
◆ The TAX TIMES ◆

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Newsletter of the Brown County Taxpayers Association

July, 2006

We are a nation of immigrants, but ...

Once upon a time, there was a small contractor who couldn't find any American tradesman who would work his small jobs, so he had to hire illegal aliens to get his small jobs done. The illegals were largely hard-working, God-fearing, family-loving men who had snuck into American for its vast opportunities - opportunities which many Americans saw as dreary chores.

The contractor didn't think too much about it, because the illegal pool was relatively small, nothing to worry about, aside from the downward trend in American work ethic.

But before long, there were illegal alien labor pools hanging around the 7-11s and even residential homeowners could drop by and "hire a Mexican" for peanuts to do their yard work. "Hire a Mexican" became a joke solution to any domestic chore you didn't want to be bothered with.

Rather golf than mow your lawn? "Hire a Mexican."

I used to hear this daily. Until all those presidential nominees started getting shot down for Latino nannies they "forgot" to pay Social Security taxes for. I believe Democrat attorney general nominees Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood were among the first and Republican Homeland Security nominee Bernard Kerik among the latest -- and the illegal nanny was the least of his nomination's detriments.

This sneaky behavior peeved me, among the wealthiest and most privileged members of our society, while hump-busting, law-abiding middle Americans were paying \$10 and more per hour for American college students.

Even a free-market guy like me gets a little burned up about stuff like this. Latinos are a growing pool of homeowners and economic stakeholders across America. They contribute to society, pay taxes for benefits they can never legal collect and suppress prices for goods and services Americans crave. And they actually save money, something most Americans do not. They planned their way into America and maintain a disciplined plan to succeed here. They have no entitlement complexes.

But law and order must be re-established! Immigrants must come in through the front door, sign the register and jump all the hoops, like our forefathers and mothers did. Immigrants must respect the laws and traditions of the country they invaded.

I get really cranked when the giant tandem-axle truck next to me at Walmart has the Mexican flag hanging on the windshield. We live in the USA! My neighbors of various foreign extractions do not fly the German or Belgian or Swedish or Somalian flags.

Our border guards, our front-line, first-responder diplomats, welcomed you with their conveniently turned backs. Illegals should appreciate the quasi-official nudge-wink stamp of approval. They should be American or be gone.

I don't want to sound harsh or unappreciative of the strong Latino contributions and influence on America. Spanish is practically our second language, and that's a good thing, a step away from our grandiose global self-image. We are not out to remake the world in our image, just to remain a leader in fostering global Democracy.

A Democracy that adheres to the rule of law, including immigration.

Richard Parins – President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government

Fire Prevention as A Taxpayer Issue.

At the May 18, BCTA meeting, Green Bay Fire Chief Jeff Stauber gave an overview of the size and responsibilities of his department. They also consume a good portion of the city's annual budget. One way to offset demands for increased fire department spending is through effective fire prevention measures, thereby lowering the dollar loss ratio from fire. It is also possible to lower the fire insurance expense for business establishments and individuals.

Chief Stauber offered the following "Five E's of Fire Prevention" as a guide.

An ounce of prevention...

When you get down to basics, fire departments are risk management agencies. The administrators and managers are constantly looking at the risks the community faces, not just from fire, but also from flood, severe weather, building collapse, hazardous materials, and in the past several years, the risk of terrorist attack. If the department provides emergency medical services, the risks of injury and illness are also assessed.

To really address the issue of the cost of providing services, the Green Bay Fire Department is shifting from a response-oriented agency to a prevention-oriented agency. Using the concepts of the U.S. Fire Administration's Community Risk Reduction model, the department uses the "five E's" of risk reduction. Aggressively promoting these concepts should hold in check the costs of providing services, if not reducing the costs over time.

The five E's include **Engineering**, fire and safety code **Enforcement**, Public **Education**, **Economic incentive**, and finally, if all else fails, **Emergency response**.

Engineering includes designing, building, and when necessary retrofitting buildings with fire safety systems that detect fires, warn occupants, alert firefighters, and either contain or extinguish fires prior to fire department arrival. Working smoke alarms and fire sprinkler systems are the two very important engineering features in a fire safe building. It is highly un-

likely any death will occur in a sprinkled building, and a working smoke alarm will usually alert the occupants to a fire allowing them time to escape danger.

