



Happy Holidays-Less Taxing and More Giving.

The Thanksgiving holiday is a fond memory and Christmas is coming fast upon us. It's time for some reflection on the generosity of our area. Scouting for Food, Coats for Kids, Toys for Tots, United Way campaigns, Red Kettles drives, Adopt a Family, are just a few examples. On a more localized scale, there are charitable outreach activities by virtually all the churches and other religious institutions in the Brown County area. In addition to the generosity of individuals, businesses large and small, who some call "greedy capitalists", share in the giving through foundations, direct gifts, matching gifts, and other actions. The need is great, and so is the generosity of you and your neighbors. You didn't need another tax and another bureaucracy to make this happen. It happens through the human spirit. People who feel blessed, sharing freely with those less fortunate. While it is more prominent at this time of year, it goes on year round. When needs arise, you rise to help.

That is why your BCTA supports public officials and policies that result in less government and more free enterprise, and actively resists those that take away our freedom. Rather than saying the "Government" should do more, we know the community will do more, if the weight of added regulation and tax burden is lightened. Parents can replace the tires on the family car a bit sooner, buy those new shoes for the kids, save a little more for college, and have some left over to help their neighbors. Those activities drive economic growth. Businesses can feel more confident in their future and provide additional jobs so more people can help themselves and rely less on government and neighbors.

Yes, we need good schools, sound infrastructure, and adequate public services, and those things cost money. We readily pay our taxes to support those programs, but have an expectation that they meet the intended need and are run effectively and efficiently. Without that oversight, more taxes do not equate to more effective government and greater prosperity for the citizens. As Churchill said, "We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle." The majority of voters in Brown County and the rest of the state decisively confirmed they feel the same way about taxes and government overreach. I hope you were among those who went to the polls to have your voice heard. Our County officials just passed a budget that held the line on taxes and we'll see in a few months whether those we sent to Madison will do the same

As 2014 draws to a close, we thank you for your ongoing support of our organization, and wish you a safe and happy holiday season. May 2015 be filled with health, freedom, prosperity, and your continued spirit of generosity!

Rod Goldhahn — Vice-President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 30th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

NOVEMBER MEETING NOTES.

Monthly meeting of the Brown County Taxpayers Association, Nov.20, 2014 at Tiletown Brewing.

Nate Nelson, Regional Director of Heritage Action for America, presented an overview of his organization's mission and activities. Heritage Action for America has a Washington D.C.-based government relations team and dedicated grassroots activists across the country. It is a sister organization of the Heritage Foundation, which develops conservative policy visions.

In the fight for Congressional Accountability, Heritage Action's fact-checking and conservative counter-arguments help citizens win the battle of ideas. The Heritage Action website <http://heritageaction.com>, is a treasure chest of information for concerned citizens to use preparing for writing, calling, emailing and personal discussions with lawmakers, and posts information on critical issues like the Keystone XL Pipeline vote. Their Scorecard provides up-to-date records of each lawmaker's votes on important issues.

State Senator Frank Lasee commented on the results of the recent elections. He observed that with a 19 to 14 majority, the Republicans in the state Senate will be more efficient at passing taxpayer friendly legislation. Similarly, by increasing their numbers from 60 to 63, The Assembly Republicans will become more taxpayer friendly as well. Senator Lasee also stated that Governor Walker wants the budget process speeded up. The governor would like to see the budget passed in mid-May. Senator Lasee expressed his pleasure that the constitutional amendment to prohibit raiding the state Transportation Fund passed by a comfortable margin. He is working on legislation to require

legislative approval of administrative rules with financial impacts of \$10 million or more.

Rod Goldhahn, Schools Committee Chair, reported we had been in contact with WILL (Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty) concerning our recent Open Records Request with the Green Bay School District. He also commented that with the election process over, we will engage our state representatives again about the abuses of the Community Services Fund 80.

BCTA Directors re-elected for three year terms were: rank Bennett, Elliot Christenson, Brian Verheyden, Tom Sladek.

Newly elected for a three year term: Paul Zeller

BCTA Officers elected for one year terms were: President-Richard Parins, 1st VP-Rod Goldhahn, 2nd VP-Dave Dillenburg, Secretary-Dave Nelson, Treasurer-Tom Sladek.

The next BCTA meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 18, and the scheduled speaker is David Litton,, Green Bay Metro Fire Chief.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

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.

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Brown County Taxpayers Association .

National Debt Update.



"Theres only one way to make American companies stop fleeing the tax code, create a tax code they don't want to flee." . . . National Review

"Guns are like parachutes. If you need one and don't have one, you'll probably never need one again." . . . Bumper Sticker

"The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest Rome will become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance." . . . Cicero, 55 BC
{Even good advice today.}

"One picture is worth a thousand words." Old Chinese proverb.

