the Legislature ought to take back its authority to take an up or down vote (at least) on them. We gave that away under Tommy – it's time to take it back now. Doing so will bring

those negotiations out of the back rooms, and into the public's eye.

Second, the compacts should be renegotiated at much, much higher rates. The state can do that, due to a Supreme Court ruling: the Seminole tribe vs. the State of Florida.

Of course, the tribes won't want that. The tribes have a sweet deal – they have a monopoly on slots and table gambling. They can serve food and alcohol. They have a protected status that no other group or business owner in the state can come close to. And they pay just over 2% in taxes.

Usually, we extract more, not less, for a government-granted monopoly because of the lack of competition, or we limit profits, i.e. utilities. Not in this case.

During the recent budget crisis, Wisconsin's Indian tribes ran a whole series of commercials, touting all the great jobs they create, and suggesting (none too subtly) that those jobs might be in danger. There are going to be dire predictions of mass layoffs at Indian casinos if we do this.

But the facts are on our side. Gambling has flourished in other states while paying far, far more in taxes. Our budget problems aren't over yet – there will be another deficit next year. We must stop giving the gambling industry a nearly free ride.

Representative Frank G. Lasee

"While Wisconsin hunters are concerned about chronic wasting disease, Wisconsin taxpayers should be concerned with the state chronic spending disease."

. . . **Bill Nauta**

"The business of government is to keep government out of business—that is, unless business needs government aid." . . . **Will Rogers**

"There is no dignity quite as impressive, and no independence quite so important, as living within your means." . . . **Calvin Coolidge**

Forbes Rates Green Bay as a Good Place To Live.

In it's annual poll of places to live in the United States, Forbes Magazine placed Green Bay at No. 77. This was ahead of other cities who usually do well in these surveys such as Minneapolis/St.Paul which was #79, and Madison which was #80. Other Wisconsin cities were Appleton at #124, Milwaukee at #171 and Racine #192.

Most of the cities with top ratings were located in sunbelt areas, and climate is usually one of the top criteria used in these ratings. Each one of these surveys used different factors, some of which may or may not be important to residents living in these communities . For example, the average value of a residence may be considered a plus if it is high, but this also reflects the cost of living in these communities which can be a negative factor.

Educational facilities, hospitals and medical services, cultural activities and opportunities for outdoors recreation are usually considerations in all of these surveys but do they ever realize that some people would rather ice fish than walk on a beach someplace?

One thing, however, that is always a negative factor is state and local taxes. When comparing one community against another this is often the reason given for business investment. Also, property taxes are usually much higher in the northern states than other parts of the country, and this can drag down a cities rating considerably.

The most important factor, and one which is seldom mentioned is – Are the people living there happy?

We're Still #3.

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance reports that for 2002, Wisconsin citizens will contribute 12% of their income to state and local taxes. This is still the third highest in the U. S.

This equates to an average of \$3,656 per person while the national average is \$3,274. Let's hope the legislature is aware of this as they ponder the state budget shortfall.

THINGS THAT MAKE US WONDER.

What do the “Bureau of Downtown Development,” the “Wisconsin Jumpstart Coalition”, and the “Division of Corporate Takeovers,” have in common? These are random listings from the Wisconsin State Government Office phone book. No doubt they represent important functions to the people of Wisconsin as well as keeping a few bureaucrats busy on the state payroll, but there are literally hundreds of such listings and cause us to wonder if perhaps this is part of the problem with government. (*We suspect it is.*) These are all offices added through the years for some valid reason or other, but the question is, are they all necessary? They fill huge building after huge building in Madison, have secretaries and receptionists, create paperwork to justify their existence, and cost the taxpayers money. To quote Ronald Reagan, “No government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size. Government programs, once launched, never disappear. Actually, a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we’ll ever see on this earth.” Maybe Wisconsin needs a “Bureau to see if other bureaus are necessary.”

A recent report claims the value of taxable farmland in Wisconsin dropped as much as 45 % the past year due to a formula based on the low price of corn. We can appreciate that determining the taxable value of rural land is complex and is a more of a factor on a farmers profit and loss statement that with a business operated in a urban area. Nonetheless, if one person pays more or less tax proportionally than someone else, you are bound to have problems. Unfortunately the genius who can figure out a system to make everyone happy hasn’t come along yet.

