

Taxing Times

It's taxing time again here in the County of Brown, the land of Taxidea Taxus, home of the legendary Bucky the Badgered, but just who's badgering Bucky? As always, it is his evil nemesis, Governmentalis Uber Alles and the Bureaucrasie (hereinafter known as GUAB). I feel it's my constitutional right to acronymize, just like everyone else in this great Nation feels they have a right to "rights, enumerated in the Constitution or not."

Time to get down to business, the annual levy for property; after all, GUAB must be paid for its self-expanding workload and it has been decided by the same, that said landowners benefited most from GUAB's work, therefore the "landowners" should be proportionally charged for these expenses. I need to pause here and ask the question, "does our current definition of "landowner" in any way resemble that of the Magna Carta?"

But why let these historical definitions get in the way, in actuality, renters[sic], serfs came off worst in this deal as landowners got to pass along the levy,-- plus 20% gratuity -- to the renters. GUAB, in turn, offered grumpy serfs a puny tax credit, to which most serfs accepted with little complaint, grateful for anything that would pay for a case of Leinies, PBR or mead.

To levy the proportional tax, GUAB assessed the value of each property and set the levy rate according to how much money it needed to raise to pay itself for said labors. Periodically, property values are re-assessed, ostensibly to keep the levy fair, and proportional, hence our State Constitutional concept of "Equalization." In reality, GUAB continually re-assesses values, which rose in recent years, so a lower levy rate was sufficient to meet GUAB's appetite for taxes. Re-assessment provided GUAB the opportunity to boost taxes while touting a drop in the tax, aka, the mil rate. Are you confused yet? Has a numb feeling come over your cranium, paralyzed by a requirement for common sense?

But this year is different--an economic malaise hit our land, property values plummeted; Bucky and his neighbors found they could not sell their homes for what they had paid for them. Faced with reality GUAB realized that re-assessment will find lower values and levy rates will need to rise precipitously. So, GUAB is not happy, not to mention their commitment to landowners, and serfs, we cannot forget the serfs.

The atmosphere ahead of this year's re-assessment has many property owners fearing more than the usual amount of GUAB's capriciousness. GUAB decries but does not base its assessments on what buyers will pay for a comparable home, which begs the question, "what is the value of property based upon?" Many landowners fear their levies will not decline in proportion to their property's re-sale value, landowners call this, "reality." How will GUAB boost its take without a falling levy rate as cover? Landowners should fear an enormous shift in tax burden, whilst serfs (renters) drink beer and play Sheephead or Cribbage. Landowners seek a carefree life, too! They yearn for a fun tailgate at Lambeau, we all should get a free one from the Packers from the levy placed upon us.

Landowners know how GUAB plays winners and losers against each other to keep all players' eyes off the pea, in the Shell Game of Property Tax. Landowners and serfs need to require GUAB to accomplish the basic work of government for less money, but we are oft too busy fighting amongst each other over the sizes of their tax bills. The question remains, can they get GUAB to do the job for less? Then Bucky the Badgered had an idea: pit Governmentalis Uber Alles against the Bureaucrasie. Force the Bureaucrasie to bid on the job, like a vendor bids to provide goods or services. GUA would no longer be a hostage to B's wage and benefit demands, B becomes the employer, not the employed, and will have to settle wage and benefit issues internally to make a successful bid for the work.

Alas, before Bucky could present his idea at the town hall meeting, somebody brought up health-care reform, and he never got a word in edgewise for all the shouting and finger-pointing. Someone shouted about how a know-it-all academic had finally made it into the Oval Office, had a chance to put his money where his mouth is, and decided to put up other people's money instead.

Not sure the Bureaucrasie would have liked Bucky's idea, but I did. How about you? Have a great Halloween! Don't eat all the candy before the big night.

Richard Parins – President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government

Jobs NOW Agenda Introduced in the Assembly.

Assembly Republicans introduced multiple bills in the Assembly intended to create and keep jobs in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development estimates 129,100 jobs have been lost in the state over the last year. Unemployment in Wisconsin has been 9 percent or higher for months. It only recently fell to 8.4 which continues to be too high and reflects more on the amount of people who quit looking for work than it does hiring. Another 3,300 jobs were lost from July to August alone.

