

Betty BEArlandson and Associates Certified Public Accountants

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To Our Clients and Friends

April 15 has come and gone and we are now looking forward to helping clients deal with their non-tax financial matters, as well as, finishing up many tax returns on extension. We appreciated your support during tax season and hope the articles in this newsletter help keep you informed.

Website Upgrade

By Margaret A. Hansen, CPA



Our website has a new face. Actually, we have several new faces. The new staff photos are one of many changes to the format. Our goal with the changes is for the site to be easier to use and find the information you are looking for.

Have you wondered what the different types of financial statement services are? Take a look at Financial Reporting on the services page. If you are looking for something different, the service page lists all of our standard services and links to an explanation with details about each service. Each service item provides information on what the service is and how it will assist you in reaching your financial goals as individuals or as a business.

If you are thinking about doing some cleaning and organizing and are not sure what to keep and what to throw away, our resource page links to a records retention schedule. This page also provides links to various Federal and State government agencies.

Our previous newsletters are now on the website. You can read an article you missed or want to reference. Or, you can print it out and pass the newsletter on to someone else.

The Financial Tools and Tax Updates pages are kept current through our link to the tax service that we use. Financial Tools include auto and mortgage calculators. There is also a complete

list of 17 different retirement calculators. These range from the retirement planner to the 401(k) savings planner. Ask Bob what his theory for retirement planning is after a long day at the office. We are looking forward to hearing your comments about the site.

Gone Phishing?

By Thomas H. Rogers, CPA



Sounds like a nice relaxing afternoon at the lake, hopefully, followed up by a nice fish dinner. Unfortunately, we're not talking about that kind of fishing.

Phishing is a term for one of the more recent attempts at identity theft via the internet. Phishing starts out with a very official looking e-mail from your financial institution or other trusted organization (maybe even the IRS) that enlists your help to update your account information due to some problem in their computer records. Clicking on a link in the e-mail takes you to a very convincing fake of the institution's website and then asks you to provide your account numbers, social security numbers and many other important pieces of information that the perpetrator can use to steal your identity.

Remember, your financial institution will never ask you to provide this kind of confidential information on-line, so don't do it. If in doubt, call them directly to inquire about what might be going on.

Many of the good virus scanning software programs will have features that will look for and alert you to phishing scams, but even the best will not necessarily detect them all. Your best defense is being alert. Now go fishing and relax!



Our Flag

By Gary W. Nogle, CPA



We have had some comments and questions regarding the United States flag, with signatures on it, which is on display in our small conference room. It is a thank you from the members of First Platoon "Regulators", C Company, 2-1 Infantry, of the Army's 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

During the summer of 2005, the 172nd was deployed from their base in Fairbanks, Alaska to Iraq - these soldiers included my son, Christopher Nogle. Since Chris had grown up as a child of a Firm member, it was natural for Batty, Erlandsen & Associates to "adopt" his squad as their own while they were deployed. We helped keep them supplied with snacks, personal hygiene articles and other items which the men had trouble obtaining over there. So many supplies were sent that the squad shared their excess with the rest of the platoon.

In December 2006, after a year in Mosul and three months in Baghdad, the 172nd including Sgt. Nogle, was transitioned back to Fairbanks (which entailed a nearly 100 degree temperature change). Chris was able to take leave shortly after that, and while at a Batty, Erlandsen & Associates meeting, presented us with the flag signed by all squad members and a few platoon leaders as a thank you for our support.

If you get the opportunity, take a look at our flag and remember the sacrifice of the men who signed it and all their comrades in arms. We are proud to have given them what little support we could and are honored by their flag. Most of all we are thankful that Chris and every one of the members of First Platoon was able to return to their families.

Medicare Premiums "Means Testing"

By Robert W. Batty, CPA, PFS



In what I believe is just the start of a troubling trend, many of our clients have found that the previously low Medicare insurance premium rate is not as low as it used to be. In 2008, very high annual income persons (\$205,000+) will be paying \$238.40 per month—a \$142.60 increase over the base premium. Lower annual income people (under \$82,000) pay \$96.40 per month. As pressure on the Medicare system increases due to rising costs and utilization, this is a relatively easy way the government can respond by collecting more from high income persons to subsidize costs for the entire group. If this troubles you, as it does me, be ready to contact your legislators when/if more increases are proposed.



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