



BAUMAN ELECTED CHAIRMAN . . . *The first Society member ever elected Chairman of the Board from Southeast Nebraska, Julie Bauman of Falls City, took office on October 26, 2011, at the Embassy Suites in LaVista during the Society's 83rd Annual Meeting. Chairman Bauman accepted the "chairman's gavel" from Immediate Past Chairman John Fruhwirth of Omaha (right) during the Society's annual Business Meeting Luncheon. For more information and pictures about the event, go to Pages, 6, 7 and 8 of this newsletter.*

December 2011 - January 2012

The Nebraska CPA

Official Publication of the Nebraska Society of CPAs

You and Your Spouse Are Cordially Invited to Attend
A Reception and Buffet Dinner Honoring
Nebraska's State Senators

Hosted by the Nebraska Society of CPAs

Tuesday, January 3, 2012

6:00 p.m. Reception - 6:30 p.m. Buffet

The Nebraska Club

2000 U S Bank Building, 13th and 'M' Streets
Lincoln, Nebraska

Cost is \$45 per person

Please RSVP by Noon, December 30, 2011

By Email lori@nescpa.org

By Fax (402) 476-8731

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BOARD HOLDS QUARTERLY MEETING

As part of the Society's Annual Meeting and Fall CPE Conference, on October 26 and 27, 2011, the Society's Board of Directors held one of its quarterly meetings at the Embassy Suites in LaVista.

With Chairman of the Board Julie Bauman of Falls City presiding, the Board welcomed newly elected members Tom Meister and Pat Kirlin of Omaha to the Board and reviewed and acted upon a number of Society issues.

Among the actions taken at the meeting, the Board:

- Elected Michelle Thornburg of Omaha as the Society's new Treasurer and Dan Wells of Omaha as the new Secretary. Thornburg replaces Lori Druse of Lincoln who has served as Treasurer for four years.
- Received a report from Society President Dan Vodvarka that Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman has appointed Society member Lori Druse of Lincoln, as of November 1, 2011, to a four-year term on the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy and has reappointed Jim Rieker of Omaha to the same board.
- Approved the Society's financial statements for August 31 and September 30, 2011, and approved the membership applications of 12 new members.

• Approved the Audit Committee's recommendation to accept the proposal of Grafton & Associates of Lincoln to perform the Society's three audits for the next five years.

• Approved the Embassy Suites Omaha-LaVista for the Society's 2012 Annual Meeting and Fall CPE Conference on October 31 and November 1, 2012.

• Received a report from David Lechner of Lincoln, the Society's Elected Member of the AICPA Council, regarding issues of interest to the CPE profession that were discussed at the AICPA's Fall Council meeting in Phoenix, AZ.

Chairman Bauman also appointed Treasurer Thornburg, Wells and Meister to the Board's Audit Committee for 2012. She also appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to study various proposed amendments to the Society's Bylaws and directed that the Committee should prepare a final report regarding amendments to the Bylaws available for review at the January 3, 2012, Board meeting.

The Board will next meet on January 3, 2012, in Lincoln prior to the Society's annual reception for Nebraska State Senators.

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WEBSITES CAN BE USED TO RECRUIT CLIENTS

By Hugh Duffy

Your website should be a profit center for your accounting practice and generate a steady flow of qualified leads. If it is not, then something is wrong

What most accountants really want to know, first and foremost, is how their investment in a website can be used to recruit new clients. After all, at the end of the day, every expenditure needs to have some pay-back to justify itself.

Over the last 10+ years, most accounting firms that reside in a competitive market location created websites that were little more than online brochures. Calling cards, if you will. These types of websites would be nothing more than text on a page with no photography and poorly written content. Just the information and not pleasing on the eye.

Thanks to higher connection speeds and increased familiarity with the Internet, all of us were gradually

introduced to websites that were rich in content, photography and graphic designs that were pleasing to the eye. Today, if you want to attract new clients, you should maximize your online potential. Whether you decide to design (or redesign) a website yourself or use an external resource to create one for you, you'll want to concentrate on several key components.

