

September 4, 2009



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MHA Growth Spurt

The Midwest Hardware Association is pleased to have the members of the Minnesota-Dakotas Retail Hardware Association join our association.

The merger between the two associations became effective September 1, 2009. The Midwest Hardware Association is now the largest regional hardware association in the country, with close to 900 member stores in the five states of Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

We are pleased that Mac Hardin has transitioned to become part of the MHA team. Mac will be operating out of the office in Hopkins, Minnesota, as the manager of the association's Bankcard Processing service. This popular service is already utilized by a large number of MHA members, and we look for it to grow even more under Mac's leadership.

Although MHA is now a larger association, our commitment remains the same. We will continue to do all we can to serve our members' best interests and provide services and benefits which help make our members better, more profitable, and more successful independent hardware dealers.

MHA Offices Moving in October

The offices of the Midwest Hardware Association will be moving to a new location in Stevens Point this October. After leasing space from Sentry Insurance for many, many years, MHA will be leaving the Sentry facilities and relocating to different office space located at 2301 Country Club Drive, Suite A, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Our post office box will remain the same, as will all phone and fax numbers.

The move is planned to take place from Friday, October 9, through Sunday, October 11. The offices will be closed during that time, and individuals trying to contact MHA via either phone or e-mail may experience some difficulties. We expect to have operations up and running as normal by the time we re-open for business on Monday, October 12.

The Early Edition

by Rob Karr, MHA Illinois Lobbyist

It all came down to Lisa-as in Lisa Madigan, current Illinois Attorney General and daughter of Speaker of the House and Chairman of the Democratic Party of Illinois, Michael J. Madigan. The "will she or won't she" question paralyzed Illinois politics for months-and not just in the Democratic Party. Her decision also heavily influenced Republican aspirants. Now that she has made her decision to seek re-election as Attorney General, the other pieces are starting to fall into place. While the filing deadline is not until October 5, as

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of this writing, here is how the races for the five Constitutional Offices are shaping up.

[read more](#)

Musical Chairs in Madison

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

In recent politics, it hasn't happened often, but now that Governor Doyle has announced he will not seek a third term, it's musical chairs time in state politics. There are about a dozen possible candidates and, for some, they would have to leave their current seat in order to make a run for the East Wing. That opens seats for others and this trickles down throughout state and local government all the way to dog catcher.

[read more](#)

Sales Trends - July 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	-6.25%	-2.38%
Wisconsin	-8.45%	-5.60%

New Technology Makes Training Easier

Have you ever added up what you have spent for excellent training programs that were on video tape...or DVD...or now DVD with Blue Ray?

How about your favorite songs on 8 track, then cassettes, and later on CD's? About as fast as you bought equipment, it was obsolete.

There were always two problems. You had to have the right equipment, and, you had to hope the machine didn't eat your program...or that the tape or CD didn't get goofed up for other reasons.

What if you had a training program you could watch over and over and over without a chance you might lose it? What if eight or ten employees could individually be studying lessons...in their homes...separately...at the same time? What if one of your employees wants to watch the program again and again?

That's the genius of the On-line Campus. No equipment required (VCR or DVD players), no travel or meal expenses, and the whole thing is tax deductible.

Is there a really good reason not to keep your employees at the top of their game in the most competitive market we have seen in 40 years?

Learn more by visiting www.midwesthardware.com/campus or call Roger at 800-888-1817 for more information.

"Red Flags" Rule Delayed Again Until November 1, 2009

The Federal Trade Commission staff will redouble its effort to educate small businesses and other entities about compliance with the "Red Flags" Rule. The FTC hopes to ease compliance by providing additional resources and guidance to clarify whether businesses are covered by the Rule and what they must do to comply. To give creditors and financial institutions more time to review this guidance and develop and implement written Identity Theft Prevention Programs, the FTC will further delay enforcement of the Rule until November 1, 2009. Read more at <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2009/07/redflags.htm>.

In spite of the enforcement delay, dealers are reminded that it is in your best interest to continue developing and/or implementing customer information safeguards as required by the law.

The Federal Trade Commission has developed a "Do-It-Yourself Prevention Program" to assist businesses at low risk for identity theft, and has also released a new guide, "Fighting Fraud with the Red Flags Rule: A How-To-Guide for Business." The guide defines creditors and covered credit accounts, and details what is required in the written program. For more information, visit <http://www.ftc.gov/redflagsrule>.



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