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TOOL TALK

A Publication of the Michigan Tooling Association

From Rob's Roost

by: Rob Dumont,
Managing Director

I don't easily relinquish my space in ***Tool Talk***, but this needs to be said and I can't say it any better—so why try to re-invent the wheel!

A Serious Perspective

by: Peter Morici

The United States is a debtor nation, just like the poorest states in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Since the fourth quarter of last year, U.S. citizens and businesses have paid more dividends, interest and the like to foreigners than they have received from abroad.

How Americans entered a debtor's life is hardly a puzzle but what it means is even more troubling.

For most of the last 30 years the United States has been piling up large trade deficits. The current account, which includes net exports of goods, services and income payments, has now reached 6 percent of GDP, and must be financed by capital inflows. Foreigners must purchase large amounts of U.S. property, stocks, bonds, bank deposits, and currency, or the current account deficit cannot be financed.

The U.S. appetite for foreign goods and services moves up in a fairly steady fashion, other things remaining the same, but the private sector appetite for U.S. assets is erratic. When foreign purchases of U.S. assets dip and do not finance the current account deficit, the supply of U.S. dollars in foreign exchange markets should exceed the demand, and the dollar should fall in value against other major currencies. U.S. exports should become more competitive and imports more expensive. In turn, the trade deficit should shrink to an amount foreign creditors wish to finance.

However, for decades, Asian nations, led first by Japan and now China, have prosecuted a mercantilist development strategy. They consistently buy U.S. dollars and securities to keep their currencies and products cheap.

Regardless of the level of private demand for U.S. assets, these governments have consistently entered foreign exchange markets, sold their currencies for U.S. dollars and converted the proceeds into U.S. bonds and bank deposits.

When private purchases of U.S. assets slack off, those governments rev up purchases to keep their currencies and their products artificially cheap on U.S. markets. To support these policies they erect arcane barriers to U.S. exports—automobiles and parts, heavy machinery, electronics, and software have been particular targets for their protectionist industrial policies.

This process has escalated during the recent economic expansion to dangerous proportions. Each year, China spends more than $200 billion, or 9 percent of its GDP, purchasing dollars and other foreign currencies and converting those into debt instruments. This provides an off budget export subsidy of about 25 percent of the value of China's exports.

The debt Americans are incurring is massive. Direct investment in U.S. productive assets provides only about 11 percent of the needed funds, and the balance is obtained through the sale of Treasury securities, corporate bonds, bank accounts, and other paper assets. Americans borrow nearly $60 billion

(Rob's Roost continues on Page 7)

Inside This Issue

MTA Calendar of Events—October 2006

17 MTA & NTMA sponsored dinner presentation
"The Implications of Slower Growth for the Nation and Michigan, and What Does It Mean?"
5:30 p.m. @ the Club Venetian in Madison Hts.
RSVP Anne Cairns 586-677-5568 / detroitntma@aol.com

18 MTA Board of Directors meets

19 MTA WCF Board of Trustees meets

29 Daylight Savings Time—Turn clocks back 1 hour

31 Halloween

Mark's Remarks

by: Mark Tyler, General Manager
MTA Insurance Agency

Pharmacy questionnaires to be mailed to members in fourth quarter

During the fourth quarter of 2006, BCBSM and BCN members with prescription drug coverage will receive a questionnaire asking them to verify that claims are paid correctly. The answers will help BCBS determine if customers are receiving the maximum benefit from their pharmacy plan.

ASC Heritage Information Systems will send out the questionnaires as they have since 2003. These questionnaires typically elicit a 70 percent or higher response rate.

Members are asked to verify a list of selected prescriptions that were billed by their pharmacy. A sample questionnaire is shown below.

Negative responses alert BCBS that further investigation may be necessary. They also help identify product substitution schemes, brand or generic switching and phantom billings.

