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• Jobs Grow and Unemployment Declines in April.
• MICA Future Meeting Dates.
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61st JUNE CONVENTION OF MICA

President Dale Winters and his wife, Diane, wish to extend a warm MICA invitation to you to join them as we conclude his theme year of “Human Relationships”. Come and participate as we share ideas at our annual convention this June 18 – 21, 2018, at the Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, in Prior Lake, Minnesota. Prior Lake is a city 20 miles southwest of downtown Minneapolis seated next to Savage and Shakopee in Scott County in the state of Minnesota. Surrounding the shores of Lower and Upper Prior Lake, the city lies south of the Minnesota River in an area known as South of the River and establishes the urban fringe of the south-southwest portion of Minneapolis-St. Paul, the sixteenth largest metropolitan area in the United States.

We are going to have presentations that cover a wide array of topics that will help you grow your knowledge as a business professional. We will have an opening presentation by our keynote speaker, Joe Schmit. The following topics will be covered during the convention:

• Gary Auman — An update on OSHA requirements.
• Mr. Dan Bofinger — NIA President for 2018 – 2019, will give us an update on our industry activities at the national level.
• Terry Cralle — Presentation on the importance of sleep and its direct link with peak performance.
• Carolyn Weber & Bart Stone — Carolyn and Bart of Tax Directors with PWC in Minneapolis. They will discuss the new tax regulations for 2018 on both individuals and businesses.
• Brock Ramey — An economic forecast on the construction industry.

In addition to the technical activities for the members, we will have the “Best Practices in Safety” Awards, the Safety Roundtable Session, the Member Open Forum Discussions, the twentieth annual “Mick Van Horn Memorial Golf Tournament”, networking social events, and the recognition of Peter Gauchel as the recipient of the “William R. Heaston Outstanding Member Award”.

Our block of rooms at the hotel has been released. The hotel is still taking reservations on a room available basis. If you are still in need of a hotel room for the convention, you need to call the hotel directly at 952-445-9000 or toll free at 800-262-7799.

The registration fee is $525.00 for the first attendee from a member company. Registration for all additional attendees from a given company is reduced to $500. The registration fee is $1,000.00 for the first member and spouse registered from a member company. Registration for all additional registered couples from a given company is reduced to $975. The Board is delighted to offer this incentive for multiple attendees from member companies. The benefit of joining an association comes from participating in association activities.

You may also access the convention registration form and hotel reservation form from the MICA website at www.micainsulation.org/events. You still have time to register for the 61st annual spring convention of MICA, but you need to call the MICA office directly.
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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

TO: THE MICA MEMBERSHIP

This is the last month I get to provide an article to the membership. Scott Weekly will be taking over the duties of the newsletter as well as being the “Man in Charge”. My theme this year has been Human Relations, which in reality is like most things where common sense and compassion for your fellow human beings should be the norm. We should always try to embrace the moral principle known as the ‘Golden Rule’, otherwise known as the ethic of reciprocity, which means we believe that people should aim to treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves – with tolerance, consideration and compassion. Memorial Day is right around the corner, and maybe past, by the time you receive this newsletter. In light of that, I have a couple of articles about our great men and women who have sacrificed all for the rest of us.

TWO STORIES

STORY NUMBER ONE

Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder.

Capone had a lawyer nicknamed “Easy Eddie”. He was Capone's lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but also, Eddie got special dividends.

For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago City block. Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him. Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name or a good example. One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al “Scarface” Capone, clean up his tarnished name, and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great.

So, he testified. Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he could ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine. The poem read; “The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power To tell just when the hands will stop at late or early hour. Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will. Place no faith in time. For the clock may soon be still.”

STORY NUMBER TWO

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that he would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet.

As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold: a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the American fleet. The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch waved in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible and rendering them unfit to fly.

Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another

(Continued on page 7)
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direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier.

