

IN TOUCH

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Strengthening your Family Bond

HOW TO CONDUCT A FAMILY MEETING

Our clients often tell us that family is their most cherished asset. As you prepare for the future, it's important that your loved ones remain connected and informed, especially after you're no longer here. One powerful tool, conducting a family meeting, will encourage open communication and help navigate the complexities of wealth transfer with clarity and compassion.

Conducting a family meeting fosters transparency, reduces conflicts, and minimizes misunderstandings. By discussing your wishes openly, you ensure that everyone understands your intentions. A family meeting also empowers your loved ones and provides an opportunity to educate your family members about your financial plans and the roles they may need to play, now and in the future. This empowerment can make the transition smoother and less overwhelming during a difficult time. A family meeting encourages collaboration and mutual support, reinforcing the family bond and creating a sense of unity.

How to Conduct a Family Meeting:

Plan the Meeting in Advance: Choose a time that accommodates everyone's schedule and allows for a relaxed and open discussion. Ideally, hold the meeting in a comfortable, neutral setting where all participants feel at ease. We are happy to offer a conference room for this meeting.

Prepare Your Agenda and Outline the Key Topics You Wish to Cover: A typical agenda might include your financial and estate plan, the roles and responsibilities of family members, specific wishes regarding assets and heirlooms and instructions for ongoing family support or charitable contributions. Providing a written agenda beforehand will help participants come prepared and focused on the discussion points.

Share Relevant Documents: Gather and organize essential documents such as your will, trusts, insurance policies, and financial accounts. Share these documents with your family members to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of your plans.

Facilitate Open Communication: Encourage an open dialogue where all family members feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns. Be prepared for a range of emotions and ensure that the conversation remains respectful and constructive. Address any questions or concerns with patience and clarity.

Discuss the Roles and Responsibilities: Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each family member. This might include who will manage certain assets, handle financial affairs, or take on specific tasks related to your estate. Providing clarity in these roles helps prevent confusion and ensures that everyone knows what is expected of them.

Document the Meeting: Keep a written record of the discussion, including any agreements or decisions made. This documentation can be a useful reference for future conversations and ensures that everyone is on the same page.

Follow-Up and Update Regularly: A family meeting is not a one-time event. Regular follow-up meetings can help address any changes in your plans or family dynamics. Update your estate plan as needed and keep your family informed about any significant changes.

By conducting a family meeting, you can make sure that your financial and estate plans are understood and respected, providing peace of mind for both you and your loved ones. At Ellenbecker Investment Group, we are here to support you through every step of this important process. If you have any questions or need assistance in preparing for your family meeting, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. 📞

Julie Ellenbecker-Lipsky, CFP®, CDFA®
President and Senior Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group





Is Your Heart Healthy? Give the gift of a Heart Exam

Retirement is a time to enjoy the fruits of your labor and cherish moments with loved ones. However, for too many, this chapter is tragically cut short by unexpected heart issues. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., claiming over 697,000 lives in 2020. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)) Many individuals are unaware they even have a heart condition until a life-threatening event occurs. Studies show that approximately 45% of heart attacks are “silent,” (CDC) meaning they cause damage before noticeable symptoms arise.

The sudden death of a loved one from a heart attack doesn’t just affect the individual—it leaves a lasting impact on their spouse and family. For spouses, the loss of a partner can be emotionally devastating, especially when it’s unexpected. Grieving the loss is compounded by the shock and difficulty of adjusting to life without their companion. Financial strain and guilt often follow, as many couples plan their retirement together, assuming they will share experiences and time for years to come. A sudden death can derail these plans and leave the surviving spouse struggling to adapt both emotionally and financially. Very

often the surviving spouse feels like a turtle on their back, not knowing who to trust or even who to call.

Children and other family members are also deeply affected by the sudden loss of a parent or relative. They often bear the burden of grief while trying to support their surviving parent and siblings. Family dynamics change dramatically, sometimes creating emotional and logistical challenges during an already overwhelming time.