Questionnaire Response Form Example
"Any" Insurance Company

Pharmacy: **ABC Pharmacy**
123 Main Street
Anytown, USA

Patient's Name: Jane Sample ID#: 12345678901

Drug: **PRILOSEC CAP 20MG**

Date	Rx#	*qty*	*Copay*	*Correct*	*Not Correct*
08/14/99	012563	30	10.00	_____	_____
09/15/99	012563	30	10.00	_____	_____
10/16/99	012563	30	10.00	_____	_____
11/12/99	012563	60	10.00	_____	_____
12/15/99	012563	30	10.00	_____	_____

Drug: **ZOCOR TAB 20MG**

Date	Rx#	*qty*	*Copay*	*Correct*	*Not Correct*
08/14/99	012687	30	10.00	_____	_____
09/15/99	012687	30	10.00	_____	_____
10/16/99	012687	30	10.00	_____	_____
11/12/99	012687	30	10.00	_____	_____
12/15/99	012687	30	10.00	_____	_____

"I have reviewed the listed claims, and my responses are true and correct to the best of my knowledge."

Signature: _______ Telephone: _______ Date: _______

Comments: ___________________________________

Vision Service Plan (VSP) claims reimbursed out of network until members loaded to Blues systems

VSP claims submitted by members before the members are loaded to the BCBS system will be reimbursed at the out-of-network amount, even if the providers are in-network. Provider claims are the only claims paid in-network prior to members being loaded to the system. This is especially important for those groups requesting retroactive effective dates.

A VSP provider should call VSP for authorization prior to seeing a member. If the provider is unable to obtain an authorization, the provider should advise the member to first work out his or her eligibility issue with the group before seeking services. The member can also choose to be a private patient and receive services, pay the bill in full and submit the bill to VSP for the out-of-network-reimbursement.

Option Care replaces Medco for mail order specialty drugs

Beginning Oct. 1, 2006, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network will begin using Option Care, a national network of home infusion and health care providers, to provide mail order specialty pharmacy services to members. Under this agreement, Option Care will become the Blues' exclusive provider of high-cost injectable and oral medications, and associated patient support programs (regular mail-in prescription coverages remain the same).

Option Care will contact affected members in September to introduce its services. The members will receive a letter detailing the services, which include:

- Personal attention from a patient care coordinator;
- Customer service support 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and
- Ancillary supplies, if appropriate, to administer medicine.

BCBSM and BCN are working with Medco, the current provider for these specialty pharmaceuticals, to transfer members' prescriptions to Option Care. Copayments and plan designs will not change as a result of this transition.

This agreement with Option Care is expected to save BCBSM and BCN customers up to $25 million annually through improved discounts on specialty pharmaceuticals.

More Mark's Remarks

by: Mark Tyler, General Manager
MTA Insurance Agency

Reliance Standard/Ameritas Move Nears Completion

The move to Reliance Standard for the life, short-term disability, and long-term disability and to Reliance Standard/Ameritas for the dental is nearing conclusion.

Proper billings, administration kits, and forms to be received shortly, if not already, by all of the MTA groups within these programs. Please keep these phone numbers handy:

<u>Dental Claims:</u>
Phone: (800) 497-7044
Fax: (402) 467-7336

<u>Short-Term Disability Fax Numbers</u>: (Fax the claim form directly to Reliance for faster service):
(267) 256-3533 or (267) 256-3519.

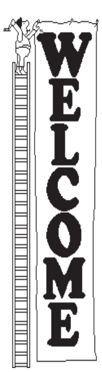
<u>Please continue to fax new enrollment forms, change forms, and any termination forms to Stella at 248-489-8436.</u>

We sincerely thank every one of our participating members for their cooperation, patience, and commitment to the MTA programs. Your participation allows your company to save over 10-15% of the cost of providing these benefits. We will continue to work for you in keeping your cost structure low and to provide the highest level of service.

For more information on any of his articles, Mark Tyler can be reached at the MTA Insurance Agency at (248) 489-8505 or e-mail to <u>mark@mtaonline.com</u>.

