



CAPSTONE

WEALTH ADVISORS

Welcome to 2018!

Thank you for being on our mailing list. We hope that you and your family had an enjoyable holiday season!

As we enter into 2018, we cannot predict what exactly may occur, but we do know one thing – there will be new changes and challenges in tax laws. 2018 is being ushered in by the momentous Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which will affect the overall financial landscape. On December 20, the House approved the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and President Trump signed it into law on December 22nd. We will be monitoring the new tax laws and how they will affect each of our client's situations.

Our primary goal this year is to continue to help our clients achieve their personal financial goals. To make that process more efficient, we send a **2018 CHECKLIST** with this letter so they can check off any of the items they anticipate needing to be addressed this year. Additionally, Capstone will continue to offer the following services along with personal meetings:

- Quarterly economic updates;
- Tax reports to keep you updated on opportunities and changes;
- Regularly scheduled educational workshops on relevant topics;
- Access to our secure portal containing valuable financial tools
- A continuous flow of weekly e-newsletters with meaningful articles on financial, tax, and estate planning topics; and
- Client Appreciation events.

We would like the opportunity to help you in 2018. After reviewing the checklist, if you see any items you'd like to discuss or receive a second opinion on, we would be honored to offer you a complimentary financial check-up. We would appreciate the chance to review your tax plan, estate plan, investment plan, retirement plan and protection plan to make sure they are all coordinated in your best interest. We are interested in working with you. **If you are interested in our services, please contact us at (317) 577-8233 to schedule an appointment or email tbarthuly@capstonewa.com.**



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Looking Ahead to 2018

2017 was a good year for equity investors. With new records continually being set in the stock market, bond yields remained low and volatility was kept at a minimum. 2017 also had its share of excitement including: tax reform, natural disasters, geopolitical unrest and U.S. political division. Although these events kept investors wondering how each would affect equity markets, for an entire year the economy continued on a strong upward trend and ended the year on a high note.

2017 was the eighth straight year of positive returns with the stock market piling up milestones right through the last trading day of the year. While 2017 was a strong year for investors, it is still important to remain cautious and not become complacent. For 2018, the mantra of “proceed with caution” is still a central theme among many experts. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has created tax changes and one of our challenges is to stay updated on how it may affect your personal situation.

While equity markets are described as “a little expensive” by some analysts, most feel that 2018 should bring in positive returns. Bank of America/Merrill Lynch calls for modest returns in their 2018 Outlook and so does Morgan Stanley Research. In addition to the new tax laws, rising short-term interest rates, inflation and stock market volatility are also potential catalysts at the forefront of a changing economic environment.

Reviewing your situation is always wise and will be especially key for 2018. As always, our primary mission is to provide our clients with guidance and support on the road to their financial goals. This is a good time to review and discuss your plans with us. We can help you determine if you're still on track to meet your long-term objectives, confirm your time horizons and your risk tolerance.

The following are a few things to watch for in 2018...

Potential interest rate changes



On December 13, the Fed raised interest rates for the third time in 2017, increasing it to a range of 1.25-1.5%. The Fed is scheduled to raise rates again in 2018 and many economists are expecting to see two or three more interest rate increases throughout the year. Numerous factors go into the Fed officials decision to increase rates and 2018 should bring its share of challenges. We will continue to keep a close eye on interest rate changes this year.

Tax reform

Congress approved the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and on December 22nd President Donald J. Trump signed into law the most sweeping overhaul of the U.S. tax code in 31 years.



Please keep in mind that each individual or household situation is different and in our upcoming first quarter Tax Report, we will discuss how the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will affect tax payers and investors. Many variables could potentially affect each person's tax scenario and tax planning strategies differently so we suggest you consult a qualified tax professional each time you implement a tax strategy.

Stock market volatility

Goldman Sachs Research Economists predict a generous 4% GDP growth in 2018. With what some call the Goldilocks Economy in effect (moderate economic growth, low inflation and market-friendly monetary policy) and decreasing unemployment rates, economic prognosticators forecasts are bullish for 2018 and are looking for economic growth.



While 2017 was a non-volatile year for equity investors, market volatility is a part of investing and could return in 2018. As advisors, we will attempt to carefully monitor market conditions and our client's timeframes. For now, investors need to prepare for what could be an interesting year in both equity and debt markets.

Here is a checklist of events and information that can help us advise you in 2018. Please help us identify which items you would like us to address with you this year.

- Do you anticipate changes to your investment goals?
- Has your risk tolerance changed?
- Have your 2018 income or savings needs changed?
- Do you plan on retiring or changing jobs?
- Will there be a change in your marital status?
- Do you plan on moving, refinancing or selling/transferring a major asset such as a home or business?
- Did you recently receive or anticipate receiving a gift or inheritance?
- Will you have any changes in your income needs +/- (i.e. vacation, assisted living needs, selling home, child/grandchild)?
- Do you expect any additional family members or dependents?
- Do you anticipate any additional dependents such as an elderly parent or other family member? Will they require assisted living?
- Do you have a child/grandchild you will be assisting with their educational cost needs through a 529 plan?
- Do you anticipate any major transfer of wealth?
- Do you plan on gifting to heirs or donating money to charity?
- Do you need to adjust your estate plan?
- Do you maximize your ability to use retirement plans?
- Do you want to explore converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA?
- Do you or a dependent family member have a severe illness?
- Do you anticipate any life, financial, or employment (retiring) changes that may require you to make adjustments to your life and health insurance policies?
- Did you contribute to an IRA? If not, would you like to discuss contributing to an IRA before April's tax deadline.
- Is there anything else we should know to help you plan for 2018?



Important Birthdays

- 50** Allows for catch-up contributions to IRAs and qualified retirements plans.
- 55** If you are retired, allows you to take distributions from your 401(k) without the 10% penalty
- 59½** Allows you to take distributions from an IRA, annuity, or other retirement plan without penalty
- 60** Allows for start of widow/ widower benefits from Social Security
- 62** Allows for starting early Social Security benefits
- 65** Allows for enrollment in Medicare & the government drug plan
- 65-67** Allows for full retirement benefits from Social Security
- 70** Start date for enhanced Social Security benefits if you deferred claiming benefits previously.
- 70½** Mandatory required minimum distribution from retirement accounts must be taken no later than April 1st of the year after the year you turn 70½.

If you have an important birthday in 2018, please remind us!