Upon arrival, he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had, in fact, destroyed five enemy aircraft. This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action, Butch became the Navy's first Ace of W.W.II, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. A year later, Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His home town would not allow the memory of this WW II hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man. So, the next time you find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial displaying his statue and his Medal of Honor. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

**SO WHAT DO THESE TWO STORIES HAVE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER?**

Butch O'Hare was “Easy Eddie”'s son.

**MAJ. DICK WINTERS**

America lost another World War II hero when Army Maj. Dick Winters (ret.) died at the age of 92. He requested that his death not be made public until after the funeral.

On June 6, 1944, then-First Lt. Winters parachuted into the French village of Ste. Marie-du-Mont with the other members of the U.S. Army's E Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. The group was famously nicknamed "Easy Company" and became the inspiration for historian Stephen Ambrose's "Band of Brothers."

After Easy Company's commander was killed in a plane crash early in the assault, Winters led the company on its mission to destroy four 105mm howitzers and a 50-man German platoon to help clear the way for the invading Allied Forces landing at Utah Beach. Winters lost his weapon during the drop and was initially isolated from his men, but he regrouped and led the successful assault, despite the unit's suffering 50 percent casualties. He later called his actions "my apogee" -- actions for which he received the Distinguished Service Cross. Ambrose wrote, "It surely saved a lot of lives, and made it much easier for -- perhaps even made it possible in the first instance -- for tanks to come inland from the beach."

When the war was over, Winters worked in New Jersey at a fertilizer plant, and later sold animal feed and ran a farm. He left his war experiences behind him, but his men never forgot. William Guarnere lost a leg in the Battle of the Bulge under Winters' command. After learning of the latter's death, Guarnere said, "I would follow him to hell and back. So would the men from E Company."

Rest in peace, Maj. Winters.

**INNOCENCE IS PRICELESS**

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names with small American flags mounted on either side of it. The seven year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex." "Good morning Pastor," he replied, still focused the plaque. "Pastor, what is this?"

The pastor said, "Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque. Finally, little Alex's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear, asked "Which service, the 9: 45 or the 11: 15?"

Thanks to the membership for allowing me to serve you for the past year.

A big thank you to all the other Board Members for taking the time to serve and support MICA, and as always, Tom and Cindy for taking care of all the things that happen because of them.

Thanks for reading and keep a smile on your face.

Dale Winters
MICA President

**LIFE IS GOOD: JOBS GROW AND UNEMPLOYMENT DECLINES IN APRIL**

By Kim Kennedy, Manager of Forecasting, Dodge Data & Analytics

BEDFORD, MA – May 4, 2018 – In April, employers added 164,000 jobs to their payrolls, slightly less than the 193,000 projected by a Bloomberg poll of economists. This moderate rate of job growth, combined with a decline in the labor force, was enough to push the unemployment rate down to 3.9% during April – the lowest rate since December 2000. April’s low unemployment rate is getting a great deal of attention in the press since a rate below 4% is a rare phenomenon. According to the Wall Street Journal, it has happened, “only a few times over the past 70 years – during the Korean War in the early 1950s, during the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and during the tech boom of 2000”. But a deeper look into the numbers suggests that it was April’s 236,000 decline in the labor force that caused the unemployment rate to dip so low.

Regardless of the exact number, unemployment has reached
FUTURE MICA MEETING DATES

61st Annual Spring Convention — June 18—21, 2018, Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, MN.

Fall 2018 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 17 & 18, 2018, Embassy Suites Downtown, Omaha, NE.

Winter Board and Committee Meetings — January 24—27, 2019, Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort, Amelia Island, FL.

62nd Annual Spring Convention — June 17—20, 2019, Omni Interlocken Resort, Broomfield, CO.

Fall 2019 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 16 & 17, 2019, Downtown, Omaha, NE.

MICA MEMBER ADDRESS/INFO. UPDATES

Be sure to inform the MICA office of any changes or corrections to your listing for either the MICA Directory, e-mail correspondence or mailing address. Even if you update your company listing on the MICA website, please inform the MICA office of the changes. We try to be as current as possible with your help.
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amazingly low levels thanks to continuous job growth since October 2010. This 91-month expansion has made it the longest span of job growth on record. Furthermore, this year’s gains have remained robust, with a remarkable average of 200,000 jobs added per month, even stronger than last year’s average of 182,000. Fiscal stimulus coming from the December tax cuts and increasing government spending is likely a major factor behind the strength.