Companies cutting jobs in Wisconsin have cited numerous proposals brought forward by the Legislative majority this session as reasons for leaving the state or cutting jobs. In February of this year, the Legislature passed a budget repair bill that raised taxes by over \$1.2 billion. Within that bill was a new combined reporting tax that has been a deterrent for companies who want to relocate or expand in these tough economic times.

Harley Davidson cut 400 jobs soon after this tax was enacted and cited this tax as one of the reasons for the cuts. Thomas Products cut 366 jobs in Sheboygan and sent a majority of them to Louisiana. Briggs and Stratton cut 530 jobs from a plant in Jefferson and are moving almost all of them to Alabama or Georgia. Wisconsin lost the Janesville General Motors plant to Michigan. The list goes on and on. If Wisconsin is going to grow and create jobs legislative leaders will have to view employers as partners as opposed to piggy banks.

Within the Assembly Republicans Jobs Agenda is a proposal that would sunset the new combined reporting tax. As well, we are proposing to sunset another tax increase enacted by the majority on savings and investments. That tax totals \$242.5 million and falls directly on capital that is used to create jobs and for employer expansion. Republicans are also proposing to sunset the new 75 cent per phone line tax enacted by Democrats in the last budget. This would save phone users \$107.6 million if it were not enacted in the last budget.

We are also proposing to offer employers jobs tax credits immediately. Under this proposal, an employer that creates jobs would be able to deduct up to 10 percent of those wage and training costs.

Within the budget enacted this year was a jobs tax credit that does not get paid to employers until 2012. Wisconsin needs jobs NOW, not more than two years from now. Under our agenda the jobs tax credit would go into effect this year.

Also, within our agenda, we are proposing to allow small businesses the option of deducting business expenses at a level similar to the federal government. This will increase small business investment and will assist employers in these tough times. Additionally, in the Republican Jobs Agenda is a proposal that would allow employers the option to invest up to \$10 million in Wisconsin NOW without being taxed on capital gains. The Democrats enacted a similar proposal, but it does not go into effect until 2011.

Health insurance costs are also addressed in our proposal. Under this bill, employers would be able to purchase insurance across state lines. Currently, employers are prohibited from doing so. This will offer more choice to employers and reduce costs through insurance industry competition.

Allowing small businesses to purchase quality health insurance at the best price they can find is a common sense part of health care reform. Automobile insurance can be purchased from out of state

and this helps to reduce the costs because consumers shop around for the best deal. Consumers should be able to purchase health insurance in the same way.

If the Jobs Agenda were passed, the Department of Commerce would be required to develop a rapid response team to retain employers in Wisconsin. As well, Commerce would have to report to the legislature on employer retention efforts they are undertaking. This provision was in the budget, but vetoed out by Governor Doyle.

The proposals would also end the practice by the Department of Revenue of unilaterally raising taxes. Over the years, Revenue has creatively found ways to increase taxes on software, the internet, and business transactions among other things. Over the years, these taxes total over \$100 million.

The agenda we are proposing would place the power to tax back in the legislative branch where it belongs. Employers should be able to operate on a level and transparent playing field. They should not be hindered by taxes they never knew existed because an executive branch is short on revenue.

The Democrats budget repair bill and biennial budget have raised taxes by \$4.76 billion this year alone. Spending has increased by 6.2 percent under the new majority. Property taxes have risen \$1.5 billion and controls on property taxes were eliminated that will result in even higher property tax burdens on Wisconsin families.

The actions by the Democrats have chased jobs out of the state and are threatening to eat away at family savings. The Republican Jobs NOW Agenda is a good start that will begin to turn the corner and bring jobs and employers back to our state. The Republicans are offering this plan as a way to create jobs because the majority party has failed to do so.

Rep John Nygren

National Debt Update.

As of the end of September, the U. S. National Debt had reached a total of **\$11,846,648,450,811**. That's \$11.8 Trillion bucks, an increase of about \$119 Billion since the first of September, and on track to reach \$12 Trillion well before Thanksgiving rolls around. Unless someone in Congress finds out to make gold out of water.

Check out **USDEBTCLOCK.Org**, and you will be right up to date on a lot of useful information that our representatives in Washington ignore such as U.S. Spending in 2009 to date is \$2.93 Trillion vs. tax revenues of \$1.55 Trillion. Medicare **fraud** so far this year is estimated at \$44 Billion which could cover cash for clunkers and bailing the auto makers.