U.S. National Debt Nov. 30, 2014 \$17,960,525,700,792.

U.S. National Debt Dec. 01, 2013 17,204,930,159,325.

Last 12 month increase \$ 756,595,541,467.

Any questions?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.BCTAxpayers.Org
EMail,
BCTA@ExecPc.Com

Things That Make Us Wonder.

The 2014 mid-term elections are now history, and we congratulate all of the winning candidates and incumbents. We trust they will represent all constituents and interests fairly and fiscally responsible.

It was discouraging that only about 52% of Brown Counties eligible voters even bothered to vote, in spite of the importance of the election and all of the publicity it received.

Millions of dollars were spent advertising by and on behalf of candidates in efforts to convince potential voters on candidate qualifications but mostly attempting to disqualify the other candidate or incumbent which in some cases may have been responsible for the poor voter turnout.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the media does not simply encourage people to get out and vote rather than subtly take sides to their own liking.

Losing candidates were quick to use the poor voter turnout and the lack of cash to "spread their message." as the excuse for not being elected, but all candidates seem to have had plenty of funding from special interests as well as their own sources. It's possible the barrage of negative advertising prior to the election could have been a negative factor. Some candidates may not have realized voters can decide for themselves who is qualified to represent them and their interests, including the economy.

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Whether the controversy over the picture ID requirement discouraged voters is hard to tell. We have noted that local food pantries require two forms of positive identification in order to qualify and this has not caused any shortage of applicants.

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Calls are out to toughen the Wisconsin OWI laws, to keep repeat offenders off of the road, and increase punishment for first time offenders. Even though there has been improvement in recent years, there is room for improvement. Is it still possible that the party who can afford the best attorney still wins?

In a somewhat related story, the *Press-Gazette* featured an article noting that Brown County leads the state with binge-drinking adults while Wisconsin leads the nation.

While this disclosure may come as no surprise as part of our lumberjack heritage, it does not justify or qualify one for driving a vehicle in traffic.

Maybe the watering hole of the future will be for pedestrians only, and include special facilities to sleep it off before being allowed to go home.

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Now that there is a Republican Senate and House of Representatives, who will President Obama be able to blame for "gridlock" in Washington. The house, senate, or both?

Predictions are that it will get worse, but probably no problem for him as he still has his Veto Power and Executive Order Pen to govern with.

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In recent months the Wisconsin DOT has been exploring new ways to finance their never ending need for more highway improvement and maintenance funding. Under consideration were higher gas taxes (up to five cents a gallon), higher registration fees; particularly on electric and hybrid vehicles which pay less gas tax, and a 2.5% tax on the sticker price of new vehicle purchases, including trucks.

So far, the answer seems to be "all of the above." While all of the suggestions are rightfully directed at highway users who benefit the most, higher costs to trucking companies hauling the goods we buy and sharply increased costs to purchase and operate a car effect all of us.

While the bottom line may be a better and safer highway system, the scores of architects and engineers the state has designing these things could possibly factor user cost as much as aesthetic appearance into their plans.

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Whatever the DOT does to enhance their bank balance, plans are underway to spend an estimated \$196 Million to enlarge their Madison headquarters from 400,000 to 600,000 sq. feet. It doesn't seem like too many years ago that many state agencies were able to operate from offices in the

Capitol building. A large state office building was built during the 1940's. but was soon outgrown as agencies grew in power. They each had to have it's own identity and location.

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While Wisconsin and 49 other states ponder over ways to finance highway problems, a recent item on "60 minutes" pointed out that this may be a far bigger problem on the federal level. Not only is the national highway system in need of updating, there are thousands of bridges, some over a hundred years old in dire need of immediate replacement. Some of already collapsed with tragic results.

It was pointed out that Congress has been aware of this but due to politics have been unable to act.

Historically, the spending of huge amounts of taxpayer money always leads to waste and graft. Perhaps the people in Washington are too busy figuring out ways to get a share for themselves and supporters that they overlook just getting the job done.

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Drug abuse is one of the biggest problems our society faces these days, and seems to effect young people the most. All indications are that the DARE program in Green Bay was an fairly inexpensive and effective way to get the message across.

We sincerely hope our Sheriff is able to sort things out and get this vital program off and running again.

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Once a victim is hooked there is little that can save him. On rare occasions some celebrity will claim he or she has kicked the habit, realizing their mistake and leading a clean life. While the media may praise a celebrity for setting a good example, they overlook the fact that gullible fans try to emulate the lifestyles of the rich and famous, which too often includes drug abuse.

The wrong message is that if a movie star or athlete can go straight at will, so can I. We all should realize it doesn't always happen that way.