Enforcement is the regular inspection of buildings and grounds by trained inspectors. Of primary importance is keeping paths of egress clear of obstructions and maintaining existing detection and suppression systems in working order.

Education is presenting safety and risk reduction information to those groups that are most vulnerable to injury and death. Nationwide this includes the very young, the seniors, and those of lower socioeconomic status. Local fire statistics shows these are also our target groups for fire safety education efforts.

Economic incentive is the creation of laws and rules that make fire safety improvements to structures and buildings affordable and attractive to owners and developers. Building a structure with sprinklers, even though they're not required by code, will greatly reduce the chance that firefighters will ever be needed to extinguish a fire. This, in turn, should reduce the number of fire stations, apparatus, and personnel that are needed over a period of time. Economic incentives may come in the form of a property tax reduction, decreased time span for depreciation of the system cost, or a reduction in alarm or system permit fees charged by a community.

Emergency response is the capability to respond and effectively suppress the fire if it does occur. Not having the capability to extinguish fires when they're small will result in larger dollar losses, loss of life, and increase the insurance company payouts to policyholders and, ultimately, the premiums charged to property owners in the community.

The reduction in risk will not occur overnight, but may instead take years to be seen by the taxpayer. As the loss history of the community decreases, the taxpayer will not only see a reduction in property taxes, but should also see a reduction in fire insurance premiums. The switch from a response-oriented to a prevention-oriented agency is a huge paradigm shift. It will not be easy for firefighters or elected officials, but will pay dividends in the long run.

...is worth a pound of cure.

Green Bay Fire Chief Jeffrey Stauber.

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.

National Debt Update.

As of the end of June, the U.S. national debt was \$8,358,076,992,226.00. This amounts to \$27,935.33 for every US citizen.

Maybe if the estimated 10 million illegal aliens living in our midst were counted as citizens we each wouldn't owe as much.

If Congress didn't spend so much money we wouldn't owe as much either. They recently denied the President the line-item veto which would have enabled him to eliminate or cut spending proposals such as unnecessary "Pork Barrel Spending." We note that Gov. Doyle has this line-item veto power but has actually used it to increase spending by reinstating items previously eliminated.

"We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the sermon on the mount. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without compassion. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."

. . . Omar Bradley

"Postal Service raises price of first class stamp to \$ 17.89 and reduces mail delivery service to Wednesdays only." . . . 2036 News Headline

"Advertisements contain the only truths to relied on in a newspaper."

. . . Thomas Jefferson

Battle to Empower Wisconsin Taxpayers Continues.

After the State Senate failed to pass any version of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (the week after the Assembly passed a pretend effort) many people in the state were left wondering if their efforts to tame the growth in government spending and in their taxes will ever bear fruit.

As it is often said, "We may have lost the battle, but we will win the war" (provided we continue to fight the war). In Wisconsin, 70 percent of the people want a constitutional check on our government, so that we the bill payers will be consulted when major government spending and taxing decisions are made. The will of the people over the long term will not be denied.

The present tax and spending situation in our state cannot stand. We cannot afford to ignore the changing world around us.

Wisconsin is in danger of becoming the next Mississippi - a state with mainly middle to lower income people, where the ever increasing demand for services (and the taxes that support them) outpaces the ability of the citizens to pay for those services. This is already taking place in our state. The long term trends are happening. Believe it or not, people (not always, but often in general) make decisions in their own best interest.

According to the non-partisan *Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance*, Wisconsin lost \$4.6 billion in net worth and \$450 million in net income between 1995 and 2000 due to people moving out of the state. Conversely, our population saw a net increase due to migration. This in migration was mainly middle and lower middle income families and individuals.

The problem is that most of the people moving in were likely to be middle or lower income without college degrees, while those moving out were more likely to be higher income - business owners, investors, people who create jobs, pay high taxes and often give their money to good community causes.

Wisconsin has fewer wealthy people than the average state and this situation is getting worse, not better. We provide a high level of government services that are enjoyed by many and have to be paid for mainly by the middle class. Remember, Wisconsin doesn't want to tax the poor like they do in Illinois. We are chasing the rich out with our high taxes on them (as well as the cold winters). This leaves an ever increasing burden on the Wisconsin middle class. When will they start calling it a day in Wisconsin? Or is that already happening? People can do the math and there are other great states to live in.

