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Another New Year is upon us and as in the past we want to keep you up to date as we enter 2016 and make you aware of the tax changes in 2015. We are providing you with some basic payroll reporting and bookkeeping suggestions. The staff is available during our regular office hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, if you have any questions.

Tax Rates

- The Employer's Social Security tax rate will remain at **6.2%** for 2016 with a wage base of **\$118,500**. **The Employee's share goes remains at 6.2%**
- The Medicare tax rate will remain at **1.45%**. Reminder, there is no limit on wages paid of the Medicare portion. This tax is due on every dollar of compensation.
The FUTA tax rate for 2016 - (**.006**) of the first \$ **7,000** of wages paid.
- The SUTA (State Unemployment Tax Act) base is **\$14,000** and the rate is determined by your history. In 2016 you will be able to file your Employee Tax and wage report online and make payments electronically.
- The Self-Employment tax returns to **15.3%** in 2016 and the wage base of **\$118,500 on the Social Security portion of this**.

Standard Mileage Rates For 2015 & 2016

Business	57.5 cents per mile	.54
Medical / Moving	23.0 cents per mile	.19
Charitable	14.0 cents per mile	.14

When using the standard mileage rate, be sure to keep track of parking fees and tolls. They represent an additional deduction

If you are self-employed and take a car loan to buy a vehicle for use in your business, the loan interest is deductible to the extent of the business use. An employee's auto loan is nondeductible even if the car is used for business.

Remember, you have the option of keeping track and using standard mileage rates **OR** depreciating your vehicle and using the actual expenses: Tires, gas, oil changes, insurance, registration, repairs and maintenance.

Reminders

Payroll

- ❑ Before any W-2's, 941's 940's or state unemployment tax forms are mailed to the various recipients, please be sure that they reconcile. All four Quarters of the 941's and state unemployment returns should tie out with gross wages, withholding, Social Security and Medicare wages reported on the W-2's, W-3 and 940. If you have any questions about this, please call the office.
- ❑ Personal use of business owned autos by employees must be added to W-2's for the year as well as leased vehicles. This must be included in Box 1 of W-2 and then shown in Box 12 as "employee use of vehicle". This must be added to gross wages on the 941 for the fourth quarter and the 940 for 2015. There are severe penalties for not complying with these provisions. Contact us if you need assistance on this.
- ❑ Reasonable wages paid to your child for bona fide services are deductible against your business income. In addition to income-tax savings, employing your child can result in savings on self-employment taxes if you are self-employed. Until your child reaches age 18, there won't be a liability for FICA (Social Security and Medicare) tax with respect to the wage you pay your child. As for your child's income taxes, the standard deduction is available to offset up to \$6,300 of your child's earning in 2016.

Bookkeeping

- ❑ Reconcile all cash accounts to December 31st statements. If the bank does not cut off your statement at the end of the month, please request a month end statement for December.
- ❑ Request or obtain copies of all loans documentation and their balances as of December 31st. We are finding more banks are requiring certain financial ratios be adhered to and a copy of the document will alert us to this requirement.
- ❑ Remember to send 1099's to any unincorporated person to whom you made payments in the course of your trade or business totaling \$600 or more in SERVICES in a calendar year and such payments are not subject to withholding tax and are not reported on a W-2. (Examples of 1099's that must be sent are to lessor's for rent payments, subcontractors, unincorporated professionals (accountants, lawyers, etc.), snow plowing, landscaping, and cleaning services.) Even if the arrangement is between a business and its owner, a 1099 is required. We have the forms and can assist in filing them.
This is a very hot area with the Internal Revenue Service. Their point of view is that the party paying the monies out is responsible to report the income and the recipient is obligated to pay taxes on the monies.
- ❑ Remember to take an inventory count at year-end. Values should be at COST, not market value.
- ❑ Review your repairs and maintenance items to determine if there is any need to capitalize. Prepare or review a list of Capital additions for your business and copy the applicable invoices.
- ❑ Prior to December 31st, try to reimburse all out of pocket costs to business owners with a business check.
- ❑ If you paid an unincorporated entity INTEREST of more than \$10.00, a 1099-INT must be issued to them. We can provide forms or prepare them for you.
- ❑ You can deduct no more than \$25 for business gifts you give directly or indirectly to each person during your tax year to include employees, customers, clients and vendors.