The good news is that many heart issues are preventable if detected early. Regular heart exams can provide a clear picture of your cardiovascular health and help you take action before a tragedy occurs. Checking your cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and heart function is critical, especially as you approach retirement. Last year I gave my three children heart exams for their birthdays. It took one hour, and it gave me peace of mind. Consider giving heart exams as a meaningful gift to your family members and even your employees. It is a gift that literally keeps on giving! Offering heart exams to your employees as a wellness benefit can show your commitment to their health, a healthy workforce is a productive workforce.

Always check with your doctor regarding your personal health circumstances and recommended screenings. Also available at Life Line Screening, (*lifelinescreening.com*) you can schedule a comprehensive heart exam at several convenient locations for as low as \$159.00. These exams are fast and simple; they assess cardiovascular health, identifying potential issues before they turn into life threatening conditions. Your heart—and your loved ones—will thank you. 📞



Karen J. Ellenbecker
Founder & Senior Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group

Do you have an LLC?

Don't forget to e-file your BOI report by December 31, 2024 (for LLCs established prior to January 1, 2024). All LLC owners are required to file. Scan this QR code to go directly to the FinCen site or visit boiefiling.fincen.gov



Making Communication Personal with Redtail Speak

At EIG, we are in the business of making finances personal, meeting each client where they are and providing exceptional planning. Each year, we look for new and meaningful ways to continue growing and deepening our relationships with our clients. We always want to make sure we are exceeding your expectations when it comes to our relationship. To continue improving, we are excited to announce that we can now personalize your preferred form of communication with your EIG team by introducing text messaging with our Redtail Speak platform.

For many of us, texting is the best way to stay in touch, schedule an appointment, or get questions answered in a pinch;

but we have always been limited by regulations around client communications and personal cell phone numbers. Redtail Speak allows us a convenient way to text with our clients, while still meeting all the regulations of our industry.

To get started, reach out to your client care team to review your preferred method of communication. Your team can send you an initial welcome text that will allow you to opt-in for future text messages from your team. It's that easy! We still love getting your phone calls and emails, but this will provide another option if you want to stay connected on the go.

If you would like to start texting with your EIG team, please reach out to your client care team. We can't wait to hear from you! 📞



Kristina Schnuckel
CFP®, AIF®
Director of Client Experience & Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group



When is a Good Time to Refinance Your Mortgage?



Many clients are hesitant to sell their home to “right size” because rates are higher than we have experienced in a long time. Even first-time home buyers are considering putting off a new purchase until rates drop. I encourage my clients to look at all the variables of a new home purchase... not just interest rates. Interest rates are variable, and the rate environment is always changing. Securing a loan today doesn't mean you can't refinance in the future.

One of the main reasons to refinance your mortgage is to take advantage of lower interest rates. If you have taken out your mortgage in the last 3 years, you may be looking for an opportunity to refinance. If interest rates have dropped since you first took out your mortgage, refinancing can potentially save you thousands of dollars over the life of the loan. By securing a lower interest rate, you can reduce your monthly payments, allowing you to free up cash for other expenses or savings goals.

Another common reason to refinance is to shorten the term of your loan. By refinancing from a 30-year mortgage to a 15-year

mortgage, you can pay off your home sooner and save money on interest payments in the long run. While this may increase your monthly payments, it can be a good strategy if you are in a strong financial position and want to build equity in your home more quickly.

Additionally, refinancing can be a good option if you want to switch from an adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM) to a fixed-rate mortgage. With an ARM, your interest rate fluctuates with the market, which can lead to unpredictable monthly payments. By refinancing to a fixed-rate mortgage, you can lock in a stable interest rate and avoid potential payment increases in the future.

However, refinancing is not always the right choice. It's important to consider the closing costs associated with refinancing, as they can be significant and may outweigh the potential savings from a lower interest rate. You should also consider how long you plan to stay in your home, as it can take several years to recoup the costs of refinancing through lower monthly payments. It would be ideal if you could recover the closing costs within 18-24 months.

Refinancing your mortgage can be a beneficial financial move under the right circumstances. Whether you want to lower your interest rate, shorten your loan term, consolidate debt, or switch to a fixed-rate mortgage, it's important to carefully weigh the potential benefits against the costs before deciding.

