January 2016

**HERE’S OUR ANNUAL PACKAGE!**

**PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY**

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas/holiday and New Year!

**For our NEW clients (there are a LOT of you this year)**

This is the package we send out every year in the first week of January. It starts the ball rolling for tax season. You will see a list of 7 items below. We want to motivate you to get items 1- 4 back to us NO LATER THAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2016. Our method for motivating you to do this is rather shameless! We offer you a $30 coupon which will be used as a discount when we prepare your 2015 tax returns. We KNOW that this works because so many of our long-time clients have been taking advantage of this.

**For the rest of you**

You already know the drill! Thanks for being a part of this family for so many years.

**There are 7 items included in this mailing. Each one is numbered.**

To get back to us

1. Engagement Letter

2. Extension Checklist

3. $30 coupon (THE BIG BRIBE!)

4. Questionnaire

To bring in with your tax information

5. Auto mileage worksheet (**if applicable for your tax return**)

For your reading pleasure only

6. Payment Policy

7. When will my tax return be done?

**Here’s what YOU need to do…**

1. Fill in and/or sign items 1- 4 above

2. Get them back to our office *on or before* February 1, 2016

**Important to Remember**

All 4 items must get back to us by the deadline in order for you to get that $30 coupon. Now, remember, this is EASY! We are NOT asking you to get us all of your tax information (like your W-2’s, 1099’s, broker statements, etc.)….just the 4 items above. It won’t take you more than an hour do.

Also, remember that we prepare your tax returns in the order we receive them (as noted in item #7). So if you already have 90% of your tax information gathered together go ahead and bring it in! There is no need to wait for those final documents to arrive. This will get your return in line, and we can start working on it much sooner.

**A plea for patience, understanding and kindness**

As I said in my December newsletter, the IRS is already acknowledging that this is going to be a horrible tax season. There will be delays. Less than half of the people calling the IRS (and that includes us) will ever get through. The Taxpayer Advocate has stated that this will be the worst tax season since 2001. AND…we have many of the new Affordable Care Act issues coming in this year (like the penalty provisions and the premium assistance credits). The likelihood that all of this will come off without a hitch is LOW. We are anticipating a lot of headaches, delays and problems. It would be fantastic to find out that we are wrong, but I am not holding my breath!

So…..it is possible that we will need to extend more clients this year. It’s possible that your returns will need more time to complete. We just don’t know yet. We will keep you informed. We will be working our tails off in tax season. We take our job seriously and ask that you be extra patient with us this tax season…we’ll need it!

**Business auto deductions (this will NOT apply to many of you)**

Item #5 is a worksheet for giving us the information needed to legitimately deduct auto expenses (business mileage). Most of you have been complying rather well. It is imperative that you fill this worksheet out…one for each vehicle used for business. EVERY LINE NEEDS TO BE FILLED OUT, unless it is clearly not applicable. We will NOT be able to prepare or sign your tax return if they are not filled out AND you do not have adequate documentation. It’s that serious now. The IRS and Oregon are convinced that the majority of taxpayers are claiming business auto mileage without adequate documentation. And their audits are proving them right! That means that millions of dollars of deductions will be disallowed. Ouch!

Remember, credit card statements do not count as adequate documentation. You need to give us beginning and ending odometer readings for the year (often times you can get these from repair bills, etc.). You also need to keep some kind of log indicating the date, purpose of trip, name, etc. to be safe. I predict we will see a LOT of business auto deductions disallowed in the upcoming years….my only desire is that it NOT happen to any of MY clients!

**In Closing**

I sincerely hope that, as a part of this family, you feel WELL TAKEN CARE OF. We aren’t perfect, and we make mistakes…..but we sure work hard to take care of you. And we sure feel terrible if we ever let you down. We never want to be ordinary bean counters!

So, here’s OUR new year’s resolution….

***We want to be MORE attentive, MORE caring and MORE involved with you.***

Here’s wishing you a wonderful 2016….in spite of these economic times! We can’t change the times we live in. We have no control over that. However, we DO have control over how we REACT to it. So, let’s keep positive, help friends and family any way we can, and really be generous with others this year. It’ll make for happy hearts…and that’s a good thing.

See you soon,

***Mike Gordon and staff***