

## BRIEF CASE

### BROWN COUNTY Groups receive money from fair

The 2008 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in Brown County continued a show tradition — using money earned by the host county for the good of the community.

"We distributed more than \$80,000 to 11 nonprofit groups that manned the show's food tents," Publicity Chair Deb Barlament said, in a Friday news release. "They were congratulated on a job well done and received checks ranging from \$1,800 to \$13,000."

Groups receiving funds were Home Field Advantage; Denmark FFA Alumni; Wrightstown Lions/Legion/Optimists; St. Katharine Drexel Parish — Kaukauna; St. Patrick's Church — Askeaton; St. Paul's Parish — Wrightstown; West De Pere FFA; Zion Lutheran Wayside Youth; De Pere Knights of Columbus; Forest Junction Civic League/4-H; and SSCM Faith Community.

— Press-Gazette

### GREEN BAY New compliance date is Dec. 1

The U.S. Coast Guard has set a new compliance date for implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential for owners and operators of facilities located within several U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port Zones including the port of Green Bay.

The new date is Dec. 1, according to the Coast Guard.

The previous compliance date of Oct. 31 was extended due to a power outage at a Transportation Security Administration facility that has delayed the activation of some credentials.

— Press-Gazette

### MADISON BBB target of phishing scam

The Better Business Bureau says its name is being used in an apparent computer phishing scam that could cause viruses to be downloaded.

The organization said consumer and businesses are receiving e-mail messages and blog posts directing recipients to register software with the BBB or update contact information.

The BBB said it has no connection to those requests.

E-mails and blog viewings can be reported to phishing@council.bbb.org. Other information can be found at www.bbb.org/securityalerts.

— Richard Ryman/Press-Gazette

### GREEN BAY Management program slated

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Small Business Development Center is offering Supervisory Leadership II, a two-day management program focused on coaching employees.

One of the core programs in the Supervisory Leadership Certificate, "Supervisory Management II," is offered from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Nov. 12 and 13 at the Business Assistance Center, 2701 Larson Road. Bob Pecor will facilitate.

Participants can register for courses without completing certificate requirements. All courses are \$425 per person. Discounts for groups are available.

For information, call the SBDC at (920) 496-2117 or visit www.uwgb.edu/sbdc.

— Press-Gazette

## MONDAY CONVERSATION: STEVE VAN REMORTEL



Steve Van Remortel, president of SM Advisors, helps business owners write strategic plans and carry out the action proposed in them. H. Marc Larson/Press-Gazette

# Expert: Preparedness key in all aspects of life

## SM Advisors helps business profit from planning

The Green Bay Press-Gazette visits with newsmakers each week in its Monday Conversation feature. This week, Steve Van Remortel of Suamico, president of SM Advisors Inc., talks about business planning.

**Q.** What is SM Advisors?

**A.** SM Advisors is a business advisory firm that focuses on the two key fundamentals of every successful organization: strategy and talent. We help organizations develop a differentiated strategy and assist them in building a skill-set aligned team to execute the plan. Skill-set alignment means we make sure the right people are in the right positions doing the right things.

**Q.** Why is planning essential?

**A.** Our tagline is "Those Who Plan, PROFIT." People plan vacations, weddings, and investments, yet seven out of 10 companies do not develop a business plan.

Business planning is essential because it brings several fundamentals to your organization.

Most importantly, your business plan helps you clearly define your competence or differentiation. Once you know what really sets you apart from the competition, you can proactively pursue the target markets that will value your competence.

Your business plan will give you a clearly defined vision with measurements to monitor your success. It will also include action plans that will strengthen and deliver your competence every day.

Tactical or department plans will detail the action plans needed to work "on" the business. As each department completes its action plans, the success of the organization accelerates.

A business plan execution program helps create a culture of accountability for your company. This helps ensure that the plan is implemented.

**Q.** What are the benefits of a business owner hiring help from the outside to write a business plan?

It's half a country away, but veal and other livestock producers in Wisconsin will watch what happens with a California ballot item Tuesday.

Voters in California will take up Proposition 2, a ballot initiative designed to "prohibit cruel confinement of farm animals in a manner that does not allow them to turn around freely, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their

### Steve Van Remortel

**Position:** President of SM Advisors Inc.

**Education:** Van Remortel received a bachelor's degree in marketing and organizational communications from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and an MBA in strategic management from Wayne State University.

**Previous experience:** He worked for Hormel Foods, Schreiber Foods and EnzoPac Inc. before founding SM Advisors.

**Best business advice you received:** "Find your passion and be the best at it. I was blessed to discover in college that strategy was my passion."

**Best business advice you'd give:** "Companies need to 'Stop Selling Vanilla Ice Cream.' Separate yourself from your competitors by creating a differentiation for your organization that your customers can't get at the same level from anyone else."

— Press-Gazette

**A.** In my previous leadership position, we completed our plan internally the first two years, but used an outside resource the next three years. The success we achieved in those three years was incredible versus the first two. That's the reason why SM Advisors exists today.

