

tmta talk

A Publication of the Tooling, Manufacturing & Technologies Association

From Rob's Roost

by: Rob Dumont,
President & CEO



SUMMER IS UPON US

The one thing that is constant is change. We have worked long and hard on HR 782, the Ryan-Hunter Bill on currency manipulation. We have contacts in both Representatives offices and with them we have been successful in getting additional members of Congress to sign on as co-sponsors. At last count we were up to 107, not an insignificant number. I am now advised that the two key sponsors Messrs. Ryan and Hunter have come up with a new (hopefully improved) version identified as HR 2942. Apparently, it is something of a 'compromise' effort to find common ground among the various legislative approaches that are in play relative to the problem of currency manipulation. Efforts to get additional details remain somewhat frustrated by the summer schedule in Washington. Members of Congress and staff like vacation time too! More to come as soon as the details are in hand.

Whether you call it 'Fast Track' or 'Trade Promotion Authority', Congress did not renew it for the Administration. For the time being, it appears that the Constitutional mandate that Congress deal with Trade issues is back where it actually belongs. How long that remains the case is, of course, an open question but I am thankful for all blessings. Hopefully the head long rush to enter into Trade Agreements without any apparent regard for the well being of American manufacturing or workers will be halted for the foreseeable future.

You are aware that Michigan has pending a new tax system for businesses. TMTA is in the throes of setting up at least one, and possibly more, seminar sessions with Certified Public Accountants to familiarize members with the new legislation. We expect the first such effort to take place early in the month of August.

On the Recovery Zone front our Lansing assistant Judy Augenstein, with the very capable and dedicated assistance of Bill Carbery of member company **Mol-Son Incorporated** of Mattawan Michigan has been working with Senator Randy Richardville (R- Monroe) to put into place changes that will benefit tool and die shops throughout the state. The process takes time but progress is being made.

Our Golf Outing in June was, by all reports, a great success! Certainly the entire TMTA staff got behind the effort to ensure the best possible result and for that I am at once grateful and proud.

Next year marks the 75th Anniversary of your Association. If you have any ideas on how you would like this special juncture in our history marked, please feel free to share them with us. Your Board of Directors will be considering a variety of options and we will keep you posted.

TMTA Wishes You and Your Family A
Relaxing & Enjoyable Vacation!

Those that say you
can't take it with
you never saw a car
packed for a
vacation trip.



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TMTA Calendar of Events—July 2007

Remember, visit the TMTA website Calendar at www.thetmta.com
for detailed, up-to-date information on all events.

- 18 TMTA Board of Directors meets
- 19 MTMIC Board of Directors meets



More Companies are Turning to Wellness

While workplace wellness is nothing new, over the last 5-10 years wellness has become much more mainstream. Employers now realize that in order to have a productive business environment, employees must be healthy.

Individuals generally spend over half of their waking hours at work. The workplace contains a concentrated group of people, usually situated in a small number of geographic sites, who share a common purpose and common culture. Workplace wellness programs can positively influence workers' health risks.

These days, employers' investment in wellness programs largely is being driven by the skyrocketing cost of providing health insurance. According to the consulting firm Towers Perrin, health care costs in the past 5 years have increased by over 60 percent. Spurring employees to make positive lifestyle changes can keep health insurance costs in check. Employers with wellness plans have found that such programs can boost worker morale, increase productivity, minimize absenteeism and even lower workers' compensation costs.

The most successful wellness programs offer individualized risk reduction counseling, coaching and self-management training to the highest-risk employees within the context of a healthy company culture and a supportive work environment.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield introduced the wellness concept in an HMO product last year with BCN's Healthy Blue Living plan. Now BCBS has come out with a new PPO plan called Healthy Blue Incentives. It is being offered to self-funded groups with 50 or more employees beginning July 2007 and will be offered to smaller and insured groups in 2008.

Both Healthy Blue Living and Healthy Blue Incentives reward members for participation in wellness activities through lower co-payments and deductibles. Both programs integrate total wellness and care management services that focus on wellness, health education, smoking cessation and living with chronic illness programs.

For more information on either plan, contact Dennis Campbell at (248) 355-1414 ext. 159 or e-mail to dennis@thetmta.com.

Ten Ways to Stretch Your Healthcare Dollar

With experts predicting national healthcare cost increases to stay in the double-digits for the near and long-term, employers are passing more costs on to their employees, and individuals and families are looking for ways to stretch their healthcare dollars.

