

Tangible Solutions

Financial Information to Meet Your Needs

Winter 2009

Introduction

Many of my clients are seeking useful information to help them make educated decisions on financial matters. Each issue we will focus on a specific topic and provide pertinent information which I believe that you will find valuable. If you have a suggestion for a future topic or concern, please let me know. I look forward to your input and feedback.

- Sandy Voit, Publisher, *Tangible Solutions*

FOCUS: ANNUAL FINANCIAL CALENDAR

Please consider the following financial review annual calendar checklist:

January:

- Children in college next fall? Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as you can so your child can be considered for maximum student financial aid. Many colleges have deadlines of January 31 or February 15...
- Medicare Part B Premium notices are being sent out in the mail.
- Ask for a free annual copy of your credit report – www.annualcreditreport.com
- Estimated federal taxes for 4th quarter of 2008 are due on January 15.

February:

- College acceptance and financial aid letters start arriving. Examine your financial aid package carefully and consider negotiating with your child's first choice to see if they are willing to improve it...
- Child going off to summer camp? Get your application in soon before spots fill up...
- Update your will.
- Purchase Turbo Tax, or other tax preparation software, or make an appointment with your accountant.

March:

- Review tax related receipts and documents. Assign values to items you donated to charities, etc.
- Deadline to use, or lose, funds remaining in your health care flexible spending account for last year is March 15 (assuming your plan allows a 2 ½ month grace period...)

April:

- Deadline for taking your first required minimum distribution from your IRA(s) and other retirement accounts is April 1 in the year after you turn 70½.
- High school seniors need to make their college decision before end of month (most colleges require May 1 response).
- Tax returns, or request for extension, must be filed by April 15 (or next business day if holiday or weekend). Also, estimated taxes for first quarter are due. And, the deadline for contributions to your IRA or Coverdell Education Savings Account for previous year.

Please continue on other side...

May:

- Looking for a used car? Car dealers restock their inventories at auto auctions...
- Buy a gift for your grad. Better yet, make an appointment for her/him to get advice from a financial planner.
- In your 20's? Wedding season is upon you – start setting aside money for gifts and travel.
- Start planning your summer vacation before sites and flights fill up and prices rise. Use www.kayak.com.

June:

- Just graduated from college? Consolidate your student loans and take advantage of lower interest rates. Also, make plan for how to use graduation cash gifts for an IRA (value of compounding interest), or starting an emergency fund, etc.
- Living and working abroad? June 15 is deadline for filing your tax return.
- Second quarter estimated tax payments due June 15.
- Deadline for college students to submit your FAFSA for coming school year is June 30.

July:

- Great opportunity to mid-year financial review. Update your goals, review your investments, etc.
- Consider re-shopping for your insurance coverages – auto, homeowners, life, disability, long-term care.

August:

- Looking for an end-of-the-year “new” car? Best time for combination of selection and price as dealers clear inventory prior to new models arriving on their lot.
- About to enroll in college? Set up bank account near campus.
- Start shopping for back to school bargains.
- Consider setting up automatic savings plan, signing up for online banking, etc.

September:

- Starts open enrollment for employer health-insurance plans. Review your options, analyze their impact.
- Estimated tax payments for 3rd quarter due on September 15.
- Check out low cost, even free, entertainment options on campus – even if you're not a student.
- Check with local nurseries to find deals on trees, shrubs, etc.

October:

- Deadline for self-employed to set up a Simple IRA – October 2.
- Weatherproof house –change air filter and tune up furnace, check ducts for leaks, caulk drafty windows and doors, get chimney cleaned, etc.
- Review year's receipts for your health care and child care flexible spending accounts, and decide how much to set aside for next year.

November:

- Daylight savings time ends – replace smoke detector batteries, replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs to save electricity and money.
- Don't forget to vote – local races can impact your finances (property taxes, levies, initiatives, etc.).
- College grad last May? Your first student loan payment is due.
- Open enrollment begins for Medicare prescription drug plan (through December 31).

December:

- Check Flexible Spending Plan balances to see what you need to spend before end of year.
- Make tax-deductible donations and/or tax-deductible expenses before the end of year.
- Deadline for taking annual required minimum distribution from your retirement accounts is December 31. Also: deadlines for your Flexible Spending Account and to enroll in Medicare prescription drug plan.

End Note: Thank you for taking the time to read this article. I hope you have found it useful. If you have any questions or concerns about this topic, or any other topic, please contact **Sandy Voit**, Tangible Solutions, 206-890-1174, or sandyvoit@gmail.com.

