

May 6, 2010



Pricing Survey

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

This month:

[Painting Sundries](#)

TRANSWORLD'S
VARIETY & GENERAL
MERCHANDISE SHOW

JULY 9 - 12, 2010
DONALD E. STEPHENS
CONVENTION CENTER
ROSEMONT (CHICAGO), IL

BACK TO BASICS...

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FREE REGISTRATION

Sharp Tips

[Cold Call Selling](#)

Bill Sharp shares the best techniques at MHA's Online Campus.

Classifieds

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

The eHELPS classifieds

Summer Heats Up with First of Two MHA Golf Outings

Take a break from the daily routine and join fellow hardware dealers and association members at the MHA Golf Outing. Our first golf outing of the year will be held on Wednesday, June 23, at Glen Erin Golf Club near Janesville, WI.

If you're a golfer who occasionally hits a "less than perfect" shot, no worries, this year's event is again a 4-person scramble. Whether you're a serious golfer or just looking for a chance to share time with other Association supporters, the MHA Golf Outing promises to be a day of fun, camaraderie, and relaxation. Reward your staff, your customers, or spend quality time with family and friends.

No matter where you're coming from, Glen Erin Golf Club is easy to get to. It's located just north of the Wisconsin-Illinois border, only a few minutes off Interstate 90. More details about this great course can be found at the [Glen Erin Golf Club website](#).

All MHA members are invited, and all guests are welcome. We'll have lunch, dinner, hole events, and prizes. It's time to get your group together and sign-up. A registration form for the Golf Outing can be found [here](#).

Watch for details on the next MHA Golf Outing being held in the Twin Cities area, taking place on Wednesday, August 11.

Minnesota Considers Changing Sales Tax Due Date

MHA is closely following a proposal in the Minnesota legislature which would require some retailers to remit their sales tax collections twice per month. MHA believes that Minnesota retailers, who receive no compensation for their costs to act as the state's tax collector, should not be saddled with the additional burden of facing TWO payment remittance deadlines each month.

However, with the state short of funds, the Minnesota Office of Management and Budget has proposed legislation [HF 3741](#) to help avoid short-term borrowing. One of the bill's components changes the date on which certain retailers-those that are subject to the June accelerated sales tax provisions-have to remit sales tax collections. Currently, (except for the June accelerated payment) retailers must remit all of their sales tax by the 20th of the following month. The proposed bill would speed up the payment by six days, requiring a percentage of the payment by the 14th of the month, and then remitting any remaining "balance due" and filing the return by the 20th.

draw a lot of attention each month. Are you taking advantage of this free member service? If not, try it out. It's easy, just [email](#) us what you'd like in your ad, and we'll take care of the rest!

Obituaries

[Joseph W. Dorn](#)

Dorn Hardware,
Madison, WI

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In a perfect world, MHA would prefer the current sales tax remittance system be kept as is. However, the state appears intent on finding a way to fix their cash flow problem. At least one alternative plan may be considered, but it would still have an impact on when the collected sales tax is paid. To read about the alternative plan, and to let MHA know which option you might favor, [click here](#).

Sales Trends - March 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 - 24 stores
Minnesota-Dakotas - 13 stores
Wisconsin - 94 stores

	Month	YTD
Illinois	-0.94%	-5.08%
MN-Dakotas	11.49%	4.60%
Wisconsin	3.73%	-6.61%

MHA Coalition Side Steps Storm - For Now

The Wisconsin legislative session has ended. It appears no legislation passed that will have a significant effect on hardware retailers.

MHA joined with a coalition of other small business groups to press against SB1-a proposal which would allow for Wisconsin's minimum wage to be automatically adjusted each year (with no legislative vote) and also would have allowed for state and local municipalities to set their own minimum wage rates. A compromise bill, AB 885 was also floated. This bill would institute a "Wage Council" to recommend if and when the state minimum wage should be raised.

