

It's the Spending, Stupid.

"Many of the challenges we face today in Wisconsin can be traced to years of bad decision making in Washington." - Diamond Jim Doyle in this year's State of the State address. This is true in the same way that many of my youthful skinned knees and elbows could be traced to the steepness of the hills on which I skateboarded.

9 Republican and 8 Democrat governors, in their annual sermons, also blamed the feds for various state budget woes. And I am sure they were trading budget frights around the 5-star hotel lounge at the National Governors' Association meeting in Washington, D.C. a few weeks back, like kids around the campfire trying to one-up each other with rumors of hook-handed killers still on the lam roaming the woods.

Doyle had an extra sob story for his fellow guvs; the feds announced a Medicaid rule change that could put a stop to his hospital tax that was intended to wrench more money from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. The bumbling feds, knee-deep in basement water, finally reached for the spigot.

I don't intend to defend the feds. Pres. Bush had trouble finding his veto pen until his duck began hobbling around July 20, 2006. And Congress kept tossing pork on the fryer, like drive-through burger chefs prepping an order for 5,000 BLTs, and failing to give the president more power to trim the fat without sending the whole steak back.

So, yes, Diamond Jim is right, the feds have made many bad decisions. Many, many. Bad, bad. They are not altar boys at St. Fiscal of Prudence. But for him to blame state budget woes on the feds is like me blaming GM for my teenaged inability to buy a 1969 Corvette, or blaming my slim childhood allowance.

Was it Chevrolet's fault that the sleek white 'vette with the red leather interior and bucket seats smelling like you're sitting in a new Rawlings catcher's mitt didn't cost \$750.00? Or was it my parents' fault for not giving me \$200/wk allowance?

Our conservative friends at the Beloit Daily News put it best in their recent editorial titled, "Overspending, or a shortfall? ... HARD CHOICES do not get made. The size of government is not reduced. Programs do not receive less funding. Employee wage and benefit costs continue to go up. And, usually, new programs and new spending schemes are added with each budget cycle ... There is no shortfall in the budgets ... There's a spending problem, as decision-makers refuse to adjust to available revenues and live within their means."

To paraphrase the great American Economist and U. S. Senator from South Carolina, Ernest Hollings, "Too much consuming going on out there," simply substitute consuming with spending.

Richard Parins, President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government

**City Council,
Brown County Board Green Bay Candi-
dates Respond to BCTA Survey on Taxes.**

As we have done in the past, we sent questionnaires to the candidates for the Green Bay City Council asking their commitment not to raise property taxes and offering them an opportunity to comment on issues they felt important.

This year there were fewer contested races than usual, which possibly accounts for the limited response we received. Also, we were unable to process the returns prior to the Feb. 19, primary election. We are listing the responses we received from those who will appear on the April 1, ballot. In the case of contested races in which we only received one response, we are noting this also.

The questions we asked City Council Candidates were.

“I support limiting City of Green Bay spending to growth in population plus growth in inflation percentage (CPI Index). A 2/3 vote of the City Council would be required to exceed this cap.

_____ Yes _____ No

**Would you recommend more or less in the following areas or departments. Your thoughts.
To what extent should the City of Green Bay participate in downtown development. What are your thoughts?**

Questions we asked County Board Candidates were.

I Support Limiting Brown County spending to growth in population percent plus growth of inflation percentage. A 2/3 vote of the County Board would be needed to exceed this cap. _____ Yes _____ No

Would you recommend more or less county spending in the following areas or departments to help Brown County proceed towards a healthy, stable economy in the future?

Do you support privatization of shared services with other areas of government assuming cost savings could be realized? Your comments.

We thank all of the candidates participating in our survey. Their input is useful to us in establishing priorities of items to address as a taxpayer organization in the months to come.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2008.

Be Sure To

VOTE

District Candidate Tax Pledge

Other Comments

District	Candidate	Tax Pledge
1	Michael Hereley	Yes The city has spent enough money downtown. Most of the funded projects have failed.
1	Jerry Wiezbiskie	Yes Growth drives needs for services. Hold departments responsible to demonstrate need for more or less spending. Participation is necessary to proceed with downtown development.
3	Andrew Nicholson	Yes City planning dept. is overloaded. No more give aways in downtown development. City must be protected and benefits assured/.
5	Gary Kriescher	No City should participate very little in downtown development.
6	Shae Sortwell	Yes Proposes property tax freeze. Keep spending stable & limit to basic city services. We spend too much for too little snow plowing. Does not support loans for downtown development.
8	Christopher Wery	No Elect responsible representatives with policy to keep taxes down.
9	Guy Zima	Yes Focus on providing basic services that people pay taxes for. Stop speculating on wasteful downtown projects.
10	Richard Skarazynski	Yes Business needs to be more accountable of their share of development. Taxpayers should not bear the burden of failed projects.
11	John Vanderleest	Yes City departments should be brought into zero based budgeting and start from

The TAX TIMES - March, 2008

Candidates for Brown County Board.