The balance of trade deficit so far in 2009 is \$259.1 Billion of which \$151.3 Billion, or 60% is with China. In addition to the official National Debt, there is another \$59.1 trillion in unfunded liabilities that won't likely go away by itself. This includes \$30.7 Trillion for estimated Medicare liabilities, \$10.8 Trillion for Social Security benefits, and the rest for prescription drug benefits.

We are sure that President Obama, and Congress are well aware of the problems faced, and have a plan of action. First they have to take over health care, the banking and insurance industries, so they can concentrate on illegal immigration and trade union legislation. Otherwise they may have trouble getting re-elected.

Jim Frink - BCTA

"The Constitution... is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the judiciary which they may twist and shape into any form they please.

. . . **Thomas Jefferson**

New Telephone Tax Starts September 1.

In the recent state budget, Democrats in the legislature created a "Police and Fire Protection Fee" commonly known as the telephone tax. This new tax will go into effect on September 1 and it will cost telephone users an additional \$107.6 million over the next two years.

Under the new law, telephone providers are required to charge every customer 75 cents per month for each and every landline and cell phone telephone number you have including voice over internet protocol (VOIP) connections. If you are a business and have more than ten phone lines, you will pay a separate 75 cent fee for each of the first ten connections (\$7.50) and one additional 75 cent fee for each additional bundle of ten connections.

Simply put, the more lines you have, the more you pay. If your household has one landline and you and your spouse each have a cell phone, you will be paying an extra \$2.25 per month with this new tax. If you pay for your teenagers to have a cell phone or your house has a second landline, you will pay even more.

Purchasers of prepaid wireless plans are treated a little bit differently under the law. They are required to pay 38 cents per retail transaction. In other words, every time you buy a prepaid phone or purchase additional minutes, you will pay 38 cents.

Your phone provider is allowed to list the tax separately on the bill, or it may combine it with the countywide 911 charge that is already on your phone bill. The state budget also increased the amount you will pay into the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund on both landline and cell phone bills. All told, 20% of your phone bills is comprised of taxes and fees.

Governor Doyle and the Democratic Legislature want you to believe that average middle-class families are not going to be hurt by their budget because they did not raise sales tax and did not raise income tax rates on anyone but "the rich". The truth is that middle-class families are being nicked and dined by various other tax and fee increases, like the telephone tax, that are taking more and more out of your household budget. Wisconsin families are struggling during this tough economic recession, and this is just another example of government demanding more of its citizens when they simply have nothing more to give.

Rep. Karl VanRoy

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 BCTA@ExecPC.Com.

State Budget Problems Impact Schools, Taxpayers. *State Aids Cut, Revenue Limits Tightened, "QEO" Repealed*

State school aid cuts and tighter state revenue limits on how much school districts can raise will make 2009-10 one of the most challenging years that both school districts and taxpayers have experienced in decades, according to a new analysis from the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX), a nonpartisan research organization.

Facing budget deficits in the billions, state government is cutting aid to local districts by 2.7% in 2009-10, the first aid reduction in modern memory. Generally, state spending on school aid has always grown steadily—from \$2.19 billion in 1993-94 to \$5.4 billion in 2008-09. During the mid- to late-1990s, annual increases averaged 5.0%. Even with recent state financial difficulties and cuts to other programs, aid grew an average of 2.3% per year since 2003.

Of all districts, WISTAX estimates that 94 will see aid drop 15% or more. The five with the largest cuts are: North Lakeland, -100%; Swallow, -16.6%; Wisconsin Dells, -16.0%; Elcho, -15.7%; and Princeton, -15.4%. Districts with the largest losses tend to be "property wealthy," often with declining enrollment. WISTAX also notes that 90 districts are projected to receive more general aid, including 16 that will get at least 5% more.

By individual district, WISTAX estimates that 181 districts face potential 2009-10 school tax hikes of 10% or more. Another 111 could have tax increases in the 5% to 10% range. Only 48 districts—about one in nine—are likely to cut property taxes this December.

