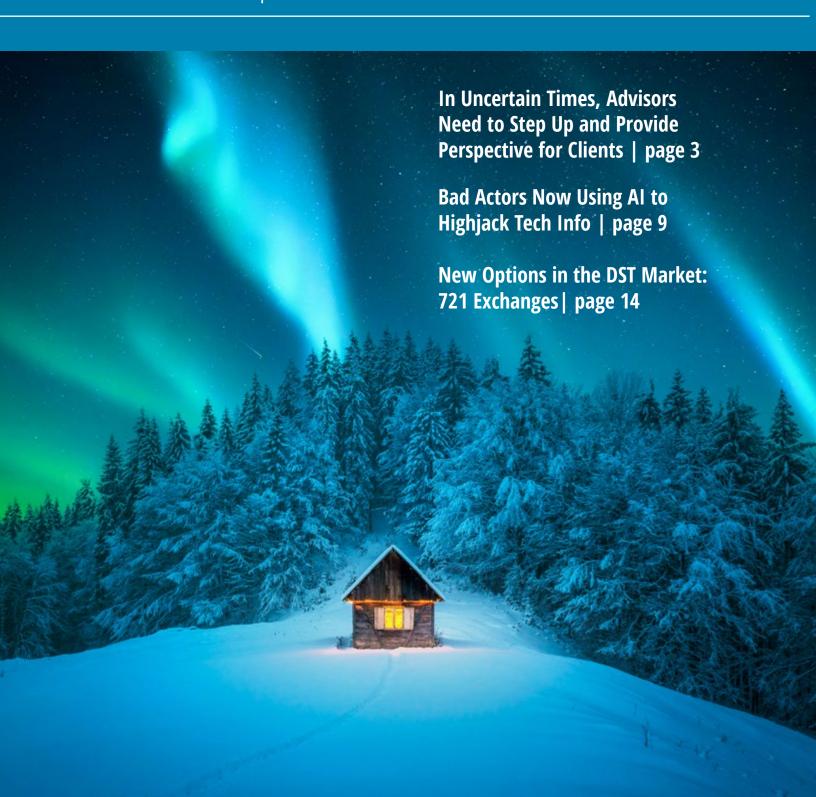
## Centaur

Summer | Fall 2025

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#### From the Chairman & CEO | Ron King



he past few months have reminded us – sometimes painfully – that uncertainty is the market's greatest enemy. Between shifting political winds and economic headlines that seem to change by the hour, it would be easy for even seasoned investors to second-guess their plans. And yet, moments like these are exactly why financial advisors exist.

I won't sugarcoat it: Clients are nervous. They're reading about political upheavals, watching pundits predict disaster, and hearing friends insist the "smart money" is sitting on the sidelines. Their natural instinct is to protect themselves, sometimes by fleeing the very markets that will ultimately deliver their long-term growth.

This is where you, the Centaurus advisor, step in. Our role isn't just to manage portfolios, it's also to provide perspective. We remind clients that markets have weathered wars, recessions, and leadership changes before. We revisit the reasons they chose their investments in the first place. And we re-establish that a disciplined strategy, not a reactive one, is what will serve them best.

Take history's lesson: Investors who have tried to time political outcomes – whether elections, legislation, or geopolitical surprises – have rarely outperformed those who stayed the course. The data are clear: Missing just a handful of the market's best days can wipe out years of compounding gains. The temptation to react is strong, but the cost of doing so can be devastating.

Advisors also serve as translators in times like these. Complex issues such as tax law revisions on the horizon, shifting interest rates, or policy debates require clear, actionable explanations. By bringing clarity, we give clients confidence to act wisely rather than impulsively. Sometimes that means a simple phone call, sometimes a detailed review, but always it's a steady voice in a noisy environment.

Higher interest rates, changing product landscapes, and evolving tax laws are creating opportunities as well as risks. Reviewing older insurance contracts or exploring new solutions can add value right now. But these actions should be part of a thoughtful plan, not a knee-jerk reaction.

**CEO >>** 



#### **HEADQUARTERS**

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#### **SOUTHEAST OFFICE**

7840 Roswell Road, Suite 415 Sandy Springs, GA 30350

#### NORTHEAST OFFICE

540 Fort Evans Road NE, Suite 200 Leesburg, VA 20176

#### PACIFIC NORTHWEST OFFICE

162 E. Hayden Avenue Hayden, Idaho 83835

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#### ON THE WEB

www.centaurusfinancial.com

#### << CEO

In short, political and economic uncertainty isn't a reason for your clients to panic – it's a chance for you to shine. Your calm guidance, historical perspective, and proactive communication can turn anxiety into understanding and hesitation into long-term success.

Addressing the above, we have the perfect opportunity to "shine" and bring in much needed clarity to our clients concerning the recently approved "One Big Beautiful Bill" (OBBB). There is hardly an investor who is not touched in some manner by its many provisions. The OBBB, which is very complex, demands that you be not only a "translator," but also prescient as you plan your clients' futures. This is our most essential role.

While much has been written about the OBBB, I have found nothing better than the numerous Kiplinger Tax Letters and Wall Street Journal articles. For a quick update (especially if you missed the Wealth Management Conference), Centaurus Financial and Jeff Bush, speaker and author from *The Washington Update*, will host a webinar at 1 p.m. September 24 titled "A Nonpartisan Overview of the Political Environment, Prospective Legislation, and Tax Strategies." You can't afford to miss it!