District	Candidate	Tax Pledge	Other Comments
1	Dean Gerondale	Yes	Examine mental health & human services which consume large part of the county budget. Would support privatization.
3	Andrew Nicholson	Yes	County spending high enough already.
7	Bernard Erickson	Yes	Board must be responsible to taxpayers. Could combine some departments. Public safety and court system important to maintain.
9	Michael Iwinski	Yes	Must maintain essential services. Would look for creative ideas to balance budget and improve services.
9	Guy Zima	Yes	Would support more spending on drug enforcement and fraud investigation. Administrative costs could be streamlined. Would support service contracts in social service which have proven to be effective.
10	Partick Evans	--	Difficult to pledge spending control but look at each item. Supports funding for advance as it produces results benefiting county. Would support privatization if saves money.
11	John Vanderleest	Yes	Should investigate all services for privatization.
13	Daniel Bertrand	Yes	Need to hold line on spending critical. Taxpayers should not have to pay for lawsuits, etc. Supports emergency communication center. Privatization does not always work but shared services with other counties could.
13	Norbert Dantine, Jr.	Yes	Difficult to base budget on set amounts. Shared services have worked well in many cases and should be looked at when possible.
17	Elaine Kittell	Yes	County should budget to live within means. Mental health center and roads should be top priority. Needs should have priority over wants.
17	Julie Knier	Yes	County does a good job of controlling expense. Could exceed in emergency. Supports privatization shared services.
18	Thomas Christensen	Yes	Cost saving measures are a must for all units of government.
21	Patrick Wetzel	Yes	Would support privatization. Supports mental hospital but believes some existing programs could be cut.
22	Richard Langan	--	Wants a smarter, safer, healthier Brown County for our children and grandchildren. Will welcome all good ideas from citizens.
23	Richard Schadewald	Yes	I have always support areas of cost savings and for shared services when they meet the needs of the county's citizens.
23	Mary Scray	Yes	Recommends spending cuts in all departments. Would support privatization if cost effective. Immigration problems costing county
25	Thomas Lund	Yes	Keep tax rate stable to keep economy stable. Would support privatization.

VOTE - APRIL 1, 2008

2008 TAXPAYER SURVEY.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete and return our annual taxpayer survey. As usual, it was obvious that the participants are familiar with the issues presented, and gave careful thought to their responses.

A couple of conclusions we made are that not everyone agrees on everything, or that no two people completing the survey agreed on everything. We appreciate this as we realize there are two sides to every question and this should be taken into consideration in our organization and the elected officials who represent us. We acknowledge that some of the answers were fairly obvious and in these cases our intent would be to show support a particular position. We have also included appropriate comments and suggestions .

As most of us are aware, we have 4 basic units of government to comply with, each with a specific area of responsibility and taxing authority to provide revenue. In some areas there is duplication of services and authority which can add to our overall tax burden. Questions 1-4 give some of the major responsibilities of these 4 areas of government.

We asked you to prioritize what those responsible should give their attention to. We didn't ask if more or less spending should be allocated, just what areas are most important to us as taxpayers. Answers are % of respondents giving as a top 5 priority.

#1 – What should be the top priorities of your local municipality?

Streets and Bridges	90.0 %
Fire and Police Protection	88.6 %
Not Increasing Taxes	75.0 %
Local School Spending	70.4 %
Trash & Garbage Collection	61.4 %
Downtown Development	59.1 %
Parks & Recreation	40.9 %
Homeless Shelters	34.1 %

Other items & suggestions: Have city employees pay a reasonable share of their health care costs, reduce bonding debt, reassess on basis of salability/market value, hold line on adding new services, combine municipal services such as police & fire protection, cut out "give-aways" for illegal aliens, reduce non-essential & non-productive employees, cut the parkie program, learn to live within budget.

Note that traditional core services such as good streets, fire and police protection, trash & garbage collection, school spending and keeping taxes in line were considered to be most important by respondents to the survey.

#2 – What should be the top priority of the County Board?

County Police Protection	86.4 %
County Highway Const.	81.8 %
Maintenance/Snow Removal	77.3 %
County Court/Legal System	56.8 %
Mental Health Care Facility	52.3 %
County Records, Permits	40.9 %
County Jail	36.4 %

County Library System	34.1 %
Trash & Garbage Collection	34.1 %
Parks & Recreation	25.0 %
Golf Course/Arena	6.8 %

Other items & suggestions were: Eliminate townships, they create excess infrastructure and service needs, Budget "needs" instead of "wants", reduce funds for services to illegal aliens, port development should be addressed, install an employee "merit" system, cut the budget-don't keep growing it, don't get involved in more new programs, reduce health care costs by reducing benefits if necessary-benefits cost is reducing services beyond what taxpayers can afford, eliminate highway dept. barn in Green Bay, reduce size of county board and focus more on local issues, privatize the health care center, allow private contractors to do more for county, sell the golf course, have county employees pay a reasonable share of their health care costs.

Note that respondents gave top priority to public safety, good highways and bridges and maintenance for county provided services. Also traditional mandated county services such as record maintenance and the court system also rated high. We don't really know if people are favoring immediate construction of a mental health center or are tired of hearing about it. Also note that operation of the golf course and arena received low priority for the county board to maintain.

#3 – What should be the top priorities of our state representatives?

Highways and Bridges	86.4 %
Business Development	63.6 %
Aids to Cities and Counties	61.4 %
State Highway Patrol	43.2 %
Campaign/Election Reform	38.6 %
Aids to Local Education	38.6 %
State Prison System	38.6 %
Natural Resources Dept.	38.6 %
Higher Education/Colleges	36.4 %
Preserving Environment	36.4 %
Universal Health Care	36.4 %

Other items & comments: Establish term limits for elected officials, stop feel good projects that are poorly run, have colleges turn out graduates in 4 years, limit state employee salary increases to dollar rather than percentage increases, no new programs & balance budget in tough economic times, cut UW control administration, cut highway patrol by 1/2, balance the budget & not allow raiding of segregated funds, free up the tax burden on individuals and corporations, implement statewide smoking ban to reduce health costs, eliminate all business assistance programs, eliminate red tape for business to locate and expand in Wis. stop aid to local govt. and cut taxes accordingly, free up elections, minimize the state elections board, state too involved in higher education-healthcare and giving money to cities and counties, if they take less from me I will be happy, preserve the QEO, end stewardship fund, take another look at TABOR, cut UW administration salaries, end all grants, decrease union control of govt. agencies, have state employees pay a larger percent of their health insurance like the rest of us.

freeze the state budget for 2 years, freeze state employment and future spending projects.

