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# ◆ The TAX TIMES ◆

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## **Feed a Cold, Starve a Fever.**

Remember that old advice on returning to good health? I never got a definitive meaning on it, but I was told that eating when you had a cold prevented, or starved, any ensuing fever. This may or may not be true. But , we have a new variation, Feed the taxpayer, starve the government. This will restore our state and nation to good health.

While local spinmeisters and the Legistocracy weave their rationalizations for supporting or opposing the recently proposed state spending-local property tax freeze, I hear nuggets of truth from both sides.

Yes, it is a gimmick with no long-range solutions. But you can expect long-range planning from the Legistocracy. We'll save that for another column.

Yes, it usurps local control. But as Speaker Gard jested, "Most mayors say they have no intention of raising property taxes. We're going to help them keep that promise."

It never hurts to help.

A recent Appleton editorial argued the freeze does nothing to improve our situation, aptly noting, "We pay 52 percent more than the national average in state income taxes. We pay 24 percent more than the national average on property taxes. We earn 13.3 percent less than the national average. The paper industry is suffering. Dairy farmers are struggling. Manufacturers are fleeing. So are our college graduates. Those are some of our problems, Freezes don't distinguish between good programs that could use more money, and bad programs that should be put out of their misery."

But can we return to the premise that you can expect long-term planning from our Legislature? While the freeze eschews the exhaustive look into programs, it forces the issue by starving the bureaucracy. Eventually, the bureaucracy will be forced to make those decisions on their own.

As a recent Beloit editorial noted, "To control the expansion of government, drain its lifeblood - money. Government cannot solve every problem. Nor are human beings perfectible . . . the only way to slow the growth of government is to deny it money . Force the decisions. And force all of us to take more responsibility for ourselves."

As an old college professor once said, "There are no solutions, only intelligent choices."

Remember that as you ponder the freeze proposal. Along the continuum of choices, the freeze may seem as intelligent as anything. Science is now testing new drugs that beat cancer by starving a tumors blood supply. If over-spending is a cancer upon government, perhaps a freeze is a step toward good health.

*Richard Parins, President*

**The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION  
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government**

## Relax and Let Free Enterprise Work.

By Curt Leonard, Executive Vice President, The James Madison Institute.

Winston Churchill once said, "No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worse form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Arguably, the worst thing about democracy is that elected leaders tend to believe they are responsible for a lot more than they really are.

Like the little boy on his first plane trip "helping" by flapping his arms as the 747 begins to ascend, legislators often seem to believe that somehow they run the economy and solve lots of problems. In reality, government tends to muck up everything it touches. If a legislator is busy, it should be because he or she is busy repealing current laws and getting the state out of the people's business.

When a freshman legislator arrives at the Capitol, there is nothing about the building that encourages reticence or inertia. Extremely bright, full-time staff wander the building looking for something to do, copiers are humming and ready to go, boxes of unused paper are just begging for statues to be scratched all over them, and there are enough staplers and paper clips to keep an administrative assistant busy for generations. The entire building begs for the inhabitants to do something. The recently elected legislator also just went through a gauntlet to win office. Having spent tens, even hundreds of thousands of dollars to win the office-money raised from friends, neighbors, community leaders, and far-flung associations and businesses-the legislator has an incredible compulsion to justify his or her recent anointing.

To strengthen the legislator's compulsion, an entire subterranean network of people screeches for the legislator's help. While the regular Joe is happy that the traffic lights work as he drives into work in the morning, others are holding press conferences, writing emails, picketing, snarling on the local news, and writing guest columns in the local newspaper demanding more state dollars, state programs and state laws. The pressure to spend, the pressure to alleviate problems, and the pressure to skid towards good old-fashioned socialism is almost too much to bear.

The problem is that all the legislator really brings to the Capitol is a parking card, a Rolodex, a briefcase, and maybe some breath mints. The legislator does not load up a Ryder truck with billions of dollars and drive to work. He or she must acquire other people's money through taxes or fees in order to answer the endless demands for assistance.

Once legislators really understand that they can tax people, get money, and then spend it-getting accolades from the local editorial board, heartfelt thank-you notes and little "Legislator of the Year" plaques-spending even more is almost too great a temptation to resist. The most perverse and beautiful part of the whole exchange is the immediacy of the transaction. A legislator can raise a tax, pull in the money and spin it back out the Capitol door within months, funding a community recreation center or subsidizing a local fishing hole to the satisfaction of thousands. The Appropriations Chairman always has the most plaques.