Making the most of your healthcare dollars can be easier than you think. Here are ten easy ways to help keep healthcare costs down.

1. Understand how your health plan works. You need to know what is and what is not covered, what procedures you need to follow to ensure your claims are paid, and which providers and facilities to use to get the most cost-effective care. Know the deductibles, co-payments and out-of-pocket costs you are responsible for paying before you use medical services or get a prescription filled.
2. Use in-network providers. When you go to a non-participating provider, you will likely pay a higher coinsurance percentage and you will likely have to pay the difference in price between the participating provider's discounted fee and the non-participating provider's "regular" fee.
3. Look into freestanding surgical and diagnostic centers. If you need surgery, you might save money by having it performed at an ambulatory surgical center—a freestanding clinic that is not a hospital. Freestanding diagnostic centers are also available and tend to charge less for tests like MRIs, CAT scans, X-rays and bone density scans. Before you go, make sure the facility is in your plan's network and that your plan's benefits cover the service. Talk to your doctor to be sure this course of action is appropriate for you.
4. Ask your doctor about home testing and monitoring devices. Home tests for blood pressure, diabetes and other conditions can help ensure you are following your doctor's orders and that prescribed treatments are working. These tests usually cost less than in-office testing. Check with your doctor to be sure in-home testing is appropriate for you.
5. Only go to the hospital emergency room for true emergencies. If you need after hours medical care, consider going to an urgent care center rather than the hospital emergency room. Avoiding the ER can save you money since the co-payment is usually lower for an urgent care visit than an ER visit and your insurer may

make you pay for the full cost of ER care if it is deemed a non-emergency visit. Also, urgent care facilities usually provide faster service than ERs.

6. Check all medical bills for accuracy. Insurance companies and hospitals are not immune from making billing errors. Keep track of individual as well as total family deductible payments. When in the hospital, try to keep a log of all services, medications and supplies you are given so you can make sure you are not charged for procedures or items you didn't use. Ask for an itemized bill.
7. Use any additional programs or discounts provided by your employer or health plan. Many health plans provide access to free disease management programs for chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart disease. These programs can help to manage your condition and save you money in the long run. These programs may include smoking cessation and weight loss programs or discounts on fitness clubs or other items that help you live a healthy lifestyle.
8. Live a health lifestyle. Healthy habits like exercising regularly, eating well and not smoking can increase your stamina, lighten your mood, lower your risk for certain diseases and save you money over time.
9. Make careful decisions about prescription drugs. Prescription drugs are the fastest rising area of healthcare costs and one of the biggest reasons behind dramatic increases in healthcare costs nationwide. Use generic drugs whenever possible, even for over-the-counter medications. Use mail order pharmacy services if available. Compare prices at different pharmacies. Take all medications as prescribed. Not refilling your prescription might seem like a good way to save money, but it may cost you more in the long run.
10. Use a healthcare spending account to pay for medical expenses with pre-tax money if your employer provides one. A flexible spending account (FSA) or a health savings account (HSA) let you set aside pre-tax money from your paycheck to pay for eligible items. Because you don't pay taxes on the money, you are actually getting a "percent off" or a discount.

Healthcare costs are tied directly to utilization. When you use your health plan more, there are more claims. The higher the claims, the more you and your employer must contribute to pay for these claims. Remember that the most cost effective way to reduce the cost of healthcare is to make better decisions about the way you live, including the way you eat, exercise and spend your healthcare dollars.

Legislative Update

by: *Judy Augenstein,*
Legislative Consultant, Lansing



The special work group charged with developing a replacement to the Single Business Tax has finally hammered out a conceptual agreement after months of negotiations. The Governor, Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House have agreed in concept to a plan the bipartisan, bicameral tax work group has crafted. The new plan will be called the Michigan Business Tax (MBT).

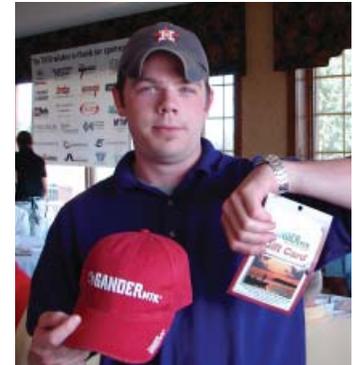
Companies with less than \$350,000 in sales are not subject to the tax. From there, companies are phased into the small business classification which taxes profits at 1.8%. To qualify as a small business, sales can be as high as \$20 million per year, with officer compensation of up to \$180,000. Businesses with over \$20 million in sales will see a business income rate of 5% and a modified gross receipts rate of .8%. Modified gross receipts are defined as sales less tangible property purchased. The current Single Business Tax (SBT) taxes for every new employee hired and taxes if health and retirement plans are offered. The existing SBT rewards outsourcing of jobs, cutting pay and slashing benefits. The MBT does just the opposite and offers tax credits for all compensation expenses for both big and small businesses. Industrial corporations will see personal property tax relief of 24 mills, plus a 35% refundable credit on any remaining industrial personal property. Commercial businesses will see 12 mills of personal property tax relief, equaling a 23% cut. Tax credits of up to 65% are made for investment and compensation and another 75% credit will be available for research and development.

