

December 7, 2009



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The importance of being a coach, not a player/coach.

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A Bad Idea That Needs To Be Stopped

Recently, a Madison, Wisconsin newspaper ran a story about the "problem" of using police resources to respond to detained shoplifters, a large number of which were coming from a local grocery store chain. A Lieutenant with the Madison police department was quoted as asking if their department's time wouldn't be better spent responding to other, more "quality of life" issues. The article went on to say that the police were tossing around the idea of setting a benchmark value for stolen merchandise-perhaps \$50 or \$75-which the shoplifter would have to be caught with before the police would respond to a store.

To say the least, MHA was disturbed to hear such a policy was even being considered. Can you imagine someone walking into your store and stealing \$10, \$20, or even \$40 worth of merchandise knowing that, even if they are caught by store personnel, there was zero chance the police would show up?

[read more](#)

Cook County Sales Tax

by Rob Karr, MHA Illinois Lobbyist

eHELPS readers will recall that, in 2008, the Cook County Board of Commissioners narrowly passed a one percent sales tax increase. This increase gave Cook County, within the City of Chicago, the distinction of having the highest sales tax rate in the nation at 10.25%. It also ignited a taxpayer revolt unlike anything Cook County has seen in decades, if ever. This public pressure resulted in a desire by many of the Commissioners to roll back some or all of the increase. Unfortunately, the process was heavily stacked against them.

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Better Not Cry, Pout, or Steal

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

The City of Madison has long been known for its city council who vote on US foreign policy, debate world affairs, and go their own way (onward through the fog). You'll recall that, about five years ago, the Madison City Council voted to enact the city's own minimum wage. That presented enormous problems for main street and other businesses as other city councils around the state decided that maybe they should do the same thing. Someday it would not be surprising to see the Mad City Council vote to secede from the State of Wisconsin and print its own currency. Now this virus may be

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spreading to the Madison Police Department, which has floated the idea of not responding to retail theft unless the amount involved exceeds \$75.

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Sales Trends - September 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 - 28 stores
Minnesota-Dakotas - 14 stores
Wisconsin - 94 stores

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-7.77%	-4.51%
MN-Dakotas	-0.21%	-0.53%
Wisconsin	-6.57%	-5.59%

Reciprocity Changes Affect Minnesota and Wisconsin Members

The long-standing individual income tax reciprocity agreement between Minnesota and Wisconsin will end effective January 1, 2010. As a result, businesses located in one state, who employ residents of the other state, will need to change their payroll tax withholding.

Beginning in 2010, Minnesota stores will have to begin withholding Minnesota income taxes on personal service wages paid to Wisconsin residents who work in Minnesota. Use the Federal Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate, Form W-4, to determine the amount of Minnesota income tax to be withheld from each employee's paycheck.

Wisconsin stores will have to begin withholding Wisconsin income taxes on personal service wages paid to Minnesota residents who work in Wisconsin. Employees will need to complete a Wisconsin Withholding Exemption Certificate, Form WT-4, to determine the amount of Minnesota income tax to be withheld from their paychecks.

To learn more, Minnesota stores with Wisconsin employees can [click here](#).

Meanwhile, Wisconsin stores with Minnesota employees can [click here](#).

Good Character makes for Good Employees

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IRS Announces 2010 Standard Mileage Rates

WASHINGTON - The Internal Revenue Service today issued the 2010 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical, or moving purposes.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2010, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups, or panel trucks) will be:

- 50 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 16.5 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

The new rates for business, medical, and moving purposes are slightly lower than last year's. The mileage rates for 2010 reflect generally lower transportation costs compared to a year ago.

Tips, Trash, & Treasures

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

Questions That Haunt Me!

Can you cry under water?

How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?

Why do you have to "put your two cents in"...but it's only a "penny for your

thoughts"? Where's that extra penny going to?

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