

Stay Focused on the Spending.

The din of electioneering is ramping up and, for better or worse, this is only the beginning. Many, many citizens are angry about the direction incumbents are taking our state and nation and much, if not most, of that anger revolves around fiscal matters.

The candidates will be advancing carefully worded positions aimed at winning votes. The words will all sound good. Balanced budgets. Growing the economy. Living within our means. Making government more efficient. Tax reform. And on, and on, and on.

Many candidates who don't really stand for smaller government will try to make the debate about "balancing budgets". Why? Because one way to balance budgets is "revenue enhancement", which of course means new and higher fees, new and higher taxes.

Then there will be the advocates of "tax reform". They seek to make the debate about "fairness", which means convincing voters that someone else is not paying enough in taxes. The solution of course is new and higher fees, new and higher taxes.

Demand that the candidates talk about spending, and how they propose to reduce spending. Will they support spending controls (caps)? Will they support spending cuts? How will they achieve a balance budget by working on the spending side of the equation versus working on "revenue enhancement?" What programs and spending do they aim to reduce or eliminate? If they don't have targeted cuts, do they support across-the-board cuts? If an incumbent tells you they're a spending cutter, have them explain their achievements to-date.

Find out if the candidate has signed the Taxpayer Protection Pledge advanced by Americans for Tax Reform. Don't let them play dumb ... they all know of the pledge, they all have the opportunity to sign it. Candidates who signed the pledge have put any tax increases off limits – meaning the only way to balance a budget is to control the spending. And candidates who have not signed the pledge? I'd be asking them to explain.

Cut through the clutter and spin. Don't let any candidate mislead you. Don't let **THEM** select the topic. **YOU** select the topic, and make it **SPENDING**.

BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION..

Tom Sladek - Treasurer

(Richard Parins is taking a well deserved respite this month, and asked Tom to fill in.)

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

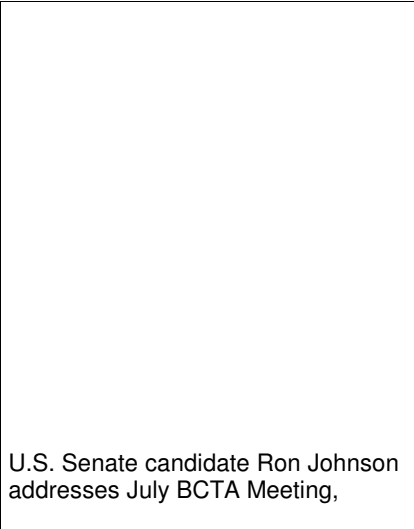
July Meeting Notes. Ron Johnson Speaks to BCTA.

Monthly BCTA meeting held July 15, 2010 at Titledown Brewing Co.

Ron Johnson, candidate for the U.S. Senate, spoke about the direction our country needs to take. He brings to the campaign a great respect for the power of the free market and a thorough understanding of the regulatory burden that government places on business. He explained that the present financial crisis was born in Washington, stimulated by the financial industry, and will be paid for by American taxpayers. He emphasized that the "financial reform" bill doesn't address Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, two of the greatest contributors to the financial crisis. He pledged that he will never vote in the Senate with re-election in mind.

In 1979, Ron started a business called PACUR with his brother-in-law. PACUR is now the largest producer in the world of a specialty plastic used in medical device packaging. PACUR sells its products all around the world. PACUR is still proud to say: "We don't export jobs, we export plastic."

When his first daughter was born with a serious heart condition, Ron appreciated the fact that he was free to take her to the finest surgeons he could find, who performed a medical miracle. He characterized the healthcare bill just passed by Congress as the greatest assault on liberty in our nation's history. He said it is intergenerational theft and it must be repealed. He fears we are moving to an entitlement society. Instead, we need to foster growth and opportunity.



U.S. Senate candidate Ron Johnson addresses July BCTA Meeting,

Dave Ross, candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, outlined his qualifications. After more than 20 years in the upholstery business, he became outraged over a property tax increase and ran for mayor. Dave was elected mayor of Superior in 2003 and was re-elected in 2007.

As mayor, he reduced the number of city employees by 10 percent and enacted a plan to eliminate over 28 million dollars in general obligation debt. He privatized the City's money-losing golf course, turning it into a revenue source with 33 new private-sector jobs. He eliminated over \$3.5 million in structural costs in the city budget while maintaining essential city services.

