

August 5, 2009



Member News

[Marty O'Hara](#)

NRHA Young Retailer of the Year

Sharp Tips



[Sell Quality](#)

Selling the Features, Functions, and Benefits of your products.

Pricing Survey

[Electrical Supplies](#)

Classifieds

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

Obituaries

[Bill Van Lanen](#)

Ripon Ace
Ripon, WI

[Hugo Trilling](#)

Minnesota-Dakotas Hardware Dealers Approve Plan of Merger

By a vote of 96-3, members of the Minnesota-Dakotas Retail Hardware Association have voted to support a merger with the Midwest Hardware Association. This vote, which comes on the heels of a 121-0 vote in support of the merger by MHA members in June, clears the way for the two organizations to combine effective September 1, 2009.

At that time, the over 300 members of the MDRHA will become members of the Midwest Hardware Association. The MHA will remain headquartered in Stevens Point, with no immediate changes to the staff and services. The association's Board of Directors will be restructured, with members from the Minnesota-Dakotas region joining dealers from Illinois and Wisconsin on the MHA Board.

The two organizations have worked closely with one another for years. For example, MDRHA has long endorsed MHA's Payroll, Accounting, and Tax Services to its members. And recently, MDRHA's innovative and highly successful My Local Hardware Store! campaign (now in its eleventh year in Minnesota) was rolled out for MHA members in Wisconsin and Illinois.

The primary goal of the merger is to take the separate strengths of two existing associations and combine them in ways which provide enhanced services and long-term benefits for all of our members. Watch for more information about the new, bigger, better, stronger MHA in the coming months.

Should YOU Invest in On-Line Training?

The On-Line Campus is available to all MHA Members. Now you can provide training for all levels of positions from New Hire Clerks to Supervisors in areas NOT generally covered by your wholesaler's product-specific training. The On-Line Campus introduces your staff to topics such as harassment and use of foul language in the workplace, to customer service, salesmanship, and even how to use the telephone. Things they need to know that you do not have the time to teach.

The campus is growing with new classes being added on a regular basis. There are now nearly 300 sessions already available, including forklift safety that meets OSHA requirements for the classroom portion of driver licensing.

Why On-Line Video?

Very short lessons...unlike VHS or CD-based programs. On-Line videos are as short as 7 minutes to as long as 25 minutes. Most run around 12 to 15 minutes.

[Trilling Hardware
Sheboygan, WI](#)

[Debra Rozman
Rozman True Value
West Allis, WI](#)

Quick Links

[MidwestHardware.com](#)

[MyLocalHardwareStore.com](#)

[RetailFinancialServices.biz](#)

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Tests with lessons...managers can see how learning is progressing...and follow up where needed. You are informed when tests are taken, by who, when, and what score.

If you have a large screen TV that connects to a computer, you can do **group meetings**. Or, if you have an LCD projector, you can connect it to a computer and turn a room into a theater. It is even available on a **web-enabled cell phone**.

"But Roger, I'm too busy to check it out!" "There's too much to look at!"

Yadda, Yadda, Yadda.

Let's make this easy. Join our affiliate, Southwestern Association, for a short webinar on Friday, August 21, 2009, at 9:00 AM. Sit back and let Nikki (SWA's Training Director) drive your computer on a guided tour of the campus. Get a feel for the program and take a quick peek at popular classes. No hassle, no sales pitch. You don't even need to pre-register. Simply log on, call in, sit back, and relax for 30 minutes. Let us show you WHY the On-Line Campus is right for your store.

Questions before hand? Call Roger or Sam at 800-888-1817.

[Click here for webinar details](#)

Illinois Sales Tax Rates on Some Products Set to Change in September

Illinois retailers selling items such as Candy, Soft Drinks, and Grooming and Hygiene Products need to be aware that products falling in these categories will be taxed at a higher rate beginning September 1. It is important to adjust your POS systems to account for this, in order to make sure the correct amount of sales tax is collected at the time of sale and later remitted to the Illinois Department of Revenue.

MHA's partner, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, has extensive information available about the changes. [Click here](#) to learn more and make sure your store is ready to implement the changes on September 1.

[read more](#)

Sign-Up Today For Illinois Football and My Local Hardware Store!

MHA is partnering with the University of Illinois Football Network to bring the My Local Hardware Store! campaign to radio stations statewide this fall.

This unique message is the only advertising campaign which exclusively promotes the service, convenience, and value that locally owned retail hardware stores provide to their customers everyday. It's a message that needs to be heard by the hardware-buying public and reminds them of the many ways you excel over the Big Boxes.

Like all association projects, our work depends upon the support of our members. This campaign can only take place if enough MHA members agree to participate. And with the season right around the corner, we need those commitments soon!

To find out more details about the My Local Hardware Store! campaign in Illinois, [click here](#), or contact Roger Siskoff at the MHA office.

Please take part in this unique effort available only to MHA members.

[Sign-up today!](#)

Health Care: Who Pays & Who Gets?

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

The national debate on the cost of health care and how to reform the delivery system is raging. President Obama has proposed sweeping legislation that is on a very fast track. Some say that by the end of this month that proposals of historic proportions will be a done deal. As technology advances our collective life expectancy and as we live longer and require more and more from the health care system, how much will that cost? Who will pay? How much should be paid? When these cost issues confront basic ethical issues of sickness and health...of life and death...who decides? There's way more here than can be decided by the end of this month.

[read more](#)

Sales Trends - June 2009

Here are the most recent Illinois and Wisconsin hardware store sales trends, gathered from association members using the MHA's monthly accounting service.

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-5.93%	-1.35%
Wisconsin	-11.67%	-6.36%

New Wisconsin LP Gas Regulations

The new Wisconsin LP gas regulations will go into effect on August 1, 2009. All existing bulk retail LPG distribution facilities including **hardware stores**, outdoor appliance dealers, and LP gas grill supply centers that fill liquefied gas containers will need to obtain the license. The fee is \$75 for initial application and \$60 renewal fee every two years.

Hardware stores filling tanks larger than four gallons in size will need the LP Gas Supplier License. If you only exchange tanks and DO NOT refill yourself, you do not need the license.

If you dispense Propane in Wisconsin-[Click here for details.](#)

New Rules Require Written Plan for Spotting Identity Theft

After several months of delay, the Federal Trade Commission's enforcement of the new "Red Flag Rules" began August 1, 2009. The Red Flag Rules require all businesses involved in extending credit to their customers (including retail hardware stores) to develop a written plan for detecting and

reporting identity theft.

Fortunately, the FTC has also recognized that not all types of businesses are the same, and that most locally owned retail shops present a low-risk of having an imposter use someone else's identity to purchase products.

With that in mind, the FTC has published a "Do-It-Yourself" prevention kit for low-risk businesses. It has two parts: Part A helps you determine if your business is at low-risk, and Part B helps you design your written Identity Theft Prevention Program if your business falls in the low-risk category. The prevention kit can be found [here](#).

While it's unclear as to how rigorously the new rules will be enforced, MHA recommends you take a few minutes to review the new rules, assess your store's risk level and use the template to develop a short, written plan for your business.

Tips, Trash, and Treasures - Swine Flu

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

My doctor is really up on these things. He was telling me about a politician in Washington who's got the Kleptomania Virus.

I said, "The Kleptomania Virus? Is it catching?"

He said, "No. It's taking!"

Incidentally, the government is finally going to do something about this swine flu epidemic. Starting Monday, it's illegal to exhale!

[read more](#)



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