

# IAPA TODAY



*The Newsletter for Idaho's Accounting & Tax Professionals*

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[www.iapacct.com](http://www.iapacct.com)

## *Free Web Tutorial Available for RTRP Exam Prep*

*From National Society of Accountants*

ALEXANDRIA, VA, January 19, 2012 — The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Registered Tax Return Preparer (RTRP) program is moving ahead in earnest. Tax preparers who want to prepare federal returns must take the RTRP exam by **December 31, 2013**.

As part of its continued commitment to the success of any members required to take and pass the RTRP Exam, the National Society of Accountants (NSA) is offering a free web tutorial to help prepare for the exam.

Entitled "Surviving the RTRP Exam: A Web-Based Tutorial," it is available online at <http://connect.nsacct.org/RTRP>. Presented by John O. Everett, CPA, PhD, co-author of the NSA RTRP Exam Review Course, the tutorial will help members brush up on what they need to know to take an online, multiple choice, true/false examination.

For those who desire more in-depth

preparation, NSA also offers a self-study Exam Review Course. Written by subject matter experts John O. Everett, Ph.D., CPA and Cherie J. Hennig, Ph.D., CPA, the NSA RTRP Exam Review Course provides a thorough review of all federal taxation topics and subjects outlined by the IRS.

The course is available in three formats: File download, CD-ROM, and print. For NSA members, the cost for the File Download and CD-ROM versions is \$100, and the cost of the print book is \$150. Costs are \$50 higher for nonmembers.

NSA Executive Vice President John Ams also has advice for tax preparers: "The IRS will update the tax law on which the exam is based in early April 2012 so that the exam available after April 15 will be the 2011 Code – the very same Code preparers will be working with for hours and hours during the upcoming tax season. In other words, if you prepare a number for Form 1040 re-

turns during tax season you will also be taking a cram course on the tax content in the exam. Why not take the exam right after that tax season cram course?"

Following this advice gives tax preparers time to prepare and still take the exam well before the deadline. In the meantime, the NSA education programs will help ensure they have the knowledge needed to pass. NSA also has an RTRP website that has everything paid preparers need at <http://connect.nsacct.org/RTRP>. For more information about NSA, visit [www.nsacct.org](http://www.nsacct.org).

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*NSA and its affiliates represent 30,000 members who provide accounting, auditing, tax preparation, financial and estate planning, and management services to approximately 19 million individuals and business clients. Most members are sole practitioners or partners in small- to medium- size accounting firms. NSA protects the public by requiring its members to adhere to a strict code of ethics. For more information, visit [www.nsacct.org](http://www.nsacct.org).*

## *Welcome to 2012!*

The IAPA computer has experienced some technical difficulties this month, so my apologies for sending this Happy New Year's greeting a bit late. But, better late than never, eh? My hope for you all is that 2012 proves to be a much better year economically than the past several have been.

Don't be a stranger—give the office a call once in awhile. I like to know my phone still works!

Best regards, Barb Neiwert, Executive Director—1-888-866-2160

## Don't forget IAPA Member Benefit—

As an IAPA Member benefit, you can now receive discounts on a variety of insurance products, including Disability Income Insurance and Long Term Care Insurance through our affiliation with Chad McDonald of MassMutual.

IAPA Member Susan Orison of Bellevue saved a full 50%

when she renewed her E&O policy. "I was impressed with such a savings!" Orison said.

Contact McDonald at [chadmcdonald@financialguide.com](mailto:chadmcdonald@financialguide.com) or visit [www.financialguide.com/Chad-McDonald](http://www.financialguide.com/Chad-McDonald). Or just call him at 208-794-3599.

## IRS Stakeholder Liaison Manager Annual Season Filing Letter

Dear Idaho Tax Practitioner,

As the IRS Stakeholder Liaison area manager for Idaho, I want to thank you for your past support and ask for your continued partnership with your local stakeholder liaisons and me. SL is proud to be in our sixth year as the practitioners' gateway to the IRS. We have had a busy year, holding practitioner events, conducting national webinars, and establishing web-based tax centers.

Practitioners provided our local SLs with many suggestions on how to improve IRS systems. We actively worked on these suggestions and were able to implement many of them. This partnership strengthens our mutual commitment to taxpayer compliance.

SL is committed to getting you the information you need. While we do not answer tax law questions or have access to your clients' tax accounts, we can steer you in the right direction.

### How SL can help you navigate the IRS

Be assured that [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) has more than just forms and publications. You'll find the latest news, online tools, research services, guidance and contact information.

The best way to stay up to date with the IRS is to take advantage of our free products and services. Subscribe to [e-News for Tax Professionals](#) for weekly news briefs. We also offer tools so visitors to your website can link directly to "tax centers" and other "widgets", making it easy to find frequently-used web pages.