This is why it is more important than ever for those of us who want more say in our government and a lower more affordable tax burden, to realize that the victory we are fighting for isn't going to be easy or happen over night. I have been at this for more than a dozen years.

The spending lobby is alive and well. It is well entrenched. It has hundreds of thousands of government paid foot soldiers and it is well funded. However, it can be beaten.

We have the will of the people on our side. It just isn't going to be easy.

I remain committed to passing a strong Taxpayer Bill of Rights in Wisconsin. If you support the passage of a real Taxpayer Bill of Rights in Wisconsin, don't give up. We need to grow our grassroots effort to put the people in back in charge of our government again and wrestle undue influence from the spending interests.

Rep. Frank G. Lasee

June Meeting Notes.

Monthly BCTA meeting June 15, 2006, at Tilletown Brewing.

State Representative Frank Lasee explained some of the manipulations and causes and of the State of Wisconsin's structural deficit. One billion dollars of school aid money is sent out after July 1, but the school districts must book these funds not later than June 30, before they receive the money. Senior Care is budgeted at \$80 million, but in reality it is a sum sufficient item - that means spend whatever it takes. Annual debt service costs for the Stewardship Fund are now \$60 million. Each year the state spends another \$60 million for more land purchases, removing the value of that land from the tax rolls for future years. That's a classic example of a double-edged sword -- borrowing money to buy land and take it off the tax rolls forever.

After discussing the issue, the board approved a resolution calling upon the Green Bay City Council to approve re-zoning for the proposed East Side Wal-Mart store in order to provide more jobs, improve the local economy, and increase the City of Green Bay's tax base. This resolution was to be communicated to the local media in a press release.

Discussion of the findings of the Virchow Krause audit team and the potential override of the county executive's veto of transferring the 911 Call Center to the Sheriff's Department led to approval of a resolution declaring the BCTA's position. The resolution stated that the BCTA strongly supports maintaining the 911 Call Center under the jurisdiction of the Brown County Executive in order to maintain public accountability and control of expenditures. This resolution was also to be transmitted to the local media in a press release.

The next BCTA meeting will be July 20. The speaker will be Harry Maier, President of the Green Bay redevelopment authority, who will update us on downtown Green Bay progress. Details on last page of this *TAX TIMES*. **Dave Nelson – Secretary**

"I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandment's would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U. S. Congress."

. . . Ronald Reagan

"Many people consider the things which government does for them to be social progress but they consider the things which they do for others to be socialism."

. . . Earl Warren

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.BCTAxpayers.

Congress Considers "Americans With No Abilities Act."

WASHINGTON, DC (AB) - Congress is considering sweeping legislation, which provides new benefits for many Americans. The Americans With No Abilities Act (AWNAA) is being hailed as a major legislation by advocates of the millions of Americans who lack any real skills or ambition.

"Roughly 50 percent of Americans do not possess the competence and drive necessary to carve out a meaningful role for themselves in society," said Barbara Boxer (D) CA. "We can no longer stand by and allow People of Inability to be ridiculed and passed over. With this legislation, employers will no longer be able to grant special favors to a small group of workers, simply because they do a better job, or have some idea of what they are doing."

The President pointed to the success of the US Postal Service, which has a long-standing policy of providing opportunity without regard to performance. Approximately 74 percent of postal employees lack job skills, making this agency the single largest US employer of Persons of Inability.

Private sector industries with good records of nondiscrimination against the inept include retail sales (72%), the airline industry (68%), and home improvement "warehouse" stores (65%) The DMV also has a great record of hiring Persons of Inability. (63%)

Under the Americans With No Abilities Act, more than 25 million "middle man" positions will be created, with important-sounding titles but little real responsibility, thus providing an illusory sense of purpose and performance.

Mandatory non-performance-based raises and promotions will be given, to guarantee upward mobility for even the most unremarkable employees. The legislation provides substantial tax breaks to corporations which maintain a significant level of Persons of Inability in middle positions, and gives a tax credit to small and medium businesses that agree to hire one clueless worker for every two talented hires.