To register for the Jeff Bush webinar, click this link:



In order for you to fulfill your role as advisor, counselor, and trusted friend, Centaurus will continue to equip you with the tools, updates, and strategies, throughout this year and next, that you need to keep your clients disciplined, engaged, and unafraid. With this information, tools, and your "steady voice," you can make a difference!

**Chairman & CEO** 



## Are You Talking to Your Clients About Roth Conversions?

Taxes are at the forefront of everyone's mind – what are you doing for your clients to help bring solutions?

**Contact Producers Prospect TODAY to Get Your Roth Conversion Guide** 

Website. https://producersprospect.com/

Phone. (800) 829-5526

Address. 6900 E Camelback Rd Suite 990, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Client John Doe wishes to Roth convert his \$1mill IRA but is worried about the significant tax liability – so we are showing him a safe and predictable model to be able to do it.

Currently he makes \$200k AGI, is concerned about jumping over the 24% federal tax bracket, and doesn't want to go backwards while converting.

So by leveraging guarantees and a 4% interest rate return, we demonstrate how to not go backwards or above his tax bracket and still converting and withholding for the taxes.

Conversion Data								
Age	8.0 X	IRA Withdrawal	Converted to Roth	Taxes	Interest	E.O.X.		
65	1,210,000	194,600	96,030	46,570	46,537	1,209,96		
66	1,209,967	194,600	146,030	46,570	46,536	1,209,933		
67	1,209,933	194,600	148,030	46,570	46,535	1,209,896		
68	1,209,896	194,600	148,030	46,570	46,533	1,209,86		
69	1,209,861	194,600	148,030	46,570	46,532	1,209,82		
70	1,709,823	194,600	H8.030	46,570	46,530	1,209,783		
71	1,209,783	188,629	143,492	45,137	46.586	1,211,233		
72	1,211,232	0	0	0	48,449	1,259,68		
73	1,259,681	0	0	0	50,387	1,310,066		
74	1,310,068	0	0	0	52,403	1,362,47		
75	1,362,471	0	0	0	54,499	1,416,970		
76	1,416,970	0	0	0	56,679	1,473,641		
27	1,473,649	0	0	0	58,946	1,532,590		
78	1,532,595	0	0	0	61,304	1,593,890		
79	1,593,899	0	0	0	63,756	1,657,650		
80	1,657,655	0	0	0	66,306	1,723,96		
81	1,723,961	0	٥	0	68,958	1,792,911		
82	1,792,919	0	0	0	יותות	1,864,636		
83	1,864,636	0	0	0	74,585	1,939,22		
84	1,909,221	0	0	0	77,569	2,016,790		
85	2,016,790	0	0	0	80,672	2,097,46		
86	2,097,462	0	0	0	83,896	2,181,360		
87	2,181,360	0	0	0	87,254	2,268,61		
88	2,268,614	0	0	0	90,745	2,359,39		
89	2,359.359	0	٥	0	94,374	2,453,73		
90	2,453,733	0	0	0	98.149	2,551,88		

Conversion Details

#### Who's a Good Fit for Roth Conversions?

#### 1. People in a Lower Tax Bracket—Today

If you expect your tax rate to be higher in the future (due to RMDs, Social Security, or tax law changes), paying tax now can save money long-term.

#### 2. Those with a Long Time Horizon

The longer the funds remain in a Roth, the greater the potential for tax-free compounding. This is ideal for younger savers or those retiring early.

#### 3. Individuals Looking to Avoid RMDs

Traditional IRAs and 401(k)s require RMDs starting at age 73. Roth IRAs don't—giving you control over when and how much you withdraw.

#### 4. Heirs in High Tax Brackets

Roth IRAs allow you to pass wealth tax-free, and beneficiaries have 10 years to withdraw the funds—without the same tax hit as inherited traditional accounts.

#### 5. People Planning Around Medicare Premiums

RMDs can increase your Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI), raising your Medicare Part B and D premiums. Strategic Roth conversions done early can reduce this impact later.

#### 6. Those With Large Pre-Tax Retirement Balances

A series of annual Roth conversions ("bracket-filling") helps manage tax exposure before RMDs force withdrawals at higher rates.

#### Final Thought: Think Strategically

#### **WEALTH MANAGEMENT | Adam Handler**



## Reflections on the Wealth Management Space as We Near the Fourth Quarter

As we navigate the second half of 2025, let's take a moment to reflect on the evolving landscape of our profession and the opportunities ahead for our community of advisors. The financial advisory industry is experiencing rapid change, shaped by advances in technology, heightened regulatory expectations, and shifting client demands. Our ability to adapt — while staying true to our core values of integrity, client focus, and innovation — remains central to our continued collective success at Centaurus Financial.

Reflecting on the current environment, it is clear that clients now expect more than just investment advice; they also seek comprehensive, holistic financial planning that addresses every aspect of their financial lives. With over 90% of financial advisors operating as small businesses, we recognize the importance of remaining agile and client-centric, even as we grow and evolve. Technology is transforming how we work, enabling us to offer more personalized, data-driven advice while maintaining the human touch that builds trust and

long-term relationships. At the same time, regulatory changes require us to be ever more transparent and diligent in our practices, reinforcing our commitment to client protection and ethical standards.