Consult with your financial advisor to determine if refinancing is the right choice for you. Otherwise feel free to reach out to me directly to create an individual plan that works best for you. 🏠



Tammy Niemann

Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group

Establishing Your Estate Plan & Beneficiary Designations

When we first meet with clients in the early stages of financial planning, it's crucial to understand their goals and what they hope to achieve. As we delve deeper, one of the most important areas we explore is the ownership and titling of personal and household assets. This process involves implementing some level of estate planning, which can range from simple to more complex depending on factors such as investment accounts, life insurance policies, real estate, and potential ownership stakes in businesses or other properties.

A critical aspect of this process is identifying who you might appoint as your successor for estate administration. Additionally, it's essential to consider any special family or charitable circumstances, ensuring these are reflected in your beneficiary designations for retirement accounts, insurance policies, and other assets.

Conduct an Estate Review:

The best place to start is by working with an experienced estate planning attorney. They can review any existing documents, recommend necessary updates, and help ensure your beneficiaries are

properly named and listed. Powers of attorney for finances and healthcare are essential for anyone over 18, and if you have children or young adults, you may need to appoint a successor to manage assets until the beneficiaries reach a certain age. In some cases, a corporate trustee might be worth considering.

Collaborate with Your Tax Advisor:

A well-constructed financial plan must consider how your assets will be used during your lifetime or passed on as part of your family legacy. Your tax advisor can help you understand which accounts to spend from or gift, with an eye toward minimizing taxes now and in the future. This can also involve taking advantage of tax code provisions to benefit both you and your heirs from a legacy planning perspective.

It's not uncommon for people to feel unprepared when it comes to deciding who will handle their affairs or how their assets will be distributed. However, by working with your wealth advisor team, you can make informed decisions that help avoid family conflicts and unnecessary legal actions like probate. Reach out to your EIG Wealth Advisor for guidance on these crucial aspects of your financial planning. 🏠

Advisors who provide structure and support®

Jamie Williams, CFP®
Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group



Life After Work: A Panel Discussion



If you had the opportunity to attend the seminar I hosted, with the help of a panel of six retirees, you may have been surprised or comforted by the conversations and questions posed to the panelists. Retirement is a time for relaxation, hobbies, travel and time spent with friends – and it is a time that will bring up a range of emotions – both exciting and daunting. This seminar was well attended because of the angst and questions around the emotional aspect of retirement. In addition, the attendees wanted to hear about how someone transitioned from a work life into retirement. You know your financial advisor is preparing you for retirement financially. Now ask yourself, what have you done personally to prepare yourself emotionally for retirement.

So why all the angst?

My hope is that if you are reading this article, you have been proactive in connecting yourself with an advisor to help prepare you financially for retirement. That said, you are the only one who can prepare yourself emotionally for

retirement. You don't want your retirement party to be a surprise party - "Surprise, you are now retired."

Retirement is a significant and transformative phase of life. Based on years of conversations with new and seasoned retirees, it clearly is more than a shift from a career to leisure time. It's a change that will impact every facet of life – identity, daily routines, financial stability, and social connections.

Here are a few topics addressed during the seminar.

HOW HAS YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE CHANGED DUE TO YOUR RETIREMENT?

Some retirees found time to develop new friendships or nurture existing friends. New hobbies or volunteer work led to meeting new friends. The panel referenced that relationships with prior co-workers suffered since they were still working, and the commonality of work was gone.

DID YOU FEEL 100% READY FOR RETIREMENT, WERE THERE ANY SURPRISES?

Most retirees don't feel 100% ready for retirement. Even with careful planning, there are uncertainties and emotional adjustments that need to be made around finding a new purpose in life as well as a new routine. The panel made it very clear that you need to be "intentional" about your day otherwise it slips away without any real purpose or agenda.