Dave is a strong supporter of limited government to protect individual rights and freedoms. As Lieutenant Governor, he will be totally committed to supporting the governor's agenda of restoring fiscal responsibility to Wisconsin government.

The next scheduled BCTA meeting will be Thursday, Aug. 19, at Titledown Brewing Co., details are on the back page of this Tax Times.

Dave Nelson – Secretary

Candidate for Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Dave Ross.

Is there no end to nanny insanity?

Recently, San Francisco hit the jackpot. The SF Chronicle article featured news of Mayor Gavin Newsome's outlawing of Coca Cola in deference to soy milk. I kid you not.

Newsom's directive, issued in April but whose practical impacts are starting to be felt now, bars calorically sweetened beverages from vending machines on city property. That includes non-diet sodas, sports drinks and artificially sweetened water. Juice must be 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice with no added sweeteners. Diet sodas can be no more than 25 percent of the items offered, the directive says.

There should be "ample choices" of water, "soy milk, rice milk and other similar dairy or non dairy milk," says the directive, which also covers fat and sugar content in vending machine snacks.

Then Thursday's San Francisco Chronicle talked about banning the sale of all pets – except fish. Really. I'm not making this up.

"People buy small animals all the time as an impulse buy, don't know what they're getting into, and the animals end up at the shelter and often are euthanized," said commission Chairwoman Sally Stephens. "That's what we'd like to stop."

Closer to home, MadTown won't sell alcohol to three dozen or so chronic alcoholics.

With support from distributors, police and social services, Madison is banning the retail sale of booze to chronic alcoholics who make trouble and use an inordinate amount of police and social services. ... To get on the list, a person would have to be either arrested and convicted of a crime while drunk or taken to treatment at least six times in the previous 180 days.

The Police Department would produce the list, notify those on it, review it annually, and remove those who have not had relevant convictions or admissions for a year.

What's the world coming to when you can't buy hamsters, Coca-cola or booze? **Jo Egelhoff, FoxPolitics.net**

"The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes decide everything."

. . . **Joseph Stalin**

"How do you tell a communist? Well, it's someone who reads Mark and Lenin, And how do you tell an anti-communist? It's someone who understands Marx and Lenin."

. . . **Ronald Reagan**

"If stupidity got us into this mess, then why can't it get us out?" . . . **Will Rogers**

Legislative candidate surge signals discontent.

More candidates (314) are running for the legislature this year than in decades. That is 29% more than in 2006 (243), the last gubernatorial election. Increases are largest among Assembly candidates and Republicans. The number of unopposed incumbents is half the 2006 figure (17 vs. 35); the number of third-party and independent hopefuls has more than doubled (12 to 26) since 2006.

Pollsters and pundits are busy trying to guess the public mood in this volatile and unpredictable election year. But a little-noticed statistic might better indicate Wisconsin voter interest in 2010: the number of candidates who just filed papers to run for the state legislature.

Telling numbers, unusual year?

If these figures are at all meaningful, 2010 could be an unusual year. A total of 314 men and women are seeking seats in the state senate and assembly, 71 more than the 243 who filed during 2006, the last gubernatorial election year.

The spike in candidate activity might be explained by a host of factors, including a weak economy, a surge in anti-incumbent sentiment, the national health care controversy, state budget problems, the Gulf oil spill, and mounting government debt. Regardless, a 29.2% jump in candidates suggests the public is more engaged than four years ago.

This year's candidate count is even more remarkable when compared to other gubernatorial election years over the past two decades, plus 1978. The latter is included for historical interest and because, like 2010, it featured two major Republican candidates and a presumptive Democratic nominee.

The number of legislative hopefuls this year exceeds all gubernatorial years from 1990 through 2006, when candidate totals ranged from 241 to 267. The average for the period is about 250, or 20% below this year.

Undercurrents

The candidate surge is not, however, consistent across both houses of the legislature or both of the major parties. And that, too, could be instructive.

Assembly. The bulk of the increase in candidate numbers in 2010 (314) over 2006 (243) is coming from the lower house: 66 of the 71 additional candidates this year seek to be state representatives, rather than senators.

One reason might be the assembly's narrow partisan balance: 51 Democrats, 46 Republicans, and two independents. A switch of two Democratic seats could shift house control to either the GOP or to some coalition including independents or third-party members.