We are proud to announce several important updates and introductions that will further support your work and enhance our collective ability to serve clients. First, I am pleased to welcome Nolan Long as our new Billing and Reporting Associate. Nolan brings valuable expertise and a strong commitment to accuracy and efficiency, which will be instrumental in supporting our operations and your business needs.

In addition, we are excited to announce that advisors using the FlexUMA program can now use Pershing LLC as a custodian. This expanded capability provides you with greater flexibility and choice, empowering you to tailor your service offerings to meet the unique needs of your clients.

Finally, I want to share that Due Diligence Works

("DDW") is coming soon. This new online research portal will offer additional resources and capabilities to help you streamline your workflows and focus more of your time on your clients.

As we move forward together, let us continue to embrace change, leverage new opportunities, and maintain our unwavering focus on client success. Thank you for your dedication and for being an essential part of our community.

**Chief Advisory Officer** 

#### Upcoming Centaurus Conferences



Leaders Conference
Wailea, Maui, Hawaii
January 5-10, 2026 (11 for Club 16)
Grand Wailea Maui



**Quantum Leap Workshop**Mission Bay (San Diego), California
April 22-24, 2026

<u>Hyatt Regency Mission Bay</u>



Wealth Management Conference
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
October 14-16, 2026
Coeur d'Alene Resort

# Second Chances for Those Who Need Them Most

**Shamrock Rescue Foundation** has been saving dogs and finding homes for them since 2013

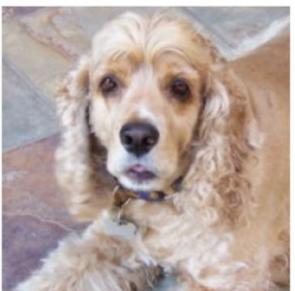
Help us help the ones no one else wants and give them the lives they deserve

#### Donate:

Website: shamrockrescue.org

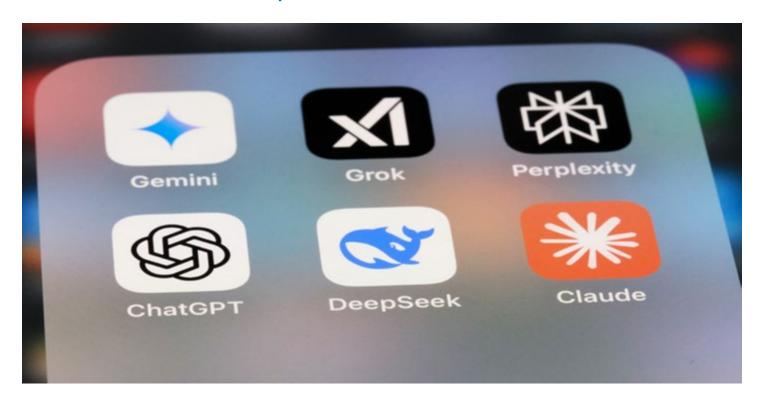
Paypal or Venmo: shamrockrf@gmail.com Mail: P.O. Box 10072, Santa Ana CA 92711







#### NAVIGATING TECHNOLOGY | Gordon Huber



#### Bad Actors Turning to AI to Highjack Financial Services Email Accounts

The financial services industry is being highly targeted by people trying to compromise and take over email accounts, now using artificial intelligence. If email security policies are not followed, you are risking your reputation and putting your clients in harm's way!

#### **Use Complex and Secure Passwords!**

If you are not sure if you are using a complex password for your email account (all other accounts, too), change it today!

For **secure passwords**, use a <u>password generator</u>, preferably set to 12 or more characters with all four character sets (capital letters, lowercase letters, numbers and special characters like \*, \$ and #). Yes, you will need to write ALL of your passwords down somewhere locally such as in a password book or Excel spreadsheet.



TECHNOLOGY >>



Some websites now require a **passphrase** instead of a password. A passphrase is different from a complex password in that it uses a string of random or associated words and can include blank spaces or a separator such as "–".

Here is a good <u>passphrase generator</u>. We suggest using a minimum of five words in your passphrase.

**Please note:** Websites might limit the use to specific separators or blanks. Create the passphrase and replace the separator with blanks if required.

**Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):** Centaurus web mail can enable MFA. Please contact the Centaurus IT Department to discuss this if you are interested.

You can also secure your account with two-factor authentication (2FA). 2FA and MFA help lock down your accounts by requiring second or third authentication methods in addition to your password. To unlock your account, thieves not only need to know your password — they must also intercept a code sent to your phone, email or third party authenticator app.

AI can scan the dark web to see how individuals use multiple passwords. Because of this, you need to use distinct passwords with a completely different structure for your various accounts. This will likely require you to use some type of password manager, as remembering multiple complex passwords can be problematic. If you have a complex password and then just use variations of it for your many accounts, AI can build a profile on you and determine a list of passwords you are likely to choose based on your previous choices. So, it is time to mix it up! Much of that forensic and sci-fi password-cracking magic that you have been watching on TV over the years is happening now.

#### How Can I Tell if My Username/Password is on the Dark Web?

As data breaches are now commonplace, it's crucial to know if your username and password combinations have been compromised. Here's how to check if your credentials have been exposed on the dark web:

- **1. Use Free Dark Web Scanners.** Reputable options include:
- Have I Been Pwned: <a href="https://haveibeenpwned.com/">https://haveibeenpwned.com/</a>
- Identity Guard's Dark Web Scanning Tool: <a href="https://www.identityguard.com/">https://www.identityguard.com/</a>
- Spy Cloud: https://spycloud.com/check-your-exposure/

#### It's time to mix it up! Much of that forensic and sci-fi password-cracking magic that you have been watching on TV over the years is happening now.

