



*Traditional values,  
new energy*

# FamilyMatters

NEWSLETTER

SPRING ISSUE 2009

**Scrivens**  
Family of Companies

## The *Scrivens* Perspective

by Peter Scrivens, President



**A**t the *Scrivens Family of Companies*, we recognize how important it is to adapt to an ever-changing world. We like to think that over the

past 78 years, we've listened—and reacted efficiently and effectively—to the constantly evolving needs of our customers. We believe that we've done so without compromising on the one practice that matters most to us and to those we serve: a personal, hands-on approach to every service we provide.

At times, retaining that personal approach has been a challenge, particularly when we've chosen to adopt and introduce high technology solutions. Certainly, that was the case when we recently created a new and more efficient website for our clients.

Yes, we wanted to streamline our services. And yes, we wanted to make our resources and our people more accessible. But we certainly didn't want any of you to feel that you couldn't pick up the phone, if and when you wanted, to speak to your representative. In other words, we wanted our website to be a door to our services, not a wall.

While we think we've succeeded, we'll wait for the final word from you. Let us know what you like, what we can improve, and what features you'd like to see added. And please, do it the way we've always done it—with a personal touch. ☘

## Passports a must after June 1

**S**tarting June 1, 2009, all Canadian citizens will be required to present a valid passport or other approved secure document to enter the U.S. by land or sea. At present, a passport is required only to enter the U.S. by air; you can still enter the U.S. by land with documentation such as a NEXUS pass or an enhanced driver's licence. To ensure you can travel to the U.S. this summer, we encourage you to apply for your passport as soon as possible.

You can obtain the forms you need for a new passport or to renew your existing passport by visiting [www.passportcanada.ca](http://www.passportcanada.ca). You can also pick up the necessary forms at the post office.

And remember, whether you visit the U.S. or stay in Canada this summer, you can always reach us by calling **1-87SCRIVENS** (1-877-274-8367) between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays. ☘

## Our seminars offer a wealth of information—and lunch!

**T**he success of the recent seminar/discussion on long-term care has convinced us that you'd like to see more of these "lunch and learn" sessions. Well, set aside an hour—and bring along your appetite for information—for two wealth management information sessions in April and May.

Both discussions will be held from noon to 1 p.m. in our upstairs boardroom. If you'd like to attend either or both of the sessions, please e-mail Stephanie Free at [sfree@scrivens.ca](mailto:sfree@scrivens.ca). We hope that you can budget the time for these valuable seminars. ☘

On April 22, Jennifer Sinopoli from CI Funds will speak about the CI Sunwise Elite Plus Guaranteed Minimum Withdrawal Benefit program. On May 27, Garrett Thiessen from Great West Life will talk about Critical Illness insurance.

### INSIDE matters

- Inside our website
- Save on insurance
- A recipe for saving



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## Our new website offers help in all the right places

Upgrading a website—and doing it effectively—is a complicated and time-consuming process. In the end, however, the only step that really counts is the first one: listening. More specifically, it's listening carefully to those who will eventually be using the site.

When we decided to restructure and redesign the *Scrivens Family of Companies* website more than year ago, we based our decisions on what you told us you wanted from your insurance and asset management provider. Based on your input, we've created a website that provides the information you need to make the decisions that are best for you, your family and your future. But while we've made it easier and faster for you to get the information and services you need, we haven't compromised on the one practice that matters most to you and to us: hands-on assistance and guidance, whenever you want it.

We believe the slogan we've chosen for our new website—"Traditional Values, New Energy"—describes exactly what we've created. Here are just a few of the improvements you'll find at our new website:

### Request a Quote

In the nearly 80 years we've been in business, we've come to appreciate that each of our clients is unique, with unique needs. At the same time, we know that your time is precious. The solution is our handy Request a Quote service. Simply

have your business or personal information ready, click on the Request a Quote icon, complete the questionnaire, and—voilà—you'll have your quote. Still not completely confident that all your needs have been addressed? No problem—just give us a call to speak to a representative right away.