IN CLOSING, LOOKING BACK IN TIME, MOST RETIREES SHARED IF THEY COULD GO BACK, THEY WOULD:

1. Pursue passions and interests prior to retirement to connect with others whether in a volunteer capacity or a creative avenue. Some retirees felt they needed to reorientate their life - the hardest part of retirement. This is when you start to re-evaluate your retirement lifestyle. It involves asking the hard questions, relearning what does and doesn't work for you, so you can get the most out of your retirement by addressing the question: What are you doing in retirement?
2. Manage their health in preparation for retirement, just as they managed their finances in preparation for retirement.
3. Enjoy BIG trips early in retirement when you are physically able to enjoy the adventure.

Here at EIG, we offer seminars throughout the year on a variety of topics. Check out ellenbecker.com/events to see what's coming up! 🏠

Join us Saturday,
November 16th
for EIG's Holiday
Mercantile!



More info at ellenbecker.com/events/holiday-mercantile



Presented by Ellenbecker Investment Group, this unique radio show features non-profit organizations each week and explores ways for listeners to have an impact in our local community and the world.

Hosted by Jill Economou, EIG's Director of Community Relations, on Sundays at 10:00 AM on WISN AM 1130. Listen to past shows at ellenbecker.com/radio.



The Heart of Milwaukee Philanthropy®

Guests from Q3 2024

- | | |
|--|---|
| Above & Beyond Children's Museum | Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance |
| Blessings in a Backpack | National Christian Foundation |
| Bradley Foundation | Ozaukee Christian School |
| Center for Urban Teaching | Pillows With Wings |
| Halftime Institute | Project WisHope |
| Marquette University College of Business | Saving Others for Archie (SOFA) |
| Mars Family Foundation | STRV365 |
| Medical College of Wisconsin | Three Pillars Senior Living Communities |
| Mental Health of America - Lakeshore | United Way |
| Milwaukee Legal Aid Society | Walker's Point Center for the Arts |
| Milwaukee Opera Theater | Wisconsin Masonic Foundation |
| Milwaukee Tennis Education Foundation | |



Jean Range, CFP®
Senior Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group

TAX CONVERSATIONS IN AN ELECTION YEAR

“Are we there yet?” says my daughter as we’re driving. As many of you may have experienced, this is a question that is not asked just one time when driving long distances. In fact, multiple successions of the same question tend to occur over a rather short period of time. It is like those recurring radio and TV commercials for the upcoming election or those darn phone calls with pre-recorded messages announcing that it is your lucky day and here’s a special message from a special somebody. Oh, don’t forget those political pamphlets that come in the mail every four years, too. Perhaps, all that speak about pumpkin spice isn’t as bad as we think.

In thinking ahead, I’m reminded of the famous words spoken by Benjamin Franklin, “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” Tax planning is vital to portfolio longevity and try as we might to predict the future, sometimes it is unpredictable. What we do know is that current tax laws are set to sunset at the end of 2025, meaning that it will cost more to access your retirement dollars or to convert to ROTH. In less than two years, our tax rates will rise if nothing is done or if no one can agree to make a change. The next leg in our tax planning journey will be driven by who is elected in November.

If elected, Kamala Harris has recently announced and introduced new tax policies that include expanding the earned income tax credit, the child tax credit, and premium tax credits for those using the Marketplace insurance while implementing additional tax incentives for housing. She is also interested in making tip income tax exempt. Likewise, there is potential that the same policies set forth in the

fiscal year budget from the Biden-Harris administration will be used as a starting point in addition to other proposed changes to our tax laws that come with time.

If elected, Donald Trump plans to implement a baseline tariff on all US imports and a 60 percent tariff on imports from China. The sunseting individual and estate tax breaks enacted in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 would be made permanent. And business taxes would be reduced from 21 percent to 20%. There is also consideration of replacing the income tax with tariffs and making both Social Security benefits and tip income tax free. Likewise, the child tax credit could be increased to \$5,000.

Lastly for context, the Biden-Harris Administration proposed for the 2024 fiscal year to raise the rate of tax on corporations, individuals, as well as on capital gains while increasing tax credits for families and workers. They also proposed increasing tariffs, specifically on steel and aluminum on certain imports from Mexico. The current tariffs on Chinese imports would be expanded to also include steel, aluminum, medical goods, and green energy.