Finally, the AWNA ACT contains tough new measures to make it more difficult to discriminate against the Non-abled, banning discriminatory interview questions such as "Do you have any goals for the future?" or "Do you have any skills or experience which relate to this job?"

'As a Non-abled person, I can't be expected to keep up with people who have something going for them," said Mary Lou Gertz, who lost her position as a lug-nut twister at the GM plant in Flint, MI due to her lack of notable job skills. "This new law should really help people like me." With the passage of this bill, Gertz and millions of other untalented citizens can finally see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Said Senator Ted Kennedy, (D) MA, "It is our duty as lawmakers to provide each and every American citizen, regardless of his or her adequacy, with some sort of space to take up in this great nation."

From the Internet.

The way Congress comes up with crazy ways to spend our money, it is hard to know what to believe and what not to believe. Our apologies for any misunderstanding. **editor**

BCTA Press Release on 911 System.

At its June 15 meeting, the Brown County Taxpayers Association Board of Directors approved a resolution strongly supporting keeping the 911 Communication Center under the jurisdiction of the Brown County Executive. The BCTA believes that it is both practically and legally consistent with the responsibilities of the County Executive's office - not the Sheriff's Department - to be held accountable for the Communication Center's budget. BCTA President Richard Parins summarized the reasoning behind this resolution:

"Most of the Brown County Board seems to be in total ignorance or in complete denial of the Virchow Krause auditors' findings. We must hope they read the report carefully, then stand up and shoulder their responsibility to the citizens of Brown County, and vote to sustain the County Executive's veto of transferring the 911 Communications Center to the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department has a long history of overrunning its budgets. In 2005, for example, the Sheriff overspent his budget by over \$1 million. There appears to be no sense to burying the 911 Communications Center budget in the Sheriff's budget, further shielding it from public scrutiny.

"When County Executive Kelso heard complaints from losing bidders about the process that awarded a \$60,000 contract for a radio communications engineering study to RCC Consultants of Virginia, she requested Administration employees to examine the file for this bid. When Director of Administration Cindy Archer became concerned about the poor documentation in the file, she hired Virchow Krause to audit this contract and report their findings. The auditors' report clearly documented that the 911 center director (Jim Nickel) accepted the RCC engineering study, which fell far short of the contract requirements, with no reduction in payment to compensate for incomplete work. In addition, the auditors found that Mr. Nickel had been communicating with RCC Consultants to steer the next (\$100,000) study to them without competitive bidding.

"Given that members of the Brown County Board were pushing to implement the \$22 million radio system upgrade recommended by the hastily contrived RCC study, we are very fortunate that the County Executive listened to complaints and took proper action to alert her staff to look into the validity of those complaints. Her vigilance has saved taxpayers from being saddled with more debt to pay for a \$22 million radio system proposed with no reasonable alternatives."

This News Release was submitted to local media June 19, 2006.

"Today's political process is nothing more than a street fight between various groups seeking to vote themselves other peoples money." . . . Rep. Ron Paul

May Meeting Notes. Fire Chief Addresses BCTA.

Monthly BCTA meeting May 18, 2006 at the Titledown Brewing Co.

Green Bay Fire Chief Jeff Stauber presented an overview of fire department operations and issues. He has been a firefighter since the age of 18, and joined the Green Bay Fire Department since 1979. He has been chief for 4 1/2 years. The department has seven fire stations strategically located to reduce response time within the 46 square miles of the city. Each station is equipped with a pumper truck. Some equipment is being funded by Homeland Security grants. The department's 2006 budget is about \$18 million without capital expenditures. The department's table of organization lists 198 positions, but the department is funded at 192 positions. The chief explained that it's cheaper to pay overtime than provide medical insurance for more employees. He noted that a video conferencing system has just been installed in all seven fire stations. Video conferencing will reduce training costs by \$30,000 this year and by \$60,000 per year in the future.

Chief Stauber mentioned the recent \$1 million apartment building fire in west Green Bay, observing that the cost of this fire would have been reduced to about \$1,000 of water damage if the building had sprinklers. Federal legislation to standardize sprinkler codes is being proposed. Wisconsin needs a stronger sprinkler code. The chief noted that a "fire-safe" cigarette law is saving lives in New York. Other states, including Wisconsin, have similar legislation in the works.