Don't Ignore Search Engine Optimization. You really may be tired of hearing about Search Engine Optimization (SEO), but you simply cannot avoid implementing SEO on your website IF you really want to reach prospects. Of course, some accounting firms have done quite well building their business the old fashioned way with networking, but nowadays, that kind of activity isn't going to be enough to find prospects and convert them to clients.

Technology is useful when it works – and in the case of SEO, it works very well. The simplest way to think of SEO is to think about a spider web with your firm smack dab in the center of the internet. Like a spider who spins a web in the right location, SEO ensures your site shows up at the top or very near the top of the search engine results page, consistently.

Here's a simple exercise. If you haven't ever searched in Google, Bing or Yahoo! for your accounting firm, try it – but try it in three ways:

- Search by the words, "accounting firm" and your local city or area. Now you can see that there are many more results.

- Search by the words, "best accounting firm in" your local city or area.

- Search by the words, "accounting firm for small businesses" in your local city or area.

Does your firm show up on the first two or three pages?

If you were a prospect who wanted to find an accounting firm in

your local area, which firms are you more likely to contact – the ones that show up near the top of the page or your firm that shows up on page 9?

When done properly, SEO works like a charm by delivering quality traffic to your website, which, in turn, gets your phone to ring. The process of SEO generally takes 6-12 months to work effectively and, like fine wine, gets better over time.

Pay up for Pay-Per-Click Campaigns. Another great way to find clients is to conduct pay-per-click advertising campaigns. If you think advertising is only for the big dogs, think again. With pay-per-click campaigns, you decide how much you want to spend per month. When you reach that amount, the campaign is no longer available until the beginning of the next cycle.

It's a fact that people are more likely to click on a listing shown in two places on the results search page, so if you create a combination of SEO and pay-per-click campaigns, you've just doubled your chances of having a prospect ask for more information.

Get Your Firm and Website Listed in Google Places, Yelp, Yahoo Local and Other Directories. To generate more awareness of your accounting firm, you should get your

Continued on Page 4



Season's Greetings

The Society Office
will be closed

~ BOTH Mondays ~

December 26, 2011
&
January 2, 2012

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WEBSITES HELP RECRUIT . . . From Page 3

practice listed in Google Places, Yahoo Local, Bing Business Portal, Yelp and other online directories. This is a free service. While it takes some time to get validated and fully complete each site's listing requirements, this exercise is *more* than worth the effort.

Leverage Complementary Tools: Newsletters and Social Media. Again, thanks to advanced technologies, many tools are available that will complement your website; the key is to use these tools to drive traffic to your site. Here are a few ideas:

• **Distribute an e-mail newsletter:** If you think a newsletter is just about content, think again. The real value to an e-mail newsletter is the referral base it generates through existing relationships. The best way to do this is encourage clients and friends to pass your newsletters

along to their friends, colleagues and even family – anyone who may qualify as a referral source.

• **Integrate social media into your website:** Your website should integrate with social media applications such as LinkedIn and others you use. Something as simple as incorporating an icon button for LinkedIn on your home page increases the likelihood that a prospect will find you.

• **Start a Blog.** All of us have something to say, so why not say it on your website? Sure, blogs are plentiful, but they are also especially helpful in helping impart important accounting-related information. Don't be shy; even if you think you can't write something on a regular basis, try it and see what kinds of results you get.

Interesting, well-executed websites are no longer unattainable. In today's always-on environment, prospects expect their professional service advisors to be savvy and

smart. As a result, a website is a great place to demonstrate your abilities.

Hugh Duffy is co-founder and chief marketing officer of Build Your Firm, a practice development and marketing company for small accounting firms and website development for accountants. Hugh teaches a series of Accounting Marketing Workshops; writes an email newsletter reaching thousands of accountants; and is frequently published in various publications. He can be reached at (888) 999-9800, Extension 151 or hugh@buildyourfirm.com.