#### 2. Utilize Browser Tools and Password Managers:

Some browsers and password managers have built-in features that can monitor saved passwords and alert users if they've been exposed in a data breach. Examples include:

- Mozilla Monitor (free and paid options)
- Google's "Dark Web Report" (part of Google One subscription)
- Microsoft Edge's Password Monitor
- LastPass and iPassword (third party password managers).

#### 3. Employ Dedicated Identity Theft and Dark Web **Monitoring Services:**

Try one of the tools recommended by security.org: https://www.security.org/identity-theft/best/ dark-web-monitoring/

These services offer more comprehensive and continuous monitoring, scanning a wider range of dark web sources and potentially detecting compromised information like SSNs, phone numbers and more. Many also come with identity theft protection, credit monitoring and other security tools.

It is important to note that, while these tools provide valuable insights, the dark web is vast and constantly changing. This makes it impossible for any single service to guarantee the detection of all compromised information. Regularly changing passwords and utilizing strong, unique passwords for each account is essential for mitigating the risk of compromised credentials. Consider using a VPN, enabling multi-factor authentication, and practicing general cybersecurity best practices to further safeguard online accounts.

Finally, if you are using a password manager system, please make sure you use a master password of 16 characters or more utilizing all four character sets.

For questions, please contact a member of the Centaurus IT Department at (800) 880-4234.

**Chief Technology Officer** 

#### More Tips on Keeping Your Office Cyber-Safe

Check Out These Past Issues of The Centaur for Additional Info...

**Fall/Winter 2022:** Better than sticky notes: Keeping your passwords secure

**Fall 2023:** How to protect yourself and your staff against security breaches

**Spring 2024:** How to keep your email safe and secure

**Winter 2024-25:** Why it's vital that you monitor your online security practices



#### Faces of Centaurus



U.S. Representative Joe Wilson, from left, Lisa Mantei and Rick Mantei of Cola Wealth Advisors and their daughter, attend an event June 7, 2025 in South Carolina honoring World War II veterans.



Cola Wealth Advisors, based in Columbia, South Carolina, hosted the event.



Representative Wilson, Brook Nardi and Cola Wealth advisor Matt Hawkins at the event.



#### Please welcome to the Home Office ...



**Paul Barnard Order Processing** Direct Business -Order Processing Associate



Jillian Haines **Order Processing** Direct Business -Order Processing Associate



**Nolan Long** Wealth Management Reporting and Billing Associate



Jack Matura Legal Paralegal

#### **Penelope Dellasue Lazette,** right, daughter of Steven Lazette, VP, Operations/ Trading Manager, had a double celebration in August: She started kindergarten August 7th and turned 5 on August 29th. Happy birthday, Penelope!





## King Joe's Court

#### Give your pet 15 minutes of fame!

To feature your pet in a future issue of The Centaur, please submit a picture and information about him or her to Maryanne Dell at mdell@cfiemail.com. Tell us whatever

you'd like - we'll edit for space if needed.

Charlie Burling's Jack Russell terrier mix, Baby, is aptly named; as Charlie says, "He acts like a little baby, since he loves being held and cuddled." Baby has been with Charlie and his wife for just over a year. "He loves going crazy on his stuffed toys, jumping over everything to show off his athletic skills, and napping in a sun spot for most of the day," Charlie adds.





Meet Saco, the newest member of Rene Fernandez's family. The Havanese mix is just 3 months old and got his name from the Spanish for "coat and tie," "saco y corbata." "We already have a dog named Corbata," Rene says, "so Saco was the next logical choice.

#### **AI JOURNAL | Paul King**



## 721 Exchanges versus 1031 Exchanges: More Options Come to Market

Por the last decade or more, 1031 exchanges using Delaware Statutory Trusts (DSTs) have been a popular tax solution for our high-net worth clients. While 1031 exchanges do not sell in large volume, they can be a very attractive option for our wealthier customers who are looking for suitable investment properties and wish to defer taxes pursuant to the guidance provided by the IRS Code. These offerings have been a staple of our alternative investment platform and remain one of the most effective ways to help clients defer capital gains when selling investment real estate.

Over time, though, a wrinkle has developed as these offerings have expanded and innovated. More DST offerings are now incorporating a potential "721 exchange" feature, which refers to the section of the IRS code that generally holds that no gain or loss is recognized when a person contributes property to a partnership in exchange for an ownership interest in that partnership. This transaction is commonly referred to as an "UPREIT" transaction. If you are active in this space, you've probably started to see more offerings with 721 exchange features. In reviewing

these newer offerings, it is very important to understand what benefits may accrue from an UPREIT transaction, as well as the potential drawbacks. Because it is showing up more often, we thought it would be helpful to revisit how the traditional 1031 cycle works and where the 721 fits in.

#### <u>The Longtime Workhorse: Securitized 1031 Exchanges through DSTs</u>

As many of you know, the 1031 exchange process is straightforward and hasn't changed much over the years. Here are the basic steps (which are subject to strict timelines):

- 1. A client sells an investment property.
- 2. They exchange into interest of a DST that holds real property.
  - 3. At some point, the DST sells its property.
- 4. The client then faces the decision to either conduct another 1031 into a new property/DST or recognize the gain and pay taxes.