The cost of health care and insurance are one of the fastest rising expenses facing all of us. It is possibly the most significant driving force behind the high costs and demands of our public employees. There are many factors contributing to of health care cost, and one of them has to be out of control lawsuits, which we all end up paying for.

A recent article in “Forbes” estimates the cost of liability lawsuits is costing are economy about \$200 billion per year, and the majority is medical related. Obviously if a person is improperly diagnosed or mistreated by a physician he should be entitled to just compensation. However, we have all heard of settlements made that exceed common sense. On the other hand, people who have had legitimate claims may have suffered simply because they didn’t take advantage of the legal system. Liability insurance is a large part of a physicians expense, and is passed on to you. Drug companies have been reluctant to introduce new products for fear of lawsuits, often from a tiny majority of patients who claim side effects. From time to time there is talk in congress of putting sensible limits on liability claims. The problem has been that trial lawyers as a group have been one of the largest contributors to political campaigns. They can afford it with their share of the rewards they collect but hopefully meaningful campaign finance reform will someday become a reality.

Another recent poll from St. Norbert College made headlines when they determined that 34 % of Wisconsin deer hunters may not hunt this year due to fears of chronic wasting disease. At this time the scope and uncertainties of this potential disaster to one of our states assets has us all concerned. What always puzzles us with polls is in this case, by somehow contacting 400 hunters throughout the state, they concluded that 34 % of the usual 750,000 hunters going after over a million deer would stay home. Hopefully the DNR will know more about this come November.

There has been talk of expanding walking trails to the Tank Park area off of Broadway on Green Bay’s west side. No doubt this would require the expenditure of taxpayer dollars, and the claim will be made that this will be an improvement to a blighted neighborhood by reducing crime land providing a better standard of living. There are a lot of other things this neighborhood

needs such as improved housing for the elderly and low income families, and less fear of violence. There is still a lot to do to make Green Bay perfect.

Apparently Kewaunee County has more landfill space available than others in the state, and is encouraging its communities to contribute more garbage. Meanwhile other counties are running out of space, and finding that no one wants a landfill in their back yard. In any event, it certainly doesn’t make sense to truck garbage any great distance and this will become more of a problem and expense in the future unless better solutions of conservation and disposal are developed.

It appears that the Brown County Board has not done a good job of clarifying their intentions with the “Resident Responsibility Act of 2002”, establishing English as the official language for County purposes. In the meantime, it seems the media and minority groups have not allowed much opportunity for open discussion either. What the advantage would be for the county is not 100% clear. It has been estimated that only 2.2% of Brown Counties population is unable to speak English. It was 4% or so back in 1900 when the word “discrimination” was probably not even in the dictionary and we have survived without major problems. The problem seems to be that it doesn’t necessarily make sense when 97.8% of the population speak and communicate in one language to incur taxpayer expense to accommodate the rest provided other options are available.

It has been disclosed that 2/3d’s of Wisconsin State employees pay nothing for their health insurance coverage. Insurance for these employees costs taxpayers ~~about \$500 million annually and~~ rising. If they opt for dependent coverage they pay an extra \$12.00 per month and the state (taxpayers) pay the balance. The average additional cost to an employee for dependent coverage from a private employer is \$120.00 monthly. In either case the actual cost is usually much greater. For example, the cost to a person family forced to provide their own insurance is usually several times as high.

It is generally acknowledged that public employees benefits are more comprehensive than those in the private sector where often benefits are being reduced due to the cost.

It didn't seem like a good idea at the time, but several years ago there was a big push in Congress to make insurance benefits paid by an employer "taxable income." We can imagine the protests of such a proposal today, but a great many people would be surprised to find what their insurance benefits costs actually are what the impact on the economy actually is.

There are lots of things to wonder about.

"Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through."

. . . Jonathon Swift

"Voters quickly forget what a man says."

. . . Richard Nixon

SOME STATES FIND THAT TAX INCREASES ACTUALLY REDUCE INCOME.

The National Center for Policy Analysis reports that Faced with revenue shortfalls, many of the nation's governors are turning to tax increases. But when they tried this during the economic downturn of the early 1990s, the states that raised taxes to balance their budgets dug deeper financial holes.

Tax hiking states lost businesses and taxpayers, prolonging the recession in those states.

- In 1991 and 1992, California, Connecticut and New Jersey raised income taxes only to see tax revenues decline still further.
- Revenues fell because upper-income homeowners and businesses fled to more tax-friendly climates like the Carolinas, Florida, and Texas.
- In fact, after California raised its incomes taxes on the "rich" to nearly 10 percent in 1992, the state actually lost domestic population and reve-

About "Things That Make Us Wonder."