Welcome New Members!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members to the Michigan Tooling Association:



- **Automacon Industrial Machinery Service (AIMS)** of Southgate, MI, specializing in cnc machine tool repair, mechanical and electrical;
- **Axis Machining, Inc.** of Pigeon, MI, specializing in machining of steel castings; and
- **Custom Form Inc.** of Hazel Park, MI, specializing in metal processing.

Legislative Update

by: Judy Augenstein
Legislative Consultant, Lansing

The Legislature has recessed to campaign for the fall elections. The Democrats will attempt to attain the majority while the Republicans will work to maintain the majority. Governor Jennifer Granholm and Lt. Governor John Cherry are faced with Republican challengers Dick DeVos and Oakland County Clerk Ruth Johnson. Before being elected clerk of Oakland County, Ruth Johnson served three terms as a state legislator representing parts of Oakland County.

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Governor Granholm has announced the 61 awardees selected by the Michigan Strategic Economic Investment and Commercialization Board who will share more than $100 million from the first round of the 21st Century Jobs Fund initiatives to create jobs in Michigan's emerging technologies. The 21st Century Jobs Fund is a $2 billion, ten-year initiative designed to accelerate the diversification of Michigan's economy. The commercialization component of the initiative devotes approximately $800 million for competitive-edge technologies in the targeted sectors of life sciences, alternative energy, advanced automotive materials and manufacturing and homeland security/defense. The original field of 505 proposals was narrowed to 179 finalists by an independent peer-review process conducted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest science and engineering association and publisher of Science magazine.

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Before the Legislature recessed, the Governor signed a package of property rights bills into law. The bills set new restrictions on "eminent domain", the government's ability to cease private property for the good of the public. The bills require the government to pay displaced property owners at least 125 percent of the fair market value of their property. The bills increase how much displaced property owners receive from a government entity in moving expenses, renting cost and legal fees. The package also requires that this compensation is paid in a timely fashion. The key sponsor of the package is Senator Cameron Brown, R-Sturgis.

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During the "lame duck" session Rep. Rick Baxter, R-Hanover, and Rep. Tonya Schuitmaker, R-Lawton, intend to introduce and move key legislation for the tool and die industry. Both are key members of the House Commerce Committee which will consider the bill. A bonus is that Rep. Rick Baxter comes from a tool and die manufacturing business background and understands the challenge the industry faces.

From the Desk of Gary Wood

MTA WCF Administrator

Mutual Insurance Company on target for January 1

Last month we announced the members' approval of the conversion of the Michigan Tooling Association Workers Compensation Fund (MTA WCF) to a new entity to be known as **Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company**. The vast majority of those voting members (205 out of 210) approved the conversion and authorized the Trustees to proceed toward the January 1, 2007 launch. I was very excited by this vote of confidence and recognize that it is not an easy decision to make a change after thirty years of involvement with a very successful entity.

A lot of work has been completed in the last month but there are still plenty of details to handle before the Michigan Office of Financial and Insurance Services permits the conversion to occur. Since the last ***Tool Talk*** publication, the Fund has undergone an independent claim audit and an additional claim audit by a third party insurance provider. This third party provider was investigating the assumption of the financial responsibility for all of the claims of the Fund from the years prior to January 1, 2006.

The Trustees met on September 21, 2006 to review the results of the audit and were pleased that both sources found the claim files of the Fund to be in excellent condition with appropriate reserves which support all transactions. The third party insurer's offer to accept the transfer of the financial liability for those claims was in agreement with the independent assessment. The Trustees agreed to the terms of the offer which will result in transparent changes to how claims are managed by the Fund (while it exists in the current form).

The continued management of the claims will be through the Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company with essentially the same staff and management processes that were offered through the Fund. Again, only the financial liability for payment of the claims will be transferred.

The Trustees were also afforded the opportunity to review quotes for the reinsurance of the Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company. Those of you that have been members of the MTA WCF for a while have grown accustomed to the difficulty we have on occasion experienced obtaining the required excess insurance due to a lack of available markets that would provide the coverage. This year we actually had various companies competing for the business! What a welcome opportunity this provided the Trustees as they finally had a choice of coverage options.