Enter the 721 ...

For many clients, that rinse-and-repeat cycle has worked out great. Some enjoy the control of selecting each replacement property and are comfortable with the risks of concentration. However, the risk tolerance and objectives of some real estate investors may change over time, and tethering their wealth to single assets or property-specific outcomes for life is no longer attractive. In other words, they want to start to diversify their wealth.

#### A New Twist to DSTs: When and How 721 Exchanges **Come Into Play**

To address the fact that some investors seek to diversify their holdings and assert more control over the tax management, real estate sponsors are incorporating a 721 exchange-exit option into many of their offerings. However, as financial advisors, it's important to pay careful attention to how the 721 exit plays into the offering. One nuance is that in the current offerings, clients do not go straight into a 721. Instead, it's an option that may be built into certain DST offerings upon the exit event. Importantly, depending on the sponsor, here are the two most common ways it is made available:

- Flexible Option: When the DST sells its property, the client has a choice: Either continue with another 1031 exchange (into a new property or DST) or roll into the acquiring REIT units through a 721. This dual-path approach gives clients more control, and many of you have found it appealing because it keeps every door open.
- Mandatory UPREIT: Other DSTs are structured so that if certain conditions are met, investors must exchange into the acquiring REIT - no 1031 option is available at that point. While this limits flexibility for the client, it creates more certainty for both sides of the transaction, which is why sponsors sometimes take this approach.

In both cases, clients still need to wait for the DST exit. The difference is what happens at that moment: Do they get to choose, or are they automatically moved into REIT units? And once they hold REIT units, the picture changes - more diversification as compared to single property/small group of properties, often more

flexibility to sell shares over time, but no way back into the 1031 cycle.

#### What This Means for Advisors

For those of you who are researching the benefits and drawbacks of 721 exchanges, here some key questions to weigh with your clients:

- Does the DST offering preserve the ability to do another 1031, or is the UPREIT mandatory?
- If a specific REIT maintains the right to purchase the DST, how comfortable are clients with the REIT strategy, its management, portfolio, and liquidity features?
- How much do they value the ability to "swap 'til they drop" versus the benefits of diversification and spreading out their tax recognition?

These are just some of the initial areas to discuss when looking into DST offerings that include a 721 feature. 1031 exchanges into DSTs have continued to be an attractive and viable option for real estate investors seeking solutions. The emergence of 721 features doesn't change that - it just expands the toolkit, but also requires further understanding of the potential exit options. For some clients, the flexibility of being able to move into a REIT may be the right next step. For others, staying in the familiar 1031 cycle will be the preferred choice. As a financial advisor, it's great that there are more options available. The key is to ensure that you and your clients find the best fit for their situation. Hopefully this brief primer will help you find your way!

As always, the key is knowing which type of DST you're working with and matching the structure to the client's goals. Many of you have already walked clients through both types, and you know how important it is to set expectations at the outset.

> **General Counsel, Director** of Alternative Investments







Consumers say that retirement income planning is their top priority when seeking advice from a financial advisor. Even further, 3 out of 10 chose "understanding how much I can safely spend in retirement" as the top service they seek from advisors.<sup>1</sup>

65-YEAR OLD INVESTOR<sup>2</sup>

\$1M 80% equities 20% fixed income

Withdrawing 5% a year indexed to actual historical inflation

Retire in 1975, money lasts

30

Retire in 1974, money lasts

13

1974 Performance of S&P 500

-26%

Just one year of volatility can kill a financial plan!

You can either prepare for the math of losses or you can ignore the math of losses.

Contact your <u>Beacon Representative</u> today to get started!

beaconinvesting.com

Read our client-approved piece, Sequence of Returns, What a Difference a Year Makes.

FREE DOWNLOAD

All investing involves risk, and asset allocation and diversification do not guarantee a profit or protection against a loss. The above example does not represent the past or projected performance of any Beacon Capital Management model or strategy. The above example is hypothetical based upon historical data, is provided for illustrative purposes only, and is not indicative of future results. Sammons Financial® is the member companies, including Beacon Capital Management, inc. is an investment advisory firm registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Additional information about Beacon Capital Management is also available on the SECs website at www.adviserinfo.sec.gov under CRD number 120641. Beacon Capital Management only transacts business in states where it is properly registered, or excluded or exempted from registration requirements. Sources Odeniran, Woola, "SmartAsset—This is the No. 1 Service Consumers Are Seeking From a Financial Advisor" (fune 2, 2022), https://smartasset.com/financial-advisor/retirement-income-planning-financial-advisor (referencing data from a report created by The American College of Financial Services analyzing survey results provided by The Granum Center for Financial Security's "2022 Consumer Survey"). Sources for the above example: Franklin Templeton (Mar. 2023), "What a difference a year makes", (Investor education), https://www.franklintempleton.com/forms-literature/download/Sex\* 9500 Total Returns. https://www.franklintempleton.com/sp500/returns. The S&P 500° Index is a float-adjusted, market-capitalization weighted index that measures the performance of the 500 leading publicly traded U.S. companies from a broad range of industries. Indexes are neither managed, nor accessible through direct investment, nor subject to advisory fees,

#### **ACCOUNTING | Sheri Lejman**



#### Tax Tips for Small Business Owners

If you're a small business owner, keeping abreast of federal, state and local tax laws, along with those related to employment, can be a job in and of itself. The various codes and rules can make the process even more difficult.