We make it easy to get up-to-date information from IRS experts. Join our free [national webinars](#), or check out [IRS Live](#) where tax professionals discuss tax topics with IRS leaders. Submit questions during the original airing or visit our [IRS Video Portal](#) to view archived webinars, video clips of tax topics, and audio archives of national phone forums.

Don't forget the IRS.gov Spanish counterpart [IRS en Español](#) and our new [Multilingual Gateway](#) for translated information. If you need a translator when meeting with IRS employees just ask for an interpreter. Over-the-Phone Interpreter Services (OPI) is available when taxpayers have limited English proficiency.

**How to keep up-to-date with the new return preparer regulations**

David R. Williams leads the new IRS Return Preparer Office implementing the new requirements for tax return preparers. Visit our Web page for [New PTIN Requirements for Tax Return Preparers](#) to keep current on implementation. There's also [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for PTIN](#). For additional PTIN information, contact the [IRS Tax Professional PTIN Information line](#) at 877-813-7846, available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. CST.

Check out [Many Tax Return Preparers Required to Use IRS e-file Beginning in 2011](#) for information on the new e-file rules and learn how to become an [authorized e-file provider](#).

### How you can help your clients and colleagues

Tell us when you see a problem or have a suggestion to improve our processes. We introduced the Issue Management Resolution System (IMRS) four years ago and have received more than a thousand IMRS issues. Check out some of the successes in our [IMRS report](#) on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).

There are many ways you can assist us to further our partnership. Help us reach more practitioners by hosting joint events or webinars. Include IRS information in your newsletters or post an IRS tax center or web link on your website. You can even volunteer to teach a [Small Business Tax Workshop](#) in your community and share what you learn.

Finally, stay in touch with your local SL. You may also contact me directly at 206-220-5659 or [kristen.a.hoiby@irs.gov](mailto:kristen.a.hoiby@irs.gov), or if you need assistance in Idaho, contact Senior Stakeholder Liaison, Kim Boyack by phone at 208-387-2829 ext 331, by fax at 208-387-2852 or by email at [kim.boyack@irs.gov](mailto:kim.boyack@irs.gov).

Filing season can be a challenging and stressful time, but together we can make it easier. Use our free tools, products and services; and raise your issues and concerns through your local stakeholder liaison.

Sincerely,

*Kristen Hoiby*

Kristen Hoiby Stakeholder Liaison Area Manager, NW Area  
[kristen.a.hoiby@irs.gov](mailto:kristen.a.hoiby@irs.gov)

## IRS Contact List for Practitioners

**NOTE:** Local Time – Alaska (AK) and Hawaii (HI) follow Pacific Time (PT)

| Title  | Telephone Number | Hours of Operation  |
|--|------------------|---|
| Practitioner Priority Service  | 866-860-4259     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| IRS Tax Professional PTIN Information Line                               | 877-613-7846     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., CT  |
| IRS Tax Help Line for Individuals  | 800-829-1040     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Business and Specialty Tax Line  | 800-829-4933     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| e-Help Desk (IRS Electronic Products)                                    | 866-255-0654     | M-F, 6:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. CT (non-peak)<br>Check out <a href="#">peak hours</a> . |
| Refund Hotline   | 800-829-1954     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Federal Management Service – FMS – Treasury Refund Offset Information    | 800-304-3107     | M-F, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., CT  |
| Forms and Publications   | 800-829-3676     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| National Taxpayer Advocate’s Help Line                                   | 877-777-4778     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Local Taxpayer Advocate – Connecticut                                    | 208-387-2827     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., local time   |
| Centralized Lien Payoff  | 800-913-6050     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., local time  |
| Centralized Bankruptcy   | 800-973-0424     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET  |
| Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD)                                      | 800-829-4059     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) – for Businesses           | 800-555-4477     | <a href="#">Automated Service and Live Assistance available 24/7</a>            |
| Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) – for Individuals          | 800-316-6541     | Automated Service and Live Assistance available 24/7                            |
| Government Entities (TEGE) Help Line                                     | 877-829-5500     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CT   |
| Forms 706 and 709 Help Line  | 866-699-4083     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Automated Collection System (ACS) (Business)                             | 800-829-3903     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., local time  |
| Automated Collection System (ACS) (Individual)                           | 800-829-7650     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., local time  |
| Tax Fraud Referral Hotline   | 800-829-0433     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Employer Identification Number (EIN)                                     | 800-829-4933     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Excise Tax and Form 2290 Help Line                                       | 866-699-4096     | M-F, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. ET   |
| Identity Protection Specialized Unit                                     | 800-908-4490     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |
| Information Return Reporting   | 866-455-7438     | M-F, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET   |
| ITIN Program Office (Form W-7 and Acceptance Agent Program – Form 13551) | 404-338-8963     | Message Line: 24/7 hour operation   |
| IRS Federally Declared Disaster or Combat Zone Inquiries Hotline         | 866-562-5227     | M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time  |

## Getting Ready for the 2011 Tax Filing Season

### Communications

[Tax Information for Tax Professionals](#) – Information Center for tax professionals.