The September Trustee meeting is one of their most important meetings of the year and covered many areas of the operation of the MTA WCF/Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company. The meeting started at 8:00 a.m. and by 5:00 p.m., a huge amount of ground had been covered ranging from the appointment of agents to the selection of accounting firms for the quarterly and annual reports. It was grueling but rewarding as each Trustee expressed their thoughts on where we have been and the future of the group. The MTA WCF's "three year plan" was reviewed in recognition of the changes being undertaken as the Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company becomes a reality.

During the course of the discussions it was pointed out that there are any number of rumors about what is going on with the Fund. Several members have called me because an agent or a representative of a PEO (employee leasing organization) has tried to use this opportunity as a "fear of the unknown" sales pitch. One of the fears I would have as a business owner is the fear of unscrupulous sales techniques by MTA WCF competitors.

One agent has even advised their clients that the Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company cannot write business direct and everybody will need an agent. The Trustees have requested that I confirm to you in writing that if you currently do not have an agent, you do not need one to become a policyholder.

This is an exciting time to be affiliated with the MTA WCF as it converts to what should be an excellent opportunity to afford a growth plan to the Association and the MTA WCF through the development of the Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company

Trustee Election

The Trustees of the Fund are elected to serve three-year terms. Annually, three of the Trustee seats are open to election and the three highest vote recipients are elected. This year the seats occupied by Robert Easterbrook (**East Lind Heat Treat** in Madison Heights), Bradley Lawton (**Star Cutter Company** in Farmington), and Doug Mack (**Grosse Tool & Machine Company** in Warren) are up for election.

This year there will be a fourth seat available as an additional Trustee has resigned from the MTA WCF effective on December 31, 2006 due to his impending retirement.

In addition to the three incumbents, the Fund seeks nominations from qualified members. Trustees must be an Officer, Partner or Owner of a member company.

Trustee's duties include:
- Directing the Administrator;
- Providing for the timely payment of claims;

Determining payable premium;
Investing monies not immediately required to pay for claims;
Accepting new members;
Terminating members that do not conform;
Purchasing insurance contracts as required protecting the Fund members;
Establishing accounts and accounting procedures;
Maintain and remain responsible for all records of the Fund; and
Audit the payroll records of the members.

These nine Trustees will also be converting to the initial board of the Manufacturing Technology Mutual Insurance Company.

The 2007 ballot will be sent to the Fund members in October. Please provide to me a letter of interest as soon as possible if you would like to be nominated as a potential board member.

MTA WCF Annual Meeting Notice

The Trustees repeat the announcement that the "regular" Annual Meeting of the Fund will be held on November 16, 2006 as required by the Fund bylaws. The meeting will be held at the Best Western Sterling Inn at 34911 Van Dyke Avenue, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 beginning at 11:45 a.m. (directly following the Trustees meeting on the same day)

In Memoriam

It is with deep sorrow we announce the September 21, 2006 passing of Bobi Jean Cox, the daughter of Fund Trustee Bobby Cox and his wife Sandra. She was a valued employee at the family's business, **Acorn Stamping** in Oxford, MI.

The MTA Board of Directors Needs You!

The Michigan Tooling Association is governed by a 12 person Board of Directors. Each year at least 4 seats on the Board are up for election; directors are elected to serve 3-year terms.

Please consider submitting your name for election. It is a voluntary position, but an extremely important one. The Board makes decisions that effect the Association and its member companies.

If you are interested in being on the ballot for the term beginning January 2007, please let us know by sending either a fax to (248) 488-0500 or an e-mail to ron@mtaonline.com by Friday, October 20th.

Flu Season Is Coming!

Flu season is approaching and the best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination. The best time for vaccination is October and November, before the influenza season typically begins. Vaccination in December and later can still provide protection because, during most years, influenza activity occurs in January or later.

According to the CDC, influenza vaccine manufacturers say they expect to produce and distribute more than 100 million doses of the flu vaccine for the U.S. market between now and early January 2007. This would be at least 17 million more doses of vaccine than has ever been distributed in the past and 19 million more than last year.

