

BCTA Press Release.

At a press conference held on February 25., leaders of the Brown County Taxpayers Association said the group could not endorse passage of the upcoming Green Bay school referenda, citing numerous concerns over School Board financial management, decision making and spending. Speaking for the group, BCTA President Richard Parins and Schools Committee Chair Rich Carlstedt further said the association will not advocate for defeat of the referenda, acknowledging some building repair needs are long overdue and have become urgent. Following is a copy of their presentation.

Text of Press Release:

"I'm here today to speak about the Brown County Taxpayers Association's examination of the upcoming Green Bay School District referenda to issue bonds for the funding of building repairs and computer replacement. Let me get right to the bottom line: our organization will not endorse passage of these referenda, nor will we work toward their defeat. We feel this choice is best made by the voters without campaigns, interference or contentious debate.

We acknowledge that the roofs are failing and the computers have become obsolete – so something must be done. We also acknowledge the favorable interest rates available and the district's intent to pay down the debt in a reasonably short 6-year period. So, the question would follow, "why not support the referenda?"

In our view there are repairs and replacements that must be done, but the School Board's own decisions and lack of spending control have created this situation and voters will have to decide if they want to slap down the credit card for a district bailout. The Board has not tended to the condition of our schools, displays an unwillingness to acknowledge money in the current budget which could be used for these needs, and presents an unreasonably stubborn determination to keep millions of taxpayer dollars in the district Fund Balance.

I am going to let our Schools Committee Chair, Rich Carlstedt, talk about the concerns and questions raised by our members for which we have not heard satisfactory answers. When Rich completes his statement, we will be happy to take your questions.

As I close my prepared remarks, I can tell you we looked hard for ways to get behind these referenda, because we know the work has to be done. But we cannot find evidence that the School Board has accepted fiscal reality, taken actions available to them to avoid this need for more debt, and penetrated their finances in the manner we'd expect of those leading a 240 million dollar enterprise. Endorsing these referenda would seem like rewarding mismanagement. I expect voters will really need to wrestle with this decision. Voters have reason to be skeptical and I hope they make a real effort to get informed before April 6th, and make their wisest decision."

Richard Parins — President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 25th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

Concerns Regarding School Referendum.

Following is a list of concerns and questions raised by the BCTA regarding the April 6, Green Bay School District referendum which have yet to be answered to our satisfaction. This list was presented at the Feb. 25, press conference.

Included was questioning why the Board has failed to establish a proper annual maintenance and replacement program, why district spending has grown much faster than inflation without money being made available for maintenance, and why the district started a costly 4-year-old kindergarten program when buildings and computers were falling into disrepair and obsolescence.

These are concerns and questions raised by our members when they heard about the School Board's plan to ask voters in April for bonding authority. These concerns have yet to be answered to our satisfaction. We have gone to board meetings, attended district information sessions about the referenda, and met with members of school district administration in pursuit of a better understanding of these matters.

The overall question for us is not about the need for the repairs and the new computers, but about the Board's failure to take care of this part of their responsibility and why it puts us in a position where we are so far behind on these items. Given this same Board wanted to drive taxpayers far into debt to build an unneeded 5th high school, it is not unreasonable to approach their spending proposals with a close examination and seek understanding of why we have arrived at this point. Among the questions raised by our members are:

- The Board is responsible to maintain the district's physical assets. Why has the Board ignored these ongoing needs? Any large responsible operation preserves their assets through a regular maintenance program, adequately managed and funded. Why has this Board failed to do that, and should taxpayers now shoulder a debt burden to provide the Board a "bail out"? At this point the Board hasn't acknowledged this shortcoming and shown commitment to fixing the problem. As far as we can see they'll be back looking to bond for every maintenance and computer replacement need in the future.
- Why did the Board start up an expensive new 4-year-old kindergarten program when they were fully aware that computer replacement and building maintenance requirements were not being done? Why didn't they first respond to the known maintenance deficiencies before expanding programs?
- At a time when inflation is zero, and fixed-income resi-

dents on social security are getting zero increase, the Board increased its expenditure budget by 6.1% over last year's actual spending. That resulted in property taxpayers facing a 3.5% increase in the tax levy. Why? We told the Board in October that increase was outrageous and we still feel that way. With that spending increase, why should citizens believe the Board cannot find money to fix the buildings?

- It appears to us that the Board has built this year's budget on an assumption of increasing wages/benefits by 5%. That is not reasonable, and certainly not justified in today's economic environment. If the Board settles its contracts for a reasonable, justifiable increase it can free up millions of dollars to put against computers and buildings. The Racine district settled recently with teachers at a 2.6% increase in wages/benefits. If Green Bay did the same, over 4 million dollars could be immediately made available.
- Why does the Board persist in stashing taxpayer money into their "fund balance" when there is no demonstrated need for this? The board took an eight million dollar surplus from last year and kept it in the fund balance, which is supposed to serve as a "rainy day fund". Well, the rainy day is here, thanks to problems being ignored for too long. Now the Board wants to spend 1.5 million from the fund balance to address these building/computer needs. Why not more? Why not 8 million? If these needs qualify as appropriate fund balance spending, why not use last year's surplus rather than borrow ... how does that make any sense?

These are some of the questions and concerns raised by our taxpayer members and, as I said, we've not been able to get satisfactory explanations that would justify enough confidence in the Board to endorse their borrowing plan.

Rich Carlstadt – Schools Committee Chairman

"We can't reduce taxes until we reduce government spending, and I have to point out that government does not tax to get the money it needs; government always needs the money it gets." . . . **Ronald Reagan**

"Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don't have for something they don't need." . . . **Will Rogers**

"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich." . . . **John F. Kennedy**

Is This What The Doctor Ordered?

1 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—The Secretary, in consultation
2 with the National Association of Insurance Commissions,
3 shall establish uniform definitions for the activities re4
ported under subsection (a).

5 “SEC. 2719. APPEALS PROCESS.

6 “A group health plan and a health insurance issuer
7 offering group or individual health insurance coverage
8 shall implement an effective appeals process for appeals
9 of coverage determinations and claims, under which the
10 plan or issuer shall, at a minimum—

11 “(1) have in effect an internal claims appeal
12 process;

13 “(2) provide notice to enrollees, in a culturally
14 and linguistically appropriate manner, of available
15 internal and external appeals processes, and the
16 availability of any applicable office of health insur
17 ance consumer assistance or ombudsman established
18 under section 2793 to assist such enrollees with the
19 appeals processes;

20 “(3) allow an enrollee to review their file, to
21 present evidence and testimony as part of the ap
22 peals process, and to receive continued coverage

23 pending the outcome of the appeals process; and
24 “(4) provide an external review process for such
25 plans and issuers that, at a minimum, includes the

1 consumer protections set forth in the Uniform Ex2
ternal Review Model Act promulgated by the Na3
tional Association of Insurance Commissioners and
4 is binding on such plans.”.