With less state aid, local school districts have several options. They can dip into reserves to cover the losses; trim budgets to reflect the revenue reduction; or—to the extent allowed by law—increase school property tax levies. Overall, the potential school tax increase for December 2009 could approach 7.8% statewide if all districts taxed to their revenue limit, WISTAX estimates. The last time larger increases were recorded was in 1988-92, when tax increases accelerated from 8.1% in 1988 to 10.7% in 1992. The following year, the legislature enacted revenue limits and restricted growth in school compensation (the qualified economic offer, or QEO).

The new state budget makes one other change that has potential adverse impacts. It repeals the QEO compensation limits enacted 17 years ago. The repeal could mean that schools will face more rapid increases in compensation, forcing them to cut programs and staff. It could also mean that school tax increases will accelerate as they did 20 years ago. "Only time will tell," observes WISTAX President, Todd A. Berry.

Wisconsin Taxpayer's Alliance – WISTAX

"We live in the greatest country in the world. I hope you'll join with me as we try to change it."

. . . **Barack Obama**

"You cannot legislate the poor into prosperity by legislating the wealthy out of prosperity. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving. The government cannot give to anybody anything that the government does not take first from somebody else. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it.:"

. . . **Adrian Rogers**

"The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other peoples money."

. . . **Margaret Thatcher**

Garbage Tax Should Be Hauled Out To The Curb

During the 1990's, Wisconsin enacted legislation to encourage recycling and waste reduction, including prohibiting certain items from being placed in landfills and establishing financial assistance payments to local governments to operate local recycling programs. To fund these programs, businesses pay a variety of surcharges and tipping fees on every ton of solid waste that is disposed of in landfills throughout the state. Essentially, tipping fees are taxes paid on garbage.

In the 2007-09 budget, the tipping fees were increased from \$3.80 to \$5.90 per ton, a 55% increase. In the 2009-11 budget, Governor Doyle increased the fees yet again from \$5.90 to \$10.30 per ton, a 75% increase. Specifically, these increases are on the recycling tipping fee, the environmental management tipping fee, and the environmental repair fee. According to the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau budget summary, these fees will generate \$48.6 million dollars in additional for state purposes.

Without a doubt, waste management companies and municipalities will pass on these tipping fee increases to their customers. This means higher property tax bills; landlords will pay more, which in turn could lead to higher rent being charged; businesses will pay more, which in turn could lead to higher prices customers pay for the goods and services they receive.

I feel that these fee increases are unacceptable tax increases on Wisconsin residents and businesses, especially in the midst of a recession. The cost of everyday goods and services are already increasing without the government piling on more taxes and fees that will negatively impact the cost of food, phone usage, and now garbage pickup, among many others in the state budget.

Recycling is a laudable goal, but the increase in the recycling tipping fee will not improve or expand upon any existing recycling programs because the state collects more money in fees than it spends on the program. So what happens to all that extra money? According to the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, between 1991 and 2008, \$107.5 million was transferred from the recycling fund to the state's general fund to pay for programs completely unrelated to recycling, even though it is supposed to be a protected segregated account. In the current budget, an additional \$31 million is expected to be transferred from this account to the general fund.

In the 2009-11 budget, Doyle completely eliminates the Clean Sweep Grant Program, the Recycling Efficiency Incentive Grant Program, and the Waste Reduction and Recycling Demonstration Grant Program. These programs that were all funded by the recycling fund clearly relate to the goal of reducing waste in our landfills. Instead, Doyle takes the money from those programs, and he uses it to pay for the creation of a new UW Bioenergy Center.

Furthermore, Doyle's proposes to take \$27 million collected from the environmental management tipping fee to pay the costs of debt service on outstanding government bonds. Like the recycling and transportation funds, this is also supposed to be a protected segregated account. Yet again, the funds are being used for something other than their intended purpose.

Some justify these exorbitant fee increases as a way to discourage out-of-state waste from being put in our landfills. The facts are that 80% of the solid waste in our landfills is generated from Wisconsin sources, and the fee increases over the years have proven to be ineffective at decreasing the amount of out-of-state waste being imported. In reality, these fees only serve as a punishment to ourselves because the vast majority of the tax increases are being paid by Wisconsin businesses and homeowners without any benefit in return.

During these financially difficult times, government should not be increasing costs for Wisconsin residents and businesses.