This immediate, political buzz also destroys sound tax policy and has been the undoing of a dozen state budgets this fiscal year and whole national economies throughout the globe. The politics of instant gratification must be resisted.

Instead of instant gratification, instead of the buzz, a state legislature must relax and allow free enterprise to do its thing. While "business cycles" can drive anyone batty, they're real and they must be allowed to wax and wane through the months and years. The problem with this Zen approach to tax policy is that there is a lag. The results are not immediate. Instead of raising tax dollars and riding to the res-

cue, the legislature must weed out bad taxes or simply stay the course, doing nothing but naming a new state pie or state lizard.

An individual legislator must remember that the elixir for all that ills is economic growth. Economic growth is spurred by low taxes, limited regulation, equitable justice, and the ability to raise capital.

Here's a primer that even the boy flapping his arms on the Boeing could understand:

### **DO A FEW THINGS...**

**KEEP ALL TAXES LOW.** According to an American Legislative Exchange Council study, the 10 lowest taxing states of the 1990s enjoyed the greatest economic growth, greatest state revenue growth, and are currently on better fiscal footing than the 10 highest taxing states. *Taxes always discourage the taxable activity.* The state should encourage saving and investing. The people who save and invest already pay more than their fair share in other productive and currently taxed economic activity. The truly well-off have the resources to move their investments out of a state in a timely manner to avoid taxes. This punishes those who save and invest but do not have the connections to move their money out-of-state.

**SAVE A LITTLE.** Since business cycles are as predictable as summer thunderstorms, the legislature should vow to never again spend everything it can during good times. That way, when times are not so good, instead of taxing the state into oblivion, legislators will have some revenue to get through. The Book of Proverbs has some things to say about the ant storing food for the winter. It's good advice.

**REFORM MEDICAID.** Medicaid is a disaster. When the economy bounces back this fall and legislators are all amazed by this newfound revenue, they shouldn't spend it on Medicaid without making changes. The system needs to be reformed. According to the U.S. Government Accounting Office, by 2025 Medicaid will bankrupt all the states if no substantive changes are made to its current administration.

**REMEMBER THAT BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IS A GOOD THING.** New business development brings new jobs and new money which is spread throughout our economy. They should not be treated strictly as a source of tax revenue, or a drain on public facilities. Population growth generally brings wealth. It's only in countries where private property is not secured or legally protected by the courts that population growth is a burden.

**THEN DO NOTHING.** The sad truth is if a legislature stays the course and resists the temptation to raid the taxpayers' pocketbooks in order to subsidize other taxpayers who want things, no new plaques will be placed on their office walls when the economy bounces back. Legislators should leave spaces on their walls and when the good times begin to roll again, make plaques inscribed with the following: "Little else is requisite to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest barbarism but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice; all the rest being brought about by the natural course of things." Adam Smith wrote this, and today would probably also advise the legislature to install hammocks in their offices, to relax, and maybe enjoy a good dinner on a lobbyist's credit card. The free enterprise system will do the rest. It's happened before and it will happen again.

This article was originally written to apply to Florida's budget which has problems similar to Wisconsin's and has been modified to apply to Wisconsin. The James Madison Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit, organization. Contact them at <http://www.jamesmadison.org>. Furnished by TNI

**Made in America?** *Regarding job layoffs and downsizing in the USA.*

Joe Smith started the day early, having set his alarm clock (MADE IN JAPAN) for 6 am. While his coffeepot (MADE IN CHINA) was perking, he shaved with his electric razor (MADE IN HONG KONG). He put on a dress shirt (MADE IN SRI LANKA), designer jeans (MADE IN SINGAPORE), and tennis shoes (MADE IN KOREA). After cooking breakfast in his new electric skillet (MADE IN INDIA), He sat down with his calculator (MADE IN MEXICO), to see how much he could spend today. After setting his watch (MADE IN TAIWAN), to the radio (MADE IN INDIA), he got in his car (MADE IN GERMANY), and continued his search for a good paying AMERICAN JOB !!! At the end of yet another discouraging and fruitless day, Joe decided to relax for a while. He put on his sandals (MADE IN BRAZIL), poured himself a glass of wine (MADE IN FRANCE), and turned on his TV (MADE IN INDONESIA), and wondered why he can't find a good paying job (in AMERICA) !!!

