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April 8, 2010



Pricing Survey

How are hardware store prices comparing to big box stores? Find out here.

This month: [Adhesives](#)

Sharp Tips

[Get the Most Out of Your Staff](#)

Bill Sharp explains how to keep your employees productive while avoiding the monotony of seemingly endless tasks. Find it at MHA's Online Campus.

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Gasser True Value
Boscobel, WI

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Wisconsin Fertilizer Restrictions Effective April 1, 2010

A new law, which restricts the sale and display of fertilizers containing phosphorus went into effect on April 1, in Wisconsin. Retailers are no longer allowed to display phosphorus fertilizer products on their sales floors. However, they may choose to [post a sign](#) advising customers that fertilizers containing phosphorus are available upon request (i.e. from their "backroom"), but may only be sold for uses permitted under the new regulations. Those uses include:

1. New lawns in their first growing season.
2. Areas shown to be deficient in phosphorus by a recent soil test.
3. Pasture land used to grow grass for sod or any land used for agricultural production.

The laws language stipulates that no person may sell retail turf fertilizer that is labeled as containing phosphorus or available phosphate if the person knows that the purchaser intends to use the fertilizer for a purpose other than a permitted use.

The rules do not apply to manipulated animal or vegetable manure or finished sewage sludge product (such as Milorganite) which stores may continue to openly display and sell with no restrictions.

How Will Health Care Reform Affect My Hardware Store?

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. This bill brings about sweeping changes to the health care coverage system in the United States.

Many MHA members are asking the question, "What does this new law mean to me and my hardware business?"

While it's a simple question, the answer is more complex. Much of how the new law will be implemented is still being sorted out. MHA pledges to keep members apprised as more details are learned in the upcoming months.

While many of the specifics are still not known, Rhonda Abrams of *USA Today* wrote an overview of how the health care reform will impact small

businesses in general. It is as concise and easy-to-read as anything we've seen, so we are passing it along for our member's benefit.

[USA Today health care reform overview](#)

Much more will be learned in the coming months, and MHA will pass details along as they are learned.



One Giant Leap Toward Reform

by Rob Karr, MHA Illinois Lobbyist

By now, it would be hard to find anyone in the State of Illinois who is not aware of the State's dire fiscal situation. The budget deficit is in the \$12 billion range; tax receipts continue to stagnate; and providers are not being paid on anything resembling a timely basis (e.g. pharmacies serving Medicaid patients are being paid every 160 days as opposed to every 30). It will take tremendous sacrifice, quite possibly tax increases of some kind, and several years to dig out of this mess. However, the budget mess pales in comparison to the underfunded liability the State's pension systems face.

[read more](#)

Sales Trends - February 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 - 28 stores
 Minnesota-Dakotas - 16 stores
 Wisconsin - 95 stores

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-5.61%	-7.97%
MN-Dakotas	-1.11%	-0.36%
Wisconsin	-5.10%	-11.99%

Health Care Tea Party

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

In this national animated debate over health care, nasty politics got nastier on both sides. Supporters heralded progress toward health care for many more than have it now. Critics decried the expansion of government into the private sector and the incumbent costs. Core issues about the proper role of government rivaled pros and cons about health care issues themselves. Peggy Noonan warns rightly that we can't lose the forest for the trees. She suggests the very core of our democracy is at risk. There is good reason to take pause. She may well be right.

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Spring 2010 | MN

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Enjoy a meal

No cost to attend

REMEMBER:

Share this information with your management team!

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Tips, Trash, & Treasures

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

I'm From the Government and I'm Here to Help You

A West Texas cowboy was tending his herd in a remote pasture when suddenly a brand-new BMW advanced out of a dust cloud towards him. The driver, a young man in a Brioni suit, Gucci shoes, Ray-Ban sunglasses and YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the cowboy, "If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, will you give me a calf?"

[read more](#)

Whether we like it or not, government does impact our lives and the lives of our customers. One thing you can do is make sure your store is in position to take advantage of new regulations.

For instance, the EPA now has [rules for contractors](#) performing work which disturbs lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978. These rules require contractors to use supplies commonly sold in hardware stores. You and your staff should know these rules and make sure you are suggesting the required items needed to be in compliance.

Meanwhile, as of April 1, 2011, all three-family and larger buildings in Wisconsin that have attached garages or "fuel burning devices"-gas heat, oil heat, gas dryers, gas stoves, etc.-are required to have [carbon monoxide detectors](#). What's more, beginning February, 2011, Wisconsin will require carbon monoxide detectors be installed in virtually ALL one- and two-family dwellings, including owner occupied. Are you aware of the new requirements? Are your customers? Stock up now, and promote the new rules and regulations early and often in you store and to your customers.



The advertisement features a red and white starburst graphic with the text "25+ yrs. exp." and a map of the Midwestern United States (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) with horizontal lines passing through it. Below the map, the text reads "MIDCENTRAL SALE PROMOTIONS, INC." and "RAISING CASH IS OUR BUSINESS!". A list of services is provided: Anniversary Sales, Moving Sales, Stock Reduction Sales, Retirement Sales, Remodeling Sales, Quitting Business Sales, Fixture & Equipment Sales, and Will Beat Competitor Quotes!. To the right, it says "CALL BOB MALONEY FOR RESULTS!" and "800-581-1414". A large white starburst graphic contains the text "OUR RETIREMENT SALES PRODUCE UP TO 130% RETURN". At the bottom, it says "midcentralsales.com" and "*Proud MHA Member".

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