5 SEC. 1002. HEALTH INSURANCE CONSUMER INFOR
6 MATION.

6 Part C of title XXVII of the Public Health Service
7 Act (42 U.S.C. 300gg-91 et seq.) is amended by adding
8 at the end the following:”

If you have any trouble reading the above, you are not alone. There are probably at least 60 U. S. Senators who have not even tried to understand it let alone read it.

This is from a couple of pages picked completely at random from the Senates version of Health Care Reform, SB 3600, perhaps better known as the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.”

It contains well over 2,000 pages, and no, I didn’t bother to read it either. While we probably all agree that health care in this country has become too expensive and complex, we at least know what we have. It may as well have been written in Chinese or Arabic. How can our representatives seriously even consider such an abomination? Or is the word Obomanation?
Jim Frink – BCTA

“Today’s tax system was shaped by sadists who were trying to be nice. Every wrinkle in the code was put there to benefit this or that interest. Since the 1986 tax simplification, the code has been recomplicated more than 14,000 times – more than twice a day.” . . . **George Will**
“In politics, an organized minority is a political majority.”
. . . **Jesse Jackson**

A Scam of Nuclear Proportions.

Nuclear power produces roughly 20% of electricity both in Wisconsin and the United States as a whole. Despite being only 1/5 of the nation’s energy, nuclear power accounts for 72% of the country’s carbon dioxide emission-free generation.

Within the United States are 104 operating nuclear reactors. Three sites are located in Wisconsin. The LaCrosse reactor in Genoa was permanently shut down in 1987. Kewaunee’s reactor is licensed to operate through 2013 with a 20 year license extension pending. Point Beach’s two reactors have operational licenses expiring in 2030 and 2033.

While constructing a nuclear reactor may be more expensive than building a traditional coal or petroleum burning facility, total energy production costs, including construction, operation, maintenance & fuel are lower.

Reported by the New York Times, wind power is approximately 50% more expensive than coal and solar is 3 times more expensive. Coal and nuclear are the lowest cost dependable sources of fuel for “base” load electricity. “Base” load electricity is the electricity needed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year to power homes and businesses.

Coal and nuclear power run regularly at capacity factors of 70.8% and 91.5%, with wind at only 31.1% and solar at 21.1%. Wind and solar energy are heavily reliant on Wisconsin’s unpredictable weather conditions and are not consistent enough to provide base load energy. In other words, if the wind isn’t blowing on a hot summer day, a windmill may not provide electricity for your air conditioner, or will solar panels produce the energy to heat your house on a gray winter day.

Although nuclear power is the most reliable and affordable solution to provide future electricity needs, controversy surrounds nuclear energy. The need to store spent fuel is one concern that cannot be ignored.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 provided that the federal government construct a national repository for the storage of spent nuclear fuel. Yucca Mountain in Nevada was chosen by Congress in 1987. Funding for the repository has been set up through the U.S. Dept. of Energy. Ratepayers in 34 states where nuclear power is generated pay into the fund via an assessment on their electric bill. For the average Wisconsin homeowner using 800 kilowatts of power per month, this fee is approximately \$10.00 per year (one-tenth of one cent per kilowatt hour).

As of September 30, 2009 there was \$33.2 billion in the Federal Nuclear Waste Fund. Wisconsinites have contributed \$414.8 million to the non-functioning repository. Add accrued interest and the state’s share of the Nuclear Waste Fund is over \$731.2 million.

Twelve years after the scheduled 1998 completion date for Yucca Mountain, money is still being collected from ratepayers. President Obama has officially stated the project will be indefinitely suspended. Instead of centralizing a repository at Yucca Mountain as originally intended; spent nuclear fuel will be stored on site at our nation’s nuclear facilities.

So comprises the scam against Wisconsinites. Although the Yucca Mountain project has been scrapped, the assessment paying for the repository will still be charged to your electric bill. Also, utility companies must charge you extra to pay for storing their spent nuclear fuel on site.

The federal government is unjustifiably taking money out of the budgets of families and employers for an unfinished and unlikely to be completed nuclear repository. These funds, rightfully Wisconsin’s, would reduce energy costs and support reliable affordable energy into the future.

State Rep. Kevin Peterseon

Taxation without Representation.

If our Founding Fathers thought taxation without representation was tyranny, they should see what its like with representation. Backroom deals, the purchase of influence, indifference to the struggles of working families, disregard for the wishes of the electorate – not much has changed has it?

During the American Revolution, Great Britain had an elected Parliament. King George maintained his control by using the power of the purse to bribe members thereby buying influence and getting his desired legislation passed. Remind anybody of the Louisiana Purchase and the cornhusker Kickback? Likewise, today we have an elected Congress but taxation and spending by career politicians is more about maintaining power and position than it is about providing for the people or fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities.

From George Washington to Ronald Reagan (19 years) the entire national debt was 1.9 trillion dollars. President Obama and his elitist allies in Congress have raised the national debt 1.4 trillion in one year. Think of it! In essence this reckless bunch took out a mortgage of over \$16,000 for every family in the country. They get to spend the money by giving it to their friends in failed big businesses while we the people have to make the monthly payments for generations to come.

Is it any wonder the people are fed up with these misplaced policies and their arrogance? They promised us that the stimulus and tarp bailouts would keep unemployment under 8%... the rate now is over 10% with real unemployment estimated to be over 17%! Washington's only solution is to borrow billions more to waste on their failed policies.

This country has never been able to spend its way out of a recession. It doesn't work that way. A large part of our economic problem is precisely because the government keeps borrowing and wasting billions on policies that are incapable of solving our economic woes. Not only that but this misguided spending addiction is hurting small business, costing us millions of jobs and will eventually lead to great inflation.

Vladimir Lenin said, "The way to crush the middle class is to grind them between the millstones of taxation and inflation." The middle class has always been the backbone of the American economy – we have been the goose that laid the golden eggs of American prosperity. Not content with our golden eggs, Nancy Pelosi and her delusional friends like Steve Kagen now are killing the goose as well. Their economic policies are totally unsustainable but there is great hope.

Our fellow citizens in Virginia, New Jersey and Massachusetts have created the beginning tremors of a great grass-roots earthquake that will redefine our political landscape. The liberal media doesn't understand it and the politicians can't stop it.

