Kansas Chapter
NATP
National Association of Tax Professionals

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The President's Message

Hello Kansas NATP Chapter Members!

I hope each and every one of you had a wonderful and prosperous tax season! I always find it humorous that people tend to believe that after April 15th everything stops. If you are like my firm, it is just as busy after the deadline with extensions, tax projections, consulting, etc. For us this cycle doesn't seem to taper off until mid-October, and then we are filling our days with continuing education classes and making preparations to do it all over again the following year.

This past tax season, a few of my very close colleagues experienced tragedies and grief that I could not begin to wrap my head around. This made me come to a realization that I have failed to show those who I care the most about, the love and appreciation they deserve. This is true with both my family and my team in my office. Even though you are busy, I feel it's important to make the effort to take a moment and enjoy time with those who you love. Time will never stand still, it is up to you to make the most of the time you have. This year the National Conference will be held in Anaheim CA, August 6th thru the 9th. What a wonderful opportunity to incorporate a family vacation while attending great education workshops!

Each year, NATP selects one chapter as Chapter of the Year. The Kansas Chapter is honored to have been nominated to receive this!! This award is given to the chapter that has gone over and beyond for their members. We were nominated for multiple reasons, one being the Chapter News. This not only provides tax updates and discussion to our members, but also tidbits about business development, management skills, and tax laws in the surrounding states. We were also recognized for incorporating technology into the chapter and holding live education events with national speakers. It is truly an honor to receive this nomination. We will find out if we are Chapter of the Year at the National Conference in August. I hope that many of you will be in attendance to see if we are selected!

Additionally, I feel it is very important to know each of our members on a personal level. I believe doing so helps to solidify not only the Chapter, but our friendships as well and conveys to you that the Kansas Chapter truly cares for each and every one of you! Because of this belief, we will continue to hold quality live education events with the hopes that members will continue to attend. And as always, your voice matters. If you would like to make a comment, suggestion, or get involved in any way, please reach out to me at my email listed in this newsletter and I will be sure to pass it along to the board.

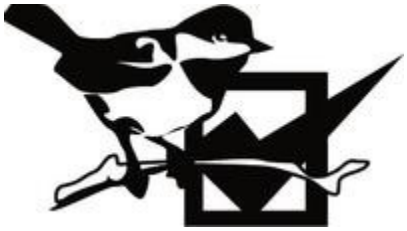
Thank you for the privilege of being your Chapter President,

Sara Wright

"Appreciate what you have, where you are and who you are within this moment."

Tony Clark

Chickadee Checkoff



What Is It?

The Chickadee Checkoff is a line appearing on the Kansas Individual Income Tax forms. Since1980, it has provided Kansans an opportunity to contribute to wildlife programs. The checkoff has allowed donations to projects for species of wildlife not normally hunted. In other words, if you want some money to go to projects to help eagles, songbirds, threatened and endangered species, turtles, lizards, butterflies and pretty little stream darters, then this gives you the opportunity to donate directly to these programs. Since 1980, over $4 million dollars have been donated for nongame. It surprises many that there are relatively few who keep this vital program going. The information below shows the annual contributions for the Chickadee Checkoff. The mean number of contributors throughout the checkoff's history is a little over 16,000. The highest year saw 26,572 contributors and was largely due to the first time the chickadee logo appearing on the tax form and, therefore, creating an effective visual reminder to folks to donate to wildlife. However, since then, donations have steadily declined for a variety of reasons, mostly due to the appearance of good but competing checkoffs for other programs on the tax form. In recent years around 10,000 folks still donate to this important program for nongame but they give more than twice of what they used to when the program was conceived, going from an average donation of $5.24 to over $12 per contributor. The mean annual donations total $143,590.

What Does It Do?

One of the most important activities of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is protection and management of threatened and endangered species. The checkoff has been able to fund dozens of projects that assess the status of threatened and endangered species and other animals on the state's Species in Need of Conservation list.

One of the most exciting projects of the checkoff has been the golden eagle reintroduction project in Russell and Ellsworth counties. The goal of the project is to establish nesting golden eagles in that area in cooperation with Western Resources, Inc. For several years the Chickadee Checkoff sponsored the Nursing Home Bird Feeder Program with tremendous success. Over 250 sites have been provided with bird feeders and initial bird feed.

