

The "Ally Mo" News



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3rd Quarter

September 2008

Quarterly Quotes



*The only way to have a friend is to be one...**Ralph Waldo Emerson***

*The brain is a wonderful organ; it starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office...**Robert Frost***

*Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe...**Albert Einstein***

If you have a quote you would like to share, please e-mail us at gov_liaison@apasanantonio.com

Member Spotlight

The Alamo Chapter would like to recognize Frances Rios in the quarterly member spotlight.

Frances Rios is a professional Accounting, Finance, and Human Resources Staffing Consultant with The Mergis Group, a national recruiting firm and division of Spherion Corporation. She specializes in contract, temp-to-hire, and direct hire placements of Finance & Accounting and Human Resource Professionals.

Frances has been in the recruiting industry for over 20 years, the last nine with Spherion. She started as the Branch Administrator for the first 6 ½ years responsible for new hires, payroll, accounts receivable, forecasting and other administrative duties. She became a Recruiter in January of 2006 after the branch started its Accounting and Finance Practice in the summer of 2005. In 2006, she earned a corporate trip to the Dominican Republic.

She is currently an active member with the American Payroll Association and was on the volunteer committee for National Payroll Week.

Frances will be celebrating her 20 year wedding anniversary in October 2008. Her husband is employed at UTSA and she is the mother of two sons, John Richard Rios – Age 16 and Abraham Joseph Rios – Age 11. John is an avid golf player and she is currently very active in helping with fundraising events so that John's golf team can participate in competitive golf tournament throughout the state of Texas. Abraham has just started middle school and is looking forward to see what he will gravitate towards – sports/music/art? She enjoys reading and listening to music and she loves the San Antonio Spurs. She also enjoys watching professional golf when Tiger Woods is playing.



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3rd Quarter 2008 New Members

Chris Leneham
Ceridian

Sally Burton
West Corp

Krystal Perez
eEmployers Solutions, Inc.

Rashonna White
The OMO Group

Mike Emsley
WFM 2.0

Judy Patek
The PM Group

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

House-approved bill would fund E-Verify in fiscal 2009

Information Provided by: CCH Business & Corporate Compliance

The House has approved legislation (H.R. 2638) that would provide \$100 million—the full amount requested by the Bush administration—for the E-Verify program, according to an explanatory statement from Rep. David Obey, D-Wis., Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. E-verify is an internet-based system operated by the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA) that allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of their newly hired employees. Absent funding, the E-Verify program, formerly known as the Basic Pilot, is scheduled to expire on November 30. The Senate was expected to consider the bill on September 25.

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IRS Issues Final Regulations on Employer Comparable Contributions to HSA's

By: Anne S. Lewis, Esq.

The IRS has issued final regulations on employer comparable contributions to Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) in cases where an employee has not established an HSA by December 31, or where an employer accelerates contributions for the calendar year for employees who have incurred qualified medical expenses.

Background

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Pub. L. No. 108-173) added Section 223 to the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) to permit eligible individuals to establish HSAs for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2003. It also added Section 4980G, which imposes an excise tax on an employer that fails to make comparable contributions to the HSAs of its employees for a calendar year. Note: The excise tax is equal to 35% of the total amount contributed by the employer to the HSAs of its employees during that calendar year.

The employer is not required to contribute to the HSAs of its employees. But in general, if an employer makes contributions to any employee's HSA, the employer must make comparable contributions to the HSAs of all comparable participating employees. Comparable participating employees are eligible individuals who have the same category of High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) coverage (i.e., self-only or family coverage).

Employee Has Not Established an HSA by December 31

The regulations provide a means for employers to comply with the comparability requirements with respect to: employees who have not established an HSA by December 31, or employees who may have established an HSA but

not notified the employer of that fact. The regulations provide that, in order to comply with the comparability rules for a calendar year with respect to such employees, the employer must comply with a notice requirement and a contribution requirement.

Notice Requirement

By January 15 of the following calendar year, the employer must provide all such employees written notice that each eligible employee who, by the last day of February both established an HSA and notifies the employer that he or she has established it, will receive a comparable contribution to the HSA.

If an eligible employee then establishes an HSA and notifies the employer by the end of February, the employer must contribute to the HSA by April 15 comparable amounts (taking into account each month that the employee was a comparable participating employee), plus reasonable interest. The notice may be delivered electronically. The regulations provide sample language that employers may use as a basis in preparing their own notices.

Acceleration of Employer Contributions

For any calendar year, an employer may accelerate part or all of its contributions for the entire year to the HSAs of employees who have incurred during the year qualified medical expenses exceeding the employer's HSA contributions at that time.

In an employer accelerates contributions for this reason: these contributions must be available on an equal and uniform basis to all eligible employees throughout the calendar year and the employer must establish reasonable uniform methods and requirements for accelerating contributions and determining medical expenses.

An employer is not required to contribute reasonable interest on either accelerated or non-accelerated HSA contributions, unless regulation 54.4980G-4 Q&A 6 (where an employee has not established an HSA at the time the employer funds its employees' HSAs) or 12 (where an employer makes additional HSA contributions to correct non-comparable contributions) applies.

Effective Date

The regulations apply to employers' contributions made for calendar years beginning on or after January 1, 2009. However, employers may rely on the final regulations beginning on or after April 17, 2008.

