

Happy New Year from the Brown County Taxpayers Association

Glen R. Schwalbach, BCTA President

I'm pleased to be able to address our members after starting my second term as the BCTA president. This is my first newsletter message because we have been fortunate to have volunteers in our association who are good writers and had very relevant issues to communicate to you in our past newsletters. We will continue to provide you thought-provoking commentaries.

I accepted a second term because of the dedication and concerns of our executive committee, our board and members in implementing our Mission of promoting:

- Individual freedom and citizen responsibility
- Limited government that is fiscally responsible, transparent, and accountable to the people
- Economic public policy through research, development and discussion of alternatives, collaboration with similarly-focused groups, and advocacy.

We are non-partisan. We have supported the efforts and taken issue with those in government regardless of their political or non-partisan affiliations.

For example, we have supported and appreciated the work of our county executive and county board in managing the costs of county government while enhancing the quality of life and improving the

infrastructure in Brown County. Real leadership was shown by the county in promoting their partnership with UW-Green Bay and county businesses to bring the STEM Innovation Center to fruition in creating a more educated workforce for our area. UW-GB is doing its part by providing two degrees in engineering and three degrees in engineering technology which helps keep students in our area. They also work with the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College to provide more opportunity for NWTC students.

That said, when the county board implemented a county sales tax, without a referendum for the citizens to have their say, we did join with the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty to get clarity on a vague state statute. The courts found in favor of the county. At the time, only ten counties out of seventy-two in Wisconsin did not have a county tax. So, it was difficult for the courts to unscramble that egg. Currently, only two counties, Winnebago and Waukesha, have no sales tax. The state restricts counties to a 0.5% sales tax except for Milwaukee County which has a 0.9%. Plus, only the City of Milwaukee is allowed to have a city sales tax. That is at 2%. So, it is cheaper to buy in Brown County.

We monitor the budgets of school districts in Brown County. Since the Green Bay Area Public School District is the largest, we meet with their staff annually to discuss their budget. Our approach is to understand the people and processes that they use to evaluate their use of taxpayers' money and to discuss options.

Glenn

October Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Patrick McIlheran, Director of Policy for the Badger Institute.

Formerly the WI Policy Research Institute, formed in 1987. The Badger Institute (BI) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit research, journalism and advocacy organization working to inform and engage Wisconsinites in discussions and timely action on issues and public policies critical to growth, opportunity and prosperity. The Institute is guided by a belief that competitive and free enterprise, limited government, private initiative, personal responsibility and civil society are essential to our democratic way of life. Prior to joining the BI, Mr. McIlheran was a reporter/columnist for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and has served as an aid for Senator Johnson. He described the BI as a think tank, doing research on several public policy related areas, typically involving taxes and spending, and sharing that data with their readers. State taxation levels, School Choice, Energy Policy, and Broadband are among the areas of current focus which Mr. McIlheran described in greater detail to the attendees.

Business items: President Schwalbach appointed Directors Parins (chair) and Bowers to a committee to research alternate venues for our meetings to allow us to go back a noon start time. He also reported that the Wisconsin Institute of Law & Liberty (WILL) had recently argued our joint case concerning the Governor's inappropriate use of the partial veto had been argued before the WI Supreme Court. A decision should come in a few months. Glen spoke at a recent event in favor of a bill to eliminate State income tax on retirement accounts, up to a \$125K level for couples. Secretary Goldhahn reported the Nominating Committee is requesting any recommendations for new directors. Elections will be held at the November meeting. Vice President



Patrick McIlheran, Director of Policy for the Badger Institute

Liddicoat expressed a desire for our group to get earlier updates on the State Budget as that process begins. Agencies have already been preparing their requests. President Schwalbach shared the timing deadlines for the various steps in the budget process.

Next month's speaker will be Jeff Flynt, Brown County Deputy Executive, to speak on the County budget.