It appears from both the quantity and tone of comments and suggestions regarding state government there is more dissatisfaction than with our local and county representatives. The top three items deserve comments. The highest priority in our survey went to highways and bridges, which may reflect on the fact that even with high gas taxes and registration fees barely sufficient to maintain the highway program, the governor diverted some of these funds for other purposes necessitating to increases in registration fees, etc. Business development had the second highest priority as we all realize this is what drives the economy. This does not necessarily mean handing out taxpayer money as bribes but creating a better business climate.

The third priority item was aid to cities and counties. While the state keeps passing more of their costs to cities property taxes keep rising out of proportion. The question was "what should be the top priorities of our state representatives," and they should make balancing the state budget without raising state of local taxes their top priority.

#4 – What should be the top concerns of our Congressional Delegates and the Federal Government?

Illegal Immigration	79.6 %
Reducing National Debt	77.3 %
National Defense	63.6 %
Financing Social Security	52.3 %
National Infrastructure	43.2 %
Controlling the Economy	40.9 %
Developing Energy Sources	38.6 %
Foreign Affairs	36.4 %
Campaign Finance Reform	31.8 %
Crime/Illegal Drugs	31.8 %
Universal Health Care	22.7 %
Federal Aids to Education	22.7 %
Aids to Cities and States	18.2 %
Global Warming	11.4 %

Other items & comments: Less foreign aid = less spending, eliminate earmarks, trickle down economy reduces restrictions and taxes, cut all budgets 15%, spend less on foreign aid,-nobody appreciates it, drop Dept. of Education, cut farm subsidies for farms over a set income level, eliminate deficit spending, eliminate duplication of programs and services by multiple agencies, stop spending more than you take in, promote right to life, phase out medicare & Social Security-all Govt. run health care is a bad idea, eliminate corporate & big oil tax breaks by current administration which have devastated the economy, eliminate all pork & foreign aid,, establish term limits, perhaps elect younger people to office, ban Nascar; it sets an example of wasting energy & teaches dangerous driving habits, establish crash program to develop energy sources.

You will note that the priorities established by our survey as areas of concern for our Federal Government representatives are somewhat different from what the Presidential candidates and the media refer to as the "real issues", facing the

country in this election year. Either that is the difference between politics and reality or we are concerned with the wrong list of problems facing our great country.

Conclusions reinforced by our survey confirm illegal immigration reform is scarcely mentioned as a problem by our representatives and candidates but it is our number one concern. We realize the National Debt is dragging down our balance of trade and ability to compete in the world but our politicians keep spending money that isn't there so they can stay in office. National defense , Social Security, the national infrastructure and the economy are all top issues. Less important issues at this time are Universal Health Care, handing out federal money to education, cities and states, and global warming.

#5 – "Healthy Wisconsin", a universal health plan has been proposed by the Wis. Senate at an estimated cost of \$15 Billion yearly to be paid largely by new taxes imposed on Wisconsin business. What are your thoughts?

- A. Availability and quality of insurance and healthcare is presently satisfactory. **43.2 %**
- B. This may have some merit but is a problem for the Federal Government to legislate. **11.4 %**
- C. This may be a good but expensive idea and requires a lot more thought as to its consequences. **40.1 %**
- D. A good idea and badly needed. It should be implemented as soon as possible. **4.5 %**

The Wisconsin Senate and Governor may think this is a great idea but it didn't fare well in our survey.

#6 – What are your thoughts on illegal immigration?

- A. It is not a serious problem but amnesty and citizenship rights should be given to all that apply. **2.8 %**
- B. It is a problem but work permits and residential privileges should be given to those who are caught. **2.8 %**
- C. Immigration, employment, income tax and social security laws should be strictly enforced. **54.3 %**
- D. English should be recognized as the official language of Wisconsin. **40.1 %**

Other suggestions and comments: English should be the official language of the entire USA!, give them work visas with required English & citizenship classes, Major problem-round them up and send them home, build a big electric fence at the border, fines and prison for employers of illegal immigrants, if feds cannot or will not fix locals must act, enforcement-mandate citizenship-better monitoring, no licenses of any kind until they can read & speak English, first secure the borders, build the fence →

#7 – What are your thoughts on campaign finance reform?

- A. Require complete disclosure as to donors and purpose of “soft money” and “issue” advertising. 39.5 %**
- B. More prompt disclosure of source, purpose, and amounts of contributions for public. 31.6 %**
- C. Media which accepts questionable “attack” ads should offer other candidates a chance to respond. 17.1 %**
- D. The use of public funding of campaigns is in order and would treat all candidates equally. 7.9 %**
- E. The system is fine as is because all candidates can campaign based upon their support. 3.9 %**

Other suggestions and comments: Take away all but Federal funding so incumbents are not able to be bought off as they are now, get rid of McCain-Feingold; Feingold is the worst offender, no media campaign until 60 days before the election, no attack ads, how can Sorros advertise when the NRA cannot?, maximize amount that can be spent, free up the system but make it open, limit the number of times ads can be run, do not call lists should include political ads also, unions and public owned corporations should not presume to speak for their members and stockholders, limit amount that can be spent from all sources, limit size of contributions, universal brief media coverage of all candidates.