These are the headlining topics that we are aware of today. I’m sure there will be more both before and after the election. All planners and advisors are temporarily in limbo given the impossibility of knowing the makeup of the next presidential administration and Congress as campaign promises and headlines about changes generally lack detail and require the always-complicated passage of a bill through Congress which will take time and compromise in creating the final bill that is up to snuff.

EIG, as your trusted advisor, will keep you apprised of the upcoming changes and will adapt our planning to maximize your opportunities. Stay tuned for future updates and enjoy the ride. We’re getting there. 🚗

Communication = Trust®



Richard Wolosek, CPA
Tax Planning Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group

Simplified Charitable Giving

Heather Deaton
CFP®, CSRIC™
Wealth Advisor
Ellenbecker Investment Group



It is that time of year again – the time of year when we reflect on gratitude, generosity and helping others. With all the holiday busyness, traditions, celebrations, and shopping, sometimes charitable giving falls further down the priority list. So how can you balance your focus, feel good about your decisions and enjoy the holiday season? Keeping things simple can take the pressure off and free up your time to focus on what brings you the most joy.

Charitable giving can be done efficiently and effectively any time of year. One of the main charitable tools is a donor-advised fund (DAF). Tax planning is a huge part of a charitable giving strategy – we give from our hearts and can also gain tax savings if we do it right. With a donor-advised fund, you can add cash or securities (or other property and assets) and get an immediate tax deduction. Working with your tax advisor and wealth advisor to figure out that ‘right’ amount is the best place to start.

Imagine if the optimal amount (from a tax perspective) is \$20K – but you don’t have a nonprofit organization that you’d want to give the full amount to, nor the time to divvy it up across multiple nonprofits – a donor-advised fund is a way to ‘give away’ the \$20K all at once, and take your time to gift it to the nonprofit(s) at a later date.

A DAF is an investment fund that is managed by a sponsoring organization that is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity that administers the funds and is responsible for ensuring the funds go to qualified nonprofits. The donor is in charge of when and to where the funds are granted from their DAF while the sponsoring organization manages the investments, performs all the operational duties and provides education and information to the

donors and donees. With the DAF being invested in the market at whatever risk tolerance makes sense for your goals, there could be growth over time resulting in even more money going to nonprofits. Despite having to open a new account and make certain decisions at set up time (like the DAF name, what happens if you die, etc), it is a much simpler way to set up a charitable plan without have to commit to specific organizations.

Anytime throughout the year, you can grant to nonprofits as you wish (though the sponsor has the final say) a very efficient and simple way usually through an app, website or over the phone. You get the tax deduction at the time you add to the DAF, any future grants from your DAF do not have any tax impact. DAFs have gained in popularity over the last several years. In 2022, over \$85M of assets were added to DAFs, while over \$52M were granted out across the almost 1.8 million DAF accounts*.

Sponsoring organizations range from single-issue organizations (i.e. faith-based foundations) to national organizations (like Schwab Charitable) to community foundations. Each have slightly different rules so make sure they align with your goals. There is no mandated giving timeline so you can hold the DAF funds until the time you wish to grant them. Any unused funds at your death can be designated for specific charities or your fund can continue to be managed by family or beneficiaries. Start with a conversation with your wealth advisor to set your charitable giving plan and see if a DAF fits in. Watch future newsletters and upcoming events for more in this Charitable Giving series. 📖

*National Charitable Foundation’s annual Donor-Advised Fund Report, 2023

Divorce Mediation

How to Stay Connected During Difficult Conversations

We all encounter difficult conversations with family, friends, co-workers, and the public. Conversations between spouses about ending a marriage are some of the most difficult. The pain, anger, blame and anxiety that comes with the end of a marriage often interferes with the couple's ability to communicate at a time when they need to make family and financial decisions that will affect them for a lifetime.

Research by Drs. John and Julie Gottman has identified some of the most destructive communication patterns that can end a marriage including criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. It will come as no surprise that these patterns can also lead to a high-conflict, high-cost divorce. It doesn't have to be that way. There are process options and communication approaches that can help.