Rep. Karl VanRoy

September Meeting Notes. District Attorney Zakowski speaks to BCTA

Notes from monthly meeting held Sept. 17, 2009, at Tiletown Brewing Co,

Brown County District Attorney John Zakowski spoke about issues facing the District Attorney's office. He explained that he is about seven attorneys short of the number that the present caseload requires. The drug backlog has been reduced by the addition of a drug prosecutor. His office is dealing with major drug conspiracies and shootings related to drug dealings. A tremendous effort by the attorneys in the office is allowing them to keep up. He noted that he personally prosecutes all child abuse cases.

Mr. Zakowski stated that District Attorneys' offices have an enormous amount of discretion. It must be used wisely. He stated that the goal of his office is discovering the truth and proving it, not just prosecuting crimes. He explained how plea bargaining can achieve appropriate disposition of cases. He noted that special prosecutors are provided through reciprocity agreements without extra costs to Brown County. Using special prosecutors avoids the perception of special treatment. Special prosecutors are often appointed for ethical reasons.

Talking about the future, DA Zakowski said that the outlook for additional help from the state is bleak. The gang situation is worse than it was a few years ago. Presently, embezzlements are driven mostly by greed and drugs, with the proportion related to gambling declining. Responding to a question about election fraud, he noted that a requirement for identification cards would be a big help.

A resident of the Pulaski School District voiced her concerns about increasing expenditures in the District's Community Service Fund. She stated that the fund provides \$100,000 annually to the Pulaski community newspaper, published in the high school, but not distributed to the entire school district. Several local school districts have established these funds, which are not included in levy limits established by the Legislature. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has established guidelines for expenditures that are appropriate for Fund 80, the Community Fund, but the DPI does no enforcement of these guidelines.

The next meeting will be October 15, 2009 at Tiletown Brewing Co. The speaker will be Elaine Willman from the Village of Hobart. Details on the last page of this TAX TIMES.

Dave Nelson – Secretary.

Notice to candidates for public office.

Brown County Taxpayer Association monthly meetings are open to the public.

All candidates or incumbents for public office in the 2010 Spring or Fall elections are cordially invited to attend our meetings and be recognized.

Details on back cover of this TAX TIMES.

What The Town Hall Meetings Across America Reveal.

Much has been about the Tea Parties and a growing distrust of our current government. People, who are tired of paying a confiscatory level of taxes to fund an ill-advised and inefficient array of government programs and bailouts, got together to say enough is enough. These programs are always nice sounding and well intended but when the details become known, they all lead us down the path of more government spending, more government control and less individual

The recent displays of public outrage at the town hall meetings across the country are significantly different. Senior citizens, stay at home moms and independent voters have caught the big government liberals off guard. Regular people whose concerns about health care are real have legitimately gathered at town hall meetings with a message to every legislator in the country, "Keep Government out of health care!" Our healthcare is too important to let government interfere with it.

What is even more interesting is the how the mainstream media's attempt to label these vocal opponents of government run healthcare as right wing nut jobs, has backfired. AARP tried to play both sides by stating that AARP did not endorse the Obama healthcare plan while running TV ads supporting it. People are paying attention and AARP is losing tens of thousands of members over the ordeal.

I believe that these recent trends, including the surge in the viewership of the more conservative news channels while the ratings of the more liberal news outlets continue to fall, signal a shift in public opinion now that we are finding out the details of "hope and change". I believe America has begun an Awakening that government must be limited in scope and size. Private enterprise must be allowed not only to succeed but also to fail. Hard work and success should be rewarded.

The cost of health care will improve as transparency and competition are encouraged in an open market. However, government is the problem not the solution.

Rep Don Pridemore

"Nothing just happens in politics. If something happens, you can be sure it was planned that way."
... Franklin D. Roosevelt

"To compel a man to subsidize with his taxes the propagation of ideas which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical." ...Thomas Jefferson

"Too Many people expect wonders from democracy, when the most wonderful thing of all is just having it."
... Walter Winchell

It's you and I paying for the free lunch.

"It turns out that if you make COBRA cheaper, more people will sign up." This from Elizabeth Pope, writing for "Health Reform Talk," a well-informed group, with a liberal bias toward health reform.