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CGMA DESIGNATION TO LAUNCH

A new designation will soon be available to CPAs. The Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA), developed through a joint venture between the AICPA and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)—two of the most respected accounting bodies in the world—will offer CPAs the opportunity to be further recognized for the critical role they play in companies of all sizes. Launching at the end of January 2012, the designation will demonstrate to employers how CGMAs add value by supporting and driving the right decisions in all areas of the organization to achieve sustainable success.

New Era for Management Accountants

In the past, management accounting was often focused on cost reductions and improving efficiencies. Today's management accountants meet organizational needs by maintaining competencies and experience that goes well beyond financial accounting. The CGMA will indicate that designation holders are strategic business partners and emphasize that their understanding of the numbers—and their implications—has tremendous impact on the future of the organization. "Management accounting is broad, encompasses many disciplines and areas of expertise and builds on the CPA's technical skills," said AICPA officials. "The CGMA acknowledges this broad skillset and elevates the strategic role management accountants play within their organizations."

In addition to management accountants, the CGMA may appeal to CPAs working in other environments. For example, members in public accounting whose primary responsibilities are focused on the management and operations of a firm may consider pursuing this designation to highlight their unique qualifications to their clients and within their markets.

AICPA-CIMA Alliance

In the U.S., the CGMA is available to AICPA members and provides significant benefits to joint AICPA-state society members. CIMA, the AICPA's partner in establishing the CGMA, is a London-based accounting organization, known around the world for supporting management accounting as an esteemed profession. CIMA's thought leadership efforts in the area of management accounting includes improved decision

making, risk mitigation, talent and building world class organizations. Representing more than 183,000 members and students in 168 countries, CIMA has a long history of developing a broad range of resources to help individuals pursue exceptional careers and distinguish themselves in the job market. The AICPA-CIMA joint venture will leverage the collective power of more than 550,000 members and students to further advance, promote and support management accounting as well as promote CGMA and the U.S. CPA. Together, the two organizations are creating a highly influential alliance that will increase advocacy on behalf of the management accounting profession and in the public interest, and ensure a more powerful voice around the globe.

CGMA Presents Opportunity

CGMAs worldwide will have access to the CGMA.org website, which will house a robust set of resources, including thought leadership publications, a career guidance tool and a new online

magazine that will help them continue to support CGMAs' passion to continuously sharpen their business competencies. Leveraging the collective knowledge of designation holders, and providing them a networking forum, the website will also be home to an exclusive global online community where CGMAs can network, share ideas, ask questions, comment on and share resources and seek career and technical guidance.

Will Launch January 2012

From January 31 through July 31, 2012, CPAs will be eligible to participate in a free introductory period for the CGMA designation by verifying they meet the three year requirement for qualifying experience and also have met the requirements for being an AICPA voting member.

To Learn More

For more in-depth information about the new CGMA designation and what it means for the CPA profession, members visit www.CGMA.org.

Members In The News

Tracey Smith of Lincoln has been elected Vice-President-Operation and Finance, Individual Division for Ameritas Life in Lincoln . . . **Scott Brokke** of LaVista has been elected Treasurer of the Kiwanis Club of Omaha . . . **Larry D. Tennison** of Omaha has joined Seim Johnson, LLP as a Partner and **Randy Kathol** of Omaha has joined the firm as a Senior Manager in the firm's tax department . . . **Bruce Rohde** of Omaha has been named the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Creighton University in Omaha . . . Best Business Appraisals, LLC in Nebraska has combined with Independent Appraisal, LLC in California to form Acclaro Valuation Advisors, LLC with **Chris Best** of Omaha as Managing Director . . . **HBE Becker Meyer Love LLP** of Lincoln has moved to 7140 Stephanie Lane in Lincoln . . . **Frank L. Hayes** of Omaha has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Mutual of Omaha Bank. He is also serving as Treasurer of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors and is a member of the Board of Trustees of Creighton University . . . **Douglas L. Kucera** of Hickman is the new Vice President of Finance at the Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln . . . **Stormy Dean** of Ralston is the new Chief Administrative Officer at Siena Francis House in Omaha . . . **Douglas W. Skiles** of McCook has been re-elected as Chairman of the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy and **Michael W. Wassinger** of Hastings has been re-elected the Vice-Chairman of the State Board. . . **Kluge & Wiese LLP** of Gretna has been awarded the Golden Gretna Business Award by the Gretna Area Chamber of Commerce.