The practice of automatically raising the minimum wage each year, without approval or accountability by any elected representative, is not a good idea. If they want to raise it, legislators should have to go on the record with a vote. And, the idea of allowing individual municipalities to each have their own minimum wage sets up a compliance nightmare scenario for small business owners.

For this session, no action on the Wisconsin minimum wage was taken by either the Senate or Assembly. But, you can bet that this issue will come back again, early in the next session. MHA will be there to make sure your voice is heard.

Health Care Reform Timeline

Much has been made about the sweeping changes which will take place as part of the new Health Care Reform Act recently signed into law. Many MHA members are wondering just what effect the changes will have on them, their families, their employees, and their businesses.

Because there are so many details involved in the new health care bill, the timeline for complete implementation is currently set for 10 years. This is assuming that the new provisions are not repealed or changed in subsequent legislation.

What follows is a timeline of some of the major changes which are required by the new law, at least as it stands today. Again, some of the changes will have an immediate impact on business (such as the new tax credit which is now available to help offset the cost of health insurance for "small" employers), while others will probably not be felt for several years.

[Click here](#) to see a year-by-year list of which new health care reform mandates are scheduled to be phased in over the next decade.

Going Going Gone

by Doug Johnson, MHA General Counsel & Wisconsin Lobbyist

Legislators have left the building for the most part. At least they've stopped voting on bills and making laws, unless they call themselves back into session, or Governor Doyle does, but that's unlikely. There's too much campaigning to do back home, and there's too much trouble to start back up if they return to tinker. Unless a bill has passed both Houses and is ready for the governor to sign or veto, it's dead. Dead at least for now. There's very little that actually goes away around here. Many of these "dead" bills are just wounded. Millions and millions of campaign dollars will now be spent to tell you how great a job was done over the last two-year legislative session, or how awful it was and to throw the bums out.

[read more](#)



License Now Required to Sell Certain Pesticides

MHA members in Minnesota need to be aware of recent changes to that state's Pesticide Control Law. Any retailer selling a product considered to be an "Agricultural Pesticide" either in or into Minnesota must now obtain a license from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

These products are generally used by professionals for use in agriculture, rights-of-way, forestry, and the greenhouse or nursery industries.

How do you know if the product you are selling qualifies as an Agricultural Pesticide? You'll need to check the label. Agricultural Pesticides have a shaded box titled Agricultural Use Requirements as part of their label. To see an example of what this shaded box looks like, [click here](#).

If you are selling any products with this label, you now need to be licensed. Equally important, you also need to be charging and collecting new fees and surcharges each time you sell an Agricultural Pesticide, which you will then have to remit to the state.

Joseph Spitzmueller, Supervisor of Licensing and Certification for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, has prepared a short article recapping the law changes. [Click here](#) to read his article and learn more details about the new requirements.

New Hire Act Gives Tax Breaks to Employers

On March 18, 2010, President Obama signed the **Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act** (Hire) into law, providing tax benefits for businesses that hire unemployed workers.

These incentives include:

A payroll tax credit of 6.2% for employers who hire unemployed workers between February 3, 2010, and January 1, 2011. This effectively cancels out the employer's share of the OASDI and FICA tax paid to those employees.

A general business credit of \$1,000 for each worker who stays employed with your company for at least one year.

Before your business may take advantage of these benefits, eligible new hires must complete IRS Form W-11, certifying they have not been employed for more than 40 hours in the 60 days prior to starting employment with you. This form must be in the hands of the employer to claim both the payroll tax exemption and the retention credit; however, employers do not need to file them with the IRS. Instead, they are retained by the employer along with other payroll and income tax records.

To learn more details about the available tax incentives for new hires, [click here](#).

Tips, Trash, & Treasures

by Roger Siskoff, MHA Director of Member Services

Random Thoughts

It is hard to understand how a cemetery raised its burial cost and blamed it on the cost of living.

It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try and pass them.

You can't have everything, where would you put it?

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