This is an important subject as it goes beyond the advertising we are subjected to in an effort by candidates to gain support at the polls but to the obligation of a candidate to contributors of their campaign if they are elected. There have been a lot of proposals to fix the system but the reality is that politicians have been reluctant to agree to any thing that might effect their incumbency or level the playing field for their opponent.

* * * * *

It is a Presidential Election year and candidates have been exalting that “*We need a change.*” *While details of the consequences of proposed changes have been somewhat vague, and we are not necessary endorsing the status quo, we asked the following for suggestions.*

#8 – Presidential candidates are saying “We need a change”, Do you agree? YES 72.1 % NO 27.9%

#9 – If yes, what areas of change would you like to see?

In no particular order: Less government, lower spending, secure our borders, strict immigration laws, national defense, lower taxes & spending, stable economy & reduced debt, reduce bureaucracy, deal with Illegals, what a joke-change for change sake?, less pork and overseas spending, honest government with fiscal responsibility, back to the constitution and basic legislating, return to the gold standard & pay off debt, no more corporate support from taxes, cut government and restore individual rights, more prayer & less taxes, reduced foreign intervention and a economic stimulus plan, restrict “pork”, a major third party, fiscal responsibility, fiscal discipline, campaign finance reform and cut budgeting loopholes, 2d amendment crucial, cut back the size of government, stop the trend towards socialism. In the comments, there were NO calls for

increased taxes, new government programs, national health care, restricting business or free lunches.

#10 – Do you favor a national (health) care system? YES 29.5 % NO 70.5 %

(Not much enthusiasm for Universal Health Care.)

#10A-Should this be the state’s responsibility? YES 11.4 % NO 88.6 %

(Even less interest shown for “Healthy” Wisconsin.)

#11 – Should government reduce spending during periods of recession to reduces taxes and debt?

YES 80.5 % NO 10.5 %

(If revenues less than anticipated, should Govt. tighten it’s belt like everyone else?)

#12 – Should government increase spending during periods of recession to create jobs and stimulate economy?

YES 27.3 % NO 72.7 %

#13 – Should Wisconsin Counties explore regional facilities such as jails, police, etc., to save costs?

YES 84.1 % NO 15.9 %

#14 – Should there be a moratorium on additional casino gambling facilities in Wisconsin?

YES 93.2 % NO 6.8 %

(There may be a conception of enough casinos already with little benefit to the state treasury in relation to money spent.)

#15 – Some states have laws requiring state expenditures be posted on the internet. Should Wisconsin?

YES 88.6 % NO 11.4 %

#16 – Do you believe the present system of state primaries is giving us the best Presidential candidates?

YES 11.6 % NO 88.4 %

(OK if you like circuses, but are we getting the candidates from either major party qualified to lead the country.)

#17 – Should the Brown County Mental Health (hospital) be downsized? YES 67.5 % NO 32.5 %

#17A-Should it be privatized?

YES 62.5 % NO 37.5

(This issue has been around for a long time with questions still to be answered for taxpayers.)

#18 – Do you perceive the need for an additional High School in Green Bat at this time?

YES 7.5 % NO 92.5 %

#19 – Should “tax exempt” entities pay a maintenance fee for city/county services they receive?

YES 81.8 % NO 18.2 %

(There would be exceptions but some tax exempt organizations compete with private business and they all require city services.)

#20 – Do you agree city and county department overtime should be budgeted and held accountable?

YES 100 % NO .0 %

(Everyone agreed on this. Conception that some employees are taking advantage of the system with excess overtime with approval of dept. heads. A budget is a budget.)

#21 – Should property tax reassessments be changed only on a qualified inspection of your property?

YES 86.4 % NO 13.6 %

(This relates to reassessing property tax values from the assessors office without personally inspecting or comparing the property.)

#22 – Would you endorse an efficiency audit of all municipal, schools and county spending to include salaries, overtime, benefits and other expenses, seeking ways to improve public services?

YES 95.5 % NO 4.5 %

(We realize such audits are expensive, frustrating and unpopular but sometimes necessary to achieve efficiency and reduce costs. Government units are no different than private employers.)

#23 – Should candidates for public office pledge not to raise taxes without public approval?

YES 77.3 % NO 22.7 %

(We can't remember a candidate running for office who promised to raise taxes. We ask that they do their best to control spending.)

#24 – When public employee salaries are listed, should the taxpayer cost of health insurance, retirement pay, sick leave and other benefits be included in the total?

YES 97.7 % NO 2.3 %

(Taxpayers are not always aware that a large percentage of the cost of public employees is for benefits in addition to their salary)

#25 – Should negotiated public employees labor contracts be publicized as part of the State's open meeting and freedom of information laws?

YES 95.5 % NO 4.5 %

(Public employees work for the taxpayer who has a right to know how their tax money is spent. It is the duty of your elected officials to communicate and resolve disagreements.)

#26 – Should health insurance & other public employee benefits be limited to a percentage of salary?

YES 77.3 % NO 22.7 %

(Annual increases in benefits can often be in excess of an employees negotiated salary increase.)

#27 – Publicizing delinquent taxpayers in Wis. Has been successful. Should this program be expanded?

