



All Hands on Deck-November 4th!

The election cycle is in full swing! We have the "carpet bombing" of TV and radio ads (mostly negative), those annoying robo-calls, sound bites, mailings, literature drops, fund raisers, etc. I don't think I have ever seen any candidate, for any party, that didn't boast of being "fiscally conservative", or "an ardent watchdog of your tax dollars." Rhetoric, slogans, and promises galore. Some are delivered, some are attempted, and some are just outright lies to get a vote. Many registered voters opt to just sit it out on election day.

Whether they feel there is not much difference between the parties, or their single vote is not that important, or they don't know who or what to believe, they stay home. Or worse yet, they go to the polls and pull the lever for a candidate without really knowing where he or she stands. I even had a co-worker tell me if they didn't know much about either candidate they voted for the first name on the ballot because they figured that one was the incumbent! She was both uninformed and misinformed! Candidate order is based on the most recent Presidential or Gubernatorial election. In recent primaries, we have seen outcomes decided by a handful of votes. Each and every vote does count and is important in a free society. Exercise your right and responsibility and head to your polling place on 11/4. **But go there informed.**

Our Governor's race features two candidates with very different ideas on taxes, economic development, jobs, and the role of government in the lives of the citizens. The polls show the election as neck and neck, which underscores the importance of your vote. You don't have to rely on ads. You can look at the actual records of both candidates. One as Governor, and the other as Commerce Secretary under a previous administration. A quick internet search will provide you with actual data. Did their budgets focus on fiscal policy, or back door legislation? What was their tax policy? Did they only look at more and different "revenue sources", or did they manage spending? Does their record show they view government involvement or private enterprise as the answer to problems? Who better to decide how to spend the money you earn-you, or the government?

How do the Attorney General candidates view their office? Do they see themselves as the chief protector and enforcer of our state constitution and laws? Or, do they see the office as a platform to be an activist on issues of importance to their party? What does their record show? Similar questions exist with the other offices on your ballot.

Per our organization by-laws, we do not endorse candidates, so I cannot tell you how to cast your vote. We encourage active engagement of citizens and taxpayers in their government. Take the time to know your candidates. Not from sound bites, but from their records. If you can't find the information, you likely have friends who are knowledgeable. Talk to them, learn as much as you can, and make your decision. Then, make that decision known on November 4th!

Rod Goldhahn — Vice-President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 29th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

SEPTEMBER MEETING NOTES.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting conducted Thursday, September 18, at Titledown Brewing.

Paul Zeller, candidate for Brown County Treasurer, outlined his ideas to improve operations of the Brown County Treasurer's Office. He would bring Lean Management to the Treasurer's Office, which is one of the County departments not using that technique. He would make use of college students in the office. He would also try to invest County funds locally.

Richard Carlstedt reported that he had reviewed 490 pages of an open records request from the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty (WILL) concerning Fund 80 (Community Service Fund) to the Green Bay School District. He was concerned by the large amount of redacting in the data release. He was also surprised that 50 pages of data were withheld from the release. As this information is not considered to be personnel information, there do not appear to be legitimate reasons for the redacting and withholding 50 pages of data.

Richard Parins reported on the September 10th Transportation Fund News Conference generated by WISPIRG (Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group) and the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club contacted the BCTA for cooperative support. While it may be true that an increase in either the Federal or State gas tax is not an answer to correct the poor management of these funds, and the aforementioned groups and the BCTA may share that position, that is where it ends.

From there, the discussion went to a variety of other forms of transportation, from mass transit to bike and walking paths, none of which are inherently wrong pursuits, but better repair of existing roads might come first.

Glen Schwalbach reported that he attended the fourth annual Governor's Small Business Summit held in Racine on September 10th, with hundreds of small business owners, entrepreneurs, and innovators present. Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch conducted the event with twelve secretaries or other heads of state agencies appearing on panels for Q & A with the attendees. These agency heads were available for one-on-ones throughout the day. Each agency had an exhibit booth. Governor Walker spoke at lunch, explaining that they all share a common interest in seeing state government as their partner for job creation.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 16. The scheduled speaker is our Congressman Reid Ribble, (assuming no emergency sessions of Congress.) Details on back page of this TAX TIMES. **David 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. BCTA@ExecPC.Com.

