

## Sustainable Investing E-Newsletter

December 2009

Hope you all took advantage of the Thanksgiving holiday to share healthy food with family and friends.

### Sustainable and Responsible Investing

In October I attended the 20th Anniversary SRI in the Rockies Conference in Tucson, Arizona with more than 550 industry leaders. SRI in the Rockies is the largest and longest-running conference for the Sustainable and Responsible Investing industry in the world. The 2009 conference, *From Crisis to Opportunity: Investing for a Sustainable Economy*, is produced by First Affirmative Financial Network in collaboration with the non-profit Social Investment Forum. Some highlights from the conference included:

- Auden Schendler, Executive Director of Sustainability at Aspen Skiing Company, gave a humorous and eye-opening presentation on the **challenges of bringing sustainable business practices to a company**, even one that is committed to being green and has an Executive Director of Sustainability. His new book is: *Getting Green Done: Hard Truths from the Front Lines of the Sustainability Revolution*.
- Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins, CEO of Green for All, gave an outstanding presentation about how shifting to clean energy means redefining the very foundation of our economy. Green for All is doing fascinating work to ensure that equality and opportunity for all are etched into the creation of the new green-collar job sector. They are working with a broad coalition of groups including civil rights, social justice, labor, environmental, faith and community groups **to build an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty**. Check out their website: [www.greenforall.org](http://www.greenforall.org)
- Woody Tasch, President of Slow Money, participated on a panel with David Haynes, the Managing Director of Greenmont Capital Partners (a venture capital firm), moderated by the President and CEO of RSF Social Finance, Don Shaffer. I found Woody's comments about **investing for the long-term health and well-being of society** at large to be very compelling. He has a new book out, *Inquiries into the Nature of Slow Money*, that presents a strategy for investing in local food systems and designing capital markets around preservation and restoration rather than consumption.

And, of course, there were numerous other great speakers and informative sessions on Sustainable and Responsible Investing, including sessions about specific SRI funds, investment strategies, shareholder initiatives, and community investing. As always, it was the best place to meet, share, and learn from other SRI-focused financial planners and investment advisors.

- **Financial Innovation and the Poor** (September 25, 2009 issue of *The Economist*) is a fascinating article about the growing interest in social finance and the launch of the Global Impact Investing Network that is “in effect, a commitment to create a new asset class — impact investing — yielding a financial return alongside a social or environmental benefit.” Their goal is to grow “impact investing” to a \$500 billion (1% of the world’s total assets under management in 2008) asset class within five to ten years. The kinds of initiatives being financed include microfinance, basic health care clinics, organic food, water purification, immunizations, charter schools, and other activities that improve the lives of the disadvantaged in both developed and developing countries. This is a short article worth the read:  
[http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=14493098](http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=14493098)

**For more news on Sustainable and Responsible Investing, go to my website ([www.arcadvisers.net](http://www.arcadvisers.net)) where you will find the October 2009 issues of:**

**Market Commentary** – This issue highlights the strong 3rd quarter for stocks, discusses the advantages/disadvantages of stocks versus bonds, and discusses strategies for bond investing.

**Affirmative Thinking** – This issue features an article on: “Overcoming Short-termism: A Call for a More Responsible Approach to Investment and Business Management,” an initiative that is gaining support from people as diverse as labor leaders, John Bogle of Vanguard, and Warren Buffet. The issue also describes First Affirmatives efforts, along with 180 like-minded investment institutions representing more than \$13 trillion, to encourage an international treaty to address global warming, initiatives around green building, and an update on Congress’ efforts to address global warming.

**Deeper Thinking** – This is a special report from First Affirmative that provides an excellent overview of Community Investing.

## Quick Planning Reminders

On another note, it seems that the time between Thanksgiving and the end of the year gets shorter every year. With that in mind, here are a few financial planning things to think about before year-end.

- If you have any **investments in a taxable account**, review the unrealized gains/losses. Depending in your tax situation, it may be to your benefit to sell certain holdings before year-end to “harvest” the gains or losses.
- If you have a target asset allocation (which you should!) for your investment accounts, now is a good time to **rebalance your holdings back to your target allocation**, if you haven’t done so already. That goes for your **taxable and retirement accounts**.
- Don’t forget to make any **charitable contributions** before year-end, and if you are contributing stock or mutual funds, you need to act as soon as possible to get the transaction completed before year-end!

## Free Consumer Webinar – Investments: The Basics

- Stocks, bonds and mutual funds. You have read about them and even have people talk to you about them. But what are they? This webinar will provide information to help you better understand the basics of investing and how to determine if an investment makes sense for you. This is part of the Consumer Webinar Series sponsored by the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (the association for *fee-only* planners like myself). Follow the link below to register for this **FREE** webinar and to see the other helpful topics, including “Investments: Advanced Concepts,” and “Managing your 401(k).”  
<http://www.napfa.org/consumer/UpcomingSessions.asp>

**As always, don’t hesitate to let me know if you would prefer NOT to receive these periodic updates. Best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.**