YES 97.7 % NO 2.3 %

28 – Should the University of Wisconsin budget be open for public approval? YES 95.5 % NO 4.5 %

(While we are all proud of our University System and it's accomplishments, it represents a large taxpayer burden, with a minimum of visible effort to control costs.)

"People never lie so much as after a hunt, during a war, or before an election."
 . . . Otto Von Bismarck

"In politics you must always keep running with the pack. The moment that you falter and they sense that you are injured the rest will turn on you like wolves."
 . . . R. A, Butler

"A promising young man should go into politics so that he can go on promising for the rest of his life."
 . . . Robert Byrne

#29 – Estimates are that revenues to support the Wis. State budget could be as much as \$300 Million, (or more) due to the economy and over estimates of revenue collections. Assuming that by some strange circumstance the state were to receive \$300 million more than anticipated, what would you suggest they do with this windfall?

Save it for the next budget	14.8 %
Return to Dept. of Transportation	11.2 %
Use for Business Development	1.8 %
Reduce Taxes Next Year	22.2 %
Apply to State Debt	37.0 %
Give to Education	1.8 %
Establish a Rainy Day Fund	11.2 %

#30 – Additional comments: *Return funds to those who paid the taxes, does DePere need two school systems?, what is the purpose of CESA?-what is their budget and who do they answer to?, everyone should be working together to lower health insurance costs-there has to be a better way, down-size state government, revive depression era projects such as WPA, CCC & TVA to restore infrastructure and boost economy, government will continue to grow and oppress until we start burning buildings and turning over buses, BCTA should take bi-partisan view of issues, property taxes severe burden on home ownership and restricting business growth in Wisconsin, to publicize delinquent property taxes is statement property taxes are too high, stop spending money we don't have!*

Residence of responders: City of Green Bay — 36.4 %, Village of Allouez — 13.6 %, City of DePere — 6.8 %, Village of Ashwaubenton — 6.8 %, other or not specified — 37.4%.

That's it, the results of our 2008 Taxpayer Survey. We want to thank our committee who helped formalize the questions and areas that were covered. We tried to address as many areas of present concerns as possible. Also that our focus as a taxpayer organization is on "Fiscal Responsibility in Government", and as such our concern is the most efficient use of our tax dollars while providing a good level of government services.

We tried to be accurate in compiling the results and presenting them in an interesting and understandable way. Please give me a call if there is any question. Thank you. **Jim Frink – BCTA**

National Debt Update.

As of the first of March, 2008, the United States National Debt had risen to \$9,348,392,066,067.82. This is an increase of \$97,515,272,058.40 over last month at this time. If these numbers are confusing, the increase in Congressional talk was "only \$97.5 Billion." It normally increases at a rate of 1.62 Billion a month but they can have a bad month now and then.

Wait until May when everyone gets a big check from the government to boost the economy. Total cost is estimated at \$150 Billion give or take a few million. You can do what ever you want when you get your check.

At present, the *national debt per capita* in the United States is \$30,499.25. At 5%, your share is costing someone about \$1,524.96 a year just for interest. Someone must mean someone else. Don't look at me. **Jim Frink – BCTA**

It's time. Nix Same Day Registration.

"Wisconsin voters have finally been vindicated after four years of fighting for the integrity of our elections." This is in response to a 67-page report of the Milwaukee Police Department Special Investigations Unit.

Much has been written in the hours since the report was released Tuesday morning. Start with paging through it; the recommendations are summarized on page 26.

It is the opinion of the Task Force investigators that more than any other recommendation we could make, our investigation has concluded that the one thing that could eliminate a large percentage of fraud or the appearance of fraudulent voting in any given Election is the elimination of the On-Site or Same Day voter registration system.

As an alternative, if On-Site registration is to continue in its present form, then the presentation of a government issued identification card that includes the voter's name, address (including city) and date of birth should be presented before that person is allowed to register and vote. AG Van Hollen agrees that photo IDs are the way to go.

Fred Dooley, at Real Debate Wisconsin, catalogues some of the findings:

- * **1305 registration cards without enough information to be entered into the voter database. The people who voted on those cards did not have their votes counted. (page 9)**
- * **Evidence of double voting and double voter entries. (pages 7&8)**
- * **"The Milwaukee Election Commission employees allowed obviously ineligible voters to cast ballot in races that were contested" (pg 17)**
- * **Homeless votes cast from a non legal voting address. (pg. 21)**
- * **Irregularities in student voting (pg 24)**
- * **Recommendations on page 26, [quote above]**
- * **Dead people are rising from the grave and voting in Milwaukee (pg 31)**
- * **Double voting (page 34)**
- * **Absentee votes allowed that were not eligible to vote in Wisconsin. (pg 41)**
- * **Absentee Ballots not counted (pg 42)**
- * **A New Jersey school teacher who has not lived in Milwaukee since for years voting absentee here, add to that a New York Attorney, a school director who has been in Hamburg, Germany since 1974 and a man who has lived in Canada since 1971. (pg 47)**
- * **16 examples of "staffers from a major political party" from out of state registering and voting here. (pgs 49-51)**
- * **Conclusion: After nearly 18 months of investigation, the Task Force believes fraud was committed in the 2004 election. As one investigator stated, "I know I voted in the election, but I can not be sure it was counted."**

Here's the Journal Sentinel's "spin," coming as a 300-word "Newswatch" at 12:43 p.m. "Spin" is the spin Freedom Eden puts on the J/S story that reminds us criminal investigations by the Milwaukee Co. D.A.'s office and the U.S. attorney's office have long since been closed. "Translation:" says FE, "CYA mission complete." She provides more report details and ultimately says Bottom line: I'm mad as hell.