Ignorance of the laws is not an excuse if you owe taxes. And, overpaying your business taxes and failing to take legal and appropriate business tax deductions only ends up with you paying more than is necessary.

Having the right strategy to protect your business appears more difficult each year, because tax regulations are in constant flux. Therefore, you need to work with a certified and experienced income and employment tax professional. A good one will have years of experience with tax preparation; frequently attend tax seminars; and keep abreast of tax journals, magazines and monthly tax tips to evaluate and assist your business with the ever-changing tax codes.

In conducting proper planning for your small business, it is a good strategy to evaluate the most common small business tax items and tax tips:

#### **Start-Up Costs**

Start-up costs typically include business expenses such as advertising, travel, training and surveys. These costs are generally considered capital expenditures.

If you purchase an asset such as machinery or office equipment, these costs are expensed for tax purposes through depreciation or Section 179 expensing. When you start a business, you can elect to deduct or amortize certain business start-up costs.

Further, you can elect to deduct up to \$5,000 of business start-up and \$5,000 of organizational costs paid or incurred. But speak to a tax professional to ensure you are following the rules and achieving the greatest legal tax savings.

#### Tax Payments to the IRS

In general, the IRS cares very much if you cannot properly support your tax deductions or you pay less than you owe. Consider that even if you overpay in one

Accounting >>

#### << Accounting

area but underpay in another, the IRS will still hit you with interest and penalties for the underpayments. To help audit-proof your business, be sure to properly document and support your expenses and receive good tax advice from your tax professional.

#### <u>Self-Employed Deductions vs. Deductions</u> <u>for Incorporated Entities</u>

Sole proprietors qualify for many of the same deductions as incorporated businesses. Thus, going through the incorporation process and cost may be an unnecessary expense and process.

Costs related to incorporating a business such as accounting and legal fees can be significant. Minimum corporate tax payments will be due for certain jurisdictions, even if the business has no revenue income for the year and/or experiences a loss. For example, the state of California generally requires a minimum annual franchise tax of \$800 for LLCs, S-Corps and C-Corps, regardless of the company's financial success.

#### **Home Office Deductions and Other Business Expenses**

The home office deduction used to be an IRS red flag. But, if the business keeps detailed, well-documented records per IRS requirements, this is no longer the case. The IRS doesn't have the resources to audit all tax returns containing home office deductions.

However, keep in mind that if your deductions are unusually high when compared to income, this scenario most likely will raise a red flag for the IRS, as the IRS uses software to run statistics and analyses on tax returns to look for such items.

Don't forget to take eligible deductions such as business-related expenses: phone bills, supplies, travel, printing, employee wages or contract workers, depreciation on equipment, and other expenses for running a home office.

You are still eligible to take deductions for business supplies, business-related phone bills, travel expenses,

printing, wages paid to employees or contract workers, depreciation of equipment and other expenses related to running a home-based business even if you don't take the home office deduction.

#### **Proper Filing of Tax Return Extensions**

It is important to remember that filing a tax return extension does not extend when you owe taxes. Taxes due must be paid when they are due. Extensions enable you only to extend your filing, and interest and penalties begin accumulating from the due date of your taxes.

#### **Self-Employed Pension Plans**

Self-employed pension plans, known as "SEP-IRAs," are a must for small businesses. Even if your company has a 401K(k)plan, you can still set up a SEP-IRA. So be sure to take advantage of a SEP-IRA for the business and take the associated deduction.

#### **Business Bartering**

The use of business bartering may benefit your business. Business bartering is a taxable event that is the exchange of services or property between businesses. For example, if a business consultant exchanges their services with a marketing company, each must report income on their tax returns equal to the fair market value of the services received. Consult with a qualified tax professional to ensure you understand the complexities, timing and respective tax laws and comply with them.

#### **IRS Small Business Tips**

One final item to note: The IRS' Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) summarizes 10 federal tax tips and can be found here.

All in all, having a good understanding of federal and state tax systems is beneficial to all business owners, regardless of the size or whether you are a sole proprietor.

**SVP**, Chief Financial Officer

Show Lepman

#### MARKET REVIEW | Scott Rivera



#### The Fed at a Critical Inflection Point

#### It's 'Come to Trump' Time for Jerome Powell and Company

The first half of 2025 has delivered a dynamic and ▲ mixed performance across global markets, reflecting diverging trends among equities, i nternational stocks and bonds. The Federal Reserve finds itself at a critical juncture, balancing persistent inflationary pressures from trade policies against emerging labor market concerns while maintaining its commitment to both price stability and maximum employment.