"When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost."

. . . Billy Graham

The Governor's Small Business Summit.

As a professional consultant to small business owners, I was pleased to attend the Governor's annual small business summit held September 10, in Racine. Most of us realize that small business is the backbone of the states workforce and economy. More people are actually employed by small rather than large business, and it is encouraging to see that the state realizes this and understands the problems encountered by small business establishments.

Some of the highlights are the following. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority pointed out that Wisconsin has qualified for \$95 million dollars, fourth in the nation, for new businesses. In less than four years, Wisconsin has seen 25,000 business start-ups.

The Public Service Commission reported on the expansion of broadband in Wisconsin. The Commissioner of Insurance manages the Patients' Compensation Fund and provides property insurance for local public buildings besides regulating thousands of insurers in the state.

The rules on workmen's compensation are being rewritten to reduce the complexity and cost to businesses. The Department of Revenue is implementing a number of tax reforms. There was a complaint about the length of time that highway projects interrupt travel. It was explained that one reason for that was the effort to not completely cut off access to local businesses during the construction.

A new law and program sets up a crowd-funding process for "Wisconsin Certified Investors" to invest up to \$10,000 in Wisconsin companies online. The companies must meet certain criteria and can raise up to \$2,000,000 through this process. The website uses certain rules and formats to warn of risks.

Overall, the summit was very upbeat and focused on cooperation and support for Wisconsin businesses.

Glen Schwalbach—BCTA

November 4, 2014
Don't Forget To

VOTE!

- * **Governor and Attorney General.**
- * **Elected State Representatives.**
- * **National Elected Representatives.**
- * **County Elected Officials.**

Your vote does count!

"Bad leaders are elected by good people who do not vote."

National Debt Update.

Or “What difference does it make?”

As of the first of October, the official U. S. National Debt will be hovering near the \$17.8 Trillion mark. We can't say for sure because the reliable “*real-time National Debt Clock*” website we formerly used each month to track the National Debt as it grew each minute no longer seems to be available. Perhaps the plug was pulled by Presidential Decree to save money or embarrassment.

We call it the official clock because it only shows current such as immediate accounts payable. Long term debt items such as government employee pensions payable or social security are left out of the equation until we have to write a check. In any event, we will soon have to raise our debt limit “*for the last time*” again, and close our parks and monuments for a few days until Congress gets the message people are getting fed up with their inaction.

What are the potential consequences? While the government has kept interest low, presumably to stimulate the economy, the higher interest rates on their debt will climb as the debt rises. No one is likely to borrow money if payment is risky. Higher interest rates will make everything cost more, while slowing economic growth. Everything costing more is another term for inflation.

Is the government concerned? Probably not as long as they can continue to raise the debt limit. Government initiatives like Obamacare, student loan forgiveness, higher unemployment benefits, welfare programs, and just plain government duplication, inefficiency and waste are just a few items in the daily news that make us wonder what is really going on.

How has the debt grown? It probably is not a Democratic or Republican problem. Our country was formed by people, and at a period in time when people took care of themselves, no matter what. As the need for improved infrastructure and the standard of living rose society depended more on government. One hundred years ago, in 1910 the debt was only \$2.65 Billion. Roughly the amount it increases under today's administration. In 1920, just after WWI, it was only a little under \$26 Billion. In 1950, while we were still paying for all of the battleships, airplanes, tanks and ammunition we spent for WWII, plus the Marshall Plan to fix the mess made in Europe the debt was still about \$250 Billion. About 1/75 of what it is today.

Who do we owe it all to? A lot of it to foreign countries. China and Japan each hold over a Trillion of IOU's. Brazil, Switzerland, Britain, Belgium, Taiwan, and even Russia are also on the list along with various banks, and just about anyone with extra money.

What can be done? First stabilize the damage. The debt is growing at rate of about \$2.33 Billion per day. However, we also spend about \$4 Billion daily for interest. Anyone with a credit card and making the minimum payments soon finds they are digging a deeper hole than they can get out of. At some time Congress and the President may have to say, “Sorry, but we can't afford that program!” More next month.