Our purpose must not only be to change which Party controls Congress – our purpose must be to reform Congress, end the culture of corruption in Washington and return to our Constitutional roots.

Rep. Roger Roth

Missing Information on the Millions for Madison to Milwaukee Trains.

For big-city politicians, the mere thought of shiny fast trains filled with commuters darting across undisturbed land between one large city and the next is intoxicating. Thankfully, fiscal reality has always stood in the way of their utopian "build it and they will ride" appeal. Constructing a high-speed rail line is very costly and operating the passenger train service requires taxpayers to subsidize the cost. Congress chose to ignore these stubborn facts. Wisconsin's application was approved by the Obama Administration and the United States Department of Transportation awarded a grant of \$810 million for the project.

Not surprisingly, Governor Doyle proclaimed this to be a big win for Wisconsin. He said it will create thousands of jobs, link the state's major centers of commerce, reduce road traffic congestion and save gas for commuters who opt for train travel. The state's mainstream media followed the Governor's lead. Glowing editorials in the Appleton Post Crescent, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and the Wisconsin State Journal raved about these benefits and called upon the State Legislature to join with the Governor in backing the project.

The Governor's request for acceptance of the federal stimulus funds for the Madison to Milwaukee high-speed rail project came before the legislature's Joint Finance Committee for final approval. As a member of this committee, my job is look at the both the benefits and the costs. For that, I turned to the analysis by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB). Let me share with some of the LFB information missing from Governor Doyle's talking points.

Train Fares, Ridership and Operating Subsidies. Working with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT), Amtrak conducted a preliminary operation and financial analysis to estimate ridership and anticipated subsidies. Their conclusions were: a) one-way fares would be established at between \$20 and \$33; b) the initial operating subsidies would be \$7.5 million a year based on annual ridership of 361,400 passengers. If these figures are accurate, approximately 1,000 commuters would pay up to \$66 a day to travel by train to and from Madison and Milwaukee. It should be noted that the operating subsidy will not be paid for by the federal government, instead it will be paid for by Wisconsin motorists through gas taxes and motor vehicle registration fees.

Train Travel Times. The proposed high-speed passenger train service would run from the existing Amtrak station in downtown Milwaukee to a new station located at the Dane County Airport that is approximately five miles from downtown Madison with stops in Brookfield, Oconomowoc and Watertown. The travel time is estimated at one hour and 14 minutes. It takes about an hour and a half between downtown Milwaukee and downtown Madison by car.

Financial Responsibility for Additional Costs. In its application for federal stimulus funds, the Wisconsin DOT indicated that any costs above the \$810 million from the federal government, would be the state's responsibility. At the present time, the state's Transportation Fund is in deficit. The Governor's request for annual passenger train subsidies of \$7.5 million would be just another annual draw on an account that is already in deficit. The most likely option is another increase in vehicle registration fees or possibly a gas tax increase.

Another issue of interest to Northeast Wisconsin. Local elected officials in the Fox Valley and Brown County have called attention to a change in federal funding for local mass transit based on population. It is anticipated that the 2010 census will reveal that the population of Green Bay metro area and the Fox Cities will each exceed 200,000. If that happens, these two metro areas could lose more than \$2 million in federal transit aids beginning as soon as 2012.

For obvious reasons, I have grave concerns that \$810 million can be provided to benefit the residents of Southcentral Wisconsin, but \$2 million cannot be provided to benefit the residents I represent.

State Representative Phil Montgomery

Popular Vote Bill Bad for Wisconsin.

It has come to my attention there is misinformation surrounding Assembly Bill 751. To be clear, I strongly oppose this bill. Assembly Bill 751 would require all of Wisconsin's electoral votes go to whichever presidential candidate wins the majority of national popular votes. If this bill were passed, Wisconsin would have to give its ten electoral votes to a candidate that may not have even carried the popular vote in Wisconsin.

For instance, in 2004 George W. Bush would have received Wisconsin's electoral votes because he won the national popular vote. In 1988, George H.W. Bush would have received Wisconsin's votes. This would have taken place even though in both cases the Democratic candidate won the popular vote in Wisconsin.

Opposition to this bill is not about political party, but about Wisconsin's equal representation. The national popular vote movement benefits highly populated states and cities that are not swing states. Wisconsin is considered a swing state and is of moderate population. Wisconsin would be disenfranchised by presidential elections being decided by the national popular vote.

Simply put, the votes in urban populations in Los Angeles and New York would have more say in the election of president than the same votes from the residents of Marinette or Green Bay. As well, the thought of a nationwide recount if an election were close and the overwhelming fraud and abuse that would take place is mind blowing. A situation such as that could threaten our very democracy and delegitimize a president.

The electoral college was designed by our nation's founders to keep presidents responsive to 'all' states and it has served our nation well since its founding. Assembly Bill 751 should not be passed and I urge others to strongly oppose it.
State Rrp. John Nygren

Wisconsin Loses 4.3% of Business.

Wisconsin had 6,700, or 4.3%, fewer private businesses in early 2009 than it did at the same time in 2006, according to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX). The first-quarter statistics—from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—were part of a WISTAX review of various "state of the state" measures early in the new year.

While employment figures and jobless rates are closely monitored by the press and the public during a recession—as they should be", WISTAX President Todd Berry noted, "less attention has been paid to the employers who provide jobs."

The 2006-09 drop in private establishments here was somewhat unusual, for Illinois (7.8%), Iowa (2.2%), Minnesota (0.4%), and the nation (6.1%) all experienced increases; and Michigan (-1.7%), surprisingly, was down less than Wisconsin.

The adverse trend in Wisconsin is a relatively new development, as earlier in the decade the state outperformed the four neighbor states. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of private establishments in the Badger State rose 11.5% to 155,900. That growth rate exceeded all the surrounding states and the U.S. (7.0%). Regionally, Illinois's increase was second (8.0%) and Minnesota's third (7.7%). Numbers in Iowa and Michigan declined during 2001-06.

When establishments were examined by employee Count, WISTAX found that business numbers were down almost across the board with the largest declines coming among firms with 100 or more employees. The one exception was firms with less than five employees, of which Wisconsin had 6.8% more in 2009 than in 2006. "This is good news, since small businesses create the bulk of new jobs," noted Berry.

These and other assessments of the state of the state are Found in the recent WISTAX report, "Time for status reports," available by contacting WISTAX at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, Wisconsin wistax@wistax.org; or call 608.241.9789.