One disappointing element of the April jobs report, however, lies with wage growth. Average hourly earnings inched up just 4 cents in April and rose a very modest 2.6% over the past year. Despite the long period of job expansion and the resulting tightening of the labor market, wages have not kept pace. By comparison, the last time the unemployment rate hit 3.9%, wages were growing at a pace above 4.0%. Economists suggest that globalization, slower productivity growth, or the higher unemployment rate measure that includes discouraged workers (now at 7.8%) as possible reasons behind lagging wages, but none of these provide a fully satisfying explanation.

In April, the number of private sector jobs rose by 168,000, while the number of government jobs slid by 4,000. Goods-producing industries added 49,000 jobs over the month with manufacturing accounting for 24,000 of these and construction 17,000. The number of service-producing jobs grew by 119,000 in April with the largest number of these jobs coming from professional and business services, up 54,000, and education and health services, up 31,000.

The increase in construction jobs was expected with the onset of warmer spring weather in much of the northern U.S. Still, of those 17,000 jobs, specialty trade contractors gained 11,000, nonresidential building grew 5,000, and residential building advanced nearly 4,000. Heavy and civil engineering jobs, however, declined by 3,400 over the month. Over the year, construction jobs have increased 3.7% with residential building improving 5.1%, specialty trades 4.2%, nonresidential building 3.1%, and civil engineering 1.2%.

STATEMENT BY EEOC ACTING CHAIR VICTORIA A. LIPNIC

In 2018, we frequently hear encouraging slogans such as “70 is the new 50” (fill in your own favorite numbers as you wish!). But all too often we see the discouraging reality that being over 40 can be the “new ancient.” It seems in some employment sectors, the assumption is that you can’t be “cutting edge” if you’re not young – only a dull blade. And equally disturbing, too many older Americans face discrimination based on these outdated notions with the assumptions understood rather than spoken.

Last December marked the 50th anniversary of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Yet fifty years later, EEOC receives charges of age discrimination on a daily basis, and the
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need for us to continue to identify and stop age discrimination in the workplace — and obtain justice for its victims — is all too real. Here are just a few examples of recent cases where EEOC was able to identify and remedy discrimination against older workers:

- Just yesterday, the EEOC attained a $2.85 million settlement from Seasons 52, a national restaurant chain, for class age discrimination. EEOC alleged workers over 40 were denied front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house positions at thirty-five Seasons 52 restaurants around the country. “We are really looking for someone younger,” one manager told applicants.

- Montrose Memorial Hospital in Colorado agreed to pay $400,000 and furnish other relief to settle an EEOC class age suit. Twenty-nine employees, aged 40 and older, were fired or forced to resign because of age. Managers made ageist comments, including that younger nurses could “dance around the older nurses” and that they preferred younger and “fresher” nurses.

- Last year, in one of the largest ADEA settlements ever, Texas Roadhouse, another nationwide restaurant chain, agreed to pay $12 million to settle our class age suit. EEOC alleged that the company denied 40-and-over people a variety of front-of-the-house positions, such as servers, hosts, server assistants and bartenders, for at least eight years.

And it’s not only big class cases that make a difference. The EEOC continues to fight for the rights of all older workers to be free of discrimination based on age:

- Diverse Lynx, LLC, a Princeton, N.J.-based IT staffing firm with offices in Princeton and Noida, India, earlier this year agreed to pay $50,000 to an applicant denied a job because of his age. A manager told him, “age will matter.”

- Professional Endodontics, a Southfield, Mich.-based oral surgery practice, agreed to pay $47,000 for firing a dedicated employee with thirty-seven years of experience four days after her 65th birthday.