I'm with you Mary. Mad as hell. I don't abide the malarkey about same day registration "increase[ing the] opportunity for all citizens to cast a vote and participate in American democracy." We are one of only 7 states that allows "Election Day Registration" - wherein our residents need not think a whit about a critical election until deciding to wander into the poll on election day.

I also don't abide Democrats in the legislature who continue to insist a photo ID requirement would disenfranchise thousands and thousands of voters. Yes, it would disenfranchise those voters unwilling to go out of their way to obtain a photo ID. And don't dare call this some form of poll tax. That's absolutely ridiculous. If these things have to be free to those without drivers licenses, so be it. If there has to be a camera on every street corner to take care of this stuff, so be that too. This is not rocket science.

It's time. Nix same-day voter registration OR require photo identification at the polling place. This is not difficult.

-Jo Egelhoff, FoxPolitics.net.

Reducing Local Government Costs.

In 2005, Brown County Sheriff Dennis Kocken transferred meal preparation services at the jail to an outside contractor. Using a combination of an outside vendor and inmate labor, he was able to reduce meal costs from \$2.83 per meal to \$1.14. In addition to the substantial fiscal savings, the outside contractor would train and utilize services of jail prisoners in the food preparation. The prisoners would receive sentence credit for the hours worked, which would increase prisoner morale and jail safety, reducing overcrowding.

Unfortunately, Sheriff Kocken was sued by a local union. In a 4-3 split decision by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, the majority held that local Sheriffs cannot contract out meal preparation services because providing, preparing, and serving food to inmates is not part of a sheriff's duty of "caring for an inmate." The three dissenters on the court said that the majority opinion ignored more than 100 years of precedent. They felt "it should be self-evident that no sheriff can "care for" a person who is in his custody in a locked facility without feeding him."

Common sense would suggest that caring for prisoners means you should also be responsible for feeding them. In fact, it has been common practice for centuries for the wife of the sheriff to prepare meals for inmates. Back in the 1950's, my cousin, who was the wife of former Brown County Sheriff Lasee, cooked meals in her home for the inmates. It was a common joke that guys would purposely get arrested just so they could spend a night in jail and eat a delicious meal prepared by her.

Recently, the Assembly Committee on Local and Urban Affairs held a public hearing on Assembly Bill 650, to help our Brown County Sheriff's Department save money which in turn saves money for you, the taxpayers of Brown County. The proposal would make jail food service a prohibited subject of collective bargaining and restore the authority of local sheriffs to provide meals as cost-effectively as possible.

State Rep. Karl VanRoy

Let Rep. Kagen Know.

As we discussed with Rep. Kagen at our last meeting, Indian tribes are increasingly buying private lands and putting them under federal trust, effectively removing them from tax rolls, yet consuming government services and thereby increasing the tax burden on remaining taxpayers.

Tribes often make payments in lieu of taxes to cover these services. But those payments often do not cover the total cost of the lost tax base, especially in regard to schools. Our income taxes indirectly help pay for tribal schools, but tribal payments in lieu of taxes do not cover the shortfall in payments for our schools.

Federal law must be changed to ensure that tribes fully compensate local governments for all the costs of putting private lands into tribal trust. Rep. Kagen promised to help us on that account. I would encourage you to write and remind him of his support at the following address.

Attn: Carl Carmichael
Honorable Steve Kagen, M.D.
U. S. Representative, 8th District
700 E. Walnut St.
Green Bay, WI 54301-4052

Richard Parins – BCTA

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 in vite 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.

"A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage."
 , , , Herbert Hoover

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.BCTaxpayers.Org
Email, BCTA@ExecPc.Com

February Meeting Notes.

Representative Kagen Meets With BCTA.

Monthly BCTA meeting conducted Feb. 21, 2008 at Titledown Brewing. We were honored to have Wisconsin 8th District Congressman Steve Kagen address the meeting.

He began by stating he was elected because we are heading in the wrong direction. He cited a recent report by US Comptroller General David Walker, head of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to the House of Representatives Budget Committee. The report, Deficits Matter-Saving Our Future Requires Tough Choices Today, paints a stark picture of our country's future if our present federal deficit spending is not brought under control. Our personal spending habits are no better, he explained. The United States had a negative personal savings rate for the first time last year.

Representative Kagen expressed concern about foreign investment in the United States, made easier by our deficit spending and our balance of payment deficits as well. We need to define what assets we are willing to let foreign investors own. He recalled that his interest in this problem began when he sat next to Sir Sidney Lipworth at a dinner party in Washington, D.C. Sir Sidney explained that he was knighted for his work leading a commission that generated a plan and rules that saved Great Britain's critical assets from being purchased by foreign investors.

He stated that we must grow our economy by increasing the minimum wage. He commented that unions have driven up the quality of life in this country. He said that employers should pay benefits for illegal aliens. All medical payments should have deductibles, based upon personal income.

Responding to a question about the federal government's responsibility to deal with the effects of Indian tribes purchasing property and then removing it from the tax rolls, Representative Kagen compared this situation to the announced paper mill closing in Niagara, Wisconsin, where about 300 jobs will be lost. When it was explained that over 340 Indian tribes across the United States have the right to remove purchased land from the tax rolls, making this an obvious federal issue, the congressman committed to calling attention to this issue when he returns to Washington, D.C. (Almost \$207 million of property has already been removed from the tax rolls in Brown County. This amount of tax base reduction also applies to NWTC and the State of Wisconsin.)

