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February 9, 2010



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You can add real dollars to the bottom line by taking the "Bottom Line" course at MHA's On-Line Campus.

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[Reuben Johnson](#)
Stier's Hardware
Gresham, WI

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FMLA Laws Change for 2010

The Family Medical Leave Act requires employers to allow employees twelve weeks of unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons, without the employee running the risk of losing their job.

Generally, the federal FMLA applies to employers with 50 or more employees. However, businesses under that limit can be subject to their state FLMA laws. It's important for every employer to know which set of rules, if any, apply to them. In instances where both federal and state laws apply, employers are required to abide by whichever requirement provides a greater benefit to their employee.

Beginning in 2010, two significant changes have been made to the federal FMLA policy:

[read more](#)

Bob Aiken Plumbing & Electrical Sessions Return to MHA

Why do you want your key employees to attend the Hands-On Plumbing and Electrical classes?

Plumbers and Electricians know how to Plumb and Wire. They do not necessarily know how to SELL.

Your entire staff should be "at ease" helping customers in your two most profitable departments. Bob Aiken's Hands-On training will do that very thing.

March 8-9, 2010, Comfort Inn & Suites, Madison, WI
March 11-12, 2010, Holiday Inn, Rothschild/Wausau, WI

Watch for more seminars this fall in Illinois, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

Space is limited, and time is running out, don't miss this important opportunity in your home state.

[Sign up today!](#)

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Who Got It and Who Gave It?

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

Campaign finance laws took it on the chin two weeks ago when the US Supreme Court struck down expenditure limits on corporate "independent expenditures." What does this mean for Main Street? Nationally recognized campaign finance reformers Senator Feingold (D-WI) and McCain (R-AZ) decry the impact upon those without access to wealth. Still, this country has been based upon free speech, and over time, that has encouraged debate, and slow but sure progress. The question now is just how much "political free speech" can we afford before the election system spins out of control?

[read more](#)

Few Voters, Lots of Excitement

by Rob Karr, MHA Illinois Lobbyist

To paraphrase Peter, Paul, and Mary, it may be asked of the 2010 primary election "where have all the voters gone"? The turnout was perplexing, given the fact that the 2010 Primary elections in Illinois had all the excitement you could want to drive voter interest.

[read more](#)

Sales Trends - December 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 - 20 stores
Minnesota-Dakotas - 14 stores
Wisconsin - 82 stores

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-10.05%	-5.38%
MN-Dakotas	-10.08%	-3.81%
Wisconsin	-10.22%	-6.90%

Why Do You Need Background Screening and Credit Reports?

What you don't know about a new hire or an organization seeking to do business with you, can hurt you, damage your company's reputation, and put your employees and customers in harm's way. In today's highly litigious environment, employers are more and more often held responsible for their employees' actions while on the job.

[read more](#)

New Fertilizer Rules to Take Effect May 1, 2010, in Wisconsin

Governor Jim Doyle has signed into law, new regulations which will severely limit the display and sale of fertilizers containing phosphorous. The new regulations will go into effect May 1, 2010. The statewide law looks to standardize a patchwork of city, county, and municipal ordinances which had been adopted over the past several years, each bringing with them their own sets of rules and compliance guidelines.

Retailers will not be allowed to display the product on their sales floors. Rather, they may choose to post a sign advising customers that fertilizers containing phosphorous are available upon request (i.e. from the "backroom"), but may only be sold for uses permitted under the new regulations.

Members in Wisconsin will be mailed two free sign cards from the MHA. If more are needed, you can [get copy for the sign here](#).

Tips, Trash, & Treasures

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

Ever Hear of AAADD?

Have you started to notice that you are working harder than ever, always tired, AND things just don't seem to be getting done? I finally went to the doctor and here is what I found out...

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