Another reason for the increase in assembly candidates probably has to do with district size, both in population and in area. Assembly districts have an average of about 56,000 constituents, while senate districts typically represent three times that amount. For a first-time candidate, waging an effective campaign is simply easier in a much smaller district.

Senate. Not surprisingly, the pattern in the senate is different. Candidate numbers from 2006 to 2010 grew only 13.9%, from 36 to 41. Moreover, 41 is only slightly above the 1990-2006 average (37) and the same as the 1994 and 1998 counts.

Party? In addition to differences between the houses, candidate numbers also vary by party affiliation. Political analysts say that a president's party tends to lose ground to the "out" party (this year, the GOP) in midterm elections such as 2010. One-party control of execu-

tive and legislative branches both in Washington and in Madison might also favor some swing to the opposition.

Wisconsin data would appear to bear this out. Republican candidates for seats in both houses total 171, 56 (or 48.7%) more than in 2006. Democratic numbers are largely unchanged from four years ago (119) to now (117) and actually exceed the 1990-2002 average of about 109. Of all years shown, the Democrats' high was in 1978 (165).

The Republican count is unusual even over a longer period of time. During gubernatorial years from 1990 through 2006, party aspirants ranged from a low of 117 (2006) to a high of 133 (1994). This year's GOP total surpasses 1978's (134), when candidate numbers (306), regardless of party, approached this year's level (314).

Ups, downs of incumbency.

Advantage. Part of the reason for fewer candidates in the senate and on the Democratic side of the aisle is incumbency. Candidates for reelection are less likely to face opposition, particularly in primaries. A slightly higher fraction of senate incumbents are seeking reelection—14 (82.4%) of 17—than in the assembly—70 (79.7%) of 99. When both houses are combined, 52 Democratic incumbents are running compared to 40 Republicans.

Disadvantage. Put another way, 23 of 116 incumbents (three senators, 20 representatives; 13 Republicans, 9 Democrats, one independent) are vacating seats. Retirements are almost double what they were in 2006 (12). More open seats helps explain increased candidate numbers. In retiring, several lawmakers cited the legislature's increasing partisanship and acrimony. Incumbents may have an edge in seeking reelection, but frustration can take its toll.

Public Unease.

While incumbent dissatisfaction is somewhat anecdotal, 2010 candidate data provide more concrete evidence of public discontent.

"Free rides." First, the number of uncontested races is down from 35 of 116 (30.2%) in 2006 to just 17 (14.7%) in 2010. The tally in the senate fell from four to one (of 17) and in the assembly from 31 to 16 (of 99). By party, 22 Democrats and 13 Republicans were unopposed in 2006, compared to six and 11, respectively, this year.

Primaries. A second way to read 2010 candidate data touches on primary contests. In 2006, there were 17 GOP and 18 Democratic primaries. This year, there are 39 on the Republican side but only 15 on the Democratic side. Unlike general elections, where party activity (e.g., candidate recruiting) can affect these statistics, primary activity tends to be driven by individual decisions. One way to interpret primary activity is that there is greater Republican interest at the grassroots. Another way is that more GOP primary contests reflect greater intraparty disagreement, while Democrats are more unified.

New faces. Final evidence pointing to citizen discontent hinges on the long-standing political science finding that periods of electoral flux are characterized by more independent and third-party candidates. In 2006, there were only 9 such candidates; this year, that number is 26, the highest in years (see table).

The increase in third-party and independent candidates, along with higher candidate numbers, more primaries, and fewer uncontested seats, all point to voter dissatisfaction with the status quo, the two parties, and incumbents in general.

WISTAX

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX), is a nonpartisan, independent research organization founded in 1932 to promote better government and inform citizens how government works. They are located at 401 N. Lawn Ave. Madison 53704, (608) 241-9780.

National Debt Update.

As of August 1, 2010, the United States National Debt reached a total of Thirteen Trillion, Two Hundred, Seventy Billion, and a few hundred Million dollars. Up until this month, the increase had been averaging about three and a half billion per day, but averaged about five and a half billion per day during July.

No doubt some of this could be credited to the many trips the President has been making about the country telling everyone how wonderful the economy is and he is starting to believe himself.

Perhaps he could do more good by staying home to set an example and explaining to the press that the country simply can't afford his taking the time for a ride in a 747 to give a 1 hour talk in some town 1,000 miles away every day.

Trouble is when he stays home it costs even more money. Every thing the President and Congress does costs money. Extending generous unemployment benefits, new government agencies to run healthcare, financial reform and others. Even giving Kenya a meager \$17 Million to hold an election. It all adds up.