Divorce mediation is an option for couples to work together with a neutral lawyer-mediator as their educator and guide to jointly navigate the legal process. Despite the ending of a marriage, the reality for couples with minor or adult children is they are connected for a lifetime. Including a child/family specialist as a mediation team member can help parents jointly plan conversations with their children and restructure their family in the healthiest way possible.

In any difficult conversation, it is easy to focus on the other person as the problem. To stay connected and resolve issues, individuals are encouraged instead to focus on what they can control, i.e., their own behaviors. Here are some recommended strategies to support positive results.

ACTIVE LISTENING

- Listen to understand, not to respond
- Engage with eye contact, expressions and body language, avoid distractions
- Summarize what you are hearing to demonstrate listening and confirm understanding

"I" STATEMENTS

- Blaming triggers defensiveness, avoid it
- "I feel frustrated" rather than "you are so frustrating"

EMOTION MANAGEMENT

- Practice empathy; try to understand even if you disagree
- Stay calm; take a break if needed
- Consider how your words will be received before you speak

BE REALISTIC AND PRAGMATIC

- Focus on your goals for the future, not rehashing the past
- Be patient with each of you—difficult conversations are hard work

FOCUS ON ISSUE RESOLUTION

- Stay on topic
- Keep the big picture in mind
- Us against the problem, not us against each other

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

- Mediation with a neutral lawyer and child specialist will help facilitate respectful, problem-solving communication and steps necessary to navigate divorce
- Professional counseling and financial advising can provide support and education
- Language, what you are hearing to demonstrate listening and confirm understanding

These strategies can help maintain connection and a more positive outcome in any difficult conversation. For divorcing couples, focusing on such positive communication techniques and staying connected in a cooperative mediation process can provide a foundation to navigate the difficult conversations inherent in divorce. This is essential for couples who want to create a positive future for themselves and their family. 🏡



Dr. Casey A. Holtz
Family Mediation Center



Susan Hansen
Collaborative Lawyer & Mediator
Co-Founder Family Mediation Center
Hansen & Hildebrand, S.C.



My Investment Grade Bonds "Only" Returned 4.5% this Year

Richard Schiller, CFA®, CPA
Portfolio Manager & Wealth Advisor, Pavlic Investment Advisors, Inc.

September 2024

"Why on earth would I own bonds when they've only returned just short of 5% in the first 8 months of the year; meanwhile my stocks have returned triple that in the same timeframe?" We hear questions like this quite often during a strong stock bull market. But we hear the opposite during stock bear markets—something along the lines of "we are so thankful we owned bonds to minimize the overall portfolio price swings during this terrible bear market—why didn't we own more bonds heading into this?"

There are a couple of key points to consider when looking at these two very different market environments. First, we do not compare our investment grade bond performance to that of the US stock indexes such as the S&P 500, the Dow Jones, or the Russell 2000. That would be like comparing apples to oranges. Stocks and bonds have very different return and risk characteristics and different roles to play in your portfolio. Historically over long time periods, returns on investment grade bonds have been about half of that of equity investments. Considering an expected return that is lower, so too is the expected risk associated with bonds. You can look at risk in several different ways, but most simply from the price volatility, we know a bond at maturity is worth \$100/bond so by

staying relatively short to maturity (< 10 years), we limit interest rate risk—or negative price movements when interest rates rise. This has helped us to greatly minimize the downside price risk during the bond bear market of 2022 and 2023. While expected bond returns may be half that of stocks, the risk profile characteristics of our bond portfolios are also much lower.

When looking at your overall asset allocation mix between stocks and bonds, the key to success is setting a proper percentage mix that an investor can feel comfortable sticking to through both bull and bear markets. Reducing stock exposure during stock bear markets can be detrimental to overall portfolio values over the long term. A major benefit of bonds is reduced price volatility which helps to ease the overall portfolio volatility of stocks—you'll be very glad you own them when the

going gets tough in the stock market. Additionally, provided we are not in a rising rate environment driven by rising inflation, stock prices and bond prices historically have had a negative correlation, meaning as stock prices fall, bond prices go higher. This is because when economic growth and stock prices fall, interest rates are lowered in response to slower economic growth. Lower interest rates are a boon for bond prices—you'll be thankful you own bonds when the sledding gets tough in the stock market! Remember what role stocks and bonds play in your overall asset allocation policy.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your EIG Wealth Advisor if you would like to discuss our investment grade bond strategy in greater detail. 📞

Treasury yields declined across the yield curve



ECONOMIC UPDATE

Barry Mendelson
CEO
Capital Market Consultants, Inc.