[Follow us on Twitter!](#)

[Follow the Nationwide Tax Forums on Facebook!](#)

[Check out IRS on YouTube](#)

[IRS e-News for Tax Professionals](#): Subscribe to the IRS e-newsletter for tax pros

[IRS Video Portal](#) - Find video clips of tax topics, archived versions of live panel discussions and webinars, as well as audio archives of national phone forums.

[Outreach Corner](#) – Subscribe to have access to ready-to-use articles, [widgets](#), audio/video materials, and publications/flyers for you to use.

[QuickAlerts “More” e-file Benefits for Tax Professionals](#) – Subscribe to receive “up-to-the-minute” information on e-file events.

### Contacting Us

Your local Stakeholder Liaison office establishes relationships with organizations representing small business and self-employed taxpayers. They provide information about the policies, practices and procedures the IRS uses to ensure compliance with the tax laws. To establish a relationship with us, use [this list](#) to find a contact in your state.

### Tools for You

Want to find the pages you need on IRS.gov more easily? [Basic Tools for Tax Professionals](#) has a comprehensive list of what you need to help prepare your clients' tax returns and information on representation. [Electronic IRS Online Tools](#) will help you and your clients conduct business quickly and safely electronically.

### Help Us Resolve Problems

With your help, we have identified hundreds of large and small issues that were getting in the way of efficient tax administration. Continue to contact us when you or your clients notice something isn't working. The [Issue Management Resolution System](#) gets to the bottom of the problem. Check out some of the issues practitioners have raised, what we've done to resolve them and what we are currently working on.

## Get Found And Go Place With Google Places *by Hugh Duffy*

Could your practice use more customers? If so, think Google Places.

Google reports that 97% of consumers today search for local businesses online, so having a virtual presence in our digital age is essential. Google Places brings potential customers and local businesses together first online, then in the real world. It's a savvy way for businesses to be found in today's competitive marketplace.

### Make It Easy to Get Found

Did I mention that Google Places is free? If reducing marketing expenses isn't enough to pique your interest in the online platform, consider this: a page on Google Places (your Place Page) provides consumers who are new to your area with an easy way to get to know you, read reviews of your services and take action.

Sure, you have a website that works hard to give your practice visibility, but if you want to make sure your firm appears in Google search results, Google Places makes good sense. It's a more direct way to advertise your practice than putting your dollars in newspaper ads, Yellow Pages or other local efforts.

What's more, iPhone and Android users can find your business listing immediately while on-the-go. They don't need to be in front of a computer to do a search or visit your website.

### Learn From Your Relationships

As part of your free Google Places listing, you can add content and visuals to your Place Page, highlight special offers or services, and use the platform's reporting tools to gain valuable insight about potential and existing customers.

For example, the Google Places

dashboard is especially useful for understanding how customers find your practice. Review how many people are seeing your Place Page at any given time, find out how they have come to your page and see where they have come from. The dashboard makes it easy to see how many times your listing appears as a result of a Google or a Google Maps search, and what keywords people are searching to get to you.

It's also useful for tracking effectiveness. Check the dashboard's top search query results to see how many people found your listing when looking for an accounting firm. Google Places makes it much easier to measure online advertising effectiveness and determine how new business inquiries correlate to Web traffic than, say, a Yellow Pages ad — and, it's a whole lot cheaper. With Google Places, you can make more informed decisions about how to be found on Google and interact with your customers.

### Put Your Best Foot Forward

If you can find 15 minutes to spare in your day, you can gain visibility on Google Places. To get the most out of your listing, follow these guidelines to get started.

- Represent your practice exactly as it appears in the offline world. The business name field is just for that: providing the name of your practice. This is not the place to include your marketing tagline, phone number or website URL — unless they are truly part of your business name. You will allow for better searches if you stick to a concise name rather than trying to manipulate search results by adding extraneous keywords.

- Use a precise, accurate address to describe your practice's physical location. One out of five

searches on Google are related to location, so every Google Places business listing must have a mailing address. If you office out of your home, you can specify a "service area" during the sign-up process and choose to hide your physical address. If you specialize in multiple services, it's best to create a single listing that highlights all of the specialties rather than creating multiple listings.

- Provide a phone number that connects to your individual practice location as directly as possible, and provide one website that best represents your practice location. This should be pretty straightforward (in any line of business).

- Be specific, but brief, in categorizing your practice. Say what your business is (Certified Public Accountant, Accountant, Enrolled Agent) instead of what you offer (tax accounting). This information can be added in your description.

