

# audit report

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HAPPY  
*New  
Year*

Tax Management Associates, Inc.







## *review of 2015*

*A brief snapshot of last year, closing thoughts, and a look ahead* | by Chip Cooke

Where does the time go? As we come to the close of 2015 and move into 2016, I can't help but look to the future with excitement and anticipation. Honestly, it is impossible not to be motivated with what 2016 has in store.

TMA is currently gearing up for a gigantic year of growth in terms of new

clients, diversified services, and new geographic locations. The sales team has been hard at work spreading our value proposition and we are gaining real traction in non-traditional areas. In 2015, sixteen (16) states were projected to run budget deficits. A combination of pension deficits, healthcare issues, and declining oil tax revenues may

have contributed so 2016 isn't looking any better. That said, TMA's revenue enhancement and maximization programs are of great interest across the country. We strive to provide additional resources to our clients by locating overlooked, underreported or fraudulent taxes, thus increasing budgets and equality in the tax base.



As for our Operations staff – they are some of the hardest working people I know. Tom Tucker and Dale Baker have done an outstanding job in keeping our business personal property (BPP) audit clients happy and it is within this division that we are seeing the greatest growth trend. TMA started its BPP audit program in 1987 and in

2006 we completed 100,000 audits. In 2016, TMA is poised to complete over 200,000 audits for our clients. It took us twenty (20) years to complete the first 100,000 audits. Now we will complete that accomplishment in half the time. That's pretty incredible. It also shows that audits are necessary, well accepted, and rapidly growing in popularity across the country. Can we get to 300,000 audits by 2021? That's the plan.

Homestead Exemption Audit programs continue to grow in popularity as governments seek to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in their revenue streams. To date, TMA has completed programs in Indiana, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Michigan with data sales to clients in Illinois and Texas. I really see this as a bright spot in 2016 as more clients understand the need for compliance programs. Our relationship with LexisNexis® continues to flourish and we look forward to assisting jurisdictions with eliminating waste in 2016.

Not to be outshined by the traditional audit lines of business, IT is gaining momentum in custom software builds and data analytics platforms. What we see in the marketplace is a metric ton of useful data and no easy solution to make sense of it. CAMA data resides on one system while GIS may be on another. In fact, if you were to look at state and local governments across all departments, you would find very few common systems. In the past, various departments and department heads were given wide latitude on determining how they store and query important information about their constituents. Data silos are the norm with practically no cross department business intelligence. TMA has a

simple solution for accessing and understanding your data. Give Mark Cooke a call to learn what your data can provide for you.

I am also excited and greatly pleased to announce the addition of Jay Taranto, TMA's new National Sales and Marketing Director. Jay comes to TMA from Vision Government Solutions, Inc. where he served in a similar role. Jay brings over thirty (30) years' experience in the state and local government market and has extensive ties across the United States.

Now that we find ourselves in the holiday season I think it is important to count our blessings and thank all of our clients for the support they have shown throughout the year. We are blessed to have such wonderful and dedicated employees. Thank you for all that you do for TMA! We are equally blessed to have hard working professional clients. Let's face it, assisting the taxpaying public can be a thankless job. I am here to tell you that we understand and know our clients are a group of very special people. I am grateful to have spent time in Indianapolis with many of you at TMA's client appreciation event, celebrating TMA's 35 years of service.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank you for all of your support throughout the year. 2015 was a great year to be at TMA. 2016 is setting up to be a tremendous leap forward. I want to commend all of our employees on a job well done and I look forward to a fantastic 2016.

I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year! From all of us here at Tax Management Associates, thank you for your business and another great year.





# ask the coo

Tom Tucker, Chief Operations Officer, answers the tough questions | by Ryan Hunter

Tom is in multiple ways an anchor to our company. There are not many questions employees or clients can ask that he could not answer. He is one of the sharpest individuals I know. He is a family man, a deacon at his church, and a self-proclaimed best Grandpa. I had a chance to sit down and ask Tom a few questions. The answers that didn't make it to print will remain a secret and used as blackmail against him at a later date...

Where are you from? *I spent my childhood in Dallas, Texas but I've been in Charlotte since high school so I call Charlotte home.*

What was your job prior to TMA? *Prior to TMA, I spent 15 years at Mecklenburg County as one of their assistant tax administrators.*

What roles have you held here? *From 1987, I held the role of Director of Audit Operations. Since 2012, I have been COO of the company.*

What are the first three things you do at work? *I turn on my computer, try to say hello to fellow employees, and then I organize my priorities for the day.*

What is your proudest accomplishment? *Professionally, would have to be achieving the Personal Property Specialist (PPS) designation for the IAAO. Personally, it is being married to my wife, Barbara, for the past 44 years.*

How long would you last if your plane crashed in a jungle and you were the lone survivor in a predator-infested land? *I don't think I would be smart enough to have a friend like Wilson. I probably wouldn't survive that long. The real question is why would I want to survive? How old am I when this plane crash happens am I in my 20's or in my 60's?*

What is the last book you read? *Killing Jesus by Bill O'Reilly.*

How would you describe yourself in three words? *Fair, compassionate, and lighthearted.*

If you could be anyone else, who would you be? *One of the twelve disciples.*

Which destination have you traveled to that meant the most to you? *Israel.*

What is the best thing that someone should have? *Community. You can't be self-absorbed. You have to be cognizant of what's going on around you and be somewhat of a chameleon in your surroundings. You need to have respect for everyone.*

What was the last thing you bought that cost more than \$500.00? *I bought my wife a new wedding ring for Christmas.*

