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FINANCIAL SERVICES

YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

Your Guide to Life Planning

January 2011

I hope this educational resource proves helpful. I believe an educated investor is a better investor. Please call me if you have questions.

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Sun is Shining on Investors as 2010 Draws to a Close

The sun is shining on investors as 2010 draws to a close. The economy has shown signs of reaccelerating from the summer soft spot, the stock market has made new two-year highs, as measured by the S&P 500 (returning to the level that preceded the September 2008 failure of Lehman Brothers), and the President signed into law a bill that extends all of the Bush tax cuts for two years, cuts payroll taxes, and expands jobless benefits.

Three Tips to Help Keep Identity Thieves Away

The more business we do and information we share online, the more identity theft becomes a growing threat to our financial security. This article highlights ways you can help protect your good name and credit.

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January 2011 Greetings from Feiertag Financial Services

The holiday season and transition to a new year prompt us to reflect upon all the things we are thankful for and look forward with optimism to new opportunities. During this special time of year, please know that I truly appreciate your business and your continued trust. Thank you.

It is no surprise that economic conditions over the past few years have created unique challenges for managing wealth and pursuing financial and investment goals. Many investors are seeking guidance that emphasizes caution and protection as our nation slowly works through what we hope will be a strong, steady recovery. Regardless of what economic and market changes may occur, I will continue to work with you to take the steps necessary to address your changing priorities and help you pursue your long-term goals. Please don't hesitate to contact me any time you have questions, or if there is anything I can do to further satisfy your needs.

Many of you have stopped the habit of contributing each year to your Roth IRA's. That is likely a mistake. Please call our office to see if you qualify for a Roth IRA. If you are still working and meet the IRA income guidelines for contributing to a Roth IRA, now is a good time to think about funding your Roth IRA for 2010. You have until April 15, 2011 to make your 2010 Roth IRA contribution. Many of our clients have Roth IRA's in place; it is very easy to mail in a check or set up an automatic monthly investment option on your account. Please call to get more information.

I look forward throughout 2011 to helping you clarify your financial picture, sort through the complexity of choices, and make strategic, well-planned decisions regarding your wealth and your future. Rest assured, I will always place your needs first in that pursuit.

I wish you the happiest and healthiest of holiday seasons.

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The end of 2010 also seems to be setting the stage for the return of diversification. In 2008 and 2009, most markets moved together as the outlook for all financial assets was tightly linked to the global financial crisis and then to the recovery. During 2010, glimmers of the impending return of diversification became evident as markets began to behave more independently of each other. In May and June, as stocks and commodities asset classes fell, bonds steadily rose in value. And, inversely, in November and December, as stocks and commodities asset classes surged, bonds fell. A key potential benefit of having the investments in your portfolio behave differently is that it should serve to mute volatility, which is especially valuable when taking distributions from a portfolio. The return of the effectiveness of this important investment risk management tool is a welcome gift as investors look toward 2011.

However, the horizon for investors is not brightening everywhere. One area with a cloudy outlook is municipal bonds. The fiscal challenges facing U.S. states are serious and need to continue to be addressed in the coming years. However, we do not expect a stormy environment akin to the solvency troubles that plagued Europe in 2010. The state debt issues are different than those troubles in Europe in two main regards:

- First, the magnitude of the problem facing some European nations is much greater. For example, the budget deficit-to-GDP ratio for some of the most troubled states, such as California, New York, and Florida, average about 1%, while European nations like Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and Spain average about 10%. Additionally, the total debt-to-GDP ratio for these same states average about 20% when including the states' unfunded pension liabilities while those of the European nations are much higher at around 100%.
- Second, the ownership of the respective bond markets is very different. Banks in the U.S. do not own much domestic municipal government debt while European banks own a lot of European government debt, which has magnified the problems overseas relative to those of the states.

No stormy skies or bright sunshine for 2011, we see a more middle of the road forecast, composed of a mix of clouds and sun. Recent years have seen extremes one way or the other and we see a 2011 that offers investors modest single-digit gains for stocks, low-to-mid single-digit gains for bonds, and an economy in the United States that muddles along at a 2.5 to 3% pace. As always, I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions.

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

There is no guarantee that a diversified portfolio will enhance overall returns or outperform a non-diversified portfolio. Diversification does not ensure against market risk.

The Standard & Poor's 500 Index is a capitalization-weighted index of 500 stocks designed to measure performance of the broad domestic economy through changes in the aggregate market value of 500 stocks representing all major industries.

Municipal bonds are subject to availability, price, and to market and interest rate risk if sold prior to maturity. Bond values will decline as interest rate rise. Interest income may be subject to the alternative minimum tax. Federally tax-free but other state and local taxes may apply.

This research material has been prepared by LPL Financial.

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The more information you share with the world -- say, by posting your birth date to your Facebook profile -- the easier you are making it for thieves to find that information.

Three Tips to Help Keep Identity Thieves Away

The more business we do and information we share online, the more identity theft becomes a growing threat to our financial security. There are ways you can help protect your good name and credit. You've got to be vigilant and willing to put in a little effort on a regular basis. But as anyone who has ever been the victim of identity theft will tell you, it's worth it.

Here are some tips to help keep you and your family safe.

Tip 1: Monitor Your Accounts

This goes for everything you have financially -- credit cards, banks, brokerages, credit unions -- as well as email and social networking accounts. You should also monitor your phone bills (both cell and landline), as thieves can "piggyback" on your plans.

But above all, be sure to check your monthly financial statements carefully. If you notice something strange -- even if it is just for a small amount -- call the issuing financial institution immediately and report it.

Sometimes identity thieves test, or "phish," stolen account numbers by running a small charge or debit -- often of a dollar or less -- to make sure the account number is legitimate. Most accountholders don't notice the transaction or don't think it's worthwhile to alert their financial institution. That is, until a few weeks or months later when thieves wrack up big credit card purchases or drain a bank account. Bottom line: If you see something "fishy," no matter how small, report it right away.

Vigilance is the word for your email and social media accounts. The more information you share with the world -- say, by posting your birth date to your Facebook profile -- the easier you are making it for thieves to find that information. Check your privacy controls, and keep checking. Facebook for one is notorious for changing its policies with little or no notice. Also check the information your children are sharing online. They are less likely to be aware of privacy concerns and the consequences of sharing sensitive information.

Finally, you should Google yourself periodically to see what type of information about you or your family is publicly available. You may be in for a surprise.

Tip 2: Buy a Shredder -- and Use It

You don't have to shred every piece of mail you receive, but anything with account numbers or other personal data should be shredded. You should also be sure to shred certain pieces of junk mail -- especially those unsolicited pre-approved credit card offers that seem to show up in your mailbox on a weekly basis. An enterprising thief can rifle through your garbage and simply fill out the application in your name.

You can further reduce or even eliminate these nuisance offers by opting out of the lists aggregated by credit bureaus, who then sell your name to lenders. Go to www.optoutprescreen.com or call 888-567-8688 to get your name off these lists.

Tip 3: Check Your Credit Reports

The Fair Credit Reporting Act gives all American consumers the right to access their credit reports from the big three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion) for free once a year. Many unscrupulous firms will offer access to these reports for a fee or on a subscription basis. You shouldn't pay anything for this access. To get the reports, go directly to the source: www.annualcreditreport.com.

You can also place a security freeze that will prevent anyone from viewing your credit report who is not affiliated with a company that you already have a financial relationship with or certain government and exempt agencies. You have to visit each credit bureau individually to do so. Note: Security freezes are not free. Each agency charges a fee for this service, unless you are already the victim of an identity theft.

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