



## Spring 2009 Newsletter

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### *Happy Spring!*

Dear Client,

I hope that this letter finds you in good health and great spirits. I just wanted to drop you a note to tell you thank you for your business this year. It has been a busy couple of years around the office. The business keeps growing and we keep taking up more space. I owe it all to clients like you. Thank you.

#### **Off Season Office Hours Shortened**

As you might expect, the girls and I will be working fewer hours in the off season. Our regular business hours will be Monday through Thursday from 9 to 4 and Fridays from 9 to noon. I hope that these hours will accommodate your needs.

#### **Changes under way in 2009**

There are many changes coming your way in 2009. Congress has been very busy passing new laws and making changes to the tax code. We will work hard this year to keep up with all of these changes and how they may benefit you going forward. If you have unusual events happening in 2009 we may want to plan for it before the end of the year. Give me a call so that we can discuss it.

#### **Investment Fraud Information**



I recently attended a seminar that focused on Financial Exploitation and Investment Fraud. It was extremely informative. The seminar was geared toward elder abuse but I think it is an area in which we can all learn a little something and be more prudent in our financial decisions.

#### **10 Key Points – How to Protect your Assets**

1. Check out your broker and firm. You can call the State Auditor's Office to inquire about licensing and prior complaints. (800)332-6148
2. Meet with your broker and visit the firm.
3. Keep good notes of conversations you have with your advisor.
4. Stay in charge of your money. Monitor your accounts and investments. Review your statements monthly.
5. If unauthorized transactions appear on your statement contact your broker and/or the State Auditor's office immediately.
6. Conduct research on your investments. Read prospectuses, annual reports, and research reports and offering materials.
7. Do not make checks or other payments for investments payable to your broker, advisor or any other INDIVIDUAL. Payments should only be sent to your brokerage firm.
8. Review your portfolio from time to time. Make sure the securities in your account meet your objectives. Be sure you feel comfortable about your investments.
9. Don't judge a book by its cover. Always check out your financial professional even if they are friends or relatives and monitor your account.
10. Don't be ashamed to ask the hard questions. Don't let embarrassment or fear keep you from reporting investment fraud or abuse to the State Auditor's office. Remember if you have been scammed you are probably not alone.

Always be careful who you trust. Keep in mind, however, that the majority of advisors who are licensed by the proper state authorities are honest professionals who have the best interest of their clients at heart. There are always a few bad apples in the bunch that remind us to stay prudent and do our homework. It's your money. You must stay in the loop. We can't be too careful. Check out the MT State Auditor's web site for the latest information at:  
<http://www.sao.mt.gov/>





### Spring Cleaning

If you're anything like me you've already started going through closets and dresser drawers cleaning out the old clothes that either don't fit anymore or are just out of style. I have a rule, if I haven't worn it in the last year it's got to go. Besides, then I have room to buy more. Be sure to keep good records of the items you donate to a qualified charitable organization. As you know, the rules have gotten much stricter on using these donations as a deductible expense. Just keep a list and GET A RECEIPT. Bring in the list and the receipt when you come in for your tax appointment next year. I like to keep copies of these records for you as well. If you need a contribution value schedule you will find one on our website along with many other items. [www.cblacktax.com](http://www.cblacktax.com) This could work out to be a sizeable itemized deduction. If you have a garage sale call one of these organizations to pick up the remaining items, they will be happy to give you a receipt for the items donated.

### Home Improvements

Also, if you are planning some home improvements this year, there are a number of energy credits available for Federal and many states. The Montana Energy Credit is still available for 2009. Keep your receipts and bring them in for your appointment as well. It's a great time to make some energy efficient improvements to your home. It's like getting it all on sale.

Things like adding insulation, replacing windows, a furnace, air conditioner, hot water heater or adding a wood burning stove will qualify for the credit.

Remember for the federal credits it must be improvements to your principle residence. The state allows for improvements made to any building you improve.



### New Venture

Along those same lines, we started a new enterprise. We now have a small construction company. If you are looking for someone to do some handyman work or small construction please keep us in mind. The guys have been doing a terrific job on remodeling the office. Just give us a call and we'd be happy to provide you a quote.

### Don't Forget

We're trying to clean out our files here at the office and it seems that many of you have not picked up your tax documents for 2008. Please stop by the office during our business hours and pick them up if you have forgotten. Remember, if you don't want paper documents in the future we can always create a digital copy of your tax return and supporting documents for you. It works great when you need to supply copies for the bank. You just forward on the password protected file onto whoever needs the information. Just let us know and we'd be happy to get it done for you.

Please feel free to call or stop by the office anytime if you have any questions on your tax situation or if you receive any tax related correspondence from the IRS or State.

I continue to take clients for tax, consultation, accounting and payroll services. Finally, a great big thank you to those of you who spread the word and recommended us to your friends and family. There is no bigger compliment than that.

Have a great summer and I'll see you next year.

**Colleen Black**

and **Staff**

