



News Release

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THE SPARK INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 403(b) PLAN CONFERENCES

SIMSBURY, CT, June 19 -- The SPARK Institute is organizing two “403(b) Plans Issues and Answers Forums” this summer to provide employers, third party administrators, plan advisors, and others involved in 403(b) plans with an unmatched opportunity to understand, prepare for and capitalize on the opportunities created by new IRS regulations affecting these plans, it was announced today by Larry H. Goldbrum, General Counsel. The Forums will be held on August 18-19 in Austin, TX at the Hyatt Regency and September 4-5 in Palm Beach Florida at the PGA National.

Goldbrum noted that on January 1, 2009, the new IRS regulations will take effect, requiring major changes for educational institutions, hospitals, and nonprofits. “As the organization at the forefront of assisting the 403(b) community in preparing for these changes, we felt it was important to provide a forum for industry leaders to educate everyone affected by the changes and correct some of the myths and misconceptions that appear to be floating around,” he said.

Goldbrum said the Forums are designed for anyone responsible for a 403(b) plan and those working with 403(b) plans, including representatives from schools, universities, hospitals, non-profit organizations, religious institutions, third party administrators (TPAs), financial advisors and investment providers. During the comprehensive 1½ day programs, attendees will learn from industry leaders how to prepare for the new regulations, best practices for plan management and ongoing compliance, the differences between ERISA and non-ERISA plan requirements, and how to benefit from the new regulations. A Services Exhibit area and hosted reception will provide venues for networking and discussions with major vendors serving the market. Details about the two 403(b) Plans Issues and Answers Forums may be found on The SPARK Institute’s web site at <http://www.sparkinstitute.org/403b-conference.php>.

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The SPARK Institute is leading the way in the development of practical solutions to assist the 403(b) plans community in meeting the compliance requirements of the new IRS regulations. Its members include most of the largest vendors in the 403(b) plan industry who provide record keeping and investment services to plans ranging from one participant programs to plans that cover tens of thousands of employees. The combined membership services more than 90% of all 403(b) plan participants. In the past few months, The SPARK Institute has been successful in such critical activities related to the new 403(b) plans regulations as:

- Developing a sample Information Sharing Agreement
- Establishing industry best practices for required information sharing
- Creating an RFP Guide for employers that offer a 403(b) plan
- Advancing cost effective and sensible approaches for operating plans and regulatory compliance and with the IRS and Department of Labor.

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