Legislative discussions continue on attempts to raise other taxes to address the on-going budget crisis. The two taxes most likely to move are an income tax rate hike and the 6% services tax.

Bill Carbary (**Mol-Son Inc.**), Rob and I continue to work with Senator Randy Richardville, R-Monroe to fine tune legislation to amend the tool and die Renaissance Recovery Zone Act. At this point, we are working with other interest groups to get them to support the measure. We expect to see a substitute bill to the original draft within the next few days.

The legislature is scheduled to be in session through the summer. The Legislature has been somewhat paralyzed by the budget and tax debate and hopefully will be able to move on to other issues during the summer session, such as our tooling legislation!!

Highlights from the TMTA 72nd Annual Golf Outing & Dinner





From the Desk of Gary Wood

MTMIC, Chief Operating Officer

Summer is a great time of the year to kickback and relax with your friends and neighbors and maybe have a drink or two. Occasionally there may be a few too many drinks and that may be okay if you are not driving or performing work related functions. If you are working or driving, look out because you could find yourself in trouble with the law or risking your life and not even know you have a problem.

Alcohol is not a prohibited substance but merely a regulated substance for which a "tolerance level" has been generally assumed by society. Alcohol affects different people in different ways but the Michigan Secretary of State has included on their website the standards for "Alcohol and Driving in Michigan".

Several years ago the MTA Workers' Compensation Fund Trustees determined that the CDL standard for drinking and driving would be supported as the standard for determining the capability of an employee to function after consuming alcohol.

The CDL rules states that (in part): "You will lose your CDL for at least one year for a first offense for driving a CMV if your blood alcohol concentration is .04% or higher."

The Directors of the MTMIC have not withdrawn the standard and it should be remembered that claimants demonstrating a higher blood alcohol content will have their claims contested where appropriate.

MTMIC NEWS

The MTMIC has lost a long time staff member in Bill Hoke. Bill, our Loss Control Manager, has accepted a new position effective July 9 with another employer. We wish Bill the very best with his new opportunity. It is sad when someone with his credentials leaves unexpectedly.

This of course means we have to replace this important function. Fortunately, we have kept in touch with a former employee and he has accepted the role of Loss Control Manager and will be joining the staff on July 16, 2007. I hope you will join me in welcoming Ray Duff as the new Loss Control Manager. Ray comes back to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience. This is an outstanding addition to the staff and I am sure those of you that know him will welcome him back into your shops.

Thinking of Loss Control: have you seen your loss control

representative lately? The loss control staff has continued to provide top notch service to the policyholders by completing more than 300 visits as of the end of May, while completing accident investigations and prospective policyholder evaluations.

Claims Management has not sat back on their department laurels. The staff is currently handling all of the claims incurred under the MTA WCF for the Safety National Mutual Insurance Company while handling the claims that have occurred since January 1, 2006 under policies issued by the MTMIC.

The results for the MTMIC so far have been very positive; the loss ratio for the 2006 year has only reached 38.6% while the 2007 year has a slightly higher (aged) loss ratio of only 26.9%. There are 425 policyholder currently affiliated with the MTMIC and we are looking to improve that number through agents, our contacts and referrals.

In case we had not mentioned it, the MTMIC has begun the transfer of data to a new computer system. We are contemplating an early September transfer to the new system. The old system had been in existence since the mid-80's and was no longer supported by the manufacturer or Microsoft operating systems. To put it in the terms of our hardware technician: "some day you could come to work and the system will not run." I guess it was time. The inconvenient news is we will likely be "down" for two days during the week we switch systems. If you have ever gone through a conversion, that is an expected and unavoidable situation.

The Board Planning Session is historically held on the third Thursday of September. This meeting starts at 8:00 a.m. and runs as long as necessary to craft the foreseeable future of the organization. In past years there have been a lot of plans cast. Some have taken shape, others have been modified while still others have been abandoned. The point of the planning session is to take the best thoughts of the Board collectively to plan for the successful future of the MTMIC.