There are several key reasons why it helps to use a business plan adviser. First of all, an adviser is objective. He can professionally resolve the sensitive issues that are holding the organization back.

An outside resource also provides a proven process and methodologies to tackle the specific needs of the organization.

They have the skills to help build a cohesive team by facilitating healthy conflict. That's really what leads to the best decision-making and strategy for the organization.

Also, your planner can bring ideas and proven solutions that have worked in other industries to your company.

An outside resource helps create a culture of accountability to

make sure the plan gets implemented. And, your adviser is an experienced and confidential sounding board.

**Q.** Businesses often spend time and money to develop mission statements and business plans, but sometimes they end up in a binder collecting dust. How does a business plan become a living document?

**A.** This is a very common complaint. At SM Advisors, we focus on creating a culture of accountability. We focus on two things: the tactical plans and the Plan Execution Program. The tactical plans include actions that every department must complete throughout the year to work "on" the business. The tactical plans also include measurements to ensure the actions are accomplishing company goals. In the Plan Execution Program, we develop a consistent schedule for the organization to review the measurements and completion of action plans. We have found that these techniques really help keep the business plan "alive."

**Q.** You're a sponsor of the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce's CEO/CFO Roundtable Program. What is the program? Why is it important?

**A.** Our passion at SM Advisors is to help people achieve their professional and personal objectives. Sponsoring and co-chairing the roundtable program is another way to help individuals succeed. The roundtable is a group of 10 to 12 noncompetitive members who meet monthly to learn from the experience of each other in a confidential environment. Research has proven that company leaders who are involved in peer groups experience a higher level of success than those who are not.

We started the program in 2005 and currently have six CEO roundtables and three CFO roundtables. We expect to launch three more roundtables this fall. I would encourage all company leaders and company financial

See Planning, B-2



**MICK HAGER**  
 Commentary

## Always beware of hard-sell tactics

**R**ecently, I was looking for a band instrument for my daughter and learned some very valuable lessons.

We found a locally-owned music store in Milwaukee that had what we needed. They had "just gotten it in" and advised us that they needed three days to inspect and adjust it. That left us no choice but to have it shipped. Nonetheless, we decided to purchase it.

The salesperson then put on a full-court press for us to "buy it and take it today" instead of risking damage during shipping. What about the three days to adjust it? We didn't give the hard-sell tactic a lot of thought at the time.

We left our contact information and waited for the store to call. A few days later, they informed us the instrument was "completely refurbished and ready to ship." It was then that I asked about their rent-to-own program. I indicated that we wanted to rent it for three months under their rental program to evaluate it before making such a large purchase.

A funny thing happened! Remember it was "ready to ship?" The salesperson indicated the manager would have to call me before they could ship it.

Unfortunately, the manager never called. I called them to find out the status. This same salesperson explained that the maintenance records for the instrument were problematic and it "couldn't be sold — ever!" It was an interesting situation given the hard-sell we had received. It was unclear what was really going on. Only days earlier, it was OK to sell "out the door" but not OK now that we wanted to evaluate it.

Lessons learned:  
 • Pay attention to what is and isn't being said. The salesperson showed real inconsistencies in his approach.

• If a product is high-quality and the value is obvious, there is no reason to "hard-sell."

• When purchasing used, high-ticket items such as an instrument, if possible, always try before you buy. Put the responsibility on the seller so you don't get scammed.

— Mick Hager is a business consultant, author, trainer and professional speaker. Download free resources at www.mickhager.com.

## State veal, livestock producers eye California proposition

### Initiative designed to prevent cruelty

BY NATHAN PHELPS  
 nphelps@greenbaypressgazette.com

limbs." If passed, the law would go into effect in 2015 and violators would be subject to a \$1,000 fine, according to the wording of the proposition.

"Both proponents and opponents agree this measure is going to have national reverberations," said Paul Shapiro, a spokesman with the Humane Society of the United States, which is backing the ballot initiative. "These ballot measures provide the most modest reforms on an industry that for so long ... has been able to treat animals however it likes."

The proposition covers egg-laying hens, pregnant sows and calves raised for veal.

Those in the livestock ag sector say the wellbeing of their animals is a crucial part of their operation.

"When it comes right down to it, if (farmers) didn't have healthy and content animals, they wouldn't be in business," said Casey Langan, a spokesman with the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.

Langan contends passage of the measure would damage or dismember agricultural industries

in California and could also shift production to other parts of the world where regulation of both animal welfare and food safety are less stringent.

"As these measures pass, someday they're going to come to a large pork-producing state and use the argument: 'Seven other states have passed this. Why haven't you?'" said Langan. "They're probably seven states that don't have many pigs. ..."

He noted the animal rights groups didn't start taking aim at hog gestation pens in Iowa, a large hog-producing state.

"The storm clouds are

kind of building and that's why it's more important than ever for producers to explain to consumers how they are raising animals and that their main concern is to have healthy content animals," he said.

Shapiro said they have taken the issue to states with significant pork production and passed similar legislation in Colorado, phasing out gestation pens in the pork industry.

A similar move in the Nebraska's Legislature failed, he said.

See Initiative, B-2