Karen Hawkins, Director IRS Office of Professional Responsibility, to Speak at Tax Debt Resolution Industry Conference

Karen Hawkins, director of the IRS Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), will be a featured speaker at the inaugural meeting of the National Association of Tax Debt Resolution Companies in Washington, D.C. The OPR has promised to take a "closer look" at the tax debt representation industry and the director will detail her office’s concerns and the continuing obligations of those who are authorized to appear before the IRS.


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The conference will be a chance for industry colleagues to learn about the new challenges for the industry and public policy options while helping to create a unique voice for tax debt resolution businesses.

About Karen Hawkins
Karen L. Hawkins is the Director of the IRS Office of Professional Responsibility. Prior to taking this position in April, 2009, Ms. Hawkins was in private practice at the Oakland, California law firm of Taggart & Hawkins where she specialized in civil and criminal tax controversy cases for nearly 30 years.

She has been a frequent speaker and writer on a variety of diverse tax law topics including: Innocent Spouse Relief, Attorney's Fees Awards; Collection Due Process; Civil and Criminal Tax Penalties; Tax Court Litigation; International Tax issues and Ethics in Tax Practice. Ms. Hawkins has a number of reported precedent-setting tax cases to her credit in the US Tax Court and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Ms. Hawkins holds several degrees including: MBA in Taxation, J. D. and M.Ed. Among her many honors and awards are: V. Judson Kelin Award from the California Bar's Taxation Section and the National Pro Bono Award from theABA's Taxation Section.

About the IRS Office of Professional Responsibility
The Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) establishes and enforces consistent standards of competence, integrity and conduct for tax professionals (enrolled agents, attorneys, CPAs, and other individuals and groups covered by IRS Circular 230.

OPR supports the IRS strategy to enhance enforcement of the tax law and to ensure that attorneys, accountants and other tax practitioners adhere to professional standards and follow the law.

The Office of Professional Responsibility provides education and outreach to the tax professional community and administers the enrolled agent exam. To support the IRS' strategic priorities, OPR ensures the integrity and credibility of the American tax system by working through tax professionals and with IRS operating divisions.
and functions. Circular 230 changes have created a need to increase awareness among tax professionals regarding the consequences of non-compliance.

Additional Conference Sessions

New Federal Regulation Targeting Tax Debt Resolution Companies: The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and the Financial Fraud Enforcement Taskforce

On June 23, 2011 the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (CFPB) issued its Federal Register Notice for defining "larger" non-depository industry participants. The Notice outlined the industries that the Bureau will immediately seek to regulate.

One of the industries to be regulated is "debt relief services" which includes providers of services that "offer to reduce medical or tax debt."

The newly created Consumer Protection Working Group of the federal Financial Fraud Enforcement Taskforce has stated that it will work across federal law enforcement and regulatory agencies, and with state and local partners, to strengthen efforts to address consumer issues, including schemes targeting vulnerable populations, such as the unemployed, those in need of payday loans, and those suffering from the burden of high credit card "and other debt."

The Future of “Deferred Enforcement” of the Federal Trade Commission’s Telemarketing Sales Rule

On October 17, 2010 the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR) became effective thus regulating "debt relief services" which included individual or companies that negotiate or settle "tax debts owed to the government."

The same day the TSR became effective, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a policy statement that it was unclear if tax debts are "unsecured" – one of the triggering elements of the TSR. In this session you will learn the history and current status of the treatment of tax debt in the TSR and the FTC’s work to regulate the industry.

Continuing Education Requirements and Compliance Solutions

Enrolled agents, certified public accountants, attorneys, registered tax return preparers all have differing requirements for continuing education and compliance. This session will review the current "what" you have to do as well as provide the "how" to remain compliant to represent taxpayers before the IRS.

View of the Industry from the U.S. Senate

The Congressional football of jurisdiction over tax debt resolution companies and their IRS approved employees is being bounced around from Committee to Committee with each claiming some part of the industry but not the industry as a whole. Learn the perspective of the Senate's view of the issue in comparison to that of the House of Representatives.

Referrals, Lead Generators and Marketing on the Internet

The increasing use of a "person that, in the regular course of business, supplies a provider with the name of a potential customer, directs a communication of an individual to a provider, or otherwise refers a customer to a provider" brings a host of opportunity and a wide variety of legal challenges. In this session you will learn how the laws of deceptive advertising, unfair and deceptive trade practices and liability for "down-stream" users of referrals can impact your business.
View of the Industry from the U.S. House of Representatives
In this session you will be briefed on the House of Representative’s perspective of the FTC’s efforts to regulate tax debt resolution service providers, current efforts to protect consumers and the prospects for the introduction of legislation that will regulate the industry.

Federal and State Legislative and Regulatory Briefing
Mark Guimond, the state and federal lobbyist for the TPRSC, will brief you on the current status of recent proposals to regulate the industry including the still-deferred Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR), California Senate bill 708, legislation proposed to Congress, the state Attorneys General proposal and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Registration Information
• Registration fees are not refundable and do not include transportation, parking, lodging, meals, incidentals or other expenses except where otherwise noted.
• All fees are per person.
• All speakers and subjects may change without notice.
• Early registration rates are only valid until March 31, 2012. After this date, registration rates will increase.

A specially priced block of rooms only for conference participants is available on a first-come-first-served basis. Reservations may be made by calling the Madison Hotel directly at 1-800-424-8577 and indicating group code 3u44vm or online at:


Early Registration is only $459 for the first person and $399 for each additional person from the same company.

Early registration rates are only valid until March 31, 2012. After this date, registration rates will increase to the standard rate.

A full conference program may be requested from: Info (at) NationalPolicyGroup (dot) com

Conference registration information may be found at:
http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=lwvevocab&oeidk=a07e5ind7z174c3b309
Contact Information
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Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.