#### **Federal Reserve Policy Outlook**

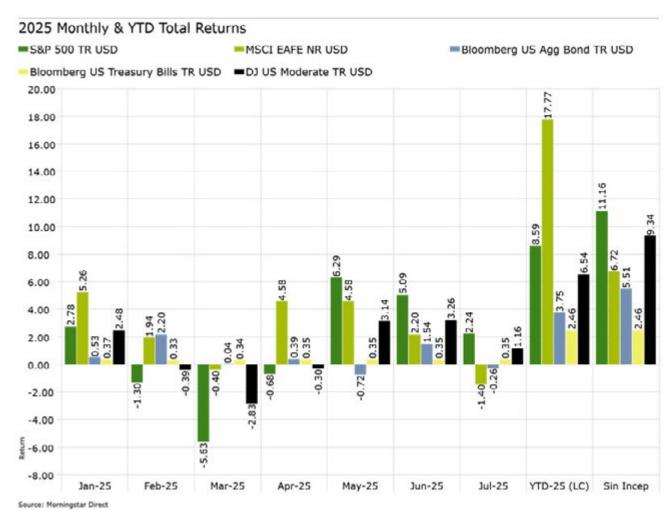
The Federal Reserve has held its benchmark interest rate steady at 4.25% to 4.50% for five consecutive meetings through July 2025, marking a cautious approach amid economic uncertainty. However, the July meeting revealed growing internal division, with two Federal Open Market Committee members dissenting for the first time since 1993. Governors Christopher Waller and Michelle Bowman both voted in favor of a 25-basis-point cut, citing concerns about labor market softening.

In his August 22 speech in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell provided the strongest signal yet that rate cuts would be imminent. He indicated that "the shifting balance of risks may warrant adjusting our policy stance," noting that downside risks to employment are rising while policy remains in restrictive territory. Powell emphasized that the Fed faces a "challenging situation" as a hiring slowdown coincides with tariff-driven price increases.

And, indeed, Powell and Co. followed through on the Fed's September 17 quarter-point rate cut likely is the first of more to come before year's end. The central bank indicated two more cuts would be coming in 2025.

Markets >>

#### **Market Performance Review**



#### **U.S. Equities Lead Global Markets**

The S&P 500 has demonstrated resilience throughout 2025, advancing 8.59% year to date through August 22. This performance represents a recovery from a challenging start to the year, with particularly strong momentum building through the spring and summer months. The index's strong performance has been supported by robust corporate earnings and improving investor sentiment following Powell's Jackson Hole remarks.

#### **International Markets Outperform**

International developed markets have been standout performers in 2025. The MSCI EAFE index has delivered impressive returns of 17.77% year to date, significantly outperforming U.S. markets. This

outperformance reflects resilient corporate earnings and stabilizing economic data across Europe and Asia, despite ongoing global economic uncertainties.

#### **Fixed Income Provides Steady Returns**

The bond market has delivered modest but consistent positive returns in 2025. The Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond index has registered a year-to-date gain of 3.75%, while ultra-short, fixed-income investments, represented by Bloomberg U.S. Treasury Bills, have provided steady returns of approximately 2.46% with remarkably consistent monthly performance.

#### **Balanced Portfolio Performance**

Balanced investment strategies, exemplified by

portfolios with 60% equity and 40% fixed-income allocations, have generated solid returns of approximately 6.54% year to date. This performance demonstrates the continued value of diversified investment approaches in navigating market volatility and uncertainty.

#### **Sector Leadership and Rotation**

	eniaurus Date: 7/31/202	10.7	United States Sectors								
Best	Consumer Ser- vices 6.6	Energy 26.3	Technology 37.3	Health Care 6.2	Technology 47.5	Technology 47.3	Energy 54.4	Energy 62.2	Technology 65.1	Technology 38.3	Telecommu- nications 15.8
	Health Care 6.6	Telecommu- nications 24.0	Basic Meterials 25,1	Utilities 4.4	Industrials 32.8	Consumer Occulty 13.2	Technology 37.2	Utilities 1.5	Consumer Services 34.1	Telecommu- nications 29.7	Utilities 15.2
		Basic Materials 20.3	Industrials 24.5	Consumer Services 2.1	Financials 32.6	Consumer Ser- vices 29.8	Financials 32.3	Health Care -4.5	Industrials 19.8	Consumer Services 28.5	Technology 13.4
		Industrials 19.5	Health Care 22.8		Consumer Golds 28.7	Basic Materials 18.3	Basic Materials 27.8	Telecommu- nications -5.7	Financials 16.1	Financials 26.6	Industrials 11.6
	Telecommu- nications 3.5	Financials 17.3	Consumer Services 20.4	Telecommu- nications -6.7	Telecommu- nications 27.9	Industrials 17.9	Meath Care 23.6	Basic Materials -7.6	Consumer Goods 13.9	Utilities 24.2	Financials 9.0
	Financials 0.1	Utilities 17.1	Financials 20.0	Financials -9.0	Consumer Services 26.9	Health Care 16.0		Financials -13.7	Basic Materials 11.0	Industrials 17.2	Basic Materials 0.2
	Industrials -1.7			Industriels -11.3	Utilities 24.9	Financials -0.5	Industrials 18.4	Industriels -14.0	Telecommu- nications 3.5		Consumer Ser- vices 7.3
	Utilities -4.5	Consumer Services 6.0	Utilities 12.4		Health Care 21.3	Utilities -0.6	Utilities 17.4		Health Care 1.9	Energy 5.9	Energy 3.5
	Ratir Materials •12.4		Telecommu- nications -0.3	Hatir Materials -16.2	Masic Materials 19.0	Telecommu- nications -5.9	Consumer Ser- vices 12.0	Consumer Ser- vices -30.3	Energy -1.0	Health Care 2.5	Health Care -4.3
	Energy -22.0	Health Care -2.4	Energy -1.6	Energy -18.9	Energy 10.4	Energy -33.2	Telecommu- nications -8.7	Technology -34.5	Utilities -7.2	Basic Materials -5.3	
	2015	2016	2017	2016	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	YTD