National Debt Update.

As of Feb. 28,2010, the official U. S. National debt reached a total of **\$12,429,033,950,086.00**, or an increase of about 70 Billion since last month at this time, give or take a few million. Thank goodness Congress had the foresight to raise the limit so they wouldn't have to shut the government down.

Of this total about \$3.9 Trillion is owed to foreign countries and they probably won't say much as long as we keep buying their oil and consumer goods to sell at Walmart and just about everywhere else.

Unfortunately a liability that is growing even faster is the **"Unfunded National Debt,"** which now totals about \$107.6 Trillion, consisting of \$14.2T for Social Security, \$18.8T for Prescription drugs, and \$74.6T for Medicare recipients. Does anyone know where the Social Security trust fund is stashed? Would President Obama's Health Care Plan reverse this trend?

In the meantime, the total privately held assets in the United States are estimated at \$75.6 Trillion. This consists of \$4.7 Trillion the value of small business, \$13T the value of Corporations and \$57.9T for the net worth of individuals and households.

How is the Federal Government doing? So far this year expenditures have been \$3.518 Trillion against income of \$2.116 Trillion – not good. Obviously increasing private employment will help. While the Labor Dept tries to show improvement in employment figures as a result of stimulus programs, there is still a long way to go. Example, on Feb. 28, they determined the official number of unemployed was 14.441 million. However, the actual number is estimated to be 24.164 million. The difference being in those claiming or not claiming unemployment.

In the meantime, Pres. Obama has established a "bipartisan" *Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform* to tackle the countries fiscal challenges.

Hang on to your pocketbooks. If you want to verify any of the numbers in this article, check out **www.USDEBTCLOCK.Org**. You will be entertained for hours watching your money disappear.

Jim Frink – BCTA

"Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases. If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it." . . . Ronald Reagan

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.

Welcome To Green Bay and Bay Beach.

One of the most notable attractions in the City of Green Bay is Bay Beach Amusement Park. As the 9th oldest amusement park in the United States, Bay Beach has a rich history and has served as an affordable recreational destination for countless area families and visitors. The widely recognized historic pavilion, various amenities and 17 nostalgic rides make it a unique asset to our community. As affordable as Bay Beach is, the park is also a significant revenue generator for the City of Green Bay. In 2009 alone close to one million people visited the park amounting to \$1.6 million in revenue from ride ticket sales and concessions. In the same year, the cost of operating Bay Beach was just over \$800,000. The remaining \$800,000 of revenue is used to help pay for other city services and saves taxpayer dollars.

Recognizing the future potential of Bay Beach and the need to expand, I along with members of the City Council and Park Department staff worked over many years to develop what is known as the Bay Beach Master Plan. In 2008, the City of Green Bay adopted the plan which included the acquisition of a family-friendly wooden roller coaster.

We now have an opportunity to implement phase one of that plan by acquiring and building a wooden roller coaster in the coming year at no cost to taxpayers. Originally constructed in 1923 by renowned wooden coaster designer John Miller, the Zippin Pippin is the second oldest wooden roller coaster in the United States. This classic wooden coaster design and unique history makes it a natural fit for Bay Beach.

Despite what some have said, the City is not purchasing a collapsed, rotting wooden ride. What the City is purchasing is the legal rights to the historically significant design concept and Zippin Pippin name along with usable fixtures and equipment. It will be designed to meet all current safety standards and reconstructed entirely of new lumber. The cost of the roller coaster will be paid for by a combination of private donations and ticket sales from the ride itself, not taxpayers.

In fact, the addition of the Zippin Pippin will not only generate more revenue from its own ticket sales but also by boosting ticket sales for existing rides and increasing concession sales. These additional revenues will reduce the burden on tax payers.

Put simply, the rebirth of the Zippin Pippin wooden coaster at Bay Beach will serve as a key attraction, enticing even more visitors to the area and ensuring future generations will continue to enjoy the amusement park and the historic roller coaster for years to come.

Mayor Jim Schmitt

"In our brief history we have shot four of our presidents, worried five of them to death, impeached one and hounded another out of office. And when all else fails, we hold an election and assassinate their character."

. . . **P. J. O'Rourke**

"Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics so not know what religion is."

. . . **Mahandas Gandhi**

"We may not imagine how our lives could become more frustrating and complex – but Congress can."

. . . **Cullen Hightower**

February Meeting Notes.

Mark Neumann Addresses BCTA.

Monthly BCTA meeting held Feb. 18, 2010 at Titledown Brewing Co.

Mark Neumann, candidate for governor, began his talk by introducing his wife of 35 years, Sue Neumann. After four years as a high school math teacher, Mark and his wife started a real estate business in their basement. In 1986 they started building homes. They built nine homes their first year and grew the business to building 120 homes in their fourth year.

Mr. Neumann stated that service to the nation is the highest calling for a citizen. Elected on his third try, he served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 through 1999. He served on both the House Budget Committee and the House Appropriations Committee. He noted with pride that during those years taxes were cut and after four years the federal budget was balanced. In 1998, he lost a close race for U.S. Senate to Russ Feingold.

Now, after ten years back in the private sector, he is running

for governor because he believes we need a new positive vision for Wisconsin so our children and grandchildren will have the same opportunities we have enjoyed.

Mr. Neumann said that his top priority as governor would be putting people back to work. He would surround himself with great people and permit them to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. He said we need to bring state spending under control and make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation. Lower taxes and improved education, including charter schools, are important steps. Rules

Wisconsin Governor Candidate Mark Neumann speaks to BCTA, members at February meeting.

and regulations must be sensible, not barriers to economic growth. "The culture in Madison must change," he said.

Seven Directors were elected for three-year terms: Richard Carlstedt, Beverly VanDeurzen, David Dillenburg, Rod Goldhahn, *Rick Hood, *Glen Schwalbach, and *Jerry Loritz (*first-term directors). Mary Kennedy was elected to fill the remaining year of the term of Carol Macaux-Roen, who has left the area.

Officers elected for one-year terms were:

- President: Richard Parins**
- 1st Vice President: Rich Carlstedt**
- 2nd Vice President: Rick Hood**
- Secretary: Dave Nelson**
- Treasurer: Tom Sladek**

The next meeting of the Brown County Taxpayers Association will be Thursday, March 18, at Titledown Brewing. The scheduled speakers will be Dr. Marc Trager, and Mark Savard. Candidates for the 8th District Congressional seat. Details on the last page of this **TAX TIMES**.

