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March 4, 2010



Member News

[Doerre Hardware Honored](#)
Spring Green, WI

Sharp Tips

[Most "Lookers" Aren't](#)

Help the "lookers" and sell more. Find the best set of questions to ask these customers at the On-Line Campus.

Pricing Survey

[Hand Tools](#)

Classifieds

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

Obituaries

[Thomas R. Austad](#)
Door County Hardware
Sturgeon Bay, WI

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MHA Expands Legislative Presence to Minnesota

We believe independent hardware dealers should have a voice. Through the strength of your association, MHA acts as both a watchdog and an advocate on key issues such as minimum wage, health care, business taxes, workers' compensation, and government involvement in business operations...to name just a few. MHA works with lawmakers and government agencies so that new laws and regulations don't place undue burden on our members and their stores.

With that philosophy in mind, MHA is pleased to announce that Bruce "Buzz" Anderson will serve as MHA's chief lobbyist in Minnesota. Buzz is currently the President of the Minnesota Retailers Association (MnRA), with whom MHA will partner to represent the interests of independent hardware dealers at the capitol in St. Paul.

[read more](#)

Regional Meetings to be Held In Lieu of MHA Convention

In the hopes of expanding and improving the opportunities for members to learn from one another, MHA plans to hold a series of regional meetings during the upcoming year. And, as a result of dwindling attendance and increasing costs, MHA will not sponsor a large Convention-type event in 2010. Rather, smaller, more regionalized "Hardware Professionals' Meetings" will be held during the spring and fall months.

By bringing meetings "to the dealers" (meetings will be held in numerous locations throughout the MHA region), we hope nearby owners and managers will invest a few hours of time, get together with other hardware peers, and exchange ideas about how to be successful in today's retail environment.

Not only will MHA members be asked to attend, but we'll also encourage each member to invite a non-member or two, so they may experience MHA and find out what our association has to offer.

The first series of meetings are set to kick-off later this month in Minnesota. Discussion will center on driving sales, traffic, and profits into your store. To find out more about the dates and locations of the upcoming Minnesota

Join Our Mailing List!

meetings...and, to register to attend...[click here](#).

Additional Hardware Professionals' Meetings will be held in the fall, and we'll expand our locations to include sites in Illinois and Wisconsin. Please watch for more details in the coming months.

You are cordially invited to...



Hardware Professionals' Meetings
Spring 2010 | MN

Meet fellow hardware dealers

Enjoy a meal

No cost to attend

REMEMBER:

Share this information with your management team!

[Click Here for Details](#)

Last Call for Wisconsin Plumbing & Electrical Sessions

LAST CALL to attend the Hands-On Plumbing & Electrical sessions held in Wisconsin.

Two of the most profitable departments in your store are Plumbing and Electrical. You may be running on a lean staff, BUT everyone in the store must be familiar with these two very important departments.

Bob Aiken is the Hardware Industry's most renowned Plumbing and Electrical HANDS-ON sales trainer. Do not miss this FINAL opportunity in Wisconsin to have your staff learn the Hands-On way. CALL NOW for availability on sessions March 8-9 in Madison, WI, and March 11-12 in Wausau, WI.

This fall, Bob will be in Bloomington, IL, on September 20-21, Minneapolis, MN, on September 23-24, and Sioux Falls, SD, September 27-28. Watch eHELPS for specific details.

[Click here](#) for the registration form, and be sure to call Roger TODAY (800-888-1817) to save your spot in Madison or Wausau.

Minimum Wage and the End of Legislative Days

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

Come April 22, the legislature will adjourn its two-year legislative session and head back home to circulate nomination papers, plan more fundraisers, and figure out how to get re-elected and bring enough buddies from the same party to either maintain majorities (D dream) or re-take majorities (R dream). Until then, there are hundreds of bills competing for attention and they in turn will draw thousands of amendments. Now is the time to pay close attention as politics, not merits, drive many of the decisions about whose bills pass and whose die. MHA has its eyes focused on Senate Bill 1. This is more than just "let's increase the minimum wage."

[read more](#)

Minnesota Tries to Expand Sick Leave

[House File 2959](#), an act relating to public health; establishing minimum standards of sick leave for workers was referred to the Committee on Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight, and was scheduled for a hearing this week.

This legislation [HF 2959/SF 2553](#) is supposedly focused on H1N1 and other "contagious illness" outbreaks. While the authors have tightened the mandates slightly, the bill still requires:

- Employers with ten or more people must provide at least 72 sick leave hours in a year for every employee working more than 30 hours.
- Employers with fewer than ten people must provide at least 40 sick leave hours in a year for every employee working more than 30 hours.
- Employers must provide pro-rated sick leave hours based on a formula to be determined by the commissioner to employees who work fewer than 30 hours a week.
- Sick leave may be used for the employee, immediate family, or extended family, and must be granted with no more than an "oral request."
- Employers face civil liability for failing to comply with the bill's requirements.
- If an employer "retaliates" against an employee for use of sick time, the employer can be held civilly liable.
- And much, much more...

In an ironic twist, rumor has it that local units of government might be exempted due to the high cost.

If approved, MHA sees great potential for abuse and a heavy cost to employers. Earlier this week, Buzz Anderson testified against the proposal on behalf of MHA. Rest assured, we'll keep a close eye on this bill and keep you informed as developments warrant.

Sales Trends - January 2010

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 - 27 stores
Minnesota-Dakotas - 12 stores
Wisconsin - 93 stores

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-9.78%	-9.78%
MN-Dakotas	-3.51%	-3.51%
Wisconsin	-17.81%	-17.81%

MHA's New Coupon Processing Program is Easy to Use!

- Complete a short questionnaire to begin processing. No application fee to MHA Members.
- Do not sort or trim the coupons; submit them just the way they were redeemed by the customer
- Mail collected coupons to the MHA's Clearing Center (American Coupon Service - ACS) every 6-8 weeks with labels that ACS provides your store.
- Within days, you will receive a notice that your coupons were received for processing.
- Value Added - MHA's New coupon processor has a charge back rate of only 5%, that's 15% lower than the national average. You get your money faster and with fewer hassles.
- Value Added - In the event of a charge back, ACS will go to bat for you with the Clearing House, all you have to do is give ACS a call to get the ball rolling.
- ACS will reimburse you for face value, minus five cents per coupon, making it a low-cost, member service.

[Get your application here](#)



2010 MHA Golf Outings
SAVE THE DATES 

Wednesday, June 23
 Northern Illinois or Southern Wisconsin

Wednesday, August 11
 Twin Cities Area

(Specific Course Locations TBD)

Reminder to True Value Members

As the endorsed provider of store accounting, payroll, and tax preparation services by True Value Hardware Company, the Midwest Hardware Association and our Retail Financial Services will be in booth 2838 at the

True Value Spring Market on March 19-21 in Chicago. We encourage all MHA members to stop by and say hello.

Tips, Trash, & Treasures

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

Managing Your Money

I need to stretch my money as far as I can, but some things are just too important to pass up, right? So, I just bought a book on golf tips to improve my game and lower my scores. I know there's quite a bit of information out there, but this hits the nail on the head for me when it comes to relevance. The Author is Anonymous, but I doubt it was Tiger.

[read more](#)



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