The bottom line is that every citizen owes \$6,185 each year for state and national government interest alone. Another way of looking at this is if you pay less than \$6,185 in state and federal taxes each year you are not even paying the interest on what is owed China and Saudi Arabia on your behalf.

Jim Frink – BCTA

Brett Davis to Speak at August Meeting.

The guest speaker at the August 19, Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting will be Brett Davis, Candidate for Wisconsin Lt. Governor. This meeting will be held in the second floor meeting room of Tiletown Brewing. Details on the back page.

We are fortunate to have had candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, the U.S. Senate and 8th Congressional District appear and answer questions at our recent meetings. There are also a number of well qualified candidates running to represent us in the Wisconsin State Legislature and Senate. Read Tow Sladek's excellent article on the front page of this Tax Times again. This year more than ever the focus of their campaigns should be on saving more than spending.

"One of the traditional methods of imposing socialism on a people as been by way of medicine. It's very easy to disguise a medical program as a humanitarian project. . . . Now the American people, if you put it to them about socialized medicine and gave them a chance to choose, would unhesitatingly vote against 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. E-Mail BCTA@ExecPC.Com.

An Invitation to our Members.

Would you care to serve on a committee of the BCTA?

The BCTA has five standing committees, and any member of the organization is welcome and encouraged to participate. If you have some time or talent you can devote to strengthening the achievement of our mission, consider joining one of our committees.

The County/Municipal Committee examines issues related to Brown County government, and the various Cities, Villages and Towns within the county.

The State/Federal Committee focuses on pertinent issues emerging from Madison and Washington.

The Schools Committee examines local school district issues.

The **Communications Committee**, in addition to being responsible for the Tax Times, aims at examining alternative, effective ways of communicating with members and the public.

The Membership/Development Committee is responsible for organizational growth and development.

Any individual member is welcome to become involved with any of the above committees. Interested? Drop us a note at **BCTA, P.O. Box 684, Green Bay 54305-0684**, or, email your interest to **BCTA@execpc.com**.
Thank you!

Things That Make Us Wonder.

IS THIS TRIP NECESSARY?

President Obama and Congress allocated \$810 Million to Wisconsin for a high-speed rail line between Milwaukee and Madison, claiming it would create jobs and boost the economy. Estimates are that it could cost the taxpayers of Wisconsin millions more and there is no reason to believe it would ever be profitable. Even with projected passengers it will still require taxpayer support to operate. It was reported that the state already spend about \$100 Million of their money this year on preliminary work.

Original plans were to have a depot at Truax Field on the outskirts of Madison which would eliminated the need to upgrade tracks and street crossing all the way downtown.

Now Gov. Doyle has announced plans to build the station downtown in the vicinity of state office buildings, complete with parking garages and hotel facilities. While this would be more convenient for passengers it would probably add costs which we will all end up paying for.

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WHAT'S A PRIORITY?

While supporters are seeking justification to proceed on the high-speed rail project, the Hoan Bridge in Milwaukee is also attracting attention. Recall it was built a few years before the Tower Drive Bridge in Green Bay. Chunks of concrete reportedly have been falling off into the water and it is estimated it would cost \$250 Million for the DOT to repair.

Since the state has not included this in its budget, the suggestion has been made that it be taken from the \$810 million of federal money allocated for the high-speed rail project. The need to repair the bridge being more immediate.

This wouldn't be the first time in Wisconsin (or anywhere else) federal funds were diverted to different projects than intended. It's still our money either way.

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WASTING RESOURCES AND MONEY.

Hopefully, by the time you receive this the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico will be fully under control. While reports are that damage will be minimal, the unfortunate consequences of this disaster will be with us for a while. The Gulf is about 7 times

the size of Lake Michigan and environmental groups will have plenty of reasons to ban offshore wells while our increased need for energy will put more pressure on present sources. It is disturbing to see any resource, including money go to waste.

The ultimate cleanup costs will require financial resources that could well be spent elsewhere. While BP takes the blame and said they would pay for cleanup it is not clear if they will write the checks or if the Federal Govt. will use the \$20 Billion they took from BP for the job or just go spend it on something else.

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POLICE PROTECTION COSTS.

The City of Racine estimates it will cost about \$38,000 for Police Dept. overtime expenses encountered from Pres. Obama's recent visit to talk about the economy. No telling how much his trip in Air Force One cost the taxpayers.