Dave Nelson-Secretary.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE – www.BCTAxpayers.Org
Email: BCTA@ExecPc.Com**

50 Examples of Government Waste. Part #2.

In the February *TAX TIMES*, we commented on a report from the Heritage Foundation titled, "50 Examples of Government Waste." Some of the more flagrant items we listed were \$25 Billion to maintain unused or vacant property, \$72 Billion in unauthorized or improper payments, \$92 Billion on corporate welfare excluding TARP, and \$123 Billion in aid programs which fail to show any positive impact on the intended recipients.

A few other items from the report to add to the list are as follows. Federal agencies are delinquent on nearly 20% of travel reservations at a cost of hundreds of millions annually. The Postal Service spent \$13,500 for a banquet attended by 81 people. Over half of all farm subsidies go to commercial farms reporting average incomes of over \$200,000 annually, while some farmers are paid not to plant crops. Health care fraud is estimated to cost taxpayers more than \$60 Billion annually. Refusal of many federal employees to fly coach costs taxpayers \$146 annually in upgrades. Sen. Kerry diverted \$20 Million from the defense budget for a new Edward Kennedy institute.

The FCC spent \$350,000 to sponsor a Nascar driver. Was a \$2.5 Million Super Bowl for the Census necessary? Members of Congress furnish their offices with popcorn machines, plasma TV sets, personalized calendars plus spend millions on fancy printing for their free mailings. They also just voted to increase these mailing privileges by \$90 Million: Just in time for the 2010 election campaigns and keeping the folks back home informed.

Congress recently gave Alaska Airlines \$500,000 to paint a Chinook Salmon on one of their planes. Washington has spent \$3 Billion re-sanding beaches around the country, even though the new sand washes back into the ocean the next day. Much of the \$2.5 Billion in "stimulus" spending by the Dept. of Agriculture for broadband internet has been wasted. The Defense Dept. wasted \$100 Million in unused airline tickets because they didn't claim a refund. The list goes on and on.

Efficiency recommendations from the Dept. of Health and Human Services which could save \$9 Billion annually have been ignored. Washington state sent \$1 food stamp checks to 250,000 households to raise their caseload numbers and receive \$43 million in federal funds. It was found that many suburban families were receiving subsidies for growing grass in their backyards. Nobody ever bothered to check their claims.

Congress appropriated \$20 Million for "commemoration of success" celebrations related to Iraq and Afghanistan. The National Institute of Health spends \$1.3 million per month on a lab that it cannot use. Congress recently spend \$2.4 Billion on 10 new jets that the Pentagon says it does not need and will not use. A total of \$13 Million was diverted from Katrina relief to build a museum celebrating the Army Corp. of Engineers, who were somewhat to blame for the damage that was caused.

Medicare mailed \$50 Million in erroneous refunds to Medicare recipients. Audits showed at least \$34 Billion of significant waste and fraud in Dept. of Homeland Security contracts. Washington recently spent \$1.8 million to help build a private golf course in Atlanta. The Commerce Dept. lost track of 1,137 computers, many with sensitive records. There is no reason to believe that this list is even the tip of the iceberg as far as wasteful or unnecessary spending by the Federal Govt. is concerned. It is really a joke when President Obama calls his proposed budget \$3.6 Trillion budget "bare-bones", but in the same breath claims he can possibly find ways to cut \$140 million.

In all fairness, no President in the past 80 years truly seems to have been concerned with government spending. It is part of the system and the way things are done. The demands on Washington have become more complex. When new people are put in charge of cabinet departments with each new administration, is the incentive to save taxpayer money or establish new programs?

Perhaps we need more people in Washington with a background in responsible business financial management. One big difference between private industry and government is that in private industry you are usually expected to have at least some idea of where the money is coming from before you spend it.

Jim Frink - BCTA

Reid Ribble On The Economy.

Early last year, Congress authorized over \$2.5 trillion of spending to "stimulate" the economy. President Obama told the American people that if they spent this amount of money, that unemployment rates would level off and the economy would start growing again. Now here we are, months later, and the jobless rate continues to grow; the unemployed represent over 10% of all workers¹. This is tragic....more importantly it didn't need to happen.

In the 1930's, both President Herbert Hoover and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt used taxpayer dollars in attempts to stimulate the economy. The Great Depression lasted for almost a decade and what resulted was a system of patronage whereby if you voted for the party in power you were rewarded with money and if you didn't, well, you simply were left out. Today we see signs of that happening now. Congress passed a massive spending bill, called it "stimulus" and mortgaged our children's future to pay for it.

The U.S. government has over-spent for the last four decades and the current Congress has taken spending to new levels. Whenever you and I overspend, the money must be paid back. The U.S. government has borrowed more than \$12 trillion (and rising) and this level of debt cannot be sustained and must be paid down. Until we solve the spending problem in Washington DC, the economy will struggle under the burden. If we want long term economic recovery, government at all levels must spend less, pay off debt, and become more fiscally responsible.

Economies ebb and flow naturally. I believe that the economy is best able to grow when the government takes less out of it. Each dollar the government "redirects" is a dollar that would have naturally been used in the free market system to improve productivity, employ people and provide a service. Government's intrusion into the natural flow of the markets does little to make economies grow and in fact can get in the way and make matters worse.

So where do we go from here? We elect representatives that understand the principles of a restrained government discussed above and then we hold them accountable. We send people to Washington DC to not just talk about smaller, more responsible government; we send those with enough life experience to get the job done. Now is not the time for "on the job" training. We need representatives that know how jobs are created and budgets are balanced; not from reading books or spending time in committee meetings about it but from actually having done it.

Reid Ribble

"The art of politics consists in knowing precisely when it is necessary to hit an opponent slightly below the belt." . . . Konrad Adenauer

"I love a dog, he does nothing for political reasons." . . . Will Rogers

FAT-CAT POLITICIANS SQUEEZING TAXPAYERS WITH FAT TAXES.

"Today's taxes are already oppressive, but things have truly gotten out of hand when research into the possibility of passing new taxes is funded by taxpayer dollars," warns Jim Tobin, president of Taxpayers United of America.

Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago have reportedly received \$1 million from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute to study the relationship between "fat taxes" and food consumption, diet quality and obesity. Taxpayers know what's on the horizon: new taxes on soft drinks.

Obesity is a complex problem due to a variety of factors. Since the 1970s, Americans have steadily increased their caloric intake by anywhere from 8-18%. At the same time, they have become more sedentary. Sixty percent of Americans are not regularly active, and 25 percent are not active at all. Based on an A. C. Nielsen study, an average American spends 60 days a year in front of a TV set.