**From the Internet.**

**How much is a billion?**

A billion can be a difficult number to comprehend, and some of us and our elected officials get the terms million and billion twisted around. One advertising agency did a good job of putting that figure into perspective in one of their releases.

*A billion seconds ago it was 1959.*

*A billion minutes ago Jesus was on Earth.*

*A billion hours ago our ancestors were living in the Stone Age.*

*A billion dollars ago was only 8 hours and 20 minutes ago, at the rate Washington spends it!*

"If pro is the opposite of con, then what is the opposite of progress? Congress." . . . **Sign in U. S. House of Representatives restroom.**

"Those who give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

**The Property Tax Freeze Proposal.** **By Rep. Frank Lasee**

Today is a great day in Wisconsin. The Assembly majority has endorsed and forwarded a plan to freeze property taxes for two years. Wisconsin taxpayers need this break.

In its current form, Governor Doyle's budget would force a nearly 10% increase in local property taxes – not at all what any of us intended, least of all the Governor himself. Consider what he said during his budget address, on February 18: "Wisconsin's families can't afford more property taxes any more than they can handle more income or sales taxes."

I've had my disagreements with Governor Doyle, both during his campaign and since, but on taxes, the Governor is right on. Wisconsin citizens can't afford more taxes – not on any level.

Property taxes are particularly bad, because there's nothing a property owner can do, short of selling, to avoid them. Income taxes are tied to income – they don't rise faster than your income, until you hit a higher bracket. Sales taxes are tied to behavior – if the price is too high, you don't make the purchase.

But property values keep going up, and the taxes go along with them. If the economy hits a recession, property taxes keep going up. Lose your job, they keep going up. Have another child, they keep going up. Retire and live on a fixed income, and they keep going up.

The freeze proposal requires all local taxing jurisdictions – counties, municipalities, school districts, and technical schools – to levy the same number of dollars next year, and the year after, that they levied this year.

This differs from the levy cap that already exists on counties: that's a cap on the tax rate. Under that cap, if your property values rise, so do your taxes, even if the rate remains the same.

This proposal caps the dollars local governments can levy, ad-

justed for new construction. If new construction adds 2% to the local property tax base, then the levy can also grow 2%, but each individual property tax bill will fall.

A local government can also exceed the levy if its citizens say so through a referendum. This places the power to tax directly in the hands of those who will have to pay the tax. The referendum has worked for school districts for 10 years: a decade after school revenue caps, with the referendum, were put in place, Wisconsin still ranks in the top ten nationally in spending per student and academic achievement.

So the taxpayers should be as happy as I am. I've worked for years on spending cap proposals, and I'm hopeful that this is a real first step forward toward permanent spending constraints on both state and local government.

Who won't like this? Local government officials. Get ready: tomorrow, the news will be packed with ominous predictions of weed-infested roads, boarded-up windows at the local library, and chaos in the cities as police and firefighters are laid off.

But if anything, local government should welcome this news: local governments have long complained about the mandates placed on them by the state. This will force the state to work with local governments, instead of shifting more and more spending onto them.

Even better – capping property tax levies will keep the pressure on government – both state and local – to continue finding ways to make government more efficient. We've got to keep that pressure on: once it's off, government will revert back to the irresponsible spending that helped get us into the deficit in the first place.

I'm hopeful that my colleagues in the Senate will see the logic in this proposal, and that they'll endorse it. I'm confident it will reach the Governor's desk, taking him at his word, I hope the Governor will sign it.

**Rep. Frank G. Lasee,**

## PROPOSED "VILLAGE HALL" IN ALLOUEZ COULD BE COSTLY.

The property tax base in the Village of Allouez is largely composed of occupant owned single family residences. There is a relatively small amount of commercial property, with about a third of the land tax exempt in the form of cemeteries, religious and state holdings. In other words, homeowners pay the bills. Through the years the Village board has maintained a reputation for providing good, no-frills, government services at an acceptable cost to these taxpayers and residents have been well satisfied.

As with many area communities, a large percentage of the population is retired on limited incomes, and who have been living in the same residences for many years. Property taxes are one of the largest annual expenses for many residents, and seem to be taking a larger proportion of their disposable income each year. They rose 6.1% for Allouez last year. The sluggish economy is in some way a concern for all of us.