Jim Frink—BCTA

“Just because we have the best hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail.” . . . , Barock Obama

“Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.” . . . P. J. O'Rourke

“It's awful hard to get people interested in corruption unless they can get some of it.” . . . Will Rogers

Using The “Truth-O-Meter” To Check Facts On Political Advertising.

No matter what your political beliefs might be, it would seem all of us could agree that so far the campaign ads we see on TV for the office of Wisconsin Governor have gone way over the top in regards to decency, respectability, and truthfulness.

Both major parties are to blame. While it may not necessarily be the candidates themselves placing the ads, it would be the doing of well-financed special interest groups, with their own agendas adding fuel to the fire. Unfortunately this is all creating an atmosphere of not who is the best and most qualified person to lead the state for the next four years, but of supporting who may be the lesser of two evils. This does not create confidence in our government or whoever is elected to represent us,

Most ads presented so far range from ridiculous speculation to outright lies. While many of the ads we see focus on the states job creation record and handling of funds, is this a diversion to distract voters from the facts? Are things as bad as being claimed? The common thread seems to be of disqualifying the other candidate for either their past actions or what they might do if elected. This might leave us wishing for a little more explanation. If you have a computer, some help is available.

Google up www.PolitiFact Wisconsin. This will connect you to a website originally developed by the Tampa Bay Tribune, to check political advertising. Although co-sponsored in Wisconsin by the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, it appears to be non-partisan, non-biased, and remarkably comprehensive. We would recommend you check it out for yourself.

Their methodology is to check all statements from political ads, research the background of statements made, and then rate them for accuracy and truthfulness. Their ratings go from **FALSE** to **TRUE**, with partially true or false, some truth, mostly true or false, etc., in between. Outright lies or obvious statements from conjecture are awarded with a well deserved. “**Pants on Fire**” rating. It is interesting to note that in the case of the Governors race, both candidates or their supporters were given ratings ranging from **True** to **Pants on Fire** for statement made.

There are about 800 items from recent Wisconsin political statements covered, and their ratings are right on. In addition, they each rating contains supporting articles and facts supporting their ratings. The website is complete, well organized, and easy to navigate. Give it a try.

All in all, this is a most interesting and useful reference. It is too bad advertisers are not required to abide by the truth in advertising standards on political ads the same as commercial products being touted in their commercials. **JF**

“Do you ever get the feeling that the only reason we have elections is to find out if the polls were right?”

. . . Robert Orben

“The Budget should be balanced the treasury should be refilled, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, lest Rome will become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance.”

. . . Cicero, 55 BC

(Still good advice.)

Things That Make Us Wonder.

The furor arising over the NFL and their handling of domestic abuse charges against some of its prima donna players has us all wondering just where it will end. Blaming the commissioner and demanding his resignation seems only another sign of the "blame somebody else" mentality we see as the answer to our problems.

There have even been a lot of reports lately of school teachers having "inappropriate relations" with the children in their schools.

The Sept. 19, *Journal-Sentinel* reported that a federal judge, no less, in Atlanta, has been accused of domestic violence. Whose resignation should we all demand to correct that kind of problem?

* * * * *

A recent report from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services Claims that a whopping 7.3 million people have enrolled and paid for health insurance through Obamacare.

While they admitted this was somewhat less than they anticipated, it also would indicate there are still a few obstacles to overcome to make Obamacare acceptable.

* * * * *

While just about everyone except the Washington Redskins fans and owners is demanding they change their name to something less offensive, *This Week* magazine reports that from a database of 42,624 names currently in use by high schools, colleges and pro teams in the country, 2,129 have Native American origins, including Savages, Squaws, and 74 others still using the name Redskins.

There used to be a baseball team called the Washington Senators, but a lot of people would undoubtedly find that offensive these days.

* * * * *

The media can't get over obsessing about the source and amount of campaign contributions. The Center for Responsive Politics, a group which keeps track, reports that nationally, of the top 20 top political donors so far in 2014, sixteen are considered

as "solidly Democrat/liberal." Eleven of the top 20 are trade unions, Koch Industries who are often criticized for partisan beliefs are #36 on the list.