The MTMIC Annual Meeting will be held this year at the Red Run Golf Club. Please mark your calendar for Thursday, October 18, 2007. Invitations will be sent to all policyholders.

I hope your Fourth of July Holiday was outstanding and your vacation plans all work out.

Please don't take a vacation from safety!



Another Glorious Golf Outing

The TMTA 72nd Annual Golf Outing & Dinner was another winning event enjoyed by both members and their guests alike at the Fox Hills Golf Club in Plymouth. Rain threatened, but it quickly passed becoming a pleasant, sunny day filled with golf, dinner and prizes.

Kevin Strine from **Vicount Industries**, Bill Thomas from **Ronart Industries** and Ron Peuterbaugh from **Knight Carbide** were the hole-in-one shoot-out participants trying for \$1 million, a 2007 Chevy Corvette and a 2007 Chevy Tahoe (in that order). The team with the lowest score was from **Vicount Industries** with a score of 58.

The prizes included two American Airline tickets to anywhere in the continental U.S.; a Garmin GPS system; tons of golf clubs, golf bags and golf balls; numerous gift certificates for food, books, shopping and gas; and a flat screen plasma color television donated by Bob Easterbrook of **East-Lind Heat Treat**.

In case you missed the event or were there and want to peruse our pictures, go to our website at www.thetmta.com. If you have any remarks, visit our blog site through the link at the bottom of our homepage. We look forward to hearing your comments.

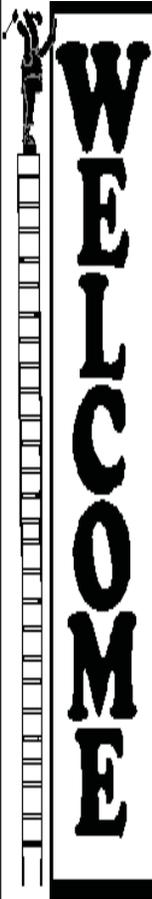
TMTA wishes to thank all of the sponsors, volunteer workers, and most of all our attending members and their guests for making this a wonderful day for everyone.

We hope to see *you* at next year's outing.

Welcome New Members!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members to the Tooling, Manufacturing & Technologies Association:

- ❖ **Campbell Fittings, Inc.** of Boyertown, PA, specializing in the manufacturing of industrial hose fittings, couplings, clamps, ferrules, and related tools & accessories for air, steam, gas, water, dry bulk, chemical, and petroleum applications;
- ❖ **Capture 3D** of Novi, MI, specializing in 3D scanning systems and services;
- ❖ **D.M.C. International, Inc.** of Harrison Twp., MI, specializing in the manufacturing of high precision tooling and components; CNC jig grinding; surface, OD & ID grinding; production machining; and reverse engineering;
- ❖ **Liberty Cast Products, Inc.** of Sterling Hts., MI, specializing in non-ferrous sand castings;
- ❖ **Milliken & Company** of Spartanburg, NC, specializing in textile and chemical manufacturing; and
- ❖ **W.S. Molnar Company** of Detroit, MI, specializing in the manufacturing of metal safety products (*SlipNOT*).



In an effort to get TMTA Talk to you as quickly as possible and in keeping with 'being green', we are now **offering to send TMTA Talk to you via e-mail**. If you would like to take advantage of the new electronic edition of TMTA Talk, contact Ron at 248-488-0300 ext. 1306 or e-mail to ron@thetmta.com.

Just a reminder: the **TMTA Training Room is available** for rent. It has seating and table room for 60 people. It has a speaker system, 2 dry eraser boards and an overhead projector. TMTA will provide coffee and tea and can arrange for lunch at your request. If you are interested, please contact Jerry Morrow at 248-488-0300 ext. 1308 or e-mail to jerry@thetmta.com for rates and availability.

The **Americans with Disabilities Act** was signed into law on July 26, 1990 guaranteeing equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

Eighteen percent of Americans have some kind of disability. Your online connection to the Federal government's disability related information and resource center for individuals and employers can be found at www.disabilityinfo.gov.

Many companies call our office looking for the **U.S. Department of Labor's Required Posters**. We no longer carry them, but you can order the posters free from the DOL by telephone at 1-888-972-7332, by e-mail at contact-OSBP@dol.gov or print them yourself from the DOL website at www.dol.gov/osbp/sbrefa/poster/matrix.htm.