The State of Wisconsin is struggling with a huge budget deficit, with reductions in state aids and shared revenues already causing cutbacks on the local level. Despite what we are told from Madison, this could possibly result in sizable property tax increases to support local school, county, and municipal spending programs, without initiating additional spending projects.

At this time, however, the Allouez Village Board is proceeding on plans to construct a new Village Hall/Public Works complex, with an estimated price tag of \$4.5 to \$7 million. Financing for 20 years at 5% could add another 55% to the cost. The present village hall is located in a renovated burial vault factory, and has been well documented to need extensive repairs. The problem is not whether new facilities are needed, or if remodeling and repairing the present buildings would be practical. The question is more a matter of the proposed high total cost and proceeding when the economy is down.

As we understand, the original intent was to build on land now used as a park, on a main road about 4 blocks from

the present facility. This land was originally intended for a public school and has been owned by the village for many years.

Construction at this site could still leave ample green space and playground to serve as a park. A softball diamond could be located in one of the other village parks with no loss of playing space. In other words, a suitable location is available and waiting with very little additional cost to taxpayers.

In the meantime, the village board has started condemnation proceedings on a 29 acre parcel of land which is about 3 blocks to the south of this site. It is estimated the cost could exceed \$1,000,000. This is far more land than needed for the project, and includes lowland not suitable for development. At present, this land could be used for apartment or residential development which could add \$10-\$18 million to the tax base, and in effect lower or at least help stabilize the property taxes paid by other village residents.

The population of Allouez has stabilized at about 15,000, (which includes prison inmates and nursing home residents.) This is because there is virtually no vacant land remaining for development, residential or commercial. The significance of this is that in the future there will be little opportunity to increase the assessed valuation of the village to spread the property tax burden. Also, the need for additional community services should also have stabilized, minimizing the need for expanded village office and personnel facilities. DNR regulations concerning storm water runoff, and the cost of disposing of the old property which may have contaminated soil are expense factors which will also have to be addressed in regards to cost.

We realize that the cost of construction has gone up considerably in recent years. Nonetheless the proposed cost seems extremely high, even with a new public works facility.

It appears we are witnessing a scenario that has been played many times in the past. First, a need for a

new public facility is brought forth and minimal requirements are established to gain support. Once the ball starts rolling, enhancements are added to make sure all those supporting the facility are rewarded. Architects are asked to prepare proposals and cost estimates, and if further convincing is necessary, consultants are retained to reinforce and justify the project. Past history has shown that architects for public buildings such as schools, jails, and even football stadiums do their work with little regard for the taxpayers paying the bills.

Based on a final cost of \$6,000,000 (without financing), this project would represent a cost of about \$400 for each resident of Allouez. Estimates for the property tax to pay for range from \$47 to \$90 per \$100,000 of valuation over 20 years, depending on financing and other factors. You do the math.

We can agree with the village board that a new facility is needed. The question is the size, cost and timing. We elect our village officials to make prudent decisions on such matters, but in the recent spring elections, did any of the candidates seeking reelection even mention they were supporting this huge expenditure? They spoke of open government and keeping taxes low. Plans for a new village hall have been proceeding rather quietly. At a board meeting May 21, 2002, a motion to put this to a referendum vote was defeated because, in the words of the chairman, "a referendum held (*about 40 years previous*) to build a new high school was voted down, and we couldn't afford another no vote."

**Are other options being considered?** If the village board is truly concerned with providing improved facilities at a minimum cost to taxpayers, perhaps other options are available for consideration. For example, there is a vacant church property directly across the street from the park being considered, consisting of an adequate sized building in good repair, a large parking lot, and plenty of adjacent land for expansion or the public works facility. The needs of the village could easily be accommodated.

ALLOUEZ – Continued.