What was your dream job when you were a youth? *(Laughs) I was going to be an orthodontist.*

If you won \$10,000,000 what would you be doing one week from today? *After I give the IRS their third, I would give away half of the remaining money and volunteer a lot. (Then he gave me complex math on interest and how his money would work for him at his current age)*

Where did you go to college and what did you study? *I went to UNC Charlotte and graduated with a B.A. in Business Administration.*

How do you motivate others? *I let them know how valuable they are to me and how valuable they are to their objective. You'd be surprised on how much can be accomplished if you don't care who gets the credit.*

What is your management style? *I am more of a macro manager. I want to give my employees every opportunity to grow through giving them latitude by instilling confidence in them to make their own calculated decisions.*

What do your grandchildren call you? *My four grandchildren call me Poppy.*

If you could work in any other profession, what would it be? *My aptitude would have maybe been towards an engineering field but those guys are too serious.*

What is your least favorite part about your job? *I enjoy every facet of my job but at the same time, it is difficult to juggle my personal and professional life with the amount of travel.*

What are your thoughts about including Nerf guns in the office? *If HR would permit them it would be a fabulous way to alleviate frustrations. That's more of an HR question.*

Have you ever gotten into a fistfight? *A couple times I did and most times it was defending my brother.*

If you were on death row and you had one last meal, what would it be? *Chicken fried steak with milk gravy, and a slice of my mom's carrot cake.*

If you could play a professional sport what league and what position would you play? *I would play shortstop for the Chicago White Sox.*

This one is important, so please pay attention. What do you think dogs dream about? *(Laughs) You can't write that answer what's the next question...*

How many times does it take you listening to a song that you love before you actually hate it instead? *It depends but I can listen to a track a lot and love it. Other times, I find myself thinking why did I love this song so much it's too slow!*

You're a new addition to the crayon box, what color would you be? *I would say orange because when I was a child that was my favorite color.*

What is the last movie you watched? *Creed.*

If I gave you three bucks to go buy me a mango Snapple, and it only cost two something, would you bring me all the change or would you tell me it was actually three bucks? Because I'll know. I'll know a mango Snapple doesn't cost that much. *Well Ryan, if I have any kind of suspicion that you were penny pitching like that I would probably just buy it for you.*



## *indiana education*

### *Tax Management Associates assists with educating assessors in Indiana* | by Taylor Ennis

John Shelton, one of TMA's Regional Managers, assists Assessors by teaching business personal property courses in Indiana. In 2015, John taught courses covering audit complications and how to address them. Approved by the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF), this seven and a half hour course covers real versus personal property, accounting terminology, and how TMA performs audits. John's course reviews audit basics but he also takes time to address questions from Assessors and their staff.

John is a Level II Certified Assessor-Appraiser in Indiana as well as a Certified Personal Property Examiner in Michigan. With nearly 30 years of experience, John has a solid understanding of personal property

laws and encourages others to educate themselves in order to assess accurately. TMA has a commitment to our clients to assist in the training of staff in order to implement a well-rounded and complete audit program. TMA offers to train our client's personnel in every aspect of the audit process from reviewing and benchmarking returns to auditing Fortune 500 corporations. TMA encourages client staff to join our auditors on audits to learn the methodologies of auditing and the different approaches used to complete a full-scale comprehensive audit program.

The State of Indiana requires each Level II and Level III certified Assessor-Appraiser to complete 45 hours of continuing education every two years. John's courses are certified by the

state of Indiana and can assist you and your staff with fulfilling these goals. However, you don't have to be a Level II or III Assessor-Appraiser to participate. John encourages all assessing staff to attend in order to fully understand audit procedures. This course establishes the differences between desk audits, field reviews and comprehensive on-site audits. The class curriculum evolves according to who attends. Should participants have questions, John will always take the time to address them. When similar questions or issues consistently arise, those topics are included in future courses to ensure all areas of confusion or concerns about auditing are covered.

John clearly defines how proper audits should be conducted and recommends





what auditors should look for onsite. He advises that assets an auditor may not see can be just as important as the ones they do. For example, how does a farmer with bales of hay, bale it without a baler onsite? It is crucial to know key components or assets that certain businesses must own or rent in order to operate. John also reviews appeal issues, proper classification and professionalism in auditing.

In 2015, TMA held a continuing education course in the following Indiana counties: Washington, Allen, Porter and Marion. We expect to offer several educational courses in the upcoming year throughout the state of Indiana. If you have course topic requests or would like additional information on class time and

location please contact John Shelton or Larry Brandon at 317.841.0309 or 888.452.5556. If you are looking for additional continuing education opportunities check out [www.iaao.org](http://www.iaao.org) for available IAAO courses.

Perhaps you don't reside in the state of Indiana, but have interest in TMA teaching a course for your staff. Give us a call: 800.951.5350, Let's talk about how we can assist you.

We would like to say a special congratulations to Robin Ward, Indiana's 2015 Assessor of the Year! Robin is the Assessor of Hamilton County, IN and has served the County for 21 years. The Association of Indiana Counties (AIC) proudly granted her the award.

She also earned the Assessor of the Year award from the Association of Indiana County Assessors and for the second consecutive year, received the Indiana Assessors East Central District's Assessor of the Year.

Robin is currently serving her second term as County Assessor and is a Level III Certified Indiana Assessor-Appraiser.

Ward served as Noblesville Township Assessor from 1999-2008. She is also a member of the Association of Indiana County Assessors and past president of the Indiana Assessors East Central District and is currently serving as district representative. She is also a member of Indiana Chapter International Association of Assessing Officers.



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