Economic growth defied expectations in the second quarter. The U.S. economy accelerated in the second quarter as consumers increased spending, businesses invested more in equipment and stocked inventories, and inflation cooled. Real GDP expanded at a 3.0% annualized rate, a sizable acceleration from 1.4% in Q1. Such a strong upturn could be head-scratching when stacked against the various and broader signs of economic deceleration reported over the past few months.

No matter how resilient the broader economy has appeared, cracks have materialized across interest-rate-sensitive sectors. The housing market has been caught in the crossfire. Both new and existing home sales softened in June. Elevated rate expectations and election uncertainty have discouraged would-be buyers. As inventories have climbed higher at a slower sales pace, weak demand has become a greater burden on the resale market than low supply. Existing home prices rose in June, keeping buyers caught between increasing prices and elevated mortgage rates. Demand for new construction has also been losing steam. Plentiful new home inventories have discouraged development.

The manufacturing sector has continued to struggle in a weak demand environment. Durable goods orders plunged in the last few

months. The uncertainty around the election and its implications for interest deductibility and capital investment expensing will likely limit the scope for a manufacturing rebound heading into November.

Growth in real disposable income has not kept pace with growth in real consumer spending. Consequently, some households have resorted to unsustainable means to maintain current spending levels. The value of household checking and savings deposits has fallen, credit card debt has risen, and the personal savings rate has become depressed.

Deceleration in economic activity has been associated with some softening in the labor market. Payroll growth has slowed recently, and the unemployment

rate has trended higher. Consequently, wage growth has moderated. A welcome byproduct of slower economic growth and a softening labor market has been less upward pressure on consumer prices (inflation).

This easing of inflationary pressures has positioned the Fed to potentially decrease interest rates by as much as 50 basis points at their September and December meetings. It seems logical that investors would welcome such news. However, it could also beg the question whether a Fed's more aggressive rate cutting posture is indicative of underlying concern about whether the U.S. economy is slowing faster than the Fed would like. Recent increased volatility in the equity markets may be another sign of this concern and its potential impact on future corporate earnings. 📉

Personal Consumption Expenditures



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

NAME TWINS of EIG

As Ellenbecker Investment Group continues to grow, you may have noticed we have some duplicate names on our team. Some are spelled differently but sound the same. Others are spelled the same but pronounced differently. And others share it all, even down to unique spellings! Meet the "Name Twins" of EIG!

To learn more about these team members and more, visit [ellenbecker.com/our-team!](https://ellenbecker.com/our-team)



Amy (Tax Planning Associate) and Amy (Investment Operations Associate)



Heather (Wealth Advisor) and Heather (Chief Financial Officer)



Ryan (Wealth Advisor) and Ryan (Investment Operations Associate)



Sandra (Director of Tax Planning) and Sandy (Wealth Advisor Associate)



Jill (Director of Community Relations) and Jill (Integrative Health Consultant)



Kristina (Director of Client Experience & Wealth Advisor), Kristen (Business Services & Compliance Associate), and Chris (Controller)



Michele (Wealth Advisor Associate) and Michele (Chief Compliance Officer & Director of Business Services)



Cara, pronounced "Car-a" (Wealth Advisor Associate), and Cara pronounced "Care-a" (Chief People Officer)

WELCOME: New Team Members



Stacy Melichar joined Ellenbecker Investment Group in August 2024 as an Investment Operations Associate with 9 years of experience in the financial services industry. A graduate of Carroll College, Stacy lives in Pewaukee and enjoys going on walks, doing jigsaw puzzles, drawing, and watching football – especially the Green Bay Packers.

