

## Thoughts & Comments

Summer 2009

I wanted to provide an update on some additions and changes which we believe are exciting and will increase and improve the services we provide.

Before doing so, I wish to provide a quick comment on the markets. As you may know, the first stock market low was in November while the second was on March 9th, and was somewhat lower than the first. Since March 9th, there has been a significant increase in market values. Though there are no guarantees for the future and I would expect volatility to continue, the markets have recovered from past declines. I believe they will recover from this one as well.

### Staff

In the past year we have added two new staff members to our firm. Though I have no plans to retire now or in the future, it is important to me that our firm has a talented staff clients can rely on for quality information and services. I believe we have achieved this. The following is a review of our newest additions.

**Morgan Ranstrom:** Morgan joined the firm last September. After graduating with honors and as a member of Phi Beta Kappa from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, in May 2007, he spent the next year teaching English in Peru and traveling throughout South America. In the summer of 2008 he did an internship for Harbour Investments, Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin. In addition to working at our firm, he is enrolled in a post-graduate program. His responsibilities include portfolio analysis, communications, and technology.

**Courtney Ranstrom:** Courtney began working for the firm in January 2008 on a part-time basis and started full time in February. She graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, in December 2001. She obtained her MBA from Willamette University in May 2005. She has also obtained her Certified Internal Auditor designation (CIA). Since then she worked as an internal auditor for the State of Oregon and most recently West Coast Bank. An interesting part of her background is that she skipped her senior year of high school and completed college in 3½ years. She lives in Salem, Oregon. Though she will spend part of her time in Fargo, the reality of a virtual office makes it possible to do everything from her workplace in Salem just as if she was sitting at a desk in our Fargo office. Her responsibilities include client services, research, marketing, and business and personal financial analysis.

I would make one personal comment. If anyone would have suggested as recently as two years ago that either, not to mention both, of my children would eventually work for me, I would not have believed them. But, I am pleased both have decided to work here as they bring talents and skills that are very useful.

- Morgan became interested in economics on a global level while living and traveling in South America. He brings a global perspective which is beneficial.
- Having worked for both a large government agency and publicly traded bank as an internal auditor, Courtney brings research and analysis skills that are relatively unique for a financial planning/money management firm like ours.

## New Portfolio Management and Reporting System

We have recently purchased and installed a state-of-the-art Portfolio Management and Reporting System. I believe you will find the Reports much improved in presentation. In addition, there are a few new features which will be available to you in the near future.

- You will be able to view a current report on-line at any time.
- We have the ability to incorporate separate accounts into the system. For example, if an individual would like to include his or her 401(k) account into our reporting and overall money management system, we have the ability to do so.
- We will provide you with details on both of the above options in the near future.

## Email

Many clients prefer to receive all correspondence and reports by email. While we are happy to continue sending by regular mail, and at times it may be necessary for the purpose of signing forms, etc., we would like to use email if possible for the following reasons:

- It is immediate. We have noticed that even correspondence and reports we send locally can take several days while email has immediate delivery.
- The new portfolio management program is email friendly as a means of updating clients on their portfolios.
- It reduces the amount of paper used which is environmentally and financially beneficial, while also making the storage and organization of correspondence much easier for quick reference.

*If you would like to receive future correspondence and reports via email, please email me at [daranstrom@hirep.net](mailto:daranstrom@hirep.net) and confirm this is acceptable.*

## Thank You

Over the years, our firm has grown due to kind referrals and recommendations from clients. We are most appreciative and thankful for this support. Going forward, we hope you will continue to refer us to family and friends. There are very few financial planning and money management firms that have the combination of credentials, experience, and services that we offer. Upon receiving a referral, we send a letter of introduction along with information about our firm and the services we provide. It is then up to the individual to contact us if he or she wishes to do so. If there are individuals you believe would be interested in our services, please call or email with their name and address and we will send them a letter of introduction.

*Thank you for the continuing opportunity to serve your financial needs and as always, if you have questions or concerns regarding your portfolio or financial plan, be sure to give us a call or email us.*