### Tools and Resources

The Tools and Resources section of our new website not only provides the information you're looking for, it also gives you the ability to download the forms you need to act on that information. For example, there's an inventory form to help you list your possessions—a must if you're going to get the type and amount of insurance you need.

The Tools and Resources section also provides an incredible assortment of external links—everything from the latest road conditions to up-to-date information on vehicle recalls. For added convenience, we subdivided this section of the site into our three main lines of business: commercial insurance, personal insurance and wealth management. Here's a sampling of what each of these sub-sections has to offer:

#### ■ Commercial Insurance

There are links to Transport Canada, the most recent vehicle reviews and ratings, and the Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness, just to name a few. Other links include Canadian Crime Stoppers, the Safety Council of

Canada and the Canadian Coalition Against Insurance Fraud. In addition to easy-to-use forms and easy-to-access information, take advantage of our community links and safety links as well.

#### ■ Personal Insurance

As in so many other areas of life, prevention is essential when it comes to keeping your personal insurance costs in check. You'll find tips on how to make that happen at the Personal Insurance section of our website, under Tools and Resources. You'll appreciate the many links, from MTO Licensing to Car Heaven for used car disposal or donation. The forms—all easy to understand and all downloadable—make getting a quote or filing a claim as quick as clicking your mouse. Information, links and tips: they're all right here for your convenience.

#### ■ Wealth Management

In this section, you'll find not only an incredible amount of information about all of the services and products we offer, but also links to all of our supplier companies—so you can get right to the source to learn more about what we offer, at a time and pace that's convenient for you. There's more, of course, including current GIC rates and forms to request a quote for life, disability, critical illness or long-term care insurance. 🌱



## RISK management COMMERCIAL insurance

### Tax credit for home improvements benefits everyone



The year-long Home Renovation Tax Credit (HRTC) benefits both homeowners, who can now afford to get much-needed work done on their homes, and contractors, who need every opportunity to find work in a struggling economy. To get the most out of the HRTC, contractors need to take some key steps to protect themselves and their clients.

First of all, contractors should have commercial general liability in place to cover any damages or injuries that may occur during the renovation. This coverage not only protects you and your clients, it makes it clear that you're more than just an underground opportunist. Don't just tell homeowners you're insured, educate them about the need for such coverage. Offer proof you're insured by showing them a

certificate of insurance. Better yet, encourage your potential clients to fraud-proof themselves by checking with the Better Business Bureau and inquiring about your membership in your particular industry association.

While the HRTC provides contractors an exceptional opportunity to get more business, it provides an even greater opportunity to establish professional working relationships, build a satisfied client list, and compile references for more work in the future.

The HRTC expires after one year. For contractors who approach the program in a professional manner, the benefits will last for years to come.

**For more information about the Home Renovation Tax Credit, call Ole Jensen at 613-236-9101.** 🌱



## PERSONAL ASSET management



Many of the proposals contained in the recent federal budget are likely to impact your financial plan. For example:

- The basic personal exemption (the amount you can earn without paying tax) has been increased to \$10,320.
- The upper limit of the first two federal tax brackets will be raised to \$40,726 and \$81,452 respectively.
- The Age Credit—for those 65 or older—will increase by \$1,000 to \$6,408 (the credit is fully phased out for those earning \$75,032 or more).
- Under the Homebuyers Program, first-time homebuyers will be able to withdraw up to \$25,000 from their RSPs, up from \$20,000.

- Also, a First-Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit will apply to costs associated with buying a home, such as legal fees, disbursements and land transfer taxes (the credit would cover only \$5,000 of such expenses).

The budget also proposes a one-time home renovation tax credit, which would cover expenditures incurred between January 28, 2009 and January 30, 2010. The expenditures must be for major renovation, not routine maintenance. Qualifying expenses can be for work performed and/or goods acquired. The credit may be claimed on eligible expenditures greater than \$1,000, but not in excess of \$10,000, at a credit rate of 15%.

**For more information, call Ken Brouness at 613-236-9101.** 🌱



## PERSONAL insurance

### How you can reduce your personal insurance costs



While overall premiums aren't coming down at the moment, there are ways to save money and stay well protected.