Mutual aid agreements share aid across municipal boundaries without cost. Chief Stauber explained that capital equipment costs could be reduced countywide if all departments participated in a mutual aid agreement. An article by Chief Stauber regarding the importance and methods of fire prevention appears on page #2 of this *TAX TIMES*.

County Executive Carol Kelso presented an explanation of the options for the Brown County Mental Health Center. New construction cost estimates range from \$23 million to \$27 million,

compared to \$13 million for renovation. Mrs. Kelso explained that operating costs for each option must be included to determine life-cycle costs for comparison.

Concerns were voiced about the County Board's recent action giving the sheriff a 9 percent salary increase for 2007, raising his pay to \$86,000, with \$2,500 annual increases after 2007. **Dave Nelson – Secretary**

Public must insist on open government.

Citizens may have a right to privacy. Government mostly doesn't! Some government officials continually look for ways to keep government business private, away from the eyes of interested citizens.

That's why it's in the interest of every citizen to make sure that government officials aren't behind-dosed doors. That work has become even more critical at a time when new technology makes both access and secrecy easier to achieve. In fact, not only should citizens be fighting the trend to roll back current open records laws, it's time to demand that the laws be updated to take into account technological developments and new trends.

Citizens of a republic must be able to know what their officials are doing and how much that work is costing taxpayers. Without open government - and the open records and open meetings laws that make open government a reality - there can be no accountability. In a republic government simply disappears. Trust but verify!

It's important to trust public officials. It's far more important to be able to verify that trust. State law should be changed to make it easier and less expensive for citizens to get the information.

That's right. Open records and meetings laws aren't just for journalists. They exist for all citizens to insist on open and honest government

PAUL W. SYLVESTER
President, Concerned Citizens of Fond du Lac.

Things That Make Us Wonder.

The Wisconsin Dept. of Revenue reports that for 2004 only 6% of taxpayers opted to authorize a contribution from their income tax liability for state office elections. Hardly an endorsement of taxpayer supported political campaigns endorsed by some as a way to finance elections. Some reasons are that be accepting these funds candidates are limited to the total amount they can raise and spend. Another may be that contributors prefer to make their own decisions as to who to support. So far nothing has really been done to clean up campaign financing but you can be sure the politicians are watching each other closely on this.

Most Americans seem quite concerned with the problems caused by illegal immigration and would like to see some sensible control over the problem. Apparently the U.S. Senate is not as concerned. One recently proposed bill would have allowed 193 million new immigrants during the next 20 years, adding 60% to our already crowded population. While political power through Congressional reapportionment may be their goal, they seem to forget about the demands on our infrastructure and available resources.

Apparently some people think the Wisconsin tax system is not confusing or expensive enough.

Like other counties in the state trying to balance their budgets, Milwaukee County has trimmed their parks and recreation spending to the minimum. A group representing some of their various attractions has proposed a "cultural sales tax", to provide more revenue. They would extend it to several counties, but the proceeds would all go to Milwaukee, similar to their baseball stadium tax.

While such a plan may be well intended, it could cause a few problems. Besides setting a new precedent for new state taxes, it would create another book-keeping expense for all of the business's involved. Every other county and municipality in the state could use more



THINGS THAT MAKE US WONDER (CONT.) money for this or that purpose and they are not going to collect it and send it elsewhere. The Dept. of Revenue has enough problems keeping present sales taxes straight despite their new \$37 million computer system.

The U.S. Treasury Dept. has found that it costs more to produce pennies and nickels than they are actually worth. While they don't buy much they are useful for making change.

It has been suggested that these coins be discontinued and prices simply be rounded off. Good idea except that sales taxes could cost a lot more. When Europe switched to the Euro, they didn't even bother with a 1/100 Euro coin for making change, which would have been the equivalent of our penny. Retail prices are usually rounded to even numbers rather than the \$9.99 and \$19.99 we use here to make things sound cheaper. Nonetheless they claim inflation has been rising rapidly and they blame the fact that small everyday items cost more as a leading cause.

Summer is always "road closed" season and we learn to live with it; as long as the work proceeds with as little delay and inconvenience as possible. What is difficult to understand however is when 2 or 3 projects in the same area at the same time making it difficult to take detours. We wonder if the people authorizing these projects intentionally coordinate their plans or things just happen that way.