Since 1985, the checkoff has sponsored the Backyard Habitat Improvement Program. Besides providing information and assistance to people for improving their yards for wildlife, a certification program is offered to recognize those people who have done the necessary or exemplary things for wildlife in their own backyards.

The Chickadee Checkoff has supported the Kansas Winter Bird Feeder Survey since 1988. About 1,000 people participate each year and provide valuable information about midwinter bird populations. Research and habitat management have focused on sensitive river species in southeast Kansas, dwindling resources in western Kansas and endangered species such as the Least Tern.

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FLASH DRIVES: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY.

Nolin Christensen, EA

Several years ago my office started switching over to paperless. While we are paperless for client stuff, I still had to have my paper copies of forms 8879, 8867 and bank applications. Well, this year we went paperless for those too. We scanned all the prior 4 years (7 for bank) on to a flash drive and then we were going to copy that drive off to the hard drive at the end of tax season. That way we would have it in three places, client folders, forms folders and the flash drive.

Well the ugly happened. The drive got fried and we lost everything. My I.T. guy tried to salvage it, but we lost all of the documents.

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Important Dates to Remember for 2018:

WHAT	DATES	WHERE
National Conference	**August 6-9, 2018**	**Anaheim CA (Anaheim Marriott)**
IRS Symposium	**August 23, 2018**	**Johnson County Community College**
Annual Meeting	**October 29, 2018**	**Hilton/Double Tree (Airport Hilton)**
NATP 1040	**October 30 & 31, 2018**	**Hilton/Double Tree (Airport Hilton)**
NATP 1040	**November 12 & 13, 2018**	**Overland Park Double Tree**
Fall Seminar	**November 14, 2018**	**TBA**

For all seminars, registration is at 7:00 a.m. and the Seminar is at 8:00 a.m. If you have a suggestion for a topic for these seminars, please send your suggestion to kansasnatp@gmail.com.

KANSAS EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS & MEETINGS

GETTING CLIENTS TO PAY ON TIME

Terri L. Ryman, EA

From the first meeting with a potential client to following up with past due accounts, keeping a consistent cash flow in an accounting firm is an ongoing effort. If you can figure out why the client isn't paying on time, then you can see how you need to improve your processes in order to increase cash flow.

The following reasons are just some of the excuses that clients use for non-payment:

Disputes…resolving disputes and getting paid are much easier if the follow-up process is started early. This is an opportunity to review how things are done, and subsequently implement change to avoid the same issues coming around to bite you in the future.

Overwhelmed and/or Busy…the reason for non-payment, quite often, can be that the client is under-resourced or just plain too busy. Usually all you need to get a payment is a timely reminder in the form of an e-mail, letter, or statement.

Disorganized…we hope that our clients are efficient and have everything in order. But the truth is that they probably get numerous vendor invoices each week, and they can be put easily to the side and forgotten about, even though they are right on their desk! In today's age, invoices should be e-mailed out regularly. If you must mail them, ensure that the invoice is placed on top of any other notices that you may be mailing at the same time. That way it's the first thing they see when they open the envelope.

Low on Funds…you are in a much better position to offer the client a payment plan if you can find this out early. Another tactic is to break down the invoice into smaller amounts when the job is large. If you can bill in steps, this can have the same end result as instigating a payment arrangement. However, this method means that you begin the process earlier in the billing process, and also gets you paid earlier!

Unconcerned…often the client is slow pay because WE took too long to get the job done. Our job is to focus on job turnaround and job completion, which then makes paying on time the client's responsibility.

Dishonesty…you may be alerted to this type of client through the initial interview, engagement letter, and interim billing. However, you definitely start to suspect they have no intention of paying once the account hits 4-6 months overdue. With these clients you have to start the follow-up process early. And don't be afraid to call in the experts once you feel you've exhausted all your options.

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Getting Clients to Pay On Time (continued from page 3)

There are several steps that can be taken to help remedy these problems:

As soon as the project is completed, make sure you present the invoice. Billing upon completion will have a positive impact on cash flow due to the client relating the invoice to the job just completed, and the value of the project relates to the invoice when both are presented at the same time. Because the perception of value delivered declines over time, when the invoice arrives weeks after the job is completed it will probably be scrutinized more closely by the client. Especially for larger jobs, you will impact a client's cash flow to a lesser degree by interim billing, while at the same time benefiting your firm by receiving payments before the work is completed.