Not only is targeting soft drinks as the cause for obesity nonsensical, it is simply an excuse for new taxes. Soft drink sales have declined nearly 10% since 2000, though adult and childhood obesity rates have continued to rise. In other words, while calories from the soft drink industry are decreasing, obesity rates are increasing.

"Tax-hungry politicians lie awake at night thinking of new ways to take our money," says Tobin. "Having hiked cigarette and liquor taxes as much as they dare for now, they've found a new "sin," obesity, to be used against us. Taxes on soft drinks and snack foods will make us lighter—but only in the wallet—and enable fat-cat politicians and their friends to laugh all the way to the bank."

Politicians should put spending on a diet and leave consumers alone.

Taxpayers United of America..

"A politician should have three hats. One for throwing in the ring, one for talking through, and one for pulling rabbits out of if elected."

, , , Carl Sandberg

"Politics is an excellent career, unless you get caught."

. . . Robert Half

Things That Make Us Wonder.

ELECTION REFORM? MAYBE LATER.

Despite a lot of lip service from representatives in both Madison and Washington we have yet to see any meaningful campaign finance reform. If anything, the U.S. Supreme Court has muddied the waters even more by removing restrictions on corporate donations.

With the mid-term elections this fall with the balance of power in the House and Senate at stake, along with our own state governor and legislature be prepared for an onslaught of advertising to buy votes like never before. The race for Wisconsin Governor alone could cost \$50 Million.

This is unfortunate. It is obvious that much of the recent legislation from both Madison and Washington is influenced by the big money paying to put people in office and supporting the lobbyists who have their ear rather than the needs of the people who they are supposed to be representing. The popular idea of publicly financing campaigns is a political cop out Money will still talk..

PEOPLE WILL STILL SMOKE.

Wisconsin now has the 6th highest cigarette tax in the nation. While the .75 per pack increase in 2009 was touted to discourage smoking, it was also intended to increase state revenue.

However the Dept. of Revenue now estimates cigarette tax revenues will be about \$92 million per year less than was anticipated. It was not established whether this was due to fewer people smoking or buying their cigarettes in other states where the tax is much cheaper.

Now the Cancer Action Network has proposed another \$1.00 per pack tax hike which they claim would raise \$84.4 million more annually in Wisconsin. Who are you supposed to believe? Why not just pay people to quit smoking if that's what they want.

SPEND LESS OR TAX MORE?

This idea will keep coming around until we all realize when "enough is enough." Recall a couple of years ago meetings were being held around the state to promote new ideas to finance public schools. Nothing much was formalized, the state

budget effectively reduced school spending, and many if not most of the states school district are facing budget problems.

A Madison group called Wisconsin Alliance for Better Schools is now proposing raising the states sales tax from 5 to 6% with extra percent being dedicated to public schools. No doubt the schools would have no trouble spending it.

When Wisconsin first started the sales tax it was to be "temporary", just 3%, and only on "luxury" items. You know the rest. Simply put, spending keeps expanding to consume available money, and many interests are looking for extra ways to finance their existence. Highways could use an extra 1%, so could welfare, so could state pension plans, so could police and fire and courts. The list is endless and by that time the schools will need another 1%. Give us a break.

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THE \$810 MILLION DOWN PAYMENT.

In their anxiety to receive \$810 Million in federal stimulus money to fund a 110 MPH "Bullet Train" between Milwaukee and Madison, we wonder if anyone has wondered if this is all the project would cost, if anyone would ride it, or if the proposed revenues would be sufficient for operating expenses. As taxpayers we are also paying the first \$810 Million.

There is an old saying that if a project is not attractive for private investors, why should the government have to step in and pay the bill.

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MAKING THE TOURISTS PAY.

Claiming that tourists would help pay, the Sheboygan County Board is considering implementing the .5% sales tax. While the county will no doubt find ways to spend the extra money, tourists will only end up paying a fraction of what it will cost county residents. Last reports indicate a lot of citizen opposition to the plan.

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COOK COUNTY LEADS THE WAY.

In an effort to demonstrate transparency in government, a number of Illinois counties, including Cook are putting their check registers and meeting minutes on their websites for public scrutiny.

Great idea, especially if they would also include bid results, payroll figures and under the table cash payments which they possibly make.

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KEEPING OUR JUDGES HONEST.

Public financing of election campaigns is an idea that hasn't taken hold, Governor Doyle recently signed a bill providing taxpayer money to Supreme Court candidates. The idea is to discourage special interest influence although candidates although there are a few strings and conditions attached. Although any judge at any level should be impartial and follow the law the source of the money used to get elected should always be suspect.

* * * * *

RIDE THE ZIPPIN PIPPIN.

No doubt the addition of a roller coaster at Bay Beach would be a unique and popular attraction for Green Bay. Even a jazz age antique if it could be obtained and reconstructed at a reasonable cost to the city. If you want to go for a ride, Google in "Zippin Pippin Ride" on your computer, and click on the You Tube video to enjoy a front row seat ride around the track.

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GETTING YOUR \$50 WORTH.

The 2010 U. S. Census is extremely important to all of us, and the Federal Government is giving it top priority.

In typical fashion they have allocated \$15 Billion to the project, and are now figuring out ways to spend that much money, which equates to about \$50 to count each one of us once.

Expenses so far include \$2.5 M for a Super Bowl ad, and hiring 10,000 employees who were paid \$300 each to attend training sessions but ended up quitting before doing any work. Reports are that 40,000 workers will be hired in Wisconsin, mostly to make house calls to people who don't return questionnaires by mail. At least it will make the governments unemployment figures look better.

* * * * *

THE LAWYERS GET THEIR SHARE.

Right or wrong, Toyota is getting a lot of bad publicity over their recalls. A lot of people drive their products and will expect them to fix any safety defects.

However, like buzzards attracted to road kill, it was reported that a group of national law firms are seeking lists of owners with the intent of initiating class action suits on their behalf for value lost as a result of the recalls. Go where the money is.

* * * * *

SUBSIDIZED ROBBERY.

The Mayor of Madison earns

\$112,880 per year, and he isn't even one of the top 20 paid employees. The highest was a city bus driver who raked in \$159,892 last year thanks to overtime and a union contract.

If Madison is like most other cities with municipal bus operations, they are heavily subsidized with taxpayer money in order to operate. Overtime in 2009 amounted to \$1.94 Million.

The general manager of the system earned \$118,800 last year, and has defended his employees overtime and other conditions leading to their other extraordinary operating expenses. Apparently cost control or operating within a budget are not part of his responsibilities.