2011 ANNUAL MEETING . . .



Over 200 Society members gathered for two days of events and education during the 2011 Annual Meeting and Fall CPE Conference held on October 26-27, 2011, at the Embassy Suites in LaVista.

Upper left picture: Immediate Past Chairman John Fruhwirth of Omaha reviews the past year's Society activities and looks to the future during his presentation at the annual Business Luncheon. In the upper right, conference participants listen to one of the many outstanding speakers during a Conference breakout session. In the middle left picture, are the Society's three 2011 award recipients from left to right: Mike McClure of Lincoln, Distinguished Service to the Profession Award; Duane Gabriel of Seward, Public Serviced Award; and Tom Von Riesen of Omaha, Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry Award. In the middle right picture, Chairman Fruhwirth meets with Conference speaker Gayle Hatheway, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration from Kansas City, MO and new Society Chairman Julie Bauman of Falls City. In the lower left, Jason Evans of the AICPA meets with Past Society Chairman Rand Hansen (right) of Omaha shortly before Evan's ethics presentation to the Conference.



AND FALL CPE CONFERENCE

Nearly 40 years of Society leadership gathered at the Society's annual Business Meeting Luncheon on October 26, 2011, at the Embassy Suites in LaVista. The Society's Past Chairmen/Presidents in attendance are back row from left to right: Tom Purcell (1998) of Omaha, Don Kluthe (2001) of Omaha, Bryan Robertson (2006)



of Lincoln, Jim Rouch (1987) of Beaver Lake, Rand Hansen (2003) of Omaha, Leo Panzer (2008) of Omaha and Keith Snyder (1992) of Lincoln. In the front row left to right: Tracy Black (2009) of Lincoln, John Fruhwirth (2010) of Omaha, Bill Strain (1989) of Lincoln, Herman Weist (1973) of Bennington, Ed Fitzgerald (2002) of Omaha, John Hancock (1988) of Omaha, Tom Von Riesen (2004) of Omaha and Dave Emry (1990) of Omaha. Each year, in respect for their leadership and unselfish service to the Society, all the Past Chairmen/Presidents are individually introduced at the beginning of the annual Meeting luncheon.



Nebraska State Senator Galen Hadley of Kearney talks about CPAs in public service at the Fall Conference. Hadley is the first Society member and CPA to serve in the Nebraska Legislature.



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VON RIESEN RECEIVES BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AWARD

The following is the tribute read when Tom Von Riesen of Omaha was presented with the Society's 2011 Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry award at the Society's annual Meeting Luncheon on October 26, 2011, in LaVista. The other two award tributes for 2011 will be published in the February-March, 2012 edition of this newsletter.

A majority of the Nebraska Society's current membership does not practice public accountancy but instead have careers as educators, in government or in a variety of capacities in business and industry in Nebraska. And many of those "industry" members have spent most of their professional careers with one company – helping that business grow and produce more business opportunities in a vibrant, expanding Nebraska economy.

One of those outstanding Society members is Tom Von Riesen of Omaha, the Principal, Executive Benefits with the SilverStone Group in Omaha, who today is being honored with the Society's 2011 Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry Award.

A graduate of Hastings College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Economics, Tom earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and then went on to also pass the CPA exam and join the Society in 1986. He immediately became active with Society committees and after years of service became the Chairman of the Industry Committee. He was elected to the Society's Board of Directors in 1999, served as the Society's Secretary and then was elected Chairman of the Board in 2004. Currently he serves as a Trustee of the Society's Foundation Board.

Tom's professional career began as a corporate attorney before he moved into public accounting. He used his law degree to serve as an attorney with the Farm Credit Banks and then moved into public accounting with PricewaterhouseCoopers where he worked in both individual and corporate taxation. Using his broad range of educational and professional experience, Tom then joined the SilverStone Group in Omaha in 1991.