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The shiny new 50' Lombardi Trophy replica at Lambeau Field will

Continued on next page →

undoubtedly prove to be a major visitor attraction bringing tourists to spend money in the area. Somehow we would still like to see them find enough to install hand rails in the coach sections for the safety of the paying fans..

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Some of the TV ads prior to the November 4, election, were obviously designed to make us believe we were living in some third world country anxiously awaiting for government action to save us from a number of imaginary evils lurking behind every tree.

Fortunately the majority of voters seemed to know better. While no government has ever made everybody happy, by most measures ours seems to be one of the best. In many ways, Wisconsin is probably one of the most average states in the country, and it seems our residents like it that way.

Check any measure and see if you agree. First, on most comparisons, we are close to the middle of the 50 states. This relates to size, population, weather factors, climate, average income, employment and education factors, crime rates, home ownership and value, and other economic items.

It may get a little cold in the winter, but have little trouble with drought, earthquakes, or even forest fires. Our average income isn't the highest, but it's far from the lowest. Our taxes may be a little high but we have responsible government and get the services we expect. Medical availability, an ample supply of clean water, and an outstanding school system puts us way ahead of many other states.

We are able to take advantage of every recreational activity from thousands of acres of forests and lakes to gambling casinos and the Green Bay Packers. What more do you want?

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Recent reductions in the pump price of gasoline have been welcomed by all of us. No doubt our politicians and highway departments across the country will see this as an opportunity to raise gas taxes. In the meantime plans for the delayed Keystone Pipeline are being dusted off. If the President is in a signing mood our supply of crude oil should last a few more years easing dependence on foreign sources.

The U.S. has been by far the world's largest consumer of crude oil,

and fortunate in being able to import much of our demand from various countries throughout the world. In the meantime the demand in developing nations in developing rapidly as other countries try to become more like us.

While our reserves have grown considerably in recent years, they are not infinite by any means. So far no practical replacements have appeared. As worldwide demand increases, so will geo-political considerations create tensions in the years to come.

The Keystone Pipeline could be a step towards becoming an exporter from an importer of oil, along with the profits to our economy. This may not be a win-win situation however.

Efforts should always continue to treat our energy resources as a treasure to be preserved, and not to be wasted away just because it is available to this generation. If we have so much oil that we can export some of it, let's make sure it is to our friends, and not just to make some oil barons rich. This stuff is our life blood.

. Not that we necessarily agree with all of them, but concerns with construction and the environment will have to be addressed. Responsible parties should be able to work things out.

We would certainly urge supporting the project as a solution to dependence on foreign oil and the needs of future generations assuming all of the bases are covered.

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The Milwaukee Bucks claim they need a new arena, and would like to have the state help pay for it. So far there has been little enthusiasm for financing such a project, either from the citizens of Milwaukee and certainly not from the taxpayers from the rest of Wisconsin. One solution could be for the Bucks to petition Milwaukee County to establish a special sales tax for their needs such as the Packers did a few years back.

This could enable them to complete their arena project on their own, give them time to obtain financial footing from their other operations such as the Packers did, and then add more additional seating and other enhancements as well as purchase adjacent property for future ventures.

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It has been reported that 70% of 17-24 year old recent applicants to the U.S. Army have been disqualified because they were too obese, had a criminal history, or did not finish high school.

This also might help explain our high unemployment rates.

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A single Ebola patient treated at a U.S. hospital can generate 8-55 gallon drums of medical waste each day, which includes protective clothing worn by caregivers, and materials to clean the patients room.

How or where these materials are disposed of, or if Ebola treatment is covered by Obamacare wasn't disclosed.

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Governments at all levels are feverishly seeking ways to increase revenues to satisfy their spending requirements. Problem is that each jurisdiction has it's own source of revenue, such as income, property, sales, excise or user fees, or a combination thereof, and it may be politically difficult to cut your own piece of the pie without overlapping. You can only tax the wealthy so much.

Terms like Value Added Tax, Flat Tax, and Fair Tax often show up in discussions on how to continue financing the federal government but these probably won't happen soon.

The big problem, the federal tax code has grown to be so big, largely due to clauses and exemptions favoring (*many now obsolete*) special interests inserted through the years.

While income taxes may still be the best source of revenue, no one wants to offend anyone (special interests) by making changes.

The best plan would probably be to cut spending but that won't happen any day soon either.

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A recent news report noted this year there have been 30 corporate mergers valued at \$10 Billion or more and hundreds more worth at least a billion or more. While this may be acceptable in the business world, there are always winners and losers.

While the announced purpose is often to cut costs and operate more efficiently, what's accomplished is the squelching of competition, raising prices to consumers, and the closing of production facilities no longer needed.