The City of Green Bay will be screening applicants for a new police chief, possibly promoting from within or through a nationwide search. The chief is the man responsible for the performance of his staff in enforcing law enforcement in the city. Drugs, increased traffic problems and an increasingly diversified population make the job more difficult. Taxpayers expect nothing but the best but are reluctant to pay more in return. Applicants from elsewhere may have more training and experience, but not being familiar with the area and politics can prove a handicap. Promoting from within can also present problems. By the

time someone has worked their way through the ranks they are eligible for retirement. Favoritism and respect from co-workers can be problems. The bottom line is the selection of the right person for the job and giving him the proper authority to do the job.

There have been a number of recent fires caused by the careless use of smoking materials (cigarettes). As a result, several innocent families have lost their residences and possessions.

Perhaps in addition to showing proof age smokers should have to show evidence of personal liability insurance when purchasing cigarettes.

The UWGB as well as other UW system campuses say they would like to accommodate more students to meet the demands of the future. The problem is money which they claim is necessary for expanding their facilities and instruction staffs. While this may be true they may have to do a better job of convincing taxpayers and the legislature that their present facilities are being utilized to capacity and not just building monuments to themselves. Also, some assurance that their instruction and support staffs are earning their salaries and benefits.

The Green Bay School District is planning a \$75 million referendum this fall. Included are plans for a new \$63 million high school on the east side plus various renovation and land purchase projects in the district.

Although the price tag seems higher than many of us anticipated, the board is scheduling public meetings on July 10 and 18, and will give the public a chance to comment on their plans.

What most of us are interested in will be the net effect on our property tax bills. The cost of staffing and maintaining the new school, and the cost of financing in addition to the price of the bonds should be clarified. Also, the status of payments due on previous bonding issues, 2000, 1996 and prior should be addressed. In other words, how much of an additional debt burden will this referendum cost the property taxpayers?

The Green Bay City Council has approved the application of Walmart to build a super store on the east side. There were a lot of issues here including traffic and safety, competition with other business, Walmarts employment and social practices, and on and on. What is best for the city was the main factor.

The recent failure of The Taxpayer Protection Amendment (TPA) leaves questions as to the future of spending and taxation in Wisconsin. Already there are estimates of a \$1.6 Billion budget shortage for next year. Our public employees, public school systems and universities, welfare recipients and others are all crying loud and clear for more taxpayer money. The fact that Wisconsin citizens are consistently among the highest taxed in the country makes no difference to them.

The UW System has finally announced it will accept transfer students from the states technical college system. While details and conditions will have to be worked out between the various campuses, this should prove to be a big plus in providing a college education for Wisconsin students.

The Brown County Library has proposed the sale of some historic artifacts placed in their trust to meet the increasing costs of their operations.

While these treasures should possibly on display at the museum, what is to stop them from selling some of their collection to raise money? What next, naming rights for City Hall? It worked for Lambeau Field.

Despite good attendance. the Wisconsin State Fair board claims it losing a couple of million dollars a year. They say they need more taxpayer money to operate. They also have identified areas that are causing the deficit. This sounds more like a management than a taxpayer problem.

President Bush is asking the senate for a line-item veto. This has been requested by previous presidents but congress seems to fear it would cut their authority, especially "Pork barrel spend-

ing. Governor Doyle has this authority and somehow he manages to add rather than cut spending by restoring cuts made by the Legislature prior to sending the budget to him for approval.

Congress and the President recently approved an extension of previous tax cuts which reduce government revenue by \$70 Billion or so annually. While the net effect on the economy may be available, it is the casual way our media reports such news that is questionable. One of our local TV stations trying to cover this story referred to the amount as \$70 Million dollars and even had it written out. No wonder our voters and elected officials are so careless with our tax dollars when the difference between a Million and a Billion are unimportant.

FEMA has discovered at least \$1.6 Billion of emergency aid doled out in the form of debit cards to victims of Hurricane Katrina was spent on items completely unrelated to the intent. . Everything from gambling trips to football tickets. This accounted for about 10% of the total taxpayer money distributed in this fashion. They say they will do better next time.

There have been a number of recent incidents where very sensitive government information has been stolen, often in the form of a computer entrusted to an employee away from his office. This is an unacceptable breach of security and those responsible should be severely punished.