Combating age discrimination can present special hurdles for us as an enforcement agency. Age discrimination can be harder to prove than other forms of discrimination, and in our youth-focused culture, stereotypes that lead to age discrimination are more persistent than many others. Too many supervisors who wouldn’t dream of discriminating against anyone because of their race, sex, or religion seem to think it’s ok to assume that older workers just don’t or can’t “get it” when it comes to understanding technology or “thinking outside the box”.

We are cautiously optimistic of signs that an increasing number of employers (and society in general) are “getting it” and realizing that discrimination based on someone’s age is not only legally but morally wrong. Let’s keep that trend moving forward. As I said last year during our commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the ADEA, “My wish for the ADEA@50 is for all of us to remember, ability matters — not age.”
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HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

The following article is provided by Gary Auman, MICA’s legal counsel.

As we move into the summer months it is time for all contractors to consider implementing a heat illness prevention program. There have been increasing reports of heat illnesses in the workplace. Employees, who work in a high heat index environment, are vulnerable to various heat related illnesses. At their worse, heat illnesses can result in the death of the employee. Back in 2011, OSHA instituted a program to make employers aware of the dangers of working in a high heat index environment. Since then there have been numerous OSHA citations of employers for heat related illnesses. The increase in reported cases can partially be attributed to the new OSHA reporting rules that now require reporting the hospitalization for treatment of even one employee (the old rule was three employees) for treatment. Prior to this, reports of heat illness injuries were pretty much limited to fatalities, but with the change of rules employers must report employees who are hospitalized for treatment of heat related illnesses.

While there have been numerous reported decisions, the leading OSHRC decision is by Judge Patrick Augustine in March of 2012 in his decision in the case titled Secretary of Labor v. Post Buckley Schuh & Jernigan, Inc. In his decision, Judge Augustine upheld a general duty clause violation against the employer related to the death of an employee from heat stroke. Judge Augustine listed five components of the NIOSH criteria document for heat illness prevention as essential for an employer to be in compliance with the OSHA General Duty Clause. Judge Augustine’s decision makes sense, and provides a practical checklist for employers to follow to ensure a safe workplace for employees from a heat illness prevention standpoint.

The steps an employer should take are as follows (be aware that all of these steps need to be implemented and enforced by the site supervisor. You should not rely on employees taking responsibility for self-compliance):

1. Establish an acclimatization program for employees upon their initial assignment to a worksite with a high heat index environment. Such a program should also be used for an employee who is returning to the high heat index environment after a period of time away from the high heat index environment. Such a program will have all of the remaining four steps, but will also gradually expose the employee to the high heat index environment. Many employers start their employees with one to two hours of labor in the high heat index environment, extending the work hour in the environment over a period of five to ten workdays. I recommend discussing your program with your company doctor to get their opinion on the best way to acclimatize your employees. As I emphasize to all employers, the acclimatization period as well as the actions taken to comply with the requirements in the next two steps will vary depending on the heat index at the job site. The point for each of these steps is that the steps taken to protect your employees will vary depending on the heat index to which your employees are exposed.

2. The second step is to have the site supervisor establish a work/rest regimen based upon the heat index on the job site. So, at the start of the work day if the heat index is in the low caution range the site supervisor might schedule rest breaks every 90 – 129 minutes. As the heat index increases into the caution range and higher, the rest periods may become longer and more frequent. Again, to be absolutely sure you are doing what is necessary you should run the guidelines that you provide to your supervisors by your company doctor.

3. This step involves hydration. Here the NIOPSH Criteria document suggests that employees drink 5-7 ounces of water every 15-20 minutes. Again, I suggest running a hydration schedule as to the quantity of water employees and the frequency over which they should consume it by your company doctor. Again, the quantity and frequency will vary as the heat index varies. In an OSHRC decision involving the Sturgill Roofing Company of Dayton, Ohio in 2015, Judge Carol Baumerich stated that she felt that the employer should proactively monitor the water consumption by employees and remove any employees from the site who fail or refuse to comply. Such a requirement would place a tremendous burden on the employer. Judge Baumerich’s decision is effectively on appeal to the full Review Commission and no decision on that appeal has yet been reached. So, at this time the original language of the NIOSH Criteria Document is still effective.

