



Financial Principles, LLC

NEWS

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Navigating the New Financial Frontier

Local Financial Advisor Gives Tips to Manage the Changing Economic Landscape

Fairfield, NJ (October 7, 2009) — The financial landscape has changed dramatically since Ben Bernanke's first appointment as Chairman of the Federal Reserve in 2006. Although the Fed intervened in unprecedented fashion to curtail the biggest global downturn since the Great Depression, according to Brad Bofford, an independent financial professional, a magnitude of economic challenges still confront our nation. "We have not yet dealt with the \$2 trillion in bank-owned mortgage-backed securities," Bofford says. "In addition, unemployment is creeping toward 10 percent and could mean even more home foreclosures. Many experts are predicting a crash in the commercial real estate market and on top of all of that, the previously unflappable American consumer seems tapped out, unable, and in some cases unwilling, to increase spending to boost the economy."

While President Obama praised Bernanke for bold action and outside-the-box thinking that helped soften the economic fall, Bofford believes that it's become increasingly clear that many individuals and families may need to make bold financial moves of their own. "The 'borrow and spend' paradigm that sustained families, towns, and even our nation is broken," says Bofford. "With credit tight, consumers have to rely only on their earnings – something they've not had to do in decades."

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As the government enacts legislation to guide the economy out of recession, Bofford believes American consumers must adopt a new vigilance in order to understand and take advantage of emerging opportunities. “Just as buy and hold no longer works as an investment philosophy, consumers must make an effort to stay informed about how new policies enacted by Congress, the Federal Reserve, and the Treasury alter the playing field in order to make well-reasoned decisions.”

Bofford suggests positioning for the transitioning market environment by considering a number of tactical moves from including inflation hedges in portfolios to pursuing other strategies. The key, Bofford says, is to remain nimble in order to react quickly, when necessary, to market opportunities and stay informed about new federal programs. For example, the government’s Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS), or Cash for Clunkers program, came and went before many consumers were informed enough to take advantage of it.

“While the dollar value of these rebates, including the upcoming rebate on energy efficient appliances, may be relatively small, I still recommend paying attention to and taking advantage of these programs,” says Bofford. For example, someone in the market for a first home can take advantage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 which authorizes a tax credit equal to 10 percent of the home’s purchase price up to a maximum of \$8,000 for qualified first-time home buyers before December 1, 2009. For more information on the program, consumers should visit

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=206293,00.html>.

In addition to stimulus programs that can provide advantages for consumers, there is a new rule regarding Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) distributions to charities which are now able to be excluded from income. In other words, an investor, 70 ½ or older can transfer up to \$100,000 from an IRA directly to an eligible charitable organization tax-free. This provision will not apply to any distributions made in taxable years after December 31, 2009.

Bofford believes it’s never too early to begin tax planning. “If an investor wants to create a nontaxable retirement income stream but is currently prohibited because of a modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) over \$100,000, he or she should consider converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA in 2010,” Bofford advises. “In 2010 a provision in the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2006 will allow those with modified adjusted gross income over \$100,000 to do a conversion.” Restrictions, penalties and taxes may apply. Unless certain criteria are met, Roth IRA owners must be 59 ½ or older and have held the IRA for 5 years before tax-free withdrawals are permitted.

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About Financial Principles, LLC

Financial Principles understands the importance of planning – whether it’s for retirement, saving for college or even charitable giving. Two senior partners, Bradley H. Bofford, CLU, ChFC, and Mike Flower, bring a combined 25+ years of financial services experience to their clientele. Both are recognized as qualifying life members of the prestigious Million Dollar Round Table, “The Premier Association for Financial Professionals®”. As representatives of Securities America, Inc., Bofford and Flower are able to provide comprehensive services and advice in all areas of personal finance, such as estate planning, retirement planning and tax reduction strategies.

Bofford and Flower believe that a well-informed client is essential for success. They love taking clients from fear to confidence regarding finances, by placing a strong emphasis on educating people about how to prepare for and enjoy a comfortable retirement. Both advisors have contributed to articles in several leading trade publications including Investment News, Financial Advisor, and Research magazine as well as consumer outlets such as BusinessWeek, Money and New Jersey Business magazine. Learn more at www.financialprinciples.com.

NOTE:

When you need a knowledgeable professional to speak on complicated financial topics in an easy-to-understand and comprehensive manner, please call the advisors at Financial Principles.

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