Committee/other reports: Secretary Goldhahn shared information about a recent meeting with representatives of the Green Bay Area Public School District concerning their upcoming referendum. Our decision was to take a neutral position on the referendum. He also stated we are looking for members willing to serve on ad hoc committees as the District requests participation from our group. We will be requesting earlier meetings with them concerning their annual budget. President Schwalbach shared information from a recent media event with the WI Elections Commission, addressing the subject of election security. He encourages attendees to check their voting history record on myvote.wi.gov. Director Parins referenced the recent press activity concerning the lease between the Packers and the City of Green Bay.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

November Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Jeff Flynt, Brown County Dep Exec.

Speaking on the recently passed County Budget. Financial highlights included an equalized tax rate reduction from \$4.56 in 2018 to \$2.80 for 2025, the lowest on record. Debt reduction over that period went from \$104.9 million to a projection of \$34.76 million. Equalized value across the County went from \$20 billion to a projection of \$33.67 billion. The levy increase over the past 6 years was a total of 2.67% vs an average annual inflation rate of 3.83%. Since 2020, Brown County population has increased 2.29% with new construction valued at \$737.8 million. Major infrastructure projects include the South Bridge Connector, 18 other road, bridge, highway, and traffic projects totaling \$38.5 million. Other projects include a new jail pod, courthouse security, Port development, libraries in Pulaski, Denmark, & Ashwaubenon, Pamperin Park, Barkhausen, Fox River Trail, and tourism enhancements. Both County funds and various grant money will be used for these last groupings of projects. The County is also covering costs to subsidize the District Attorney's office and other state mandates dealing with the legal system. There is active work to obtain relief from these in the State budget.

Business items: Treasurer Sladek presented the Nominating Committee's recommendations for Directors and Officers for the next year.

Reelected as Directors for three-year terms were:

Rick Bowers, Dave Dillenburg, Rod Goldhahn, and Glen Schwalbach. Officers elected for the next year were: President-Glen Schwalbach, Vice Presidents-Dave Dillenburg & Scott Liddicoat, Secretary-Rod Goldhahn, and Treasurer-Tom Sladek.

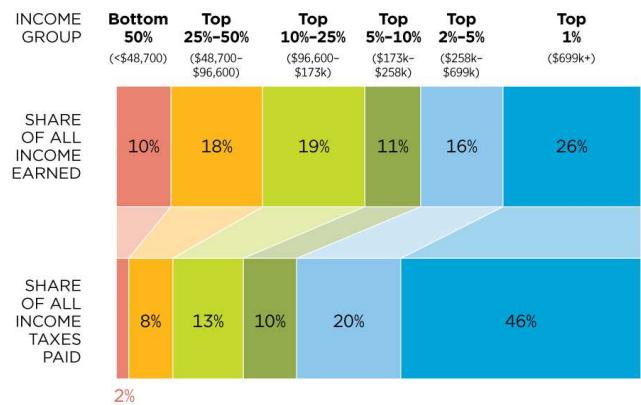
Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary



Jeff Flynt, Brown County Deputy Executive speaks to BCTA

Do the Rich Pay Their Fair Share?

FEDERAL INCOME TAXES AND ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME EARNED IN 2021



Source: FederalBudgetinPictures.com

Monthly Meetings @ The Village Grille

Monthly meetings are held at **The Village Grille**, corner of **Hoffman and East River Drive**, Allouez. The location has no stairs or steps, convenient parking, and a room to better accommodate speakers and conversation. There will be three selections from which to choose lunch - each one will be priced at **\$15 (includes tax and tip)**. Lunch is at 1:00 pm with monthly speakers presenting.

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members Welcome

www.BCTAxpayers.com

The Brown County Taxpayers Association is a local group working to bring information and awareness to issues that affect tax policy or impose regulatory burdens.

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
P. O. Box 684
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Taxpayers Association
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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

**1:00 pm Meeting
Time Change**

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - Jan 16, 2025 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez
Invited guest: BC Organics

Tuesday **Feb 18, 2025** Spring Primary

Thursday - Feb 20, 2025 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez
Invited guest: Member of WI Joint Committee on Finance

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 1:00 pm, at , at The Village Grille, Allouez.

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: \$15.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.**

Jan-Feb 2025



www.BCTAxpayers.com