Pope analyzes the impact of a stimulus program initiated earlier this year which subsidizes COBRA payments for "certain involuntarily terminated individuals and their families." COBRA is the federal program that allows employees leaving their jobs to continue to carry their group health insurance – but the only catch is the departing employee must pay the full boat of the premium. Many employees get a real wake-up call when they realize the actual cost of employer premiums that reflect the actual cost of health care. Imagine that. Your health care is not free.

So, until December of this year, a COBRA premium subsidy, courtesy of "the stimulus", subsidizes 65% of the cost of COBRA premiums for laid-off workers. Large employers report that COBRA enrollment has doubled since the COBRA premium subsidy was enacted in February 2009, according to a new analysis from Hewitt Associates, a global human resources company.

Hewitt estimates that subsidized COBRA coverage will cost the average worker \$3,000 per year, while regular, unsubsidized COBRA coverage costs nearly \$9,000 per year. So Pope's summary? "It turns out that if you make COBRA cheaper, more people will sign up." Well, duh.

But where does this money come from to make COBRA cheaper? It's NOT free money! It makes me scream when the solution to all of health care's ills is to have someone else pay for it.

Repeat after me: "There is no such thing as a free lunch."

Should laid-off employees suffering economically get needed help?

Yes, surely.

But what should happen when employees realize just how much health insurance (i.e., health care) costs? We Americans should be screaming about finding ways to become involved in our health care, to make better competitive choices, to reduce the cost of health care!

But no. Instead, we ask for more subsidies, and rejoice when a loss leader flies off the shelves - and health care priced as a loss leader continues to bleed America dry. And it's you and I that are paying for it. As some wise sage said, nothing is more expensive than when it is free.

Glenn Frankovis shares a postcard he received from Congresswoman Gwen Moore recently. "Five years ago, seniors in America didn't have drug coverage under Medicare. Today, they do. Medicare Part D is working. Not only are seniors saving an average of \$1,200 per year on medicines, but competition among private insurers is holding down costs, saving taxpayers billions of dollars. Now, by passing consensus, bipartisan health care reform, Congress can strengthen and improve Medicare Part D, help close the Medicare donut hole, and save millions of seniors as much as \$1,800 more every year.

Five years ago, U.S. taxpayers began paying for drugs for seniors. That wasn't enough. Now taxpayers, burdened with ever more debt, are going to sweeten the program still further.

It just doesn't jive. It's we who are paying for all of this. And experts like Elizabeth Pope (and Gwen Moore? Hmmm.) should get that.

Jo Egelhoff, FoxPolitics.net

For a daily E-mail update on Wisconsin news, go to [www/FoxPolitics.net](http://www.FoxPolitics.net)

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

Things That Make Us Wonder.

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO TRUST?

Health care "reform" has become a divisive issue in the country and seems to be getting more so every day with rallies, new proposals, pleas from the President, and polls claiming public opinion going one way or the other dominating the news.

While we all probably agree that some improvements are in order for the system, one side claims we should fix what's broken and don't break what's working while the other side wants to impose complete government control over the entire system. One step at a time if necessary. What we read and hear from both sides is confusing to say the least.

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LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT.

Much of the confusion comes from the cost of any government run plan to taxpayers and the national debt, or if you and I and the millions of people or are presently uninsured proponents claim would benefit if changes to the system are made.

What we are hearing perhaps qualifies the theory that if you want to prove something by using a survey, you first determine the results you want and then go about with the methodology. Same for determining the ultimate cost.

At one point President Obama stated that the cost to the average taxpayer would be minimal due to savings on other programs and increasing taxes on the "rich". Unfortunately the "rich" and their resources are already targeted for several other major spending programs.

Somehow the amount of \$800 Billion over 10 years is used. They likely used a SWAG formula to arrive at that number. Just like in the past they used numbers to prove that Social Security, Medicare and numerous other programs would not raise taxes or contribute to our debt.

In his address, the President flatly stated that persons who have entered the country illegally would not be eligible for government health care benefits. However, he has also stated that he favors amnesty, which could make these people U.S. Citizens qualify for all citizenship benefits. He didn't say how the government would handle abortions. In other words, his speech left more questions than answers.

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LOBBYISTS GET THEIR SAY.

Also to be resolved is what would a plan cover, and for that matter, what changes would be made once the government gets it foot in the door?

