

MONEY SENSE

Genesis
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INC.

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NEW BEGINNINGS, DEBT FREE

Savvy Shopping Crucial Right Now

As the cost of so many things increases, while our incomes remain the same— or even go down— we worry about how to make ends meet. On page two, we talk about the power of “small change,” but here we offer some practical “penny-pinching” tips for tight times— or anytime!

Take advantage of deals wherever— and whenever— you can find them. Coupons and rebates can help make your money go further, and there are an abundance of them out there if you know where to look.

Coupons aren't just for groceries anymore. You can find discounts on everything from dining out to parking to household goods— as well as offers for free samples and trial products. There are a crop of websites now devoted to helping you save money. One to try is www.couponmom.com, where you'll find links to deals and tips for stretching your dollars. On a recent visit to the site, we found a link to restaurants.com where you can purchase dining gift certificates for up to 75% off their face value.

You can also check out sites like wow-coupons.com and redplum.com where you can sort what you're looking for by category to make it easy to narrow the search for dining, grocery, retail or travel discounts.

If you've ever made a purchase online, chances are you've encountered a box somewhere on a check-out page where the merchant asks if you have a “coupon code” or “promotional code.” Now you can do a web search for these codes to make sure you don't miss out on any potential savings. Use a search engine like “Google” and type in the company's name and the exact wording it uses to describe its discounts (be they “coupons” or “promotions”). Chances are, you'll find a number of websites that offer these codes. Some may already be expired, but it's worth the time and effort to find those that aren't.

You can, of course, still find a wealth of coupons in your Sunday paper as well and through books like the *Entertainment Book*, which is a popular fundraiser among schools and youth groups and can be found in most bookstores or at entertainmentbook.com

Finally, take advantage of rebate offers when available, but be sure to keep your receipt and mail it in a timely fashion so you don't miss out on the savings. And don't get so carried away with saving money that you start using coupons or rebates as excuses to buy something you wouldn't normally spend money on. You're not really saving then!

Dollar \$aver\$:

Landscaping

- **Make your own compost** using yard waste or kitchen scraps or see if your local landfill will let you haul away a free load
- **Sow plants from seed**— it's cheaper than buying seedlings and can help fill in a lot of bare spots in your beds.
- **Harness the power of rain**— don't let all that valuable water go to waste. Use a simple rain barrel system to collect the rain for use in your garden or lawn, ultimately saving you money on your water bills. One inch of rain falling on 1,000 sq. feet of space (like your roof) can yield up to 600 gallons of water!
- **Go native**— choosing native plants for your landscaping can help you conserve on water and maintenance. Pick varieties that naturally thrive in your area and are easy to care for.

Payment Address

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Just a reminder that we have moved! All written correspondence should be sent to us at:

Genesis Financial Management
12640 Telecom Drive
Tampa, Florida 33637
(Payments still go to our PO Box)



The Simple Power of Compounding

If you saved a penny today and it doubled every day for the next 30 days, how much money would you end up with? Try \$5,368,709.12! Hard to believe, but that's the power of compounding—money making money. Now, not every investment will enable you to double your money on a daily basis (don't we wish!), but the key is to save consistently and start early to build wealth. Small amounts can add up when you take advantage of this principal. And to see just how long it would take for your money to double, use the "Rule of 72." Divide the interest rate your money is earning into the number "72".

Never underestimate the difference a few dollars can make—when spending or saving!

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Stimulus Payments: It's Not Too Late To File!

April 15th may have passed, but it's not too late to file for your Economic Stimulus Payment. You have until October 15, 2008 to file a return that can qualify you for this one-time payment.

Millions of people may actually be eligible for these payments but not know it. This includes certain retirees, disabled veterans and low-wage workers who may not normally file a return because their income is too low or is non-taxable. This year, they **MUST** file in order to claim the stimulus payment.

People who have no tax filing requirement but have at least \$3,000 in qualifying

income must file a simple Form 1040A return to obtain their stimulus payment. The law provides a minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 for married couples) plus the \$300 payment per eligible child, if the person (or married couple) qualifies. Qualifying income includes any combination of earned income, nontaxable combat pay as well as certain payments from Social Security, Veterans Affairs and Railroad Retirement. Supplemental Security Income is not qualifying income.

All eligible persons, including qualifying children, must have valid social security numbers. Individ-

ual Taxpayer Identification Numbers will not qualify. Also, anyone claimed- or eligible to be claimed- as a dependent on another's tax return is not eligible for a stimulus payment.

You may be able to receive free assistance with filing your return through an IRS taxpayer assistance center. To locate one near you, go to www.irs.gov, click on "Contact IRS," and then click on "Contact Your Local IRS Office." You can also call 800-906-9887 to locate a volunteer tax assistance site in your area.

So What's Seventy-Five Cents?

We've addressed the topic of saving money many times in here, but never has it been more relevant than at a time when most of us are wondering how we're going to accommodate higher gas, food and other costs in our already maxed-out budgets. How do we truly "live within our means" when our means seem inadequate to meet even the most basic of expenses?

We're used to thinking in terms of dollars- but what about cents? Every dime counts these days, so

it may be time to start tracking the "little stuff." For example, if you spend \$.75 on a can of soda each day from the vending machine at work, after thirty days, that's \$22.50- maybe not enough to fill up your gas tank, but certainly good enough for some milk, bread and other staples at the grocery store- or to pay down that credit card debt!

What about eating out for lunch? Assuming that you spend about \$5 per meal and eat out twelve times per month, that's an extra \$60 you could apply

towards necessities.

Pay attention to the small stuff- even banking fees. Try to avoid going to the nearest ATM out of convenience if it means you'll pay an extra \$2, \$3 or more just to access your own money. Brew your own coffee at home rather than pulling into Starbucks so often.

The reality is that every dollar- and cent!- really counts now, and you might be surprised how much of a difference small change can make once you start adding it up.

Please Note: Using New Address Avoids Problems

Old habits can be hard to break, we know!, but we're urging all of our clients to please make sure that when you send correspondence to us, you make sure to send it directly to our new address. We're no longer at 14025

Riveredge Drive, having made the big move- all the way across the street!- to 12640 Telecom Drive. The rest of the address is still "Tampa, FL 33637". Mail is still being forwarded, however time-sensitive in-

formation may reach us too late to have the desired impact if it has to be forwarded first.

So cross out that old entry in the address book and add a new one for us!

Visit our Website: www.YourGFM.com