Since then, Tom has used his wealth of knowledge to help SilverStone clients with human resource con-



Tom Von Riesen, Principal, Executive Benefits with the SilverStone Group in Omaha receives the Society's 2011 Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry Award from Immediate Past Chairman John Fruhwirth of Omaha (right) during the Society's annual Business Meeting luncheon.

sulting, nonqualified benefit designs and tax consulting.

Established in 1945, the SilverStone Group is a full-service resource management company offering customized services for business and private clients. Today the company has five offices employing nearly 200 associates with its corporate headquarters at 115th and Miracle Hills Drive in Omaha. In recent years as national competitors downsized, SilverStone continued to grow and expand its staff with highly skilled, talented Nebraska men and women.

A Chartered Financial Consultant and Chartered Life Underwriter, Tom has long been a leader at SilverStone. He and his team offer a depth of service that is unmatched by other firms as their creativity and technical capabilities enable them to design, implement and administer innovative plans for the benefit needs of their clients' key executives. An author of numerous articles on nonqualified plans, Tom is also a speaker for continuing education events for the Society, the M. Financial Group, the University Of Nebraska College Of Law and School of Accounting, the State Bar Association and the Financial Executive Institute.

A former Society Chairman of the Board who nominated Tom for this awarded, pointed to the "balance" in

Tom's professional career that has made him such a valuable member and resource for the Society and its broad membership. "Tom is an outstanding example of the type of industry and profession-focused leadership that this award was designed to recognize," the former Chairman wrote. "Working for almost two decades with an outstanding company that enjoys deep Nebraska roots, Tom has repeatedly demonstrated leadership that has contributed to the substantial growth and success of this employer. At the same time, through his commitments to a long list of worthy organizations, including the Nebraska Society, the Society's Foundation, the Nebraska Bar Association, the Association of Advanced Life Underwriters and the AICPA, Tom has worked actively to advance his chosen profession."

Thomas J. Von Riesen, for your leadership among the Society members in Industry, for your outstanding efforts to advance the mission and client commitment of the SilverStone Group, a Nebraska homegrown business, and for the excellent example you set for young Nebraska CPAs searching for new horizons in the business world, your peers – Nebraska's CPAs – are proud to present you with the 2011 Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry Award!

METRICS REVOLUTIONIZING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

By John L. Daly, MBA, CPA, CMA, CPIM
Executive Education, Inc.

Business schools have long compartmentalized various aspects of financial management into separate classes. Our professors likely discussed financial planning, internal control, internal reporting, and cost accounting as different topics. Today, advances using *metrics* are quickly binding these major financial management tasks into an integrated whole. If you want to keep your financial management skills up-to-date you need to have a strong understanding how metrics are causing this to happen.

A *metric* is a performance measurement. At one time, metrics discussions focused around *financial ratios*. A financial ratio is an old-fashioned type of metric, which compares one financial number to another, such as debt/equity or profit/sales.

At one time, limited computing capabilities restricted financial

analysis to these primitive metrics derived entirely from the general ledger. However, today's financial management can provide considerably more value by combining both financial and non-financial information. While analysts usually use financial ratios for entire businesses, today companies commonly use metrics for individual responsibility centers as well. Today, organizations often develop metrics for every major activity.

Did a responsibility center do well or poorly last month? If a manager's budget was \$100,000 and she spent \$120,000, is this a good job or a bad job? To answer these questions, we need to know something about business volume. By calculating cost/unit, and benchmarking this metric against other organizations, financial management can quickly focus performance discussions.

For example, hospital departmental reports commonly show

cost/laboratory test, cost/prescription filled, or cost/inpatient day. Benchmarked against other hospitals, the metric allows everyone to know which departments are doing well and which ones are doing poorly.

What Should It Spend?

Once an organization begins using metrics, budget discussions change from what a department spent last year, to what it *should* spend to be efficient. The simple act of benchmarking metrics is a powerful tool, significantly reducing the politics in the budgeting process.