Four Ways to Sabotage Your Job Search

Information provided by: [Accountemps](#)

As the saying goes, finding a job is a job. But you can make your job easier by avoiding these common mistakes:

Mistake #1: Keeping your search to yourself. Be bold and spread the word about the type of position you're seeking — and your overall career goals — to family, friends, neighbors, even former professors. After all, you never know who might be able to open a door for you. In addition, connect with a staffing firm that specializes in accounting and finance, and expand your contact list by joining industry associations and using professional networking sites such as LinkedIn.

Mistake #2: Forgetting your homework. Research each and every prospective employer and then tailor your resume and cover letter accordingly. Carefully review the job ad for keywords about the position, and study the firm's website and current annual report to get a broader sense of the organization. Remember: You're more likely to win over hiring managers with a targeted approach that highlights your beyond-the-basics knowledge than with a generic one-size-fits-all resume.

Mistake #3: Focusing solely on technical skills. Careers in accounting and finance today require far more than an aptitude for crunching numbers. Employers seek well-rounded professionals who possess both industry-specific expertise and people skills. In fact, 53 percent of chief financial officers polled in a recent Robert Half International survey said they would be willing to hire someone with fewer technical skills if the candidate had stronger soft skills. When crafting your application materials, be sure to consider your communication, team-building, negotiating and interpersonal abilities.

Mistake #4: Failing to follow up. Another way to distinguish yourself may be the easiest – simply following up after submitting an application. In another survey by Robert Half International, 86 percent of executives said that job candidates should contact a hiring manager within two weeks of sending a resume and cover letter. Surprisingly, not all applicants do. A brief e-mail or phone call to verify that your documents were received and to reassert your interest in the job is usually enough to get a prospective employer to revisit your resume.

Accountemps is the world's first and largest temporary staffing service specializing in the placement of accounting, finance and bookkeeping professionals. The company has more than 360 offices worldwide and offers online job search services at www.accountemps.com.

Remote (Career) Control **Information provided by: OfficeTeam**

Higher fuel prices have caused many professionals to look for ways to reduce the cost of commuting. Combine this with the added availability of home office technology, and it's no wonder more individuals are working remotely. In fact, in a survey conducted by our company, more than two-thirds of executives polled said it's common for their companies to offer employees off-site work arrangements. Moreover, 82 percent of managers said they expect the number of employees who work remotely to increase in the next five years.

Of course, not all positions lend themselves to remote arrangements. Jobs that require a great deal of face time with colleagues or customers, for instance, cannot be performed outside the office. If your role allows for flexibility, you may want to discuss working remotely with your manager. Here are some questions to ask yourself before making a request:

- **What's in it for them?** Managers will respond more favorably to your request if they know the arrangement will benefit the company and not just you personally. Will the arrangement save your firm money or increase productivity?
- **Have I thought through the details?** Your supervisor will want to know key information, like why you are a good candidate for telecommuting, technology tools and upgrades you will need to successfully manage your workload, and security measures you have in place at home or at your proposed remote work site to protect company information.
- **How will I stay in touch?** Think about how you intend to interact with colleagues to ensure projects stay on track. Also, offer to provide regular status updates so your manager knows your progress on assignments.
- **How will I stay visible?** To avoid being overlooked for plum projects or promotions, maintain plenty of face time with your managers and colleagues. Schedule important meetings for your on-site workdays.
- **How can I show the arrangement will work?** Ask your supervisor if you can try telecommuting on a trial basis, working remotely one or two days a week. Propose several meetings with your boss throughout the test period so you both can evaluate how the arrangement is working.

OfficeTeam is the world's leading staffing service specializing in the placement of highly skilled administrative and office support professionals. The company has more than 300 locations worldwide, and offers online job search services at www.officeteam.com.

Preparing for Year-End and 2009

Plan ahead for year-end success! Learn how to ease your year-end crunch and tackle the toughest compliance issues with APA's Preparing for Year-End and 2009 seminars. This one-day, information-packed seminar is offered more than 75 times in 37 states during October and November, so visit www.americanpayroll.org to find a class near you.

Preparing for year-end and 2009 delivers the latest developments on taxation and reporting of employee fringe benefits, federal and state electronic reporting requirements, and more! Network and learn with your peers – more than 100,000 payroll professionals have taken this course, making it the most highly attended and valuable year-end seminar available. All attendees receive the invaluable year-end course book, including APA's famous Year-End Checklist. Visit www.americanpayroll.org and search for "year-end" for more information, course dates, cities, and full outline of the seminar.

Texas Payroll Conference

"Surfin' Payroll, Get a Board."

The Alamo Chapter was proud to attend the 2008 Texas Payroll Conference September 24 - September 27 in Corpus Christi, Texas. The conference hosted many knowledgeable guest speakers, provided wonderful networking opportunities, and gave all attendees the chance to have a little fun with the Sunset Cruise and Friday Night Party.

Alamo Chapter Booth

Alamo Chapter Attendee Reception



The Texas Payroll Conference will be in **SAN ANTONIO** next year so we hope to see all Alamo Chapter members there!



Alamo Chapter Calendar

Monthly Luncheon

- OCTOBER 16, 2008 *Unemployment Claims
Mecie Hardin, TALX Corporation
Held at Alamo Cafe*
- NOVEMBER 20, 2008 *Social Security Updates
Diane Owen, Social Security Administration
Held at Norris Conference Centers*
- DECEMBER 11, 2008 *Year-End Legislative Update
James Medlock CPP, American Payroll Association
Held at Absolutely Delicious Catering – Old San Francisco Steakhouse*

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