



Sweet Financial Services

Retirement Solutions

New Website Offers You More

Winter 2012

Easy to navigate and designed with your convenience in mind, Sweet Financial Services is proud to announce the launch of our newly revamped website, www.SweetFinancial.com. “Our online visitors will now experience a more customized and seamless view of Sweet Financial Services. The site has a fresh feel which will appeal to both existing and future clients. This is about enhancing our relationships by making the site more interactive,” said Bryan.

When overhauling the site, designers kept it clean and simple with a user friendly approach so visitors can easily access timely and industry-specific content. In 1987, when Sweet Financial Services was founded, we laid out a clear mission: to help simplify our clients’ financial affairs, to give them the freedom to focus on the things that make life truly meaningful and enjoyable. We hope our new website gives you more resources to enhance your life.



A Second Opinion on Retirement Strategies: For You, for Your Loved Ones

Second opinions aren’t just for health care decisions. They’re also valuable for retirement strategy decisions. We are pleased to offer our new Second Opinion Report, an analytical tool to help you—and your loved ones—evaluate retirement strategies. The Second Opinion Report offers the following benefits:

- Evaluates your portfolio under seven economic scenarios
- Highlights where your portfolio may need improvements
- Includes recommendations for portfolio changes
- Evaluates your individual portfolios
- Evaluates your 401(k), IRA and retirement plans
- Includes a one-on-one consultation meeting with a financial advisor to review the Report
- Best suited for portfolios over \$250,000

The Second Opinion Report was created to help our clients, and also your friends and family members—people like you. Tell your friends and loved ones about this new opportunity. We are happy to offer a complimentary Second Opinion Report to help those close to you live their retirement dreams. If you know of anyone who would benefit from this service, please let us know.

Make sure you’re on track to make confident financial decisions. To schedule your complimentary Second Opinion Report, simply call our office at 507.235.5587 or 800.658.2507, or email Ty@sweetfinancial.com.



Sweet Financial
services

Helping you live your retirement dreams.

Securities Offered Through

RAYMOND JAMES
FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.
Member FINRA/SIPC

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www.sweetfinancial.com

Sweet Financial Services is an independent firm.

The Client Advisory Council: Representing Your Interests

by Oliver Kollofski, Investment Advisor Representative-RJFS,
Director of Wealth Services-SFS



Have you ever wondered how we go about making decisions regarding the operation of Sweet Financial Services and the services we provide to our clients? Here is a “behind the scenes” perspective: The decisions we make are largely influenced by the input of your fellow clients, a peer group called the Client Advisory Council

(CAC). Every spring and fall, Bryan and Ty get together with a group of eight selected clients to discuss current ideas for the office and request feedback on our current practices, including client service. The meetings typically last 90 minutes to two hours; CAC members serve a term of two years.

Our new website incorporates thoughts and suggestions provided by the Client Advisory Council. We have also requested feedback on such items as the frequency of our client communications, utilization of social media, The Dream Architect™, and what’s important to clients when they visit our office. We encourage CAC members to be honest and share all feedback about our firm. We conclude each meeting with an open forum to allow the members to discuss anything that’s on their mind that is not on the agenda.

We value feedback from all our clients, and we strive for continuous improvement. Even if you are not on the Client Advisory Council at this point, if you have any thoughts on things we could do to enhance your experience with Sweet Financial, please contact us.

Sweet Financial Services Mission Statement

We simplify our clients’ lives and inspire them to build a bigger future with our passion for service and innovative guidance.

Core Values

Client Focused—With our passion for service, we always do what is in the client’s best interest and are courteous at all times. We always keep our commitments to our clients.

Honesty and Integrity—Our defining qualities. We are 100% focused on doing what is right and are accountable for everything we do.

Excellence—There is no substitute for total preparation and continuous improvement.

Teamwork—With respect for one another, we work toward a common goal while utilizing our unique abilities to exceed our clients’ expectations.

Navigating Your Dreams

Navigating Your Dreams

by Bryan Sweet, CLU, ChFC, MSFS, CFS
Financial Advisor—RJFS



Am I happy with where I'm going? Michael E. Gerber, author of *The E-Myth Revisited*, has observed, “The difference between great people and everyone else is that great people create their lives actively, while everyone else is created by their lives, passively waiting to see where life takes them next. The difference between the two is the difference between living fully and just existing.”

In other words, if you don't like where you're going, change it. It's your responsibility. It's not your company's, your boss's, your spouse's, your parents', or the government's responsibility to make your life better.

Even Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady, U.N. ambassador, and liberal politician said that. She said, “One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And, the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.”

You see, there are two ways to face the future. One way is with apprehension; the other is with anticipation. And to face the future with anticipation, to make sure you will be happy with where you're going, you must create your future.

As Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*, wrote, “There is, operative in this life, a profound spiritual and psychological law that causes things to turn out as you deeply expect. Your expectations play a powerful role in what you will actually receive. So it is important to plant the seeds of expectation in your mind and to cultivate thoughts that anticipate achievement.”

