

HAPPY NEW YEAR – PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR FINANCIAL CALENDAR

If you've made a New Year's resolution to keep better track of your finances in 2007, here's a list of important planning and execution tasks from experts at the Financial Planning Association that should be on your financial calendar for the year:

JANUARY:

- *Set your credit report dates:* Each year, you should check each of your credit reports from annualcreditreport.com. It's wise to stagger the dates you check each report because irregularities might surface at different times of the year and you'll catch them faster. You are entitled to one free credit report a year and you can sign up for them online at annualcreditreport.com.
- *Think about college aid:* On Jan. 1, kids and parents can start working on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the upcoming school year (2007/08). To meet deadlines in most states, you should submit your FAFSA no later than March 1, with February 15 being the optimal date.
- *Start your emergency fund:* Experts believe you should have 3-6 months worth of living expenses set aside. Set a fixed amount you'll save each month toward that goal.

FEBRUARY:

- *Start pulling your tax information together:* Your W2s and 1099s should be arriving – get your records ready to start your return. You might also get a ballpark estimate of your tax liability online -- www.finance.cch.com/sohoApplets/Tax1040.asp.

MARCH:

- *Get ready to fund your IRAs:* April 16 will be 2007's tax deadline, and that's the last date to make a tax-deductible contribution to your IRA. Plan to make the biggest affordable contribution you're allowed.

APRIL:

- *Tax deadline:* April 16 is the deadline for federal and state taxes.
- *Education account contribution deadline:* Don't forget that contributions to Coverdell accounts for the previous year are due on tax day.
- *Check your insurance coverage:* Check to see if you can afford a higher deductible on home and auto insurance and consider umbrella liability coverage if you haven't already.

MAY:

- *Talk to your parents:* If you've never discussed estate, health and long-term care planning with your parents, do it now.
- *Do an energy checkup:* Have your furnace and air conditioners checked to make sure they're working properly during the heating and cooling season.

JUNE:

- *Do a mid-year financial checkup:* Take the time to do a review of your tax planning, retirement savings, home, health and life insurance needs and do a mid-year check of your spending.

JULY:

- *Do a beneficiary check:* Is the beneficiary information on all your investments, insurance policies and bank accounts up to date?
- *Check your will:* If you haven't checked your will in 5 years, see if your instructions are current. Make sure your powers of attorney reflect your intentions.

AUGUST:

- *Go over money issues with your college student:* Whether they're freshmen or seniors, take some time to go over financial details with your student.

SEPTEMBER:

- *Order your last credit report:* Get your third and final credit report of the year.

OCTOBER:

- *Be ready for open enrollment:* Many companies set open enrollment for their benefits plans in September and October. Make sure you've done some thinking about your benefit choices for the coming year. PlanforYourHealth.com, an educational Web site from the Financial Planning Association and Aetna, can provide you with helpful hints and resources.
- *Tax extension deadline:* If you had to file for an extension on your federal taxes this year, your final deadline to file is Oct. 17.

NOVEMBER:

- *Total your potential tax losses:* Confer with your tax adviser to see if it makes sense to sell stocks before the end of the year to balance out capital gains in your portfolio or to carry forward losses for future use.
- *Spend out your flexible savings account money:* Check your employer's rules, but you should spend out the amount you put in your flexible spending account by Dec. 31 or the end of the plan year. Schedule any procedures or medical expenses you'll have by then.

DECEMBER:

- *Give:* Make the charitable deductions you want to make for the end of the tax year. Also, remember you can make financial gifts of up to \$12,000 with no penalty.
- *Pay deductible expenses early:* To lessen your tax impact for the current year, pay mortgage interest or property tax installments early if your tax situation would benefit from it.

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