While you can calculate a cost/unit for any activity where you can measure output, profit center's metrics usually include revenue/unit and gross margin/unit in addition.

These simple practices are only the beginning. In addition to financial metrics, today's performance management employs a high proportion of non-financial metrics, looking at the organization from customer, operational and learning perspectives as well. First introduced almost 20 years ago, this *Balanced Scorecard* approach has led to the development of *strategy maps* tying financial and non-financial metrics into a neat, efficient package.

Experienced financial managers quickly recognize that metrics have broad financial management uses. For example, the same responsibility center metrics generated for financial planning and control also have powerful cost accounting uses. While a short article cannot make you an expert in these techniques, we hope that it has spurred you to ask, "Do I need to learn more about metrics soon?"

John L. Daly, MBA, CPA, CMA, CPIM is a Chelsea, Michigan based management consultant specializing in costing, pricing strategy and pricing model development. John is a frequent presenter for Executive Education, Inc.



NATIONAL, STATE LEADERS MEET . . . *The leadership of the Nebraska Society and the AICPA met during the AICPA/SEA Leadership Conference in Phoenix, AZ during October, 2011. The event was held along with the AICPA's Fall Meeting of Council. Pictured from left to right are Rich Caturano, AICPA Vice-Chairman, Nebraska Society Chairman Julie Bauman of Falls City, Nebraska Society President Dan Vodvarka and Barry Melancon, AICPA President.*

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Nebraska Society Committee Service Volunteer Form

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**MEMBERSHIP
APPLICATIONS**

Nebraska Society membership applications have been received from the following individuals. Objections should be filed with the Secretary of the Nebraska Society of CPAs: Daniel L. Wells, Diesel Power Equipment Co., 13619 Industrial Rd., Omaha, NE 68137.

- ◆ **Trisha Caffrey**, McGladrey & Pullen, LLP; Omaha
- ◆ **Mikaela L. Davis**, Nebraska Department of Revenue; Lincoln
- ◆ **Peter L. Lilja**, Deloitte Tax, LLP; Omaha
- ◆ **Jamie M. Martindale**, Dana F. Cole & Co., LLP; Scottsbluff
- ◆ **James D. Ohlinger**, James D. Ohlinger, CPA; Omaha
- ◆ **Lauren M. Stamm**, Deloitte & Touche, LLP; Omaha
- ◆ **Emily J. Wolzen**, KPMG, LLP; Omaha

**OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE**
PAGES 11 & 12

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Omaha CPA firm is seeking two additional team members. **SENIOR STAFF** position requires **CPA** with minimum of 3 years audit experience, strong technical skills, and ability to meet deadlines and actively share engagement responsibilities. Experience in banking, construction, insurance, not-for-profits, and ERISA audits helpful. No overnight travel. **STAFF ACCOUNTANT** position requires experience with monthly write-up, bank reconciliations, payroll and sales tax returns, and preparation of individual and corporate income tax returns. ProFX Tax, ProFX Engagement, Asset Keeper, MAS 90, and QuickBooks software experience helpful. PLEASE EMAIL RESUME to Fuhrman, Smolsky & Furey, PC at hr@cpaomaha.com.

PRACTICES FOR SALE Council Bluffs, IA, CPA Practice - gross revenues \$330K - Well-established firm with high-quality client base and solid fee structure. Revenues comprised of 77% tax and 23% accounting. Council Bluffs, IA Tax Practice - gross revenues \$135K - Loyal client base, composed primarily of individual tax clients. Turn-key opportunity with employee in place to assist in transition. For more information about these great listings or others in your area, call (800) 397-0249. Also, see listing details and register for free email updates at www.accountingpracticesales.com.

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FUTURE MANAGER SOUGHT

MSLCPA is looking for senior in-charge accountant with future management possibilities in North Platte office. This position has ownership potential. Must have 5 years or more experience in tax and accounting. This position has little travel. A wide range of benefits are available. Contact Doug Skiles, McPherron Skiles & Loop, CPAs, PO Box 36, McCook NE 69001, dskiles@msl-cpa.com; (308) 345-5100.