Peale advised, “Create in your mind a mental picture of what you expect from life. The picture you create, even when you are only half-serious, will be conveyed to your subconscious mind. When it gets into the subconscious, you have it, because it has you.”

So go ahead. Relax completely. Think of a motion picture screen with nothing on it. And using your mind as a projector, project onto the screen pictures of what you want to be, where you want to go, and what you want to accomplish. Create pictures of the future you would like. And keep focusing your pictures until they're perfectly clear and sharp.

Every time you go through this exercise, tell yourself over and over, “This is what I expect to get...this is what I expect to have...and this is where I expect to go in the upcoming year. This is what I expect to accomplish.”

And the good news is, most of the time you get what you expect. So the way to be happy with where you're going is to expect good things to happen. Here's to living your dreams!

Words of Wisdom

Have great hopes and dare to go all out for them. Have great dreams and dare to live them. Have tremendous expectations and believe in them.

—Norman Vincent Peale

Financial Survival: Life after the Death of a Spouse

by Lynne Burgraff, WMS, Financial Advisor—RJFS
Client Relationship Manager—SFS



The death of a spouse is one of the most devastating losses any woman can experience, and it's a loss that a growing number of women in the United States face. It's something most couples don't want to consider, but to avoid planning for it can be nearly as devastating as the event itself.

The financial impact of losing a spouse is often considerable, and something most survivors are ill-equipped to deal with. On average, financial recovery takes up to five years and you'll face many major decisions. Here we'll take a look at some of the issues facing the newly widowed.

Immediate Concerns

After the emotional time of a funeral, it might be hard to think ahead to the future, but that is something that is extremely important to do. Identify and document all of your assets and liabilities including your tangible assets and your investments. You also need to factor in your outstanding debt. Important financial papers will need to be located such as wills, deeds, insurance policies, investment statements (both regular and retirement) and bank statements.

It is important to make sure that you acquire as many death certificates as you'll need, since most banks, investment companies, insurance companies, and retirement plans require a certified copy to change or distribute any assets. It is also extremely important to update any wills, power of attorney documents or beneficiaries on your own accounts.

Now is not the time to be making major financial decisions. When possible, put things like selling assets or paying off debts on hold until you are better equipped to handle them.

While There's Still Time

Here are some steps you can take now to help ease your financial burden in the event of your husband's death:

- Talk about money as a couple. Discuss your earnings, your assets and your investments.
- If you don't have wills or living wills, create them.
- Because it can be difficult to establish yourself financially after the loss of a spouse, make sure you have accounts and credit cards in your own name now.
- Keep all of your important financial documents organized and up-to-date.
- Work together to create a plan, and adjust all of your important legal and financial documents as necessary.
- Decide together and appoint a third party to handle these concerns if you fear you won't be able to.
- If you aren't comfortable with your finances, take the time to learn.

Material prepared by Raymond James for use by its financial advisors.

Life after Death

Now that you've established what you have, it's time to look at what you'll need. Is your new income situation enough to sustain you? Are some small lifestyle changes enough to help your new financial picture, or will you need to find new sources of income?

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Because the death of a spouse may mean a drastic reduction in your household income, you'll need to carefully consider what you spend. Make a list of your monthly expenses, and use it to determine what you can do without. Budgeting for only the basics can help to cushion the blow and make your money go further.

Insurance and pension or retirement disbursements can be a big part of a widow's retirement. It is important that all the options are weighed and the taxable consequences looked at carefully. A financial advisor who has experience in retirement planning is a good resource to make sure these disbursements are done correctly and with your best interests in mind.

Planning for the Worst

Advance planning is a step that most people avoid. It invites painful thoughts and forces you to ask uncomfortable questions. But it is the single most important factor in your financial recovery after the loss of a spouse. Now is the time to start talking about it.

While it may not be pleasant, having a plan can make an incredibly difficult situation a little more bearable. If you'd like to learn more about how to protect yourself for the future, or if you need guidance now, please contact me.

Question & Answer

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Q: My wife and I each have Roth IRA accounts. The beneficiaries of both accounts are our seven grandchildren, and proceeds are to be divided equally among them. Will this arrangement stand up or must we each divide our Roth IRAs into seven separate Roth IRAs?

A: It will suffice if the designation of beneficiary form is filled out correctly with your seven grandchildren listed by name as primary beneficiaries and the percentages to each. Of course, it is always best to confirm this with your financial institution. At your death, the IRA can then be separated into shares in an inherited IRA for each grandchild. You can, however, establish separate accounts during your lifetime and name each grandchild as the beneficiary of their share. You would go down that road if you plan to invest the money differently in their shares.

Q: My wife and I are 69 and 70 years old, respectively, and our 401(k) is worth \$505,000 as of today. We are both retired with a monthly income of about \$7,000. We have about \$150,000 in life insurance. We will soon have to start taking money from the 401(k) as per the IRS rules. Where can we find information on tax-free shelters to avoid the heavy tax when we take required minimum distributions (RMDs)?