We have read of a record amount of lobbyist activity in Washington from pharmaceutical manufacturers, hospital and medical association professionals and existing health insurers, all with access to our representatives, (including campaign contributions), making sure that their interests are represented in a final plan. Even the trial lawyers association was worried. The problem with this is that all of these interests may have something to fear from a government managed health system, provisions are being made to benefit them with changes to gain their support for passage than to actually cut costs to recipients and taxpayers.

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THE ULTIMATE OPTION.

While President Obama suggested a public option to his plan in his televised address, an optional plan proposed by Sen. Max Baucus which has gained attention calls for steep fines on individuals failing to carry health insurance.

Enough said on that subject.

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ACORN CRACKED.

Congress was sidetracked from healthcare reform long enough to vote to end federal funding for ACORN, (*Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now.*) Formed in 1995 as a "non-profit" group to improve neighborhoods by making low cost housing available it has received over \$50 million in taxpayer funding.

As often happens with government funding nobody checks to see what happens after it leaves the treasury.

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CLUNKERS FOR CASH.

What did "Cash for Clunkers" accomplish? Aside from selling a few hundred thousand Toyotas and Hondas, it was supposed to reduce gas consumption.

Someone figured that exchanging autos from those getting 15 MPG to those getting 25 MPG, would save 224 gallons per year over 12,000 miles. This would amount to 5 million barrels of oil for 700,000 autos.

While this number is impressive,

the total only amounts to 5 hours worth of our national consumption. Worth about \$350 Million, at a taxpayer cost of \$3 Billion.

While conserving oil is in our national interest for a great number of reasons, there have to be better ideas than that.

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SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT.

We keep hearing how much we could save, to our pocketbooks and the environment by using fluorescent light bulbs.

We're not proposing changing the NFL schedule, but wonder what the cost is and how much coal is burned to light up Lambeau Field for a night game?

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BACK TO THE FUTURE.

The University of Wisconsin wants to phase out the use of coal at its main heating plant due to environmental concerns.

Governor Doyle wants to use "renewable fuels" to set an example to the rest of world, and is even setting aside a storage area for renewable fuels in the plans. Natural gas is not a renewable fuel.

Using wind or solar power is unlikely which leaves corn cobs or wood pellets like the Amish stoves we see advertised.

Seriously, it would be nice if some day in the future one of those genius scientists at the UW could come up with a way to extract the hydrogen in water for use as a fuel. Imagine having the potential to incorporate this technology right in a power plant producing heat and electricity. We would even let Gov. Doyle take credit for inventing it.

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THE CASE OF THE MISSING RECORDS.

Somehow or other the state is missing about 12,000 criminal DNA records. The cost alone of making and cataloging them must be staggering.

There has been a lot of finger pointing as to who is to blame. It could be any one of about 12,000 state politicians.

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GETTING TOUGH ON DRUNK DRIVING.

The legislature has approved new drunk driving laws and most people seem to agree that this is in order (*as long as they don't get caught themselves*).

One problem may be more cases to be handled by County District Attorneys and more prison sentences for repeat offenders but that may be offset somewhat by the increased penalties which are also provided.

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A CASINO NEAR YOU.

A *Wall Street Journal* article reports that Pres. Obama is considering making it easier for Indian Tribes to built new casinos further from their reservations. To help the economy. The Bush administration limited new casinos within commuting distance of reservations. At present, there are about 300 Indian casinos in the country but not all, including the huge Foxwoods Resort in Connecticut are making a profit.

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WHEN LAWYERS NEED LAWYERS.

Brown County Judge J. D. McKay has ordered the county to release copies of \$2.4 Million of legal bills incurred by the county to the Press-Gazette as required under the states open record laws.

This is a lot of money for legal fees, and would assume as necessary in maintaining the interests of the county and taxpayers.

Whether or not they were budgeted or necessary as a result of official decisions is something that will have to be determined.

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CALIFORNIA BURNING.

The DNR has a long list of items that should not be burned outside for environmental reasons including building materials, plastics and cardboard to name a few. We understand their concern.

What bothers us, in addition to the tremendous waste in loss of property and life are the annual fires in California, the last of which incinerated everything in an area about the size of Brown County.

It will be interesting to find what damage this does to OUR atmosphere.

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THE RECESSION IS OVER?