It would seem that a prudent approach would be to #1-Find out what

will happen to property taxes after the state budget is finalized before doing anything. #2-Make sure all options are on the table and give consideration to the cost and impact on property taxpayers of all options. DNR imposed restrictions may serve a purpose, but is it their intent to add significant, and perhaps unnecessary cost to property taxpayers. #3- Completely reconsider using the available village property, or repairing and remodeling the present facility. #4-Scale the plans back to what is **needed** for a village hall rather than what is **wanted**. #5-Possibly remodel and expand the public works facility at their present location. #6-Have the courtesy to allow village taxpayers approve this expenditure in a referendum. If it is not approved, any consequences will soon be apparent. It is always possible to alter and remodel in the future if necessary. If our elected officials are truly convinced they are doing the right thing for you with taxpayers money, they should be able to convince the taxpayers who elected them to agree. If you are concerned with the amount of taxes you pay, you have to know what your elected officials are doing.  
**Jim Frink**

### National Debt Update.

On June 2, 2003, the National Debt stood at \$6,549,146,023,763. This represents an increase of over \$135 billion since the total we reported on the first of May. Adjustments are made in the total for government receipts, as well as expenditures. We don't know, however, if President Bush's Tax Cut has been factored in.

While the National Debt Clock shows about \$6.5 trillion, some analysts from the government claim it could be as high as **\$44 trillion**, including Social Security benefits payable.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
**www.BCTaxpayers.Org**

### Former BCTA President Frank Bennett Recognized.

Past president Frank Bennett was presented with a plaque at the May 15, membership meeting which read: *"To Frank S. Bennett, Award of Appreciation. Your dedication and professionalism as president of the BCTA is appreciated by your fellow Brown County Taxpayers Association Members. 1996-2002."*

We are sure that everyone will agree that Frank did an outstanding job as BCTA president, and sincerely hope that he will find the time to attend meetings and remain active.

BCTA President Richard Parins presents recognition to past president Frank S. Bennett.

**Good job, well done.**

### Employee Benefits are 20% of School Operating Costs.

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance reports that 20.4% of K-12 school operating costs in Wisconsin goes to pay employee benefits. Salaries accounted for 50.5% and the remaining 29.1% was for other school related expenses. Employee benefits equal 40% of the amount spent for salaries. This went for health and other insurance, retirement, and social security taxes. Many school districts apparently pay close to 100% of retirement contributions while state law requires public employees to pay half of their contributions. *(Many private employers consider sick pay, holiday pay, and vacation pay as benefits but apparently this is considered as salary by school districts.)*

The Green Bay School District, with a 2001-02 budget of \$156.8 million, reported \$79.7 million, or 50.8% of their budget was spent on salaries, while \$33.8 million, or 21.5% went for benefits. This was slightly above the state average. Health insurance cost \$12.6 million during the year. **Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance- May 23, " FOCUS."**

### FIXING SHARED REVENUE.

One of the strengths of our Assembly team is the diversity of experience our members bring to their work here in the legislature. That strength was never more clearly in evidence than this week when four of our members who were former local officials announced a comprehensive reform of the state's shared revenue system. These officials introduced a shared revenue plan that:

- (a) Puts local police, fire and emergency services first in line for limited state funds,
- (b) Replaces the highly politicized version of the shared revenue formula proposed by Governor Doyle in his budget with a fair and equitable distribution formula, and
- (c) Maintains the overall level of shared revenue proposed by Governor Doyle with no additional cuts.

The Doyle shared revenue plan punishes town government, while our assembly plan applies the shared revenue formula fairly across the board to cities, villages and towns.

The Governor's shared revenue plan politicizes shared revenue by targeting state aid to Democrat districts. - The assembly plan applies the shared revenue fairly and without regard to partisan politics.

Gov. Doyle's plan gives no priority for local police and fire services. - The assembly plan gives police and fire services first draw on state funds.

Under his plan, some municipalities saw a complete elimination of state aid, while the assembly plan guarantees that no municipality would have its aid reduced by more than 13 percent.

Under our assembly proposal, 70 percent of the municipalities will fare better than under the Governor's plan. I am extremely proud of the fine work my colleagues have put in to develop this important reform. **Assembly Speaker Rep. John Gard, From May 30, Speakers Report.**

## THINGS THAT MAKE US WONDER.

Governor Doyle has signed contracts giving 35,000 state employees pay increases which "had been delayed" due to "budget problems." They were made retroactive to June 30, 2001, which carries an additional price tag of \$77 million. Most of these contracts expire as of June 30, 2003, so they are already up for negotiation and renewal. We have no problem with paying state workers fair wages assuming the job is necessary to Wisconsin citizens and the pay and benefits are somewhat relative to the private sector. Our question is, if the salaries and benefits were made retroactive to 2001, was this really the "First raise in last 2 years" as stated in our newspaper headlines?