A: There is no way to avoid the taxation on required minimum distributions of taxable amounts from the 401(k) plan. Moving the 401(k) funds to a tax-free shelter will not avoid the required distribution rules. Perhaps you should consider converting your 401(k) to a Roth IRA if you have enough money to pay the tax. There would be no required minimum distributions going forward with a Roth IRA.

Unless certain criteria are met, Roth IRA owners must be 59½ or older and have held the IRA for five years before tax-free withdrawals are permitted. Additionally, each converted amount is subject to its own five-year holding period. Converting a traditional IRA into a Roth IRA has tax implications. Investors should consult a tax advisor before deciding to do a conversion.

Personal Notes *Personal Notes*

Callee Becker. Happy New Year! I hope everyone is having a great start to 2012 so far! At the Becker home things are going well. No winter sports for us—a nice break from rushing around every night. Noah is enjoying 7th grade and his grades have been impressive. The twins, Eden and Seth, are excelling in 3rd grade, and Beau is learning a lot in 1st grade. It's fun to see the progression each week. As you can imagine, I have lots of homework to help with each night! Chris and I are looking forward to a trip to Mexico with friends at the end of February. We are thankful for the opportunity to get away without kids! On the work front, I've been spending quite a bit of time learning new technology that begins with the letter "i". It's been challenging yet fun discovering all the capabilities the iPhone and iPad have to offer. Stay warm!



Stacy Berg. Shawn, Gibson, Gabriel and I had a wonderful Christmas. I hope your family did as well. It was nice not having a ton of snow to shovel and make traveling a worry. Electronics were a big hit this year again in our house with iPads and Wii games. Gabriel turned seven in November and Gibson will turn nine in February. As you can imagine, they were saddened to have their Christmas vacation end but are looking forward to finishing their 3rd and 1st grade school years. It was so great to see so many of you at the Client Appreciation Brunch we hosted in December. I look forward to talking with you on the phone or seeing you when you come in to the office in 2012. Wishing you all a blessed New Year!

Staff Training Updates

by Brittany Sutter, Director of Operations

We are excited to report that every staff member at Sweet Financial met their training initiatives for 2011. In 2012 we will continue to encourage each of our employees to commit to growth and learning throughout the year. Two big accomplishments we are looking forward to this year are Ty Totzke's completion of the Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) program, and Lynne Burgraff's completion of the Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA) program. Stay tuned as we share our accomplishments in the New Year!



Veterans Day Luncheon



We held a meaningful event to honor our local veterans on November 11, 2011. Guests enjoyed a nice lunch at the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont and then spent time reminiscing through the museum. Special thanks to Lenny Tvedten of the Martin County Historical Society for helping us host this special event.

News and Notes

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Holiday Brunch Thank-You.

Thank you to everyone who helped us kick off the holiday season at our Holiday Brunch on December 9, 2011. It was a great time for us to let you know how much we appreciate you not only as clients, but also as friends. Special thanks to the Holiday Inn staff for the wonderful food and to Emily Laabs for entertaining us on the piano. Mark your calendars now for the 2012 brunch to be held on Friday, December 14.

2011 IRA Contribution Deadline.

For contributions to be made by the 2011 deadline, IRA or Roth IRA contributions must be either deposited into the account or put into an envelope which is postmarked no later than April 17th, 2012, and mailed to our office. Please note on your check the year you are making the contribution for, so there is no confusion. Don't delay, stop in today!

Transportation Service Offered.

We are happy to provide free transportation to our office for review appointments for those who no longer drive or need assistance. If you feel that you could benefit from this service, please mention it when scheduling your next appointment and we'll be happy to make transportation arrangements.

Using World-Class Resources to Benefit Our Clients.

To stay on top of the latest information about retirement planning, Bryan continually seeks access to additional resources. To provide the best advice to our clients, Bryan creates strategic relationships with independent organizations that are recognized as leaders in their field, including Ed Slott and Company. Ed Slott is widely quoted by the major press on retirement distribution issues and IRAs and Bryan participates in his coaching program. Mr. Slott also holds professional education seminars on IRA distribution planning and estate planning for financial advisor firms, brokerage firms, financial planners, CPAs, and attorneys. The access to Mr. Slott's tools and techniques and the opportunity to work with his team on difficult technical issues enhances our ability to help our clients plan for their retirement success. *The opinions and services of Ed Slott are not those of Raymond James.*

Upcoming Events

Coming Soon: The Sweet Financial Services Year End Outlook Webcast will be available to view on our website. A link to watch the webcast will be sent out via e-mail.



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Change Service Requested

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Stock Buys/Sells — Lynne Burgraff, Ty Totzke, or Oliver Kollofski by phone only
(orders cannot be taken via email or on voice mail)

Any information is not a complete summary or statement of all available data necessary for making an investment decision and does not constitute a recommendation. Any opinions are those of Sweet Financial Services and not necessarily those of RJFS or Raymond James. Expressions of opinion are as of this date and are subject to change without notice.