Items included in this section are usually thoughts on various items of taxpayer concern as they appear during the month in the media. Like any item that comes along, there are generally several points of view to be considered, and we acknowledge that often this is a first impression. The reason for doing this is that if the item is important enough to pursue and discuss further, it is open for comment from our members and other readers.

While as an organization we try to consider things from the taxpayers point of view we realize that an adequate level of government service and enhancements is necessary. From time to time the voters themselves approve spending initiatives or accept decisions by their elected officials that will impact their taxes, and we can support this as long as everything is on the table. Our motto is still "*Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.*"

There are far too many issues impacting your taxes for us to address as a group. Each item in "Things that make us wonder," could be expanded to a full article or made a BCTA proj-

ect. Our concern is to call attention to the issue, give a view or two, perhaps a chuckle, and leave it to others to determine if the BCTA or any of our concerned members wants to pursue it further. There certainly agree that there are two sides to every question.

We acknowledge that some the views in this section may not be acceptable to everyone. One purpose of this section is to invite criticism and comment. The BCTA is your organization. It is strictly volunteer, and unfortunately we do not have the resources or the time to fully research and report on every taxpayer issue that comes along.

At times our position on certain items may be misinterpreted or contrary to opinion. Many of our members have special interests to be addressed. Most of us realize that there are too many challenges facing taxpayers to become bogged down with single issues and it is the big picture that counts. The "TAX TIMES" is available to our members and other interested parties to express views and we solicit input.

Jim Frink

Wisconsin's Bond Rating Drops Again.

Standard & Poors has lowered its rating of the State of Wisconsin general obligation bonds one notch to AA.

Last summer Moodys reduced the states rating from Aa2 to Aa3, and this March lowered it's outlook on Wisconsin bonds from stable to negative. These ratings reflect the entire state budget and fiscal condition such as reserves, cash flow and other obligations and revenue sources.

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

. . . Josh Billing

"You can't legislate intelligence and common sense into people."

. . . Will Rogers

"I never give them hell. I just tell the truth and they think it's hell."

. . . Harry S. Truman

- nues for the first time in history.
- The states that took the opposite course -- cutting taxes and state spending -- saw both revenues and personal income grow.
 - New Jersey's tax receipts grew twice as fast in the two years after Gov. Christie Whitman cut the income tax as they had in the two years after her Predecessor, Gov. Jim Florio, raised it.
 - In Michigan, Gov. John Engler cut income taxes, froze state agency spending and eliminated low priority programs -- over the next five years, Michigan led the nation in job creation and income growth.
 - Furthermore, over the last 10 years the states that lessened their tax burdens the most have created almost twice as many jobs as the states increasing their tax burden.

Submitted by Mike Riley - TNI

> Source: Stephen Moore (Club for Growth), "Governors and Drunken

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule. (Mark Your calendars)

Thursday – June 20, 2002, BCTA Monthly Meeting.

GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St., 12:00 Noon.
Speaker, Len Teresinski, Chairman, Village of Hobart
Chairman, Brown County Central Authority.
"Update on Metropolitan Water Supply Negotiations"

Thursday – July 18, 2002, BCTA Monthly Meeting.

GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St., 12:00 Noon.
Program to be announced.

Thursday – August 15, 2002, BCTA Monthly Meeting.

GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St., 12:00 Noon.
Program to be announced.

Regular monthly meetings of the BCTA are held on the third Thursday
Of each month at the Glory Years, 347 S. Washington St., Green Bay

**All members of the Brown County Taxpayers Association,
Their guests, and other interested parties are cordially invited
to attend and participate in our open meetings.**

Cost - \$6.50, payable at meeting - includes lunch, tax & tip.
Phone 336-6410 or 399-0768 for information or to leave message.

Phone



June,
2002

"To define democracy in one word,
we must use the word "cooperation".
. . . Dwight D. Eisenhower

"You don't make the poor richer by
making the rich poorer."
. . . Winston Churchill

"The only way to do anything in the
American government is to bypass
the senate." . . . Franklin D. Roosevelt

SUPPORT THE BCTA

**New Members are Always
Welcome.**

Call 336-6410 or 499-0768

Write us at P. O. Box 684

or visit our website

www.BCTaxpayers.Org

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