Now that incumbents and their potential opponents are gearing up, and seeking financing for the 2004 elections, do you seriously believe that any meaningful campaign financing reform legislation, either on the state or national level will be enacted beforehand? Neither do we.

On that subject, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reported on May 4, that the Ho-Chunk tribe, one of the tribes to negotiate new unlimited gaming compacts with Gov. Doyle, had an exclusive clause included that if other tribes open new casinos which cause a "substantial reduction" to Ho-Chunks profits, they would have to reimburse Ho-Chunk for its loss of business. In other words, profit protection. It was also reported that the Ho-Chunk tribe spent \$500,000 to help Doyle's election campaign.

~~Motorcyclists in Wisconsin~~ are allowed to wear safety helmets at their "own option," so as not to infringe on their rights of "freedom to choose." The same doesn't apply to automobiles, however. Seat belt use is mandated with applicable fines and penalties for non-compliance. While it has been fairly well documented that seat belt use does save injuries and lives, many people still don't use them. Perhaps motorcyclists could set a better example. Also, maybe some-

day someone will develop a better, easier way to fasten small children in automobiles.

~~On a similar subject, lowering~~ the blood alcohol percentage to .08 % has been a hot topic. Driving under the influence is inexcusable, but there are valid arguments on both sides of the question. One big argument seems to be a fear of losing \$9million in federal highway funds. Is this a fair exchange for the loss of freedom on responsible citizens? This is a small amount considering the Governor is considering transferring \$500 million of money we have already spent from the highway fund for general purpose spending. Do we want roadblocks around Lambeau Field after Packer games or our new entertainment districts to check for .08% compliance. The bottom line is reducing accidents caused by drunken drivers, and we are sure most of them are well over the limit regardless of the law.

The Chambers of Commerce from Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, Green Bay and the Fox Cities are joining to promote the entire area, which should be beneficial to all of us. They have called for "absolutely no increases or expansion of the sales tax," on which they apparently agree is a hindrance to business development. So far they have all been successful in preventing additional sales taxes with the exception of Brown County which already has a .5% sales tax which was heavily supported by the local chamber to pay for Lambeau Field renovations.

A semi-serious suggestion has ~~been floated in Congress to move the~~ due date for federal income taxes from April 15, to the first Monday in November, the day before national elections for Congress and the President. The idea is that you would be more aware of the taxes you pay when you cast your ballot. While delaying filing your income taxes from April to November may not be a practical idea, making the date you pay your local property taxes coincide more with our local, state and county elections

Could be something to think about.

Governor Doyle has signed into ~~law a change moving the Wisconsin~~ Presidential primary election to the same day as our regular spring primary. We had been holding it in April coinciding with the general election, and by that time the rest of the country had decided on a candidate. While this change was probably motivated by the national publicity brought by these early primaries, we observe that recent presidential campaigns seem to have become more of a popularity contest than to select the most qualified leader for our country. Whatever happened to the "smoke filled rooms" they used to have at political conventions?

One wonders what the shape of ~~the economy of Wisconsin will be 15-20~~ years from now. First, we have to get the state government to live within its means and encourage rather than discourage business and industrial development. Presently, there are few signs of encouragement. The paper industry which has driven this part of the state is showing signs of weakness, with plant closings and downsizing almost a daily occurrence. Our dairy industry is no longer #1 in the nation, and other food producers are just about all gone. Heavy equipment and other hard goods manufacturers no longer provide lifetime employment. The list goes on. Many of these industries depend on farms and smaller suppliers for their production, and these suffer along with the merchants and services who benefit from the employees of these industries.

Fingers point at many causes, including cheaper labor elsewhere in the USA or foreign countries, changing markets, competition, and the economy in general. Always at the top of the list is excessive environmental regulations, high labor costs, and the high taxes in general imposed in Wisconsin. Somehow it seems local leaders place more emphasis on diverting resources towards more "entertainment districts and venues" as the salvation of our economy. These establishments depend heavily on the rest of the economy to support them. It's not the other way around.

A second thought is that perhaps in 20 years, thanks to Governor Doyle, ~~everyone will be able to get rich and live off of their casino winnings.~~

While listening to a news report about banning the word "God" from patriotic songs being sung at public events, my granddaughter asked me, "Why to they write them if you can't sing them?" Good question.

As could be expected, we are being fed a full diet of the problems in the media being caused by proposed state budget cuts. It will make a good excuse for poor government service. Every special interest group from those receiving taxpayer support to those providing it are having their well-publicized say. They all have good publicity people on their payrolls. (At our expense.)