Asked if he supported transparency for all earmarks, Representative Kagen said he did. He said he is proud of the \$8 million of funding obtained for projects in the Eighth Congressional District. He explained that raising US Highway 41 to interstate highway status would cost \$1.41 billion, so it's not likely to happen soon.

The next meeting of the Brown County Taxpayers Association is scheduled for Thursday, March 20, at Titledown Brewing Co. Details are on the back cover of this *TAX TIMES*.
Dave Nelson-Secretary

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed, (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of the imaginary." . . . **H. L. Mencken**

"A politician needs the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen." . . . **Winston Churchill**

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

Things That Make Us Wonder.

In July of 1932, the price of a first-class postage stamp went from 2 to 3 cents. Technically a 50% increase. That remained until 1958, a period of 26 years. In the 50 years that have followed there have been 19 increases with the latest scheduled for May 12, of this year and less that a year since the last increase.

The price of a first class stamp has gone up 1050% since 1958 despite a lot of modernization. Sometimes it seems that postal rates are the cause more than the result of inflation. Do we really need Saturday mail delivery?

* * * * *

One Wisconsin Industry seems to be prospering due to the activities of our politicians. A group which tracks and analyzes TV advertising revenues reports \$2.1 million was spent by candidates in the recent presidential primary.

This is probably only a fraction of what will be spent in all races for the November election so be prepared.

* * * * *

The Wisconsin Senate is debating SB 150, which is intended to ban smoking in all business establishments and just about every place else in the state. It is part of a national trend and the public seems generally in favor.

While the draft of the law does not specify any exemptions to the ban, the tavern league claims that smoking will still be allowed in gambling casinos.

Casinos in other states where the ban has been enforced claim a loss of business accordingly. Unfortunately so have other business's including taverns so it will be interesting to see how this works out in Wisconsin. The Indian casinos still advertise cigarettes for sale to the public at \$10.00 a carton less than other retailers. They must absorb the tax.

* * * * *

While we criticized the Postal Service for their frequent price increases, we commend them for naming Tim Lewis as Green Bay's new postmaster. According to the report, Mr. Lewis worked his way up from a letter carrier in Green Bay. It is nice to see an employee in any business work their way to the top. The postal service has

not always had a reputation as the best place to work, and we suspect this is could be partially due to the lack of opportunity for promotion while on the job.

* * * * *

With the upcoming November election, we will be hearing more about election fraud and the need for better voter identification, even though things seem to be well managed in most of Wisconsin,

However a 67 page report by state and federal election officials just released points out a number of problems in Milwaukee in recent years. It was pointed out that the margin of victory in the 2004 Presidential election in Wisconsin was 11,400 votes. However in Milwaukee there were about 4,600 more votes counted than people who had registered to vote. A total of 1,300 on-site registrations were disqualified because their address's couldn't be verified or were from out of the area. The biggest problem seemed to be from accepting these walk in voters.

One of the negative side effects from Wisconsin's deficit spending habit is the high price they have to pay to borrow money. Their credit is bad.

A Feb. 19, story in the *Journal-Sentinel* reported the state was forced to pay a 10.25% rate on \$118.7 million in short-term bonds. These bonds would have cost 3.7% in 2003.

While there are a number of factors effecting these rates, including the present mortgage situation, the problem seems to be that the state is forced to borrow more money than usual and the cost of interest is another expense for taxpayers to pay.

* * * * *

The Wis. Dept. of Trade and Consumer Protection reports that violation of the "no call list" is the top complaint they receive from Wisconsin residents. Of course we all just went through a session of recorded message for Presidential candidates in the primary election, and our representatives made sure that political "messages" are exempt from the no call restrictions. The same as requests for donations from charitable organizations such as the "state troopers."

Perhaps the least they could do would be to have an identifiable

source phone number so that those with caller ID would know who's calling and ignore them accordingly.

* * * * *

A recent report from the Pew Center claims that over 1 in every 100 American adults are now in jail or prison.. This is incredible number and a tremendous burden on taxpayers. In Green Bay, for example it would equate to over 1,000 of our citizens presently incarcerated. This is about the same as the inmate population at the Green Bay Correctional Center.

Blame can be placed on drugs, drunk driving, violent crime, get tough on crime laws, and a million other things civilized people are not supposed to do. Just about every new law that enters the books has penalties for non-compliance which can also lead to prison.

* * * * *

An article in the Wis. State Journal claims the state will end this year with a \$650 Million shortfall. Somewhat due to from overestimating revenues but more so from excessive spending beyond the budget.

In the meantime the Governor continues to shuffle funds and paint a rosy picture of the states economy. He called for belt tightening in his "state of the state" address but failed to specify whose belt he was referring to.

* * * * *

Governor Doyle wants to have state Supreme Court races publicly financed and it might look like a good idea after April 1, this year. That is the date either incumbent Louis Butler or Circuit Judge Michael Gableman will be elected to a 10 year term.

This is expected to be as contested a race as the onet last year between Annette Ziegler and Linda Clifford which cost \$5.8 million. Butler was appointed to the court by Gov. Doyle 4 years ago to replace a vacancy and has the support of Madison. At stake is the application of law as applies to the state constitution and statutes. This often involves business interests with far reaching implications effecting all of us..