About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection. Flu vaccines will not protect against flu-like illnesses caused by non-influenza viruses. Persons who have an allergy to chicken eggs or have had a reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician.

Good health habits are an important way to help prevent the flu. Do the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Keep your distance from others when you are sick to prevent spreading your germs. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick.
- Stay home from work or errands when you are sick to prevent spreading your germs to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to contain your germs and protect others from getting sick.
- Wash your hand often to protect yourself from others' germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as this is how most germs are generally spread.

On Halloween

The witches fly
Across the sky,
The owls go, "Who? Who? Who?"
The black cats yowl
And green ghosts howl,
"Scary Halloween to you!"

---Nina Willis Walter

Successful Retirement Planning – A Case for Asset Allocation Models

What type of investors are you and the employees of your company? Are they active investors who want to make decisions that directly impact their future but value the occasional professional input from a retirement consultant? Or are they passive savers who'd rather rely on a trusted advisor to manage their retirement investments?

Whether they're the active or passive type, they often don't have the time, desire, or in-depth knowledge of the stock and bond markets to create a diversified investment portfolio. This is why Asset Allocation Models or, as Freedom One refers to them, Managed Portfolios are the ideal tool for most retirement plan participants! So, why are they so important? Studies show that 92% of an individual's investment return over time is attributable to asset allocation, and only 8% is attributable to other factors such as fund selection and market timing. Accepting this as fact, one of the most important decisions an individual or retirement plan participant has to make regarding their retirement account is how to select amongst stock funds, bond funds, and specialty funds thereby creating their own retirement strategy—or asset allocation.

Though the term sounds complicated, "asset allocation" simply means dividing your investments in a way that makes sense for you. The complication is introduced when you add the elements of asset class, associated risk, potential return and emotion tied to each of these elements. Employing an asset allocation model improves your chances for a successful retirement in several ways. Most importantly, it removes the emotional elements of investing caused by market volatility. Independent studies evidence that most investors have difficulty trying to 'time' or 'judge' the market and would be better off sticking to an investment strategy. Most retirement consultants would agree that when left to their own devices, plan participants are typically reactionary to changes in the market, adjusting their allocations at precisely the wrong time. Buying or selecting their funds at a high, when returns over the last 1-3 years are strong, and selling low, when the funds have gone through a negative correction.

Just think of the typical fund selection process. You've reviewed the list of options put before you looking for quantitative evidence of a fund's historical performance. You select the funds for your portfolio usually selecting those with better performance over a specific period of time. Rarely do investors analyze their selections considering the associated risk, the diversification within each of the funds from a market capitalization, investment style, global region where the money is invested nor the specific industrial sector. Frankly, there's a lot of work to stay on top of that.

Asset allocations relieve you of this burdensome task and make it simple by providing true diversification to your investments and eliminating emotional reactions to market swings. Several options should be made available to allow the individual participant or investor an opportunity to identify their risk tolerance and select the allocation that best suits them. Further, these options will provide a better foundation for a participant to adhere to an investment strategy over time, selecting a different portfolio as their lifestyle changes.

Freedom One has developed asset allocation models referred to as TIP Managed Portfolios. TIP stands for The Investment Path. Think of a TIP Managed Portfolio as an "allocation fund of funds." Quite literally, each TIP comprises a portfolio of mutual funds handpicked by Freedom One's investment research team, selected and allocated as a group to achieve specific levels of risk and return at your comfort level. Investors need only select the TIP allocation matching their level of risk tolerance and let the fund go to work for them, earning a return on their retirement investment while minimizing risk.

Asset allocation models or managed portfolios should be rebalanced every year to bring your portfolio back to your original asset allocation mix. This is necessary because over time, some of your investments may become out of alignment with your investment goals. You'll find that some of your investments will grow faster than others. By rebalancing, you'll ensure that your portfolio adheres to its discipline and does not overemphasize one or more asset categories, thereby returning your portfolio to a comfortable level of risk. Freedom One TIPs are automatically rebalanced annually.