4. This step requires the employer to provide cooling off areas in close proximity to the jobsite for use by employees as needed. NIOSH has indicated that a cooling off area should have an ambient temperature of approximately 75 degrees Fahrenheit. I believe this is a guideline and you could vary a little from this temperature, especially if you pass the temperature you would like your cooling off area to be by your company doctor. However, as you can guess, sling umbrellas for shade on a 95 degree heat index environment will probably not be sufficient.

5. The final step addressed by Judge Augustine requires you to train your employees in the illnesses that can be caused by working in a high heat index environment, the symptoms of those illnesses, how employees can recognize those symptoms in themselves and others and the first aid actions that should be taken if those symptoms are observed.

The preceding summarizes what you need to do to protect your employees and to have a compliant heat illness prevention program. I highly recommend having at least every site supervisor download the free OSHA heat illness app onto their smart phone or tablet. This app will provide an immediate heat index level at the location at which the app is used and it will also state the OSHA recommendation for steps for you to take to protect your employees.

(Continued on page 25)
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Building Materials - Employee Owned
The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) cited U-Haul Company of New York & Vermont, doing business as U-Haul Moving & Storage at Larkin District, for exposing its employees to asbestos and silica hazards while performing renovation work at its 665 Perry St. storage facility in Buffalo. The company faces $108,095 in proposed fines.

OSHA inspectors found that the U-Haul dealer did not monitor the work area to determine if asbestos and crystalline silica were present, and failed to provide employees with respiratory protection, protective clothing, and training on asbestos and silica hazards; properly dispose of asbestos-containing materials; have a competent person oversee renovation work; and provide a decontamination room.

“Employers must monitor the work area for the presence of these highly hazardous substances, and put in place effective controls to protect employees from exposure,” said Michael Scime, OSHA Buffalo Area Office Director.

The company has 15 business days from receipt of its citations and penalties to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA’s area director, or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.
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Remember, you are the employer and therefore the responsibility for the safety of your employees, including their compliance with all safety programs you have to provide for their safety (including heat illness prevention) is yours. Also you should be aware that all General Duty Clause violations are cited as serious violations and OSHA will not negotiate them down to an Other Than Serious. So, if you are cited for not complying with the requirement to have an effective heat illness prevention program you will get a serious citation and you will have just two choices. You will either be able to negotiate it for a lower penalty, but keep it as a serious citation, or litigate it. If you accept it as serious you will have to report it on IS Net World and as a serious on any pre-quals you may have to complete to bid new jobs.

**DODGE MOMENTUM INDEX MOVES HIGHER IN APRIL**

The Dodge Momentum Index jumped 6.1% in April to 163.0 (2000=100) from the revised March reading of 153.7. The Momentum Index is a monthly measure of the first (or initial) report for nonresidential building projects in planning, which have been shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year. Both components of the Momentum Index moved higher in April, with the commercial component up 6.3% and the institutional component up 5.8%. Over the last two months the commercial portion of the Momentum Index has posted the most aggressive growth, fueled by continued low vacancy rates for commercial buildings as well as the potential benefits from the tax cuts passed in December. The gains for the institutional component, while healthy, have been more moderate reflecting the ebb and flow of public funding for larger education and public building projects.

In April, 12 projects each with a value of $100 million or more entered planning. The two leading commercial projects were office buildings – a $200 million building in Boston MA and a $175 million building in Atlanta GA. The leading institutional projects were a $100 million hospital in San Luis Obispo CA and a $100 million training center in Pelham AL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dodge Momentum Index (Year 2000=100)</th>
<th>Apr-18</th>
<th>Mar-18</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Building</td>
<td>173.4</td>
<td>163.1</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Building</td>
<td>150.2</td>
<td>142.0</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dodge Data & Analytics
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TAXPAYERS WHO USUALLY ITEMIZE DEDUCTIONS SHOULD CHECK THEIR WITHHOLDING TO AVOID TAX SURPRISES