* * * * *

THE UNCLE SAM CASINO.

When there is money to be made it doesn't take government long to figure out a way to tax it and share the profits.

Noting that internet gambling has become popular in recent years, Congress is looking for ways to make it legal and to get a cut for the Federal Government. Whatever they do, they will find a way to spend it even faster.

* * * * *

ANOTHER REVENUE SOURCE.

Despite opposition from business owners, the City of Kenosha is proposing license fee of \$30 on all amusement device machines in the city. This includes juke boxes, pool tables, pinball and video machines. The original proposal was for a \$250 per fee but that was defeated, at least for the time being.

If the state wanted to make some money they should consider legalizing the gambling machines which seem to be present in a great many taverns throughout the state. The state lost its objection to gambling several years ago when tribal casinos were established and presently this is considered legalized unfair competition.

* * * * *

UNEMPLOYMENT RUNNING OUT!

In spite of reports from Washington trying to sound optimistic about reducing unemployment, the fact remains there are still about 250,000 workers in Wisconsin receiving unemployment alone. Of these over 100,000 are in danger of having their benefits expire.

Normally benefits are paid from

a fund charged to employers for a set amount of time. When the state fund is depleted, they borrow money from the Federal Govt., which only lasts for a specific period. When available benefit funds are exhausted it is up to the individual states or Congress to appropriate additional funding and benefits.

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STIMULATING A STIMULUS.

Creating jobs and getting people back to work seems to be the #1 concern of most people these days. It also seems that most of the initiatives from Washington all have huge price tags and have not produced much in the way of results.

Billions of taxpayer dollars have been squandered on public and private projects with promises of providing employment but only benefiting corporations and government units. Using potential jobs as an excuse for more massive pork barrel spending by members of Congress.

Most of the numbers released do not make sense except to reinforce the notion that present government programs are not accomplishing anything.

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GREAT LAKES CLEANUP WILL COST.

The Great Lakes are experiencing a number of big problems including pollution, erosion, water levels, invasive species and a few others. Some communities use it as a sewer and others want to use it for drinking water.

The EPA has unveiled a 5-year plan costing \$475 Million while Pres. Obama has only included \$300 Million in the next budget. No doubt if every community and interest submitted a request for funds they could spend Billions. The problem may be using the money wisely.

Here is a theoretical question for you. Assuming the Federal Government actually had an extra \$475 M to spend at their discretion, would you give top priority to building a high-speed railroad from Milwaukee to Madison for the benefit of a few people, or spend it on trying to clean up the Great Lakes for future generations?

* * * * *

CLEANUP OR DREDGE?

An article in the Feb. 9, *Press-Gazette* disclosed another conflict which could effect the economy of Green Bay.

The Army Corps of Engineers was scheduled to dredge the Fox River this sum-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →

mer to accommodate shipping to the Port of Green Bay, at a cost of a about \$3.1 Million. However the EPA and DNR which are already busy spending \$700 Million or so removing contaminated sludge from the river complained to the Corps that their dredging might interfere with their project.

As a result, unless some compromise is reached, it may be several years until necessary funding for dredging is again made available.

It is claimed that the harbor brings \$75 Million in business into the city annually and is responsible for 700 jobs.

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DO AS I SAY – NOT AS I DO.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration Act, (OSHA), was signed into law in 1970, and while causing a lot of confusion and expense at first for employers it has also served to make places of work more safety conscientious.

While private employers have largely accepted and complied with the regulations imposed, a recent inspection of congressional offices in Washington found that over 70% were in violation of safety hazards which likely would result in fines for anyone else. These included stacks of paper on top of heaters, blocked sprinkler heads, fire doors obstructed by furniture and electrical outlets with exposed wiring.

No doubt their excuse was the lack of money to fix and clean things up.

* * * * *

LOBBYISTS IN ACTION.

It has been reported that lobbyists spent a total of \$36 Million last year in Madison in efforts to influence our elected officials to support their causes.

Who spent the most money? WEAC with \$1.5 Million which was about double that of the second biggest spender. They listed preserving school funding in the budget as their cause. While this could conceivably benefit taxpayers in the long run, it illustrates how special interest groups with money to spend have greater access and influence with legislators than taxpayers do.

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REAL GRIDLOCK IN WASHINGTON.

While the President has problems getting his agenda approved, agreement between Congress and the Senate may be part of problem. It was reported there is a total of 290 bills which were approved by Congress waiting for the Senate to take action. Both Congress and the

Senate must approve legislation in order to receive the President's signature.

As usual they are blaming the Republicans, but some of the bills are probably too far out for the Democrats to reach agreement on.

* * * * *

PUNISHING THE VICTIMS.

Green Bay recently passed an ordinance allowing residents one week to remove graffiti from their buildings after being issued a citation. Problem is it can be expensive to remove and does not stop vandals from returning to create more of their malicious artwork.

We realize priority-wise the police have more pressing things to do, but if they can spot graffiti and issue citations couldn't they track down some of the criminals involved and as a penalty make them clean up some of the mess they have made. Makes more sense then penalizing the victims.

* * * * *

SCHOOLS STRUGGLE FOR FUNDING.

Public schools throughout the country are suffering from financial problems. Each community is doing what it takes to maintain the balance between following government mandates, offering the quality of education the community expects, funding their budget at a time when the economy is way down and keeping taxpayers quiet when other necessary government services also need more funding.

Reports indicate most Wisconsin School districts have been forced to make budget cuts, often in the form of staff and programs. The states own budget problems have reduced some of their funding to school systems..

New building projects may have to be delayed. One \$1.25 M referendum failed due in part to the school board granting a 3.9% wage and benefit increase to teachers for the next 2 years.

The Wisconsin State Journal reported that the Madison District was facing a \$30 Million budget hole. Many schools who received Federal stimulus funds for this years budget will probably not have funds available in coming years.

The school board from the small town of Central Falls, RI, where the median income is \$22,000, asked their High School teachers to work an extra 25 minutes per day to help students by helping

with tutoring. These teachers were making \$70-78,000 annually, but refused the request. The school superintendent responded by firing all of the teachers at the school.

* * * * *

THE HIGH COST OF WATER.

Sometimes it doesn't pay to try saving money. Ever since the Central Brown County Water Authority decided on a pipeline to Manitowoc, the cost to users have been steadily increasing.

As a result, when people try to save water by not watering their lawns or taking showers the authority kept raising the rates to provide needed revenue.

It was obvious at the time that building the pipeline to Manitowoc, would cost far more than a route through Green Bay's right of way, and forming a regional water authority with the City of Green Bay.