- Complete the registration fully. Provide Google Places with all relevant information, such as hours of operation, photos and appropriate logos. As part of their algorithm, Google measure the percent of completeness so lightly completed Google Places pages are seldom visible.

- Verify your listing. Your Google Places account must be validated or verified just like a newly issued credit card. Verification is required to confirm that you are the business owner or an authorized representative of the business being listed. No validation, no exposure.

Armed with this information, you should be ready to improve your practice's visibility and customer base by using Google Places. Not only will you boost your ability to get found and build relationships;

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

you will increase your ability to “go places” in your business. Why not be there when a customer is looking for you?

*About the Author: Hugh Duffy is co-founder and chief marketing officer of Build Your Firm, an accounting practice marketing and accounting website development firm. Hugh teaches a series of Accounting Marketing Workshops; writes an email newsletter reaching thousands of accountants; and is frequently published in various publications. He can be reached at 888-999-9800 x151, or at [hugh@buildyourfirm.com](mailto:hugh@buildyourfirm.com).*

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## ***PTIN Expiration notices are in the mail***

We are in the process of issuing PTIN expiration notices to those individuals who had 2011 PTINs but have not renewed them for 2012. The notices began last week and will be issued on a staggered schedule through Jan. 30. For individuals with online accounts, the notices are delivered to their secure mailbox and an email is sent advising the recipient to check their mailbox. For people without an online account, the notices are sent by regular mail.

As stated in the letter, beginning Feb. 21 anyone with an expired PTIN is removed from the list of valid PTIN holders until they renew. Any returns they file will be processed, but they can expect a contact if they continue filing returns without renewing.

We are still processing renewals and will continue to do so after Feb. 21.

***Kim Boyack*** Senior Stakeholder Liaison Boise, Idaho Office: 208-387-2829 ext 331

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## ***Plan Now to Attend Annual Meeting at Cannon Beach, Oregon!***

Each year the IAPA joins forces with our peers in the Oregon Association of Independent Accountants (OAIA) for an Annual Convention. We alternate locations and have it in Idaho one year and Oregon the next. This works well to get more people to attend and provide an interaction with accountants outside of Idaho.

This year the OAIA will host the Annual Bi-State Convention in Cannon Beach, Oregon June 20-22 at the Tolovana Inn. This year's CPE is "Dealing with the Collection Aspects of the IRS and Offers in Compromise" by Sam Peden. Most meals are included as well, and there is a separate lower pricing to bring your spouse or children.

What a great way to earn some CPE credits, network with others from Oregon and Washington, and let your spouse, children and even your pet dog (yes, the Inn does allow for pets!) roam the wide open, clean beaches and search around the tide pools of famous Haystack Rock!

The agenda is still being developed, but typically we'll hold our Annual Meeting and our Board Meeting on the afternoon of June 22, followed by a banquet with the installation of new officers for the coming year. Please think about joining us this summer. As part of the convention package, reduced rates are in effect at the Tolovana Inn. To reserve your room now, call 1-800-333-8890 and ask for the group rate for the Oregon Association of Independent Accountants. If you'd like to register, go to the OAIA's web site at [www.oaia.net](http://www.oaia.net)





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from Bob Jennings, click here or through the homepage of  
[www.iapacct.com](http://www.iapacct.com). You will receive discounted pricing, and the  
association will benefit, too!*

### 2012 Meeting and Seminar Schedule

1-888-866-2160

May 4 **Board of Director's  
Meeting**, Boise.  
Location TBD

June 20-22 Annual Meeting &  
Bi-State Convention  
with OAIA  
Cannon Beach, OR  
Tolovana Inn  
1-800-333-8890

Sept. 20-21 **Gear Up Business  
Entities**  
8 am-4 pm  
Post Falls, ID  
Red Lion Templin's  
1-208-773-1611

Sept. 27-28 **Gear Up Business**

Sept. 27

#### **Entities**

8 am-4 pm  
Twin Falls, ID  
Hilton Garden Inn  
1-208-733-8500

**Board Meeting**  
4:15 p.m. Twin Falls  
Hilton Garden Inn

Nov. 1-2

**Gear Up 1040**  
8 am-4:30 pm  
Idaho Falls Shilo Inn  
1-208-523-0088

Nov. 1

**Gear Up Ethics**  
4:45 pm– 6:30 pm  
Idaho Falls Shilo Inn

Nov. 12-13

**Gear Up 1040**  
8 am-4:30 pm  
Boise, The  
Riverside Hotel  
1-208-343-1871

Nov. 12

**Gear Up Ethics**  
4:45 pm to 6:30 pm  
Boise, The  
Riverside Hotel

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public accountancy is the principal aim of the publica-  
tion.*

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