The media's problem certainly can't be that not enough money is spent on political advertising.

* * * * *

While on the subject, the amount of money candidates raise for their campaigns is a good measure of their personal support. However these days, all high profile candidates are likely forced to solicit funding from any and all sources available.

This said, the huge amount of money furnished from national special interest groups often indicates they believe the candidate, if a winner, will possibly be of more value to them than to the people of the state they represent. It is always important to know who is supporting the candidate and paying for the attack ads. The National Teachers and Municipal Employee unions are supporting Mary Burke, and conservative interests more likely support Gov. Walker. That's politics.

* * * * *

Atlantic City is finding that they placed too much faith in the Casino industry being an economic salvation. Now a number of them are closing down along with the loss of thousands of jobs, and a lot of the money the state invested with the same "get rich" mentality as the customers they hoped to lure.

Would Gov. Walker face a similar problem with the proposed Kenosha Casino? There is probably no question that the number of Indian operated gambling establishments has exceeded the intentions of the state when they were first established.

While beneficial to the tribes as was intended, it is probably safe to say it has not been a significant source of revenue for the state. Presently the Potawatomi Tribe is withholding funds from the state pending a decision on allowing the Kenosha casino.

While the new casino could be beneficial in attracting visitors to spend money in Wisconsin, and employing many people, it would also involve money leaving the state. It would compete with other state casinos,

along with those in adjacent states. How long would it take before cash hungry Illinois saw what was happening and built one twice as big down Highway I-90 a few miles?

So far left out of the debate is the possible entitlement costs being provided to patrons who gamble away their savings. The Wisconsin Gamblers Hotline already reports over 14,000 calls for help each year;

It's a tough call for the Governor. It may not be as disastrous as the Atlantic City experiment, but one Las Vegas in the country may also be enough. All of the numbers, players, for and against arguments and expert opinion from all sides should be set on the table for a decision.

* * * * *

An article in the Los Angeles Times questions the practice of giving tax breaks for the purpose of attracting new business or retaining business threatening to move.

While possibly a factor there are usually other economic factors involved in such decisions, and seldom do the companies involved ever compute the actual dollar amount.

Also the states involved seldom put a pencil to their actual costs or actual gains obtained from new business establishments.

* * * * *

It is reported that the federal program supplying surplus military equipment to police departments is also furnishing high powered rifles, grenade launchers, and armored vehicles to public schools for protection.

Bad idea. While some may consider this to be a good idea to protect their children, training school personnel how to use the stuff and keep track of it could easily lead to more disasters than would be prevented.

* * * * *

Almonds have become one of the most popular nuts, and 82% of the world's supply is grown in California.

This is good for the economy except that California is experiencing a severe drought, effecting the production of fruits and vegetables. Over half of the nation's supply comes from California, and we are already noticing dra-

matic price increases on items.

It takes 1.1 gallon of water to produce each almond. The total could support 75% of the states population.

* * * * *

Whether the ongoing John Doe probe in Milwaukee County could be classified as a "witch hunt" with little accomplished except cast doubt or a work still in progress is a matter of speculation. A lot of time and taxpayer money was wasted by public officials who possibly could have been doing something more productive.

One thing those behind the probe did accomplish was to get Gov. Walker to spend over a million dollars of his campaign funding for lawyer fees. The expenses of conducting the investigation paid by taxpayers.

* * * * *

Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke is described as an outspoken advocate of the right to bear arms. His opponent in the August primary was not. Despite gun control advocate former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg contributing over \$150,000 to his opponent, Clarke won 52-48%, and will run unopposed in November. End of story.

* * * * *

There has long been talk of eliminating the penny from circulation. They actually cost about twice as much to make as they are worth. Their biggest value seems to be for rounding off change after sales tax is added to a purchase. We might miss them though.

When Europe standardized on the Euro a few years back, they also eliminated the equivalent of the penny. Most countries use VAT taxes rather than sales taxes which are then incorporated in the sales prices of merchandise. The result was that the price of most of the things people buy was rounded off to the nearest Euro, Half Euro, or whatever, and the need for a lot of change is eliminated.