This could compare with the expenses for the Green Bay police during the recent LZ Lambeau affair. At least Green Bay benefited from a few thousand people spending a few days in town spending some money.

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THE REAL PURPOSE OF POLLS.

As election time approaches we will see more polls being publicized claiming that people favor this or that attitude or endorse this or that person running for office. Often these polls leave us with more questions than answers.

How many people were questioned? Who took the poll? What were the specific questions asked? How many people refused to answer? What type of people were interviewed?

The media always seems to eat these things up, but sometimes they seem to be carefully planted to actually form public opinion rather than educate.

Some polls appear to be taken with predetermined results. Polls can be scrapped if the results do not suit the sponsor. The best thing when presented with a poll result is to draw your own conclusion based on who the sponsor is.

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BAIL OUT CREDIT CARD DEBT?

There have been reports that the federal government will offer financial assistance to those with excessive credit card debt. There have also been TV ads by attorneys offering to help you through

the steps. While Uncle Sam has been entirely irresponsible with our money, this has to be a scam.

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JUST KEEP RAISING THE PRICE.

Citing a drop in revenue, the USPS is looking for another 2 cent increase in the price of postage. Their last increase was May, 2009. At that time their was discussion as to eliminating Saturday deliveries plus other possible cost cutting measures such as consolidating small post offices. It is also apparent that many organizations, not always non-profit, enjoy special rates for bulk mailings which in no way could be done at a profit.

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FIRST COLLECT YOUR BILLS.

While the State of Wisconsin struggles with an estimated \$2.5 Billion deficit, the Dept. of Revenue estimates that the 24,616 delinquent taxpayers on their website owe a total of \$882.6 Million. This means we all must pay more.

While some of this total could be questionable, much of it is from business not submitting withholding or sales taxes, and under reporting of taxable income. It is unfortunate that when the state budget establishes the next years spending and revenue projections they always plan on spending more assuming an increase in revenue and never plan on recessions.

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BUSSES COST MONEY TO OPERATE.

Municipal bus lines are seldom looked at as a source of revenue. They are expensive to operate, heavily subsidized and usually only patronized by a small percentage of residents.

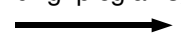
The worst situation is probably in Madison where drivers commonly made over \$100,000 annually with overtime. It was also disclosed that 20,000 UW employees and employees of the UW Hospital are eligible for free bus passes. While the rationale may be that this is less costly than providing employee parking space it is a perk that someone else pays for.

Meanwhile Racine, which furnishes free bus passes to low income residents is finding that these passes are being sold for cash by the recipients.

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PLENTY OF JOBS TO CREATE.

While the Obama administration touts their stimulus spending programs,



the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the Milwaukee area has lost a 54,800 manufacturing jobs, or about a third of the total during the past 10 years.

How many of these jobs were lost to overseas competitors or how many were replaced by other types of employment was not disclosed.

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BIG BROTHER HAS ARRIVED.

"We just have to pass this Healthcare bill to see what's in it," chirped Nancy Pelosi the night Congress voted to pass the 2,309 page monster.

As it turns out we are learning more every day. Included are at least a dozen new direct and indirect taxes that will effect all of us.

Section 9006 of the bill mandates that all business's including non-profits and the self-employed will have the burden of furnishing #1099 forms to venders and the IRS for purchases of goods, services, or whatever of \$600 or more. This likely will create a huge and probably useless expense for both them and the government and serve no useful purpose whatsoever.

Precisely what the IRS will do with all this extra paperwork remains to be seen as they seem incapable of keeping track of anything now. However accounting firms and tax attorneys will probably be overjoyed.

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THE WORLD STILL RUNS ON OIL.

An item in the Aug. 2, Time Magazine claims that in 2009, China passed the United States to become the worlds largest consumer of energy, renewable and otherwise. The U.S. still uses 5 times the energy per capita as China but remember they have 5 times our population.

The bottom line to this may be that we had better get serious about creating and conserving energy as serious competition for available sources is heating up.

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YOU CAN'T CUT WHAT'S NOT THERE.

The candidates for Governor and other state offices promise to cut state spending by eliminating thousands of state jobs.

Actually many of these positions are already vacant for various reasons. Perhaps the question should be why were so many state jobs authorized in the first place.

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WANTED: MORE JUDGES.