It is commendable that Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have joined to pledge much of their fortunes to the worlds problems. It would be really nice if their efforts helped finance some efforts now paid by taxpayers.

The Wisconsin Towns Association has strongly announced objection to an amendment to the proposed campaign and ethics reform act. This would require **all** candidates for public office in the state to file a rather complex 4-page financial disclosure covering their entire family which would then become public information. This is more than currently

required of a presidential candidate.

We certainly agree that a candidates qualifications, background, honesty and ethics are important but not to the point of discouraging them from seeking office or protecting an incumbent from competition.

Tax credits and other taxpayer provided incentives for business development are nice and make good photo ops for politicians handing them out. Keeping in mind we all help pay for these perks the bottom line is new job and economic creation for the long term good of the community involved.

The Oneida Tribe has placed another 311 acres of land they own in the Town of Hobart, valued at \$9.9 million into tribal trust, meaning they no longer are subject to property taxes. While this is their prerogative, the loss of \$249,088 in property tax revenues will be shared by the town, school districts, County, and NWTC. The town of Hobart can negotiate fees in lieu of taxes but that is difficult for the other jurisdictions. Loss of tax revenue is no different than adding a new expense.

The so-called "GI Bill" offering military veterans financial help in securing an education was possibly one of the best investments made by our government. Times have changed and the cost of a college education has gone through the roof. Gov. Doyle has offered free education at the states schools for veterans which was a noble gesture. Our brave veterans deserve every consideration for their sacrifices. Unfortunately, it comes at a time when our schools are scratching for money and tuition costs for all students has risen dramatically.

The Brown County Board has been considering An elaborate new communication system with a price tag of \$22 Million. This equates to about \$100 for each county resident, or enough to buy everybody a new cellphone. It would seem they could look for a less expensive alternative rather than worry about who is going to run the thing.

After years of debate, studies and controversy, the environmental wizards still do not have a definite or acceptable plan for disposal of the massive amount of contaminated sludge from the bottom of the Fox River. New technology may be available. Presently it will take a huge amount of storage space and will be there forever once it is moved. One question many people ask is can they really remove this material without stirring it up in the river and making things worse than they already are?

The Brown County Board has been considering an elaborate new communication system with a price tag of \$22 Million. This equates to about \$100 for every county resident, enough to buy each of us a new cellphone, (or a lot of other things the county budget can't afford.) It would seem the board should be spending their energy looking for a less expensive alternative rather than worrying about who is going to be responsible for running the thing.

As usual, lots of things to wonder about.

Jim Frink

"Things That Make Us Wonder" consists of taxpayer thoughts that occur to us during the days news events. Some are probably not worth commenting about. Others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of further study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We may try to put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that our perspective of some issues in this column may be contrary to that of some our readers. One of our purposes is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments are always welcome as well as suggestions for items to include in this section of the **"TAX TIMES."**

Alexander Hamilton started the U.S. Treasury with nothing, and that's the closest our country has ever been to being even." . . . **Will Rogers**

"Domestic policy can lose elections. Foreign policy can kill us all."
. . . **John F. Kennedy**

The TAX TIMES

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The TAX TIMES - July, 2006

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule. MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - July 20, 2006. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
TITLETOWN BREWING Co., 2d Floor Meeting Room.
Speaker – Harry Maier, Pres. Green Bay Development Authority
Update on downtown developments.

Thursday - August 17, 2006. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
TITLETOWN BREWING Co., 2d Floor Meeting Room.
Program to be announced.

Thursday - September 21, 2006. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
TITLETOWN BREWING Co., 2d Floor Meeting Room.
Program to be announced.

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at the Tiletown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

Meetings are open to the public.

BCTA Members, guests, and other interested persons are cordially invited to attend and participate in our open discussions.

COST: \$7.00 per meeting – Includes lunch, beverage & tip.
(Payable at meeting.)

Call Jim Frink, 336-6410 for information or to leave message.



**July,
2006**

"I contend that for a nation to try and tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself by the handle."
... Winston Churchill

"Foreign aid might be defined as a transfer of money from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries." ... Douglas Casey

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members are Always
Welcome. Call 336-6410
Write us at P. O. Box 684
or visit our website

www.BCTaxpayers.Org
for Details.