While this may sound great, it seems it was used as an excuse to raise prices substantially on many small items making the price of living more expensive. We may be better off sticking with the penny for a while.

One problem with the penny is

that most of them end up in collection jars rather than in circulation. Perhaps if the mint could figure out a way to discourage this habit they wouldn't need to keep making more.

* * * * *

The Wisconsin Highway Trust Fund may be in danger.

First the DOT is claiming that money for new highways and maintenance is running short, and something will have to be done before long.

Second, various groups see the transportation fund as sort of a gold mine to finance their own interests. Among other issues, they claim we have enough roads, and advocate more money be spent on rapid transit and other public transportation.

The DOT has no end of projects, big and small on the drawing board, and conceivably could keep busy forever. One problem could be that improvements scheduled for several years down the line require right-of-way which must be purchased now when it is still available. Many heavily used bridges are in need of repair or replacement. There is no assurance that federal money will always be available, as all other states are facing the same problems and competing for available money.

Raising the gas tax and registration fees are obvious but politically unpopular solutions. Remember when Gov. Doyle "borrowed" \$100 million from the fund in order to balance the state budget, and still had to add dozens of taxes and fees to satisfy his spending agenda?

In the meantime we have to trust and try to encourage the DOT to design, prioritize, and construct their projects with consideration to those who pay the bills. Other spending can be approved on their own merits.

* * * * *

It is incredible to hear all of the excuses for not having identification to present when voting. While we acknowledge it will be somewhat of a public expense and inconvenience, it will be a step towards preventing unauthorized persons from compromising election results. Perhaps some better method will be devised for the future but this is what we have now.

The established procedure for legal U.S. Citizens to register to vote couldn't be simpler, and once you have registered your name should appear on the poll lists automatically as long as you vote with the same address.

Being a U.S. Citizen is still a privilege, and voting is a responsibility often ignored or overlooked which goes with the privilege. You get what you vote or don't vote for. Identification and proof of citizenship is required for many purposes, and for the present voting is one of them. Amen.

* * * * *

The summer road construction season is finally winding down, and we look forward to using the improvements that have been made. Several projects are on tap for next year, including the ongoing U.S. #41 project.

The good news: We can look forward to dodging snowbanks rather than orange barrels for a few months,

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."

"Comedy in the age of Obama is concerned less with what is humorous than what is appropriate."

, , , **The National Review**

"He that is good at making excuses is seldom good at anything else."

. . . **Benjamin Franklin**

"The National Park Service, a division of the Dept. of Agriculture, asks people 'Not to feed the animals,' because they may grow dependent and not learn to take care of themselves."

. . . . **News Item**

The TAX TIMES\$

Brown County Taxpayers Association
P. O. Box 684
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

PRSR STD
U. S. Postage
PAID
Green Bay, WI
Permit No. 255

Address Service Requested.

Inside This Issue

- All Hands on Deck—November 4th!**
 - September Meeting Notes.**
 - The Governor’s Small Business Summit.**
 - A Reminder to VOTE!**
 - National Debt Update.**
 - Using The “Truth-O-Meter” To Check Fact
On Political Advertising.**
 - Things That Make Us Wonder.**
- And more . . .

The TAX TIMES\$ - October, 2014

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

- Thursday—Oct. 15, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.**
Scheduled Speaker: Representative Reid Ribble.
- TUESDAY—Nov, 4, 2014, ELECTION DAY! Be sure to VOTE !**
Federal, State, and County elective offices.
- Thursday—Nov. 20, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.**
Program to be announced.
- Thursday—Dec, 18, 1014, 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.

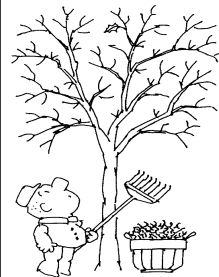
Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Tiletown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

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.



October, 2014

“Public opinion polls are like children in a garden, digging things up all the time to see how their growing.: . . . J. B. Priestley

“I don’t make jokes. I just watch government and report the facts.”
. . . Will Rogers

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.