Simplicity and payment options should be provided to your clients. So simple but so true: Clients are more likely to pay timely if you make it easy for the clients to pay. Provide clients with a central payment portal to use. Just having all of their payment options in one place, and often taking only a few clicks, clients may find less reason to procrastinate. Consider providing clients with the payment options they want. These can include standard check payments, wire transfers, and payment by credit and/or debit cards.

Basic rules of debtor management should be understood and followed. Communicate: the engagement process starts an effective receivables management plan. Be clear about your payment expectations and fees up front. **Regular Follow-up**: time should be set aside each week to contact past-due accounts. The first day an account is over due is the most effective time to start. An e-mail or letter can be a gentle reminder, and is less confrontational. Send it again in 7 days if the client has not paid or at least reached out. If the first two attempts fail, then pick up the phone to produce a satisfactory outcome. **Prepare to work**: once the client is significantly behind, a phone call is required. Try to figure out the reason for non-payment and make your plan based on their situation. Re-evaluation may be required to determine whether they are a good fit with your firm. Not all clients are good clients, and it's OK to make room for the clientele you desire.

Each stage of the accounts receivable cycle contributes to the efficiency of your collections process. Engage the client and agree on the fee, complete the work timely and correctly, and issue the invoices timely with a variety of payment options. Follow these steps and your most seriously delinquent accounts will reduce and possibly become non-existent.

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FLASH DRIVES: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY (continued from page 2)

What happened??? Well, come to find out, flash drives are not as reliable as we would like to think.

Flash Drives, the good.

The good things about flash drives are they are easy to transfer data from one place to another. They can hold a lot of data. They are good for TEMPORARY backups. They are small, convenient and easy to use.

Flash Drives, the bad.

The bad thing I found out about flash drives is they are not reliable. They tend to die. They tend to "crap" out (technical term from my I.T. guy).

I also learned that when you finish with a flash drive you need to eject them just like a disk. There is a icon on your computer called "Safely Remove Hardware and Eject Media". This should be used each time you are ready to remove the flash drive from your computer. (This was NEW info for me!!). If you don't do this, you could potentially corrupt the drive.

Flash Drives, the ugly.

The failure to eject the flash drive can possibly corrupt the drive. This can cause the drive to be unusable. So never pull the drive out of the port without using the eject first.

If you pull the drive out of the port before it has completed its process of writing or reading, again, this can corrupt the drive.

Updates to your system while the drive is in the port can also cause it to corrupt.

AND, our problem, ***static electricity***. I didn't realize that static electricity can fry the drive (in or out of the port). This is what happened with us. Our office is so dry and the static electricity is so bad (and YES, we have humidifiers!) that we are always getting shocked. So somewhere when we were moving/using the drive, we shocked it and it gave up the ghost and died.

So… my I.T. guy suggested to only use the drive in short bursts, transfer the data from it daily and ***don't*** use it for storage purposes. Hard lesson learned.

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"Here to Serve"

DID YOU KNOW?

⇒ When you purchase The Tax Book or Quickfinder, a portion of the proceeds can go to the local Kansas Chapter? This referral is available to the chapter when you purchase directly (must specify the chapter) or when you purchase through NATP. When you purchase through NATP, not only do you receive your membership discount, you also (automatically) help support your local chapter!

⇒ That NATP has a "Chapter of the Year" that awarded each year? And right now the KS-NATP chapter is in the running for Chapter of the Year! Stay tune for more information as we continue to monitor where we are in the running!

Do you know of a business that wants to advertise? Call us for rates for advertising in the Chapter Newsletter.

Member Get a Member

Do you know someone who might be interested in NATP and all the benefits for members?

You might want to check out National's "Member Get a Member" campaign. You could win a $15 or $30 gift card, a free membership, or even $1,000 in cash!

Just put your name on NATP Membership Enrollment forms in the "Who recommended your to NATP?" line and hand them out to non-member tax professionals. When they join...you win!!

Attention:

We are seeking a few individuals that might be interested in writing to the newsletter. If you are interested please contact Nolin Christensen via phone (316) 522-2880 or email nolin@cfs.tax

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