We see a lot of ads by law firms specializing in workman's comp and un-

employment benefit claims. One problem is that there about 5,800 appeals cases in Wisconsin waiting for hearings by Judges in the Dept. of Workforce Development.

While the department has 1,630 employees there are not enough judges available to handle the workload due to the large number of unemployed. That's their excuse anyway.

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DON'T ROB THE PIGGY BANK.

During the last couple of years Gov. Doyle has tried to balance the State Budget by transferring money from segregated accounts to the general fund.

This included \$200 Million from the Patients Compensation Fund and \$1.3 Billion from the Dept. of Transportation which represented gas tax and license plate revenues, intended for highway construction and maintenance.

After the State Medical Society complained about the \$200 Million, the State Supreme Court order it returned to it's original purpose. No word yet about the \$1.3 Billion pilfered from the transportation fund, so in the meantime the DOT has to borrow money and pay interest accordingly. Now the Governor wants to add the costs for running their high-speed rail to their budget.

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MONEY IS MONEY.

Right or wrong, when government money is available, people will figure out how to obtain it. In the 17 month period ending May of 2010, investigators detected 12,814 instances of fraud worth \$30.5 Million. While much of this was recovered, it is still the taxpayers money.

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TWELVE EASY PAYMENTS?

Gubernatorial candidate Mark Neumann announced a plan to allow homeowners to pay property taxes for 2011 on a monthly payment base during 2012 rather than as a lump sum at the end of 2011 as done at present.

While this may sound good to a lot of people it is unlikely the Legislature or local government units would approve it.

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WILL IT TASTE LIKE CHICKEN?

Great Lakes residents and the federal government are wary of the voracious Asian carp taking over as the predominant fish in the lakes.

In the meantime, Gov. Pat Quinn of Illinois, rather than join other states in efforts to prevent the predators from entering the Great Lakes through the Chicago River has invested \$2 Million with a Chinese firm in a processing plant capable of packaging 30 Million pounds of carp annually. The fish which abundant in Illinois lakes and rivers and considered a delicacy in China. If making money from the fish is his goal, perhaps they should publish some books with carp recipes for future sales to Wisconsin and Michigan residents.

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WE NEED BETTER ANSWERS.

The clock is running between the need for energy in the future and the options for supplying it. The fiasco in the Gulf of Mexico is not helping matters .

It is unlikely that wind farms will solve the problem. A report from England where they have been in use for years indicated they produce less than 20% of the energy that was anticipated, which has not justified their expense.

Ethanol was supposed to boost Wisconsin industry but the high cost of production and limited acceptance have cut the demand. The price of corn used for ethanol has increased considerably. Plans for a new \$237 Million plant in southern Wisconsin were recently scrapped.

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MORE THAN JUST RAINWATER.

The Milwaukee Sewage District estimated that 2.1 Billion gallons of storm water and raw sewage flowed into Lake Michigan as a result of the July 22, rainfall.

Contrast this with the Gulf Oil Spill which has gained everyone's attention during the past weeks. Estimates are that about 250 Million gallons of oil, or 1/8 the volume of the Milwaukee sewage was involved. (60,000 barrels daily @ 42 gal. Per brl. X 100 days = 252 Million gallons.)

While neither incident is justified, it is difficult to decide which is worse. Wasting precious oil or dumping sewage in to what ultimately becomes our drinking water. Every time this happens Milwaukee says it is working on the problem.

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ROBBING PETER TO PAY PETER.

The first thing cities, states and industry around the country have done the past years when they needed money for a project was apply for Government stimulus money. As long as any hint of job creation

or economic "benefit" could be realized Uncle Sam usually came through creating the grandfather of pork barrel spending.

We commend Green Bay mayor Jim Schmitt's stand that while the money is nice we are all paying for it. Job creation has been negligible and the debt and interest must be repaid eventually.

While in Brown County airport improvement, school aids and harbor dredging have qualified for federal aid, a \$20 million request for library improvements was refused.

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IF YOU BUILD IT, WILL THEY COME?

One project for which the city has applied for federal aid is one million for the demolition of the downtown "Port Plaza" mall which we understand was approved.

While we acknowledge this may have been a good idea when it opened in 1977, a lot of things have changed in the way people shop and spend money since that time. Wasn't the ultimate purpose of the mall to create a source of tax revenue?

We don't know if anyone kept track, but it must have cost someone a lot of money to buy and demolish a better part of downtown Green Bay back in 1977.