Source: Morningstar Direct

The 2025 market has been characterized by notable sector dispersion, with several sectors delivering impressive double-digit gains:

- Communications Services: 15.8% YTD, benefiting from AI infrastructure demand
- **Utilities:** 15.2% YTD, driven by data center power demand and electrification trends
- Technology: 13.4% YTD, continuing its innovationdriven growth trajectory
- Industrials: 11.6% YTD, supported by economic resilience and infrastructure spending
- Financials: 9.6% YTD, positioned for potential rate

cut benefits

The telecommunications and utilities sectors have experienced a particularly strong renaissance in 2025. Utilities have benefited from the AI-driven boom in data center construction, which is creating unprecedented demand for electricity infrastructure. Meanwhile, telecommunications companies have gained from the growing need for high-speed, reliable communication systems to support AI applications and data transmission requirements.

Markets >>

#### << Markets

#### **Investment Outlook and Implications**

The ongoing global economic rotation, lingering inflation pressures, and evolving monetary policy land-scape suggest that market volatility will remain a persistent theme for the remainder of 2025. The Federal Reserve's potential policy pivots toward rate cuts, along with the structural changes driven by artificial intelligence, create both opportunities and challenges for investors.

#### **Key Investment Considerations:**

- **Sector Allocation:** The market's sharp sector dispersion makes allocation decisions crucial, with technology infrastructure, utilities and communications services positioned to benefit from AI-driven demand.
- **Geographic Diversification:** International markets' outperformance highlights the importance of global exposure in portfolio construction.

- **Interest Rate Sensitivity:** As the Fed enters a cutting cycle, rate-sensitive sectors may experience renewed momentum.
- **Quality Focus:** In an environment of economic uncertainty, an emphasis on fundamentals and quality metrics remains paramount.

The combination of strong equity gains, steady fixed-income performance and encouraging international market trends suggests that diversified portfolios have been well-rewarded in 2025. As the year progresses through its second half, investors should remain focused on diversification strategies that can capitalize on both innovation trends and the evolving monetary policy landscape.

Thank you,





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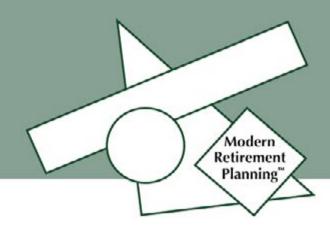
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#### In Memoriam

#### Frederick E. Carroll

It is with very heavy hearts and the utmost respect that we share the news of the passing of Frederick E. Carroll, beloved father of our colleague, friend, and two-decade member of the Centaurus family, Pat Carroll.

Pat's dad will be remembered for his lifelong commitment to education, his dedication to his family, integrity in all he did, and his generous spirit.

Pat was especially close to his dad, who played a prominent role as the patriarch of the family. He was very passionate about his family and family legacy. He treasured his children - not only Pat and his sister, Shannon, but also all of the children he influenced throughout the course of his life as a teacher and education administrator. He measured his success in the success of others.

Frederick E. Carroll of Cadillac passed away, Friday, August 8, 2025 at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City. He was 83.

He was born October 12, 1941 in Mount Clemens, Michigan to Tobias L. Carroll and Bernice H. Seymour Carroll. Fred was raised in Flint, Michigan and educated at Flint St. Michael's High School. He attended Mott Community College and graduated from Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science degree. He earned a Specialist in Education degree and Educational Doctorate.

Fred taught and administered in schools in Rochester and Flint. The latter was where he met Rochelle Galey. They were soon married and Fred was offered the Essexville-Hampton Community Schools administrative position. In 1971, Fred accepted the position as superintendent of schools in Homer, Michigan. Rochelle later became a band director in the district. They remained in their positions until retiring in 2003. Upon retirement, they spent their winters in Naples, Florida



and summered on Lake Cadillac.

Fred served with the Lions Club of Homer, Michigan; Cadillac Rotary Club; Cadillac Chamber of Commerce; and Cadillac Industrial Fund.

Fred and Rochelle had two wonderful children who survive him, Shannon Paige Carroll-Frey (David Frey) and daughters Megan and Molly Frey of Greenwood, Indiana; and Patrick Caroll (Sheri Carroll) and son Dominic Cataldo (Rebecca Cataldo) of Cadillac.

He was preceded in death by Rochelle on April 15, 2023.

Visitation was held at Peterson Funeral and Cremation Services in Cadillac on August 24, 2025. A Memorial Service was held at Cadillac United Methodist Church on August 25, 2025.

Our love and prayers go out to Pat and the entire Carroll family, along with all who loved him. Please keep them all in your thoughts and prayers.

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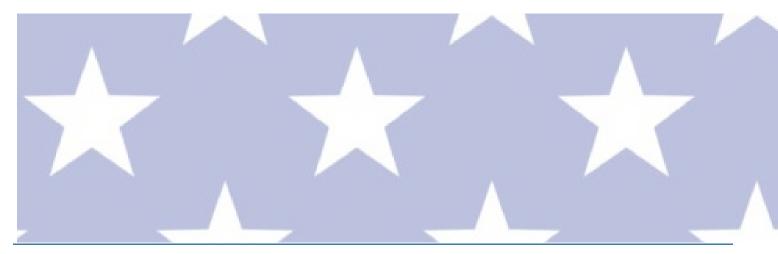
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