* * * * *

The Wis. Dept. of Revenue estimates \$2.1 Billion will be pumped into the states economy through the Federal economic stimulus package

later this spring. While this is a sizable amount, it will be interesting to see how it will help the states economy.

The same as with tax refunds, we will undoubtedly see a lot of shill advertising offering suggestions as to how recipients could spend their windfall. Paying off some credit card debt would probably help consumers and the economy the most.

* * * * *

Virtual private charter schools are a concept offering a viable alternative to public schools, offering classes via the internet. They have been somewhat successful in Wisconsin and considering pros and cons it should be the results that count.

In the meantime, Gov. Doyle and WEAC have been doing everything possible to discourage this program. Apparently they don't like competition.

* * * * *

Gov. Doyle has reincarnated his idea of a tax on hospital services as a way to help balance the state budget claiming it would bring in \$400 million and be reimbursed to the hospitals by the Federal Government.

While this could be true as long as the Federal Government can afford to go along with such a scheme, it is hard to imagine hospitals not using it as an excuse to pass it on to their customers, meaning patients and insurance companies. Have you looked at a hospital bill lately?

* * * * *

The Federal Reserve has made several reductions in the interest rate with the announced purpose of stimulating the economy. Great. However it seems that the people who lend money through the issuance of bonds have not necessarily followed suit.

Many cities and states (including Wisconsin) are being charged outlandish interest rates to issue new bonds to finance their needs due to the economy. This in turn forces them to pay higher interest rates which expense is passed onto the taxpayers which only makes the situation worse.

While many states (again including Wisconsin) have poor credit ratings and defaults have been a problem the bonding companies have a full list of excuses for their actions. We assume

they know their business. The best answer is not having to borrow money.

* * * * *

The U.S. Senate recently passed a bill authorizing \$35 Billion over the next 10 years for Indian health care needs. We realize this is a problem to be addressed. In the meantime it was reported that the Oneidas had failed to track \$2.2 million in income over a 5 year period, and have broken off negotiations with the Village of Hobart for services the Village provides to tribal property.

The Chippewa Tribe of northern Wisconsin has apparently done well with their casinos to the extent they have tried to expand to a riverboat in Mississippi and one in Cancun, Mexico. Thousands of miles from their reservation. Unfortunately these ventures have not been successful, as the tribe is now millions of dollars in debt and are considering mortgaging a portion of their tribal land as loan collateral.

* * * * *

Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. VanHollen recently issued a formal opinion that the Wisconsin Statutes do not require counties with a population of under 250,000 are required to publish their proceedings in "Official Newspapers." They could use their own websites for the purpose.

Presently counties, cities and school districts spend thousands of dollars each in printing their proceedings in a local paper. Whether anyone bothers to read them is another question. Some districts have resorted to using the smallest type styles available in order to meet the legal requirements and save taxpayers money.

Use of the internet which just about every city and county seems to have would not only save money but present the information in a timely and readable fashion, Good idea.

* * * * *

An editorial in the *Journal-Sentinel* proclaimed "Candidates should get tough on health care." We have said this all along. While the presidential candidates talk about health care and making it available to everyone, they don't get to the real problem. It is not so much the cost of making the care available as the cost

of the service itself. Medicare payments that are way less than the going rate and mandated government paperwork on the health care industry also drive the costs up to all of us.

* * * * *

Earmark spending by the Congress and Senate is a controversial subject. Most people are glad to accept whatever handouts their representatives can get from the Federal Government for the folks back home, but are appalled to find that all of the other representatives in Washington are doing the same thing.

An earmark is a project in a district for which members of Congress designate funds, often without public hearings or debate over their merit. They generally inserted into the budget at the last minute, and are not included under any other budget item or appropriation. Since basically all of our representatives get some of the action, there is little debate.

Taxpayers for Common Sense, a citizens watchdog group reports a total of 12,881 earmark items in the present budget totaling \$18.3 Billion in Federal spending. Of this Wisconsin received \$182.5 Million. Unfortunately many of these items would not be eligible for federal funding on their own merits..

As usual, lots of things to wonder about.
Jim Frink

"Things That Make Us Wonder" consists of thoughts that occur to us, mostly taxpayer related in some way, from the days news events. Some are relatively unimportant and probably not worth commenting about while others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of further study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in a limited space and 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. However, 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."

The TAX TIMES

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

PRSR STD
U. S. Postage
PAID
Green Bay, WI
Permit No. 255

Inside This Issue

It's the Spending Stupid.
Green Bay, Brown County Candidate Surveys.
Results from 2008 Taxpayer Survey.
It's time: Nix Same Day Registrations.
Reducing Local Government Costs.
Let Rep. Kagen Know.
February Meeting Notes.
Things That Make Us Wonder.
and more.

The TAX TIMES - March, 2008

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - March 20, 2008. BCTA Monthly Meeting.
Titletown Brewing Co., "Frost Room."
12:00 Noon – Discussion of Current Issues.
Candidates for office are cordially invited to attend and be recognized.

Tuesday - April 1, Local Elections. Be sure to vote.

Thursday – April 17, 2008, BCTA Monthly Meeting.
Titletown Brewing Co., "Frost Room."
12:00 Noon – Program to be announced.

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

Meetings are open to the public.

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

COST" \$7.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.

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

**March,
2008**



"Do you ever get the feeling that the only reason we have elections is to find out if the polls were right."
... Robert Orben

"Politics is not the art of the impossible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the Unpalatable."
... John Kenneth Gallbraith

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.