Here are a few:

- Increasing your property insurance deductible from \$500 to \$1,000+ can save you 10+ per cent.
- If you have a good driving record, adding accident protection coverage can protect you from increased premiums after your first at-fault accident.
- Using the same company for your home and auto policies may entitle you to discounts on both policies.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the drivers, usage and coverage on your car insurance will keep costs in check.
- If you have an older vehicle, check to see if it's worth carrying collision, rental car and comprehensive coverage.
- When your mortgage is paid off, remove the mortgagee listed on your property policy (you'll require a release letter). Some companies offer a discount for no mortgagee on your home policy.
- To avoid NSF fees and payment problems, obtain overdraft protection for any automatic payment withdrawals from your bank.

**For more information, call Jennifer Falconer at 613-236-9101.** 🌱



# OTHER MATTERS

## Staff and Stuff



- Four members of the Scrivens clan—from left to right, brothers David, Michael, Peter and Jeffrey—got some welcome exercise at a charity ski event that raised more than \$80,000 for CHEO Roger House.



- Pictured above are Peter, Stephanie Free, Jake and his dad, Michael Scrivens. The Scrivens Team were able to raise and donate \$5,651 for the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation through:
  - the annual John Shaw Memorial Golf Tournament, organized by employee Stephen Blais.
  - the selling of Christmas and Easter baskets made by employee Stephanie Free.
 Stephanie also made it possible for the Scrivens Team to work the phones during the Cancer telethon.
- In January the *Scrivens Family of Companies* donated \$5,000 to the YMCA Capital Campaign. 🌱

## The Scrivens Kitchen

### A recipe for challenging times

In the short term, at least, the economic forecast looks grim. With that in mind, we offer this recipe for today's challenging times:

- Have a financial plan: Write out your budget for income and expenses.
- Work the plan: Look for ways to improve the bottom line on an ongoing basis.
- Add some savings: Cook and eat at home more often, and plan your shopping. Avoid impulse buying.
- Pay down your debt: Start by increasing the number of payments or the payment amount for those debts with the highest interest rate.
- Get professional help to create a long term financial plan: Find out if and how the economic slide has affected your retirement plans.

Send us a favourite recipe and we'll share it through the Scrivens Kitchen. 🌱

#### Generic Disclaimer (mutual funds only)

Commissions, trailing commissions, management fees and expenses all may be associated with mutual fund investments. Please read the simplified prospectus before investing. Mutual funds are not guaranteed and are not covered by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation or by any other government deposit insurer. There can be no assurances that the fund will be able to maintain its net asset value per security at a constant amount or that the full amount of your investment in the fund will be returned to you. Fund values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated. Labour Sponsored Funds have tax credits that are subject to certain conditions and are generally subject to recapture, if shares are redeemed within eight years.

#### Personal Opinions & Recommendations Disclaimer

The foregoing is for general information purposes only and is the opinion of the writer. This information is not intended to provide specific personalized advice including, without limitation, investment, financial, legal, accounting or tax advice. However, please call *Scrivens Family of Companies* to discuss your particular circumstances.



## Worth Reading

*The Til Debt Do Us Part Life Planner*  
By Gail Vaz-Oxlade

OK, so we all know that the economy is a bit of a mess. Unfortunately, says Gail Vaz-Oxlade, author of the best-selling book *Til Debt Do Us Part*, so are the personal finances of many Canadians. In *The Til Debt Do Us Part Life Planner*, she offers a money management calendar for the year. Included are a built-in monthly budget binder for tracking variable expenses and weekly financial tips, replete with the expressions she's made famous in her book. *The Til Debt Do Us Part Life Planner* is available from the Frantic Films website at <http://www.shopfranticfilms.com/products.html>

Read a good book lately? Let us know and we'll tell others about it in Worth Reading. 🌱

*Scrivens thanks the following companies for their services and support.*



We welcome comments and suggestions about *Family Matters*. You can reach us at [triley@scrivens.ca](mailto:triley@scrivens.ca) or at: **Scrivens Family of Companies**  
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