We realize that many mergers make good business sense, with both the stock market which supports pension plans and to the economy in general. Others result in huge profits for former owners and lead to factory closings and unemployment.

While we don't encourage government oversight or interference in private enterprise, it seemed at one time their policies at least encouraged competition while discouraging monopolies and profiteering.

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An item in *The Week* magazine claims from 2000 to 2013 advertising revenue for American newspapers fell \$40 Billion from \$63.5 to \$43 Billion while *Googles* ad revenue rose to \$57.9 Billion. Does Google have Sunday editions also?

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Either by decree from the White House, or the TV networks acting on their own because they thought it wasn't newsworthy many people missed Pres. Obama's immigration reform speech. As anticipated, he opened a hornet's nest of controversy.

While there are possibly both pros and cons with the Presidents action, it is disturbing he took it upon himself without the approval of either house of Congress or of the majority of American people.

Previous offers of amnesty have resulted in poor compliance, with aliens fearful that declaring their status will result in deportation. At the same time others waiting in the wings to enter are encouraged due to our wishy-washy laws. In this case there must be at least another billion people from around the world waiting to join us.

Letting another 5 million persons who entered our country illegally be naturalized and take advantage of our benefits "just like that" is creating a problem we could possibly regret.

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While anything considered

good for the environment is praised by the media as supposed to be good for everything, we sometimes wonder.

President Obama recently returned from a jaunt to China waving an agreement whereby our country pledges to double our pace of carbon cuts and reduce emissions to 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025.

China in turn agreed to obtain 20% of it's energy from zero carbon emission sources by that time.

No doubt the fine print (written in Chinese?) stipulates we can continue to buy things we use from their country if we don't comply.

We read that China uses coal for most of it's power with a new plant going on line every 10 days, They also ordered all manufacturing and heating in Peking to shut down during the conference so that people could find their way around.

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Our problems may be a little different. It seems that low energy fuel costs, and consumers switching to more energy efficient equipment, have prompted some public utilities to ask for rate increases in order to make a profit. We can understand the great cost they encounter installing and maintaining their infrastructure and the service they give.

We should be thankful our utilities are not completely government owned as they are elsewhere.

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Christmas is rapidly approaching, and the greatest gift that could possibly be bestowed upon the American people would be the complete and irrevocable cancellation of the Rube Goldberg contraption of a law we commonly referred to as "Obamacare."

Also included on the chopping block should be the myriad of new federal regulatory agencies and thousands of pages or new regulations and gibberish they have created to make our lives more confusing and miserable. It's just not working and won't work: period.

For whatever reasons, the law was enacted clandestinely and without mandate from the American people. As more of its clauses are

enacted, the worse things become. Both to confusion over health care coverage and overall damage to our economy. We realize that a portion of our population will likely benefit, which is good. However, many insurers and providers stand to make huge profits at the expense of everyone else as payment for their support.

We have by far the best system of hospitals and medical providers in the world. Our citizens were largely able to obtain adequate health care insurance and benefits either on their own or through their employers. There were ample agencies and aids available to all those needing assistance.

What we are seeing now is all levels of health care raising their rates in anticipation of uncertainty, employers discontinuing employee benefits due to the cost, and individual confusion as to what to do next.

There are many things our government could do to make health care more efficient and affordable for all of us. Unfortunately, the so called "Affordable Health Care Act" doesn't seem to be one of them.

As usual, lots if things to wonder about.

Jim Frink

"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of taxpayer related thoughts that occur to us from daily 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 for inclusion in future "TAX TIMES."

"Where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand him?" . . . **Ben Stein**

"Socialism is a policy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy. Its inherent virtue is the equal sharing of misery."

. . . **Winston Churchill**

The TAX TIMES

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Inside This Issue.

Happy Holidays - Less Taxing and More Giving.
November Meeting Notes,
National Debt Update.
Things That Make Us Wonder.
. . . And more.

The TAX TIMES - December, 2014

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

- Thursday—Dec. 18, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Speaker—David Litton, Green Bay Metro Fire Chief.
- Thursday—Dec, 25, 2014, Have a Merry Christmas.
- Thursday—Jan, 1, 2015, and A Happy New Year.
- Thursday—Jan, 15, 2015, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Speaker—Brown County Executive Troy Streckenbach.
- Thursday—Feb. 19, 2016 BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Program to be announced.

Public officials and candidates for public office are cordially invited to attend any of our meetings and be recognized.

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



December, 2014

“As I hurled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind—every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder.”

. . . John Glenn

“No matter who you vote for, the Government always wins.”

. . . London Subway Graffiti

SUPPORT THE BCTA

**New Members are Always Welcome. Call 499-7701
Write us at P. O. Box 684
or visit our website
www.BCTaxpayers.Org
for Details.**