

October 7, 2009



## Member News

[Ellis Ace to Receive Centennial Award](#)  
Ellis Ace Hardware  
Seneca, IL

[St. Peter Stimulus](#)  
Arrow Ace Hardware  
St. Peter, MN

## Sharp Tips



## Training Then and Now

MHA's On-line Training is on demand and ready for all of your employees.

## Pricing Survey

## Air Filters

## Classifieds

[View the latest MHA Member classified ads here!](#)

## Obituaries

## Glad You're Here

by John Haka, MHA Managing Director

The Midwest Hardware Association is extremely excited and proud to welcome hardware dealers from Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota to our Association. In combination with dealers from Wisconsin and Illinois, the "new" Midwest Hardware Association is now nearly 900 members strong and the single largest regional association of hardware stores in the country.

For our new members from Minnesota and the Dakotas, this is your first exposure to eHELPS, our monthly electronic newsletter. We hope you like it. It's designed to be a quick read, yet still keep you up to date and connected with the Association. While there's no doubt it's quite a change from the traditional printed newsletter you may be accustomed to, I encourage you to thoroughly navigate through the eHELPS and check out the many articles with links to great information.

In keeping with the belief that our electronic newsletter is best as a short, fast read, I'll keep my thoughts brief. We have a great Association which is now even stronger with the addition of our new members. But in the coming months, please watch for more information about the "new MHA" and the array of services and benefits which bring real value to your membership. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts or ideas about our Association and how we might help make your store more successful, please feel free to contact me by phone 800-888-1817, or by email [johnh@midwesthardware.com](mailto:johnh@midwesthardware.com). I'd love to hear from you.

Once again, thanks so much for your support of MHA. We look forward to serving all of you for many, many years to come.

## My Local Hardware Store! Set to Partner with Minnesota Twins Again in 2010

Registration has already begun for the 2010 My Local Hardware Store! campaign on the Minnesota Twins Radio Network.

The 2009 program was supported by over 125 association members who pledged financial support for the program. Their stores were featured on messages heard throughout the summer on each and every Minnesota Twins radio broadcast.

The My Local Hardware Store! promotion is a unique campaign which touts the superior service, convenience, and home-town commitment found at locally owned hardware stores. It's a vital message that reminds the hardware-buying public of the many advantages a local hardware store

**[Howard Schwalbach](#)**  
Former Board Member and  
President of MDRHA

### Quick Links

[MidwestHardware.com](http://MidwestHardware.com)

[MyLocalHardwareStore.com](http://MyLocalHardwareStore.com)

[RetailFinancialServices.biz](http://RetailFinancialServices.biz)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

offers compared to the nearby big box.

This program is available only to MHA members. If you are interested in your store becoming part of next season's My Local Hardware Store! campaign on the Minnesota Twins Radio Network, [click here](#) to find the pledge brochure, or contact Roger Siskoff at the MHA by phone 1-800-888-1817 or via email [rogers@midwesthardware.com](mailto:rogers@midwesthardware.com).

## Unemployment Insurance Tsunami

by Rob Karr, MHA Illinois Lobbyist

Governmental debt and budget deficits have become so common place we hardly notice them anymore. The national debt has soared to nearly \$12 trillion in the past year, while the annual budget deficit is approximately \$1.5 trillion or 11% of the Gross Domestic Product - the highest level since World War II. The State of Illinois has a budget deficit of \$10-\$12 billion out of a total budget of approximately \$56 billion. Meaningless when compared to the national debt, but certainly significant to those who live and work in Illinois and will be called upon to pay higher taxes. In order to pay off such a deficit, the state would have to double the state income tax, expand the sales tax to a laundry list of services, and hold the line on new discretionary spending. The idea of taking that much money out of an already struggling economy causes everyone heartburn. While the media endlessly covers this story, employers face another taxing tsunami in the form of a bankrupt Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UITF).

[read more](#)

## Our Founding Fathers

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

There are many issues other than health care. (For example, jobs and unemployment.) However, health care seems to be an issue that is most prominent in the media and on the minds of many Americans, who either vote or have the potential to vote in the next election. The health care debate has lost some steam as the economy struggles to improve and the stock market rises. How long will this last? More importantly will local or national politicians be in the best spot to make improvements last? Maybe both, and perhaps maybe neither? Just what role should markets play? Maybe the next time a choice must be made about whether or not I should go to the emergency room or sip chicken soup and take a hot bath, the latter wins out?

[read more](#)

## Sales Trends - August 2009

Here are the most recent Illinois, Minnesota-Dakotas, and Wisconsin hardware store sales trends, gathered from association members using the MHA's monthly accounting service. The figures derived for each region includes sales data from the following number of stores:

Illinois - 31 stores  
Minnesota-Dakotas - 19 stores  
Wisconsin - 96 stores

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-10.15%	-3.35%
MN-Dakotas	-4.41%	1.20%
Wisconsin	-8.78%	-5.98%

## Reminder, New I-9 Form Required

Employers must verify the identity and employment authorization of all employees hired after November 6, 1986. The new form is dated in the upper right corner of the Instructions "Expires 08/31/12" and must be used for all new hires after April, 3, 2009.

The new I-9 form for Employment Eligibility is available on the MHA website under [Find a Form](#) (be sure to log in as a member) or directly at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf>.

Copies of the I-9 Form should be kept in a separate folder from the regular employee files and presented upon request by an authorized agent. I-9's must be retained for a minimum of three years after hire, or one year after employment ends - whichever is longer.

## Tips, Trash, & Treasures

### WELCOME MDRHA Members to the MHA!

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

Braggart, "My Grandfather was a Pilot in the Civil War."

Skeptic, "Oh really, I didn't know they had planes during the Civil War!"

Braggart, "Well I never mentioned anything about planes. He worked in the stables and was told Pilot here and Pilot it there."

I always try to lead off my TTT article with a dumb joke of some kind that ties into a little blurb about what is happening in our little corner of the hardware world. This month I'd like to remind all our Members to be on the lookout for deals that seem to be too good to be true.

[read more](#)

## MHA Office Closure

The MHA main office will be closed from 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 8 through Sunday, October 11 in order for us to re-locate to a different office building in Stevens Point.

You may notice some disruption in our phone, fax, email, and internet systems during this time period.

We plan to be back up and running as normal on Monday, October 12, 2009 at our new office location.



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Midwest Hardware Association | 2301 Country Club Dr Ste A | PO Box 8033 | Stevens Point | WI | 54481