Finally, as markets change and fund manager performance shifts, so must your portfolio. On a regular basis, Freedom One TIPs are refined to ensure the maximum benefit to participants. In fact, since May 31, 2006, we have replaced an underperforming manager in the lineup, reduced the overall expense ration (the underlying cost of each fund manager) in each TIP and benefited from our increased exposure to the stable value asset class, which has reduced risk in the fixed income category within our aggressive model.

Through Freedom One's TIP Managed Portfolios and on-site visits with your company, we improve the likelihood that you will meet your retirement goals.

If you would like to implement a strategy like this in your 401(k) plan, don't hesitate to contact Lesley Goodwin at Freedom One at (248) 620-8100.

CARPE DIEM!

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29TH.

REMEMBER TO SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR!

(Rob's Roost continued from Page 1)

each month to consume more than they produce. The total debt will exceed $6 trillion by the end of 2006.

At the same time, our ability to finance this debt is shrinking, and with it our economic security. By running such massive deficits, the United States is shifting resources in record amounts out of export and import-competing industries, like auto parts and software, where worker productivity and investments in R&D are high, into non-trade competing activities, like restaurants and retirement homes. This lowers GDP immediately and cripples future growth.

Over the past five years, the process has accelerated, as Americans, financed by China and other Asian governments, over-invested in large houses and shopping malls instead of R&D, plants, equipment, and software that drive productivity growth and product innovation. JPMorgan estimates that potential U.S. GDP growth has declined from 3.5 percent during 1996 to 2002, to 2.7 percent in the years since. Going forward it estimates potential growth to be even lower.

Rising debt and falling growth are prescriptions for calamity.

The Bush Administration urgently needs to persuade China and other Asian countries to significantly revalue their currencies and to stop intervening in foreign exchange markets.

So far China has balked at meaningful action. It has permitted the yuan to appreciate by about 4.5 percent over 15 months. That is hardly enough to have any meaningful effects.

At the conclusion of his recent trip to Asia, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson announced the initiation of a U.S.-China Strategic Dialogue. We have had years of talk, now we need strong action to combat Chinese and broader Asian protectionism.

Unfortunately, many U.S. multinationals, like GE, Caterpillar and GM are making huge profits in the protected Chinese market, and President Bush is reluctant to disappoint his strongest supporters.

Branding his critics protectionists, instead of the Chinese, the President appeases his domestic allies and foreign powers to the peril of the nation.

Peter Morici is a professor at the University of Maryland School of Business and former Chief Economist at the U.S. International Trade Commission.

Peter Morici, Professor
Robert H. Smith School of Business
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742-1815

FYI

Effective October 1, 2006, **minimum wage** for the state of Michigan increases from $5.15 to $6.95 per hour for workers 18 years of age and older. For workers under the age of 18, the minimum wage increases from $5.15 to $5.91 per hour. A training wage of $4.25 per hour may be paid to workers between 16 to 19 years of age for the first 90 days of employment. Michigan's minimum wage law covers employers who employ two or more persons, 16 years of age or older.

Remember, Michigan requires that employers post the new Michigan Minimum Wage Poster in the work place. You can print a copy from the MTA website at **www.mtaonline.com** or visit the Michigan Labor & Economic Growth website at **www.michigan.gov/wagehour**.

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Please **remind your employees to vote** on November 7, 2006. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The last day to register to vote is October 10th and can be done at any Secretary of State office in the state of Michigan. If you have any questions on voting (or to verify that you are registered), visit **www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633_8716---,00.html**.

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MTA and the National Tooling & Manufacturing Association (NTMA) are holding the dinner presentation **"The Implications of Slower Growth for the Nation and Michigan, and What Does It Mean?"** on Tuesday, October 17th. The speaker will be Dana Johnson, senior vice president and chief economist at Comerica, Inc, where he leads the economics department and provides commentary and research vital to Comerica and its customers.

Social hour starts at 5:30 pm followed by dinner and the presentation. It will be held at the Club Venetian in Madison Heights. To RSVP, contact Anne Cairns at (586) 677-5568 or e-mail Anne at detroitntma@aol.com.