ICYMI (IN CASE YOU MISSED IT)

Do you follow EIG on Facebook and/or LinkedIn? If not, you don't want to miss this!

September was Volunteer Month at EIG! Team members made blankets for the animals of Wisconsin Humane Society, packed lunches at Ronald McDonald House, and harvested poblano and bell peppers at the Hunger Task Force Farm!

Stay up to date on EIG's upcoming events, radio shows, and other important news by following us on social media.

facebook.com/EllenbeckerInvestmentGroup

linkedin.com/Ellenbecker-investment-group



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To register and view the most current list of events, visit: ellenbecker.com/events
To receive our weekly emails, please email: info@ellenbecker.com

OCTOBER

			3	5
6	8	9		12
13		16		19
20		23		26
27				

NOVEMBER

				2
3		6	7	9
10				16
17	19	20		23
24			28	29
				30

DECEMBER

1		4		7
8				14
15		18		21
22	24	25		28
29		31		

Visit ellenbecker.com/events for dates of our upcoming Tax Seminar and Town Hall meetings!

EVERY SUNDAY

Money Sense on WISN AM1130	12:00 PM
Milwaukee's Philanthropic Community on WISN AM 1130	10:00 AM

EVERY SATURDAY

Money Sense on WISN AM1130	2:00 PM
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OCTOBER

3	Medicare Seminar 2024	3:00 PM
8	Charitable Giving (@ Whitefish Bay Public Library)	6:00 PM
9	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM
16	Maximizing Your Impact: A Seminar for NPO Leaders	1:00 PM
16	Wisconsin Widows Connected (WWC)	5:30 PM
23	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM

NOVEMBER

6	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM
16	Holiday Mercantile	10:00 AM
19	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM
20	Wisconsin Widows Connected (WWC)	5:30 PM
28	EIG Closed: Thanksgiving	
29	EIG Closed: Day After Thanksgiving	

DECEMBER

4	Women's Bible Study	5:30 PM
18	Wisconsin Widows Connected (WWC)	5:30 PM
24	EIG Closed at 1 PM: Christmas Eve	
25	EIG Closed: Christmas Day	
31	EIG Closed at 1 PM: New Year's Eve	

JANUARY

1	EIG Closed: New Year's Day	
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Quarterly Charity Partner

Serving approximately 2,200 women each year, Women's Care Center of Milwaukee builds families by empowering women experiencing unexpected pregnancies with the resources, education, support, and community they need during and long after their pregnancy for their family and themselves to thrive, be nurturing parents, and become self-sufficient.



EIG is collecting these items during the months of October, November, and December:

- Diapers sizes 3T-7T
- Baby wash & lotion
- Fall & Winter clothing, sizes Newborn-6T

HR UPDATE

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to these employees for going above and beyond and being chosen as EIG's Employee of the Month!

- Ryan Fritz
- Colin Oquist
- Richard Wolosek

Employee Anniversaries

- July**
- Pam Peterson - 17 years
 - Sara McGuire - 2 years
- August**
- Evan Brown - 2 years
 - Sandy Miller - 11 years
 - Jeff Ellenbecker - 15 years
 - Jamie Williams - 5 years
 - Richard Wolosek - 5 years
 - Cam Roth - 1 year
- September**
- Ashley Olson - 3 years
 - Jennifer Geisler - 2 years
 - Cara Olson - 3 years
 - Cara McCarthy - 1 year
 - Alyssa Wiese - 2 years
 - Amy Anderson - 9 years

Anniversary Donations

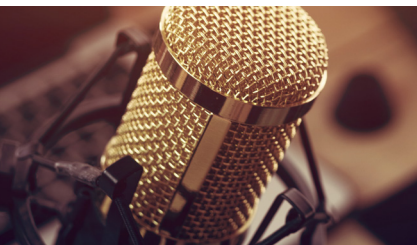
- Bell Tower Memorial
- Forever Friends Sanctuary
- Golf Fore Wolfe & A Cure
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society - Light the Night Walk
- Little Warrior Foundation
- Resilience Racing
- Soles for Jesus
- Wisconsin Humane Society



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