The city also had to update their system resulting in higher water rates. Although we don't know what the rates for either would be now if things were done differently at the time, it seems sometimes hindsight is better than foresight.

* * * * *

CUT SOME OF THE PROGRAMS.

Even the UW system is trying to save money. A review identified programs with relatively few students or which are offered at other campuses and authorized the individual schools to drop them at their discretion. So far a total of only two courses have been dropped statewide but it stills seems like a good idea.

* * * * *

GET YOUR FREE CELLPHONE.

Two things I have wondered about are where does the money from the Universal Service Fund on my phone go, and how do the people we see on TV lined up at food pantries and employment agencies manage to afford cell phones when many people with jobs regard them as unnecessary.

The answer is that receipts from the USF surcharge are used to provide cell phones to qualifying low-income individuals.

* * * * *

WHY ROADWORK IS EXPENSIVE.

The DNR is proposing stricter runoff rules for municipal road construction projects, which is estimated to add over \$45 Million to county and municipal road projects statewide. That is what the plastic fences you see along construction jobs are for.

These projects usually paid through local budgets which even though

have merit will make road construction just that much more expensive.

* * * * *

FOOD STAMPS AREN'T FREE.

President Obama's budget calls for a 30% increase to \$72.5 Billion for the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps. The cost to those not receiving food stamps would equate to about \$265 per capita.

We acknowledge that this program is helpful to many people in feeding their families and the economy has placed many more people receiving welfare. However it was disclosed that due to the large number of people applying for the program, they have not been able to check all applicants for eligibility. Presently 38 million individuals participate, and enrollment can be as easy as calling an 800 number.

* * * * *

ANOTHER STATE MADE MESS.

One of the provisions buried in the state budget was a requirement that contractors pay prevailing (*Union scale*) wages to workers they employ to work on state and federal funded projects.

While there could have been political reasons for putting this in the budget, and fines were established for non-compliance, nobody ever designed forms for reporting or established a procedure for keeping track of records.

Consequently, many contractors are confused on what to do, and are calling on lawmakers to repeal the mandate as it has no sensible purpose. In the meantime, politicians wonder why business complains about operating in Wisconsin.

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LET'SUNSET THE PACKER TAX.

Channel 11 TV recently presented an interesting series regarding the "Lambeau Tax." We acknowledge the unique value that the stadium and the Packers bring to the city, and impossible to describe with a price tag. The question is how much more will Brown County citizens have to pay?

In 2000 Brown County voters approved a referendum *authorizing a sales and use tax for purposes related to football stadium facilities in the professional football stadium district.* There was no specific amount specified, time limit established, or explanation of upkeep and maintenance obligations.

We understand that the sales tax collections have accommodated the stadium bonds at a rate faster than originally anti-

ipated, which is good. However, part of the present day collections are going to present maintenance and game day expense costs, and another \$60 to \$80 Million will be set aside as a fund to pay future expenses before the stadium use sales tax will expire.

Annual operations and maintenance items reported total almost \$10 Million including almost \$3,000,000 in utilities and \$900,000 for game day police and fire costs. If they paid 100 policemen for each game this could be \$1,000 per.

In addition the Packers have been able to purchase several pricey properties in the Lambeau Field area for future use or development

We realize it costs money to operate a first-class major league operation like the Packers but not with a blank checks paid by taxpayers. Now that the stadium is a reality it would be nice to establish a definite point in time that this tax could be sunsetted.

* * * * *

SMALL BUSINESS THE KEY TO JOBS.

A *Press-Gazette* article reported that 1,400 Wisconsin companies were sharing in the huge contracts received by Oshkosh Truck Corp. for military vehicles. The employees of those 1,400 establishments in turn will keep more employers busy.

This is wonderful economic news, and illustrates how the free market system works with benefits to all. No word on what role economic stimulus money or other government aid packages played in this story.

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REDESIGNING THE WEINERMOBILE.

No limit to suggestions to make our life better. Pediatricians have suggested the design of hot dogs be changed because too many children were choking on them.

We don't know who keeps track of this but if everything a child could choke on were outlawed there wouldn't be much left.

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READY OR NOT.

It appears that President Obama's well publicized Health Care Summit was just window dressing as he works on a strategy to jam his agenda down our throats.

One strategy has been only to work with his supporters who have something to gain if his plan becomes a reality. He has reportedly ignored advice from Congressional Budget committees. Also he has consulted with representatives from trial lawyer associations who tell him not to deal on tort reforms in his negotiations. This adds

several Billion per year to the cost of malpractice insurance and other medical costs.

If all else fails, it is reported he is looking at ways to by-pass the entire system which could be a real disaster. Not only to our health care system but the way business is conducted in Washington.

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THE FIGHTING NO-NAMES.

The Legislature is working on another bill to limit the use of what they consider to be discriminatory names for school mascots. It would allow residents to file complaints to the state school superintendent who could give them a year to change mascots. This could lead to frivolous complaints.

It would seem that if any school, place, or business has a mascot they feel uncomfortable with, they should change it on their own without having to have the political correctness police make a case out of it.

* * * * *

JUST LISTEN TO THE HUNTERS.

Wisconsin deer hunters have been complaining about unpopular hunting regulations and unrealistic deer counts by the DNR.

Now the DNR has agreed to make another count but it will cost \$2 Million to accomplish and involve using radio collars.

* * * * *

THE WISCONSIN WAY.

Finally, in December, Gov. Doyle signed a bill requiring that Wisconsin's public schools teach the history of organized labor.

However the law didn't specify exactly what or how much to teach, or did it establish penalties for not teaching the subject.

Apparently there were no textbooks yet available on the subject.

As usual, lots if things to wonder about.

Jim Frink-BCTA

"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of thoughts that occur to us, mostly taxpayer related in some way from current news events. We use only 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."

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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The TAX TIMES - March, 2010

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday – March 18, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon
Titletown Brewing Co., “Frost Room.”
Speakers, Dr. Marc Trager, Mark Savard.
Candidates for 8th District Congressional Seat.
NOTE: All candidates and incumbents for elected office are cordially invited to attend our meetings and to be recognized.

Tuesday - April 6, 2010. General Spring Election. BE SURE TO VOTE !

Thursday – April 15, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon
Titletown Brewing Co., “Frost Room.”
Program to be announced.

Thursday – May 20, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon
Titletown Brewing Co., “Frost Room.”
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: \$8.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.



March,
2010

“Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.”...Groucho Marx
“The right way is not always the most popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of character.”
... Margaret Chase Smith

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.