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Promote your company while showing your support for the MTA by becoming an **MTA website sponsor**. For a 3, 6 or 12 month sponsorship, you can have your company's logo with a link to your own website prominently displayed on the MTA homepage. In addition, a separate 'MTA web sponsors page' will detail what your company is all about. For more information, visit our website at **www.mtaonline.com** and look for the 'Website Sponsor Info' button on the lower right side of the home page.

Michigan Rx Price Finder

The price of prescription drugs can vary greatly from pharmacy to pharmacy. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has created a website to help consumers compare prices: **www.michigandrugprices.com/Search.aspx**. This site allows you to search for the pharmacy price on the 30 most commonly used prescription drugs in Michigan. Enter your city or zip code, the mileage in which you are willing to travel, and check off the prescription drugs you want to check prices on. The resulting list of pharmacies can be sorted alphabetically by pharmacy name; lowest to highest price for each individual drug; or distance from your entered location making it easy for consumers to comparison shop.

The price listed is the 'usual and customary' price of the drug. This means the price a cash-paying customer, without insurance, would pay and it does not reflect any discounts a customer might receive. The price reflected is the price for the generic equivalent of the drug, unless a generic is not available. Prices are reported each time a pharmacy fills a prescription for a drug on the list in this survey. If a pharmacy has not filled a prescription in during the bi-weekly reporting period, there will not be any price information listed for that pharmacy and 'N/A' will be displayed in the results field.

Remember that prescription drug prices vary from day-to-day and the website is updated on a bi-weekly basis; therefore, call your pharmacy to confirm the latest price before traveling.

MTA List of Endorsed Service Providers

- **Reliance Standard/Ameritas** (life/dental insurance)
  MTA contacts: Mark Tyler 248-489-8505
  Stella Krupansky 248-488-0300 ext. 1310
- **Blue Cross Blue Shield/BCN** (health insurance)
  MTA contacts: Mark Tyler 248-489-8505
  Elaine Burger-Laskosky 248-488-0300 ext. 1309
- **Federated Ins.** (property & casualty insurance)
  Provider contact: Joseph Busby 800-428-4143
- **Freedom One Financial Group** (401(k) programs)
  Provider contact: Lesley Goodwin 248-620-8100
- **John M. Packer & Associates** (unemployment)
  Provider contact: Nathan Wiest 800-482-2971
- **Custom Telecom** (phone/communications)
  Provider contact: Kathy Schaumburger 866-332-1200

MTA receives a benefit from its Endorsed Providers when you, as a member, patronize them. This is one way we are able to maintain the level of dues.

Inflation Talk

CPI-W Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers

Month	82–84	1967	57–59
August 2006	**199.6**	**594.6**	**691.5***
July	199.2	593.2	690.1*
June	198.6	591.7	688.0*
May	198.2	590.5	686.8*
April	197.2	587.3	683.1*
March	195.3	581.8	676.6*
Feb	194.2	578.6	672.8*
Jan	194.0	577.7	672.1*

CPI-U All Urban Consumers

Month	82–84	1967	57–59
August 2006	**203.9**	**610.9**	**710.3***
July	203.5	609.6	709.0*
June	202.9	607.8	706.9*
May	202.5	606.5	705.5*
April	201.5	603.5	702.0*
March	199.8	598.6	696.1*
Feb	198.7	595.2	692.2*
Jan	198.3	593.9	690.8*

Note: August 2006 CPI-W represents a 3.9% increase from one year ago; CPI-U a 3.8% increase.

* Base Year 1957–59 is no longer released. BLS has issued the following conversion factors from the 82–84 year:

CPI-W —.2886674 CPI-U —.2870447

TOOL TALK©

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P.O. Box 9151 **Phone (248) 488-0300**
Farmington Hills, MI 48333 **Fax (248) 488-0500**

Managing Director — Robert Dumont
Copy Editor, Layout / Design — Elaine Burger-Laskosky

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Send/Fax to **MTA—Attention: Tool Talk Editor.**