The article below from the IRS addresses one aspect of the new tax regulations and the potential impact on your 2018 federal income taxes. At our June convention, you will have the opportunity to hear two tax professionals, Carolyn Weber and Bart Stone with the international accounting firm of PwC, discuss this and other aspects of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2018. Carolyn Weber is a director in PwC’s PCS tax practice and has 17 years of tax experience working in the Minneapolis office. Carolyn is a proactive service provider focused on developing value-added tax ideas for her clients and on improving the efficiency of the tax compliance and tax provision process. Bart Stone is a tax Director with PwC Minneapolis and has more than 30 years of public accounting experience. Bart’s primary focus has been dealing with tax issues associated with privately-held companies, in addition to serving private equity clients at the fund level as well as the portfolio company level.

The Internal Revenue Service encourages taxpayers who typically itemized their deductions on Schedule A of the Form 1040 to use the Withholding Calculator this year to perform a “paycheck checkup.”

People who have itemized before may be affected by changes from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Taxpayers who itemize should use the IRS Withholding Calculator to make sure their employers are withholding the appropriate amount of tax from their paychecks for their financial situation.

The law changes are effective in 2018 and affect the tax returns taxpayers will file in 2019. The new law makes a number of major changes, including:

- Limiting the deductions for state and local taxes
- Limiting the deduction for home mortgage interest in certain cases (see IR-2018-32 for more information)
- Excluding deductions for employee business expenses, tax preparation fees and investment expenses, including investment management fees, safe deposit box fees and investment expenses from pass-through entities

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act nearly doubled standard deductions and changed several itemized deductions. Some individuals who formerly itemized may now find it more beneficial to take the standard deduction, and this could affect how much a taxpayer needs to have their employer withhold from their pay. Also, even those who continue to itemize deductions should check their withholding because of changes made by the new tax law.

The IRS urges taxpayers to complete their “paycheck checkup” as early as possible so that if a withholding amount adjustment is necessary, there’s more time for withholding to take place evenly throughout the year. Waiting means there are fewer pay periods to make the tax changes — which could have a bigger impact on each paycheck.

Having too little tax withheld could result in an unexpected tax bill or penalty at tax time in 2019. Adjusting withholding after a “paycheck checkup” can also prevent employees from having too much tax withheld. With the average refund topping $2,800, some taxpayers might prefer to have less tax withheld up front and receive more in their paychecks.

Using the Withholding Calculator

When taxpayers use the Withholding Calculator, they can indicate whether they are taking the standard deduction or itemizing their deductions. If they are itemizing, they’ll enter estimates of their deductions. The Withholding Calculator applies the new law to these amounts when figuring the user’s withholding.

It’s helpful if taxpayers have their completed 2017 tax return when using the Withholding Calculator. It can help them estimate the amount of income, deductions, adjustments and credits to enter. They’ll also need their most recent pay stubs. These help the calculator compute the employee’s withholding so far this year.

Calculator results depend on the accuracy of information entered. If a taxpayer’s personal circumstances change during the year, they should return to the calculator to check whether their withholding should be changed.

Employees can use the results from the Withholding Calculator to help determine if they should complete a new Form W-4 and, if so, what information to put on a new Form W-4.

The Withholding Calculator does not request personally-identifiable information, such as name, Social Security number, address or bank account numbers. The IRS does not save or record the information entered on the calculator. As always, taxpayers should watch out for tax scams, especially via email or phone and be alert to cybercriminals impersonating the IRS. The IRS does not send emails related to the Withholding Calculator or the information entered.

Adjusting withholding

Employees who need to complete a new Form W-4 should submit it to their employers as soon as possible. Employees with a change in personal circumstances that reduce the number of withholding allowances must submit a new Form W-4 with corrected withholding allowances to their employer within 10 days of the change. As a general rule, the fewer withholding allowances an employee enters on the Form W-4, the higher their tax withholding will be. Entering “0” or “1” on line 5 of the W-4 means more tax will be withheld. Entering a bigger number means less tax withholding, resulting in a smaller tax refund or potentially a tax bill or penalty.
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