Construction of the mall and parking ramps were bonded and business's locating there made sizable investments trying to make a profit. Various investors bought and sold the property through the years probably at a loss each time.

Was any amount of taxpayer money used to develop Bay Park Square or Fox River Mall?

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BUILDING BIG BROTHER BIGGER,

Flush with their success in passing Health Care Reform, Congress has pushed through a 1,300 Page health reform bill, supposedly to protect citizens from the evil practices of the banking system and Wall Street Investment houses.

By contrast, the entire Constitution of the United States, including the Preamble, Bill of Rights and all 27 Amendments could probably be printed on about 12 sheets of ordinary typing paper that we could all comprehend and understand.

It is unlikely that many citizens are aware of what effects this will have on them, and we question whether many bankers, stock brokers, or lawmakers can explain it either.

It has been reported that new

Federal agencies costing billions of dollars will be established with authority to write and enforce new regulations authorized by the language of the bill. In other words, another regulatory monster has been created which likely will effect all of us without really much public information or debate.

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DO YOU NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE?

Wisconsin has enjoyed a reputation as a high tax state based on the percentage of personal income used to pay local and state taxes. While we often have ranked in the top 10, we dropped to 13th place in 2008 according to the U. S. Census Bureau. This is 13th from the top, not the bottom,

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LOBBYING IS AN INDUSTRY.

The effect that lobbyists play on the actions of our legislators and legislation and campaign finance reform go hand in hand. There are over 11,000 registered lobbyists in Washington, and who knows how many in Madison. Many of them are former legislators with a legal background familiar with the way government works and have the connections to make things happen. Their job is to contact lawmakers and convince them to support legislation favorable to the people who hire them.

Very few of them lobby for taxpayer interests simply because that is not where the money is. While they may be careful not to offer bribes or gifts to their legislative contacts, what is there from reminding them of the campaign contributions their employer has made, or could possibly make. There is also evidence in Washington that lobbyists have actually had a hand in writing some of the Congressional Bills to specifically favor certain special interest groups over others.

Any legislation designed to curb lobbying activity seems to be quickly watered down or simply dies in committee.

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SERVING THE PUBLIC FOR FUN

While no one should be accused to running for the Wisconsin Legislature for the money, a report in "Stateline", a Pew Research publication which tracks and compares state politics reports that legislatures in Wisconsin at \$49,943 annually are the 9th best paid in the nation. Salaries range from \$95,291 per in Califor-

nia to nothing at all in New Mexico, Texas and Utah.

No mention was made of health insurance, retirement, per diem, committee or longevity benefits which can be substantial.

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A LITTLE TOO FAR?

Sometime laws don't work as intended. The city council in Greenfield, WI, passed an ordinance requiring that stores selling second hand merchandise take a photo of the person they buy the merchandise from, and imposed a hefty fee on each transaction.

Their intent was to control the sale of stolen goods through legitimate retailers. The problem is that many people buy used clothing and household items for economic reasons and these are the ones paying the fees.

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WHAT NEXT FOR THE TEAM?

According to the Press-Gazette, the Packer organization has spent over \$27 Million in recent years for various properties in the Lambeau Field area. Some of it was considerable in excess of the assessed or fair market valuation.

While no specific plans for any of the properties was disclosed, there are certainly a lot of possibilities.. The 1999 State of Wisconsin Act #167, which cleared the way for the expansion of Lambeau by establishing the .5% Brown County stadium district tax also exempts Professional Football Districts from payment of property taxes on real estate they use, develop or hold for future purposes.

We are sure this will be addressed as plans for the property are developed as it could ultimately represent a considerable loss of revenue for Green Bay and Ashwaubenon.

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."

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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The TAX TIMES - August, 2010

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - August 19, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., 2d Floor Meeting Room
Speaker – Brett Davis. Candidate for Lt. Governor.

Thursday – September 16, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co.,
Speaker. Al Ose, Americans for Fair Taxation.

Thursday – October 21, 2010. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Speaker. Jim Abts. Green Bay Chief of Police.

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 Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

Visit our website: www.BCTAxpayers.Org.
Email. BCTA@ExecPc.Com

August,
2010



We do not have to worry about the United States. They will spend themselves out of existence”

. . . Nikita Krushev

“Talk may be cheap but it can be expensive if you don’t know when to say no.”

. . . Doug Larson

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members are Always
Welcome. Call 336-6410
Write us at P. O. Box 684
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for Details.