Also, the WEAC has been running a series of radio commercials critical of proposed shared revenue cutbacks to balance the state budget. They urge citizens to call their representatives to protest on their behalf, as if their union members were our only concern. It would be interesting to hear their proposal: assuming they have a plan to keep everyone happy without socking it to the property taxpayer.

As usual, lots of things in the news to wonder about. JF

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.

## May Meeting Notes. Superintendent Nerad Addresses BCTA.

Monthly BCTA meeting held May 15, 2003, at the *Glory Years*.

Green Bay School Superintendent Dan Nerad spoke about present and future school funding issues.. He began by explaining that the Green bay School District is the fourth largest in the state, with 20,300 students. It is a growing district, which helps with state aid based on a three-year rolling average. Minority students make up 33 percent of the student population, ten times the state average. Free and reduced lunches are provided to 38 percent of the students.

A looming issue is the new federal law requiring 100 percent of students to meet standards by the 2012-2013 school year. Failure to comply might put the 6 percent to 7 percent of the district's funding provided by federal aid at risk.

The new state budget with a \$3.2 billion deficit is expected to limit the annual increase in state aid to the district to 5.5 percent instead of the 6-7 percent annual increases it has been receiving. To react, the school district will:

- Try to make spending reductions.
- Use remaining dollars from the 2003 school year.
- Use dollars from the permanent

fund balance.

The June Board of Education meeting will identify permanent reductions for the future.

Mr. Nerad stated that we are facing a teacher shortage in the future. He also noted that the district had only two-thirds of the normal number of teacher retirements this year, probably due to the economy. Some construction is possible as Preble High School has 2,200 students in a facility designed for 2,000 and East High School is only 100 students under capacity.

Former BCTA President Frank Bennett was presented with a plaque honoring him for six years of service as president of the Brown County Taxpayers Association

by current BCTA President Richard Parins.

The Brown County Sheriff's non-budget request for ten weeks of training at the FBI Academy was discussed. Concerns were expressed that Sheriff's Department external training dollars might be focused on senior members of the department and not allocated on a merit system to promising younger officers to provide the greatest long term benefits to Brown County citizens.

The next BCTA meeting will be Thursday, June 19, 2003. Details on the

Green Bay School Supt. Dan Nerad addresses BCTA membership.

questions, or would like to help, please call Jim Frink at 336-6410, or E-Mail at Frink@ExecPC.com. Thank you.

### Contribute To The Tax Times.

No, we are not asking for more money. We would, however, welcome material suitable for publication, and extend an invitation to our local and state elected officials, BCTA members, and others with a message regarding the taxes we pay who wants to speak out. We try to put out an interesting and informative publication each month, and present items and views not necessarily found in the daily papers. If you have any suggestions,

"Letting the cat out of the bag is a whole lot easier than putting it back in."  
... Will Rogers

"Where is the politician who has not promised to fight to the death for lower taxes – and has not proceeded to vote for the very spending projects that make tax cuts impossible."  
... Barry Goldwater

# The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association  
P. O. Box 684  
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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## Inside This Issue.

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Things That Make Us Wonder.  
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## The TAX TIMES - June, 2003

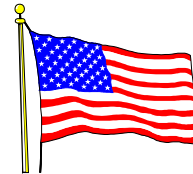
### BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule. (Mark Your Calendars.)

- Thursday - June 19, 2003. BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
**GLORY YEARS. 12:00 Noon.**  
Discussion of State Budget and local impacts.
- Thursday - July 17, 2003. BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
**GLORY YEARS. 12:00 Noon.**  
Program to be announced.
- Thursday - August 21, 2003. BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
**GLORY YEARS. 12:00 Noon.**  
Program to be announced.

BCTA Monthly meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at the  
**GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St., Green Bay.**

Cost - \$6.50 per meeting – includes tax & tip. Payable at meeting.

All members of the BCTA, Their guests, and other interested parties are  
cordially invited to attend and participate in these open meetings.



**June,  
2003**

"I hope we never live to see the day  
when a thing is as bad as some of  
our newspapers make it."

. . . Will Rogers

"A government which robs Peter to  
pay Paul can always depend on the  
support of Paul."

. . . George Bernard Shaw

### **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**  
for Details.