A slight increase in August retail sales prompted some govt. officials to declare that the recession was now over and recovery is on the way.

This might tale some explaining to the 8-10% of the people who have been unemployed for some time with no prospect of finding a job any-time soon.

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LESSONS FROM FOND DU LAC.

Apparently the Mercury Marine situation in Fond du lac has been resolved and hopefully business conditions will improve.

Our politicians should pay close attention to the reasons the

company considered leaving Wisconsin as there undoubtedly others facing the same problems as Mercury. Jobs are an asset that should be preserved and encouraged if Wisconsin intends to prosper.

* * * * *

RECEIVED YOUR STIMULUS YET?

Not everyone seems to welcome all of the stimulus money the government is handing out. Sheboygan was offered \$2.1 Million to buy new buses but turned it down due to the lack of riders on the buses they had, and future maintenance costs would fall on taxpayers.

Two Rivers turned down a grant to replace water mains because they didn't want to raise taxes for matching funds.

There has been story after story of how stimulus funds are used for strictly pork barrel projects or uses other than intended.

Wasn't all that stimulus money supposed to provide jobs for the unemployed?

* * * * *

TIME TO BAIL OUT UNEMPLOYMENT?

An article in the *Biztimes* reports that Wisconsin's unemployment insurance fund is officially broke, They have already borrowed \$600 Million from the Federal Government and may have to borrow up to \$2 Billion for unemployment claims which will have to be repaid somehow.

* * * * *

THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY.

What factors do business and individuals look at when considering a move to Wisconsin?

The *Tax Foundation* now ranks Wisconsin 42d in the country for projected business climate in 2010. Down from 38th last year. South Dakota was best and New Jersey was last.

The *Tax Foundation* also ranks us as having the 9th highest median property taxes. \$2,963 against the national average of \$1,897.

These same numbers are also likely considerations when business and individuals move out of Wisconsin.

* * * * *

THE RED LIGHT SPECIAL.

The State Senate has approved

a bill allowing police escorts with all embellishments for NFL teams between Appleton and Green Bay. While this may add some drama to the Lambeau Field experience with the visiting team arriving accompanied by sirens and flashing red lights, does the bill authorize funding for additional police overtime and expense?

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A GOO JOB FOR THE POST OFFICE.

Here's an idea that could save the Government some money and do a better job in the process.

The U. S. Census is due in 2010 and the Census Bureau has \$7.6 Billion budgeted to hire thousands of people who will probably do their usual lousy job.

Despite bi-annual rate increases and all sorts of modernization programs the Postal Service is about \$4 Billion in the red and ready to lay off workers.

Why doesn't the Census Bureau contract the USPS to take the 2010 census?

They already know where every-one lives, and have a good idea of how many children they have and even if they are legal citizens or not.

This could give the people at the Post Office something constructive to do, while times are slow, give us a more accurate census, and maybe save some money.

* * * * *

As usual, lots if 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 current news events. We use reliable, published information and statistics. Some items are unimportant and probably not worth commenting about while others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of future study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in limited space and perhaps put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that our perspective on some items in this column may be contrary to some of our readers. However, one of our purposes is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments or suggestions are welcome to include in this section of the "TAX TIMES."

"There is good news from Washington today. The Congress is dead-locked and can't act." . . . **Will Rogers**
"Government does not solve problems; it subsidizes them."

. . . **Ronald Reagan**

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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The TAX TIMES - October, 2009

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

- Thursday - October 15.2009. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., "Frost Room."
Scheduled Speaker, Elaine Willman
Administrator, Village of Hobart
- Thursday - November 19 .2009. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., "Frost Room."
Program to be announced.
- Thursday - December 17 .2009. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., "Frost Room."
Program to be announced.

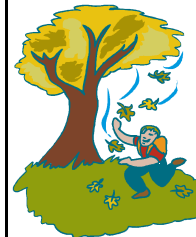
NOTICE: All candidates and incumbents for public office are cordially invited to attend our open meetings and be recognized.

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Titledown 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" \$8.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Jim Frink – 336-6410 for information or to leave message.



October, 2009

"The only difference between death and taxes is death doesn't get any worse every time Congress meets."
. . . Will Rogers

"There is always somebody who is paid too much and taxed too little - - - and it's always somebody else."
. . . Cullen Hightower

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.