Who’s Your Beneficiary?

When you joined your employer’s retirement plan, you probably named a beneficiary for your plan account and quickly forgot about it. But you should take time to review your retirement account beneficiary designation every so often. You may find that you want — or need — to change it.

The Basics
The person you name as the beneficiary of your retirement plan account will receive the money in your account if you die. Even if you have a will and have designated someone to inherit all of your assets, it generally won’t affect your retirement account. Instead, that money will typically automatically pass to the person you have designated as your account beneficiary.

Your Spouse
If you’re married, some retirement plans require that you name your spouse as the primary beneficiary. However, this does not pertain to your Knox County retirement plan(s). You can designate any person(s) or your estate to be your beneficiary.

Your Kids
If you’re a single parent, you may want your plan assets to go to your minor children. However, most retirement plans will not transfer money directly to minors. Instead, a court will appoint a trustee or guardian to receive the money on your children’s behalf. This legal process can take time. Meanwhile, the money won’t be available for your children’s support.

One way to avoid delays is to name a trust for the benefit of your children as the beneficiary of your account. If you decide to go that route, be sure to talk to your legal advisor.

Your Parents
If you’re unmarried and don’t have any children, you may decide to name your parents as your beneficiaries. If you should get married later on, you can change your beneficiary designation.

Checking your beneficiary designation will help ensure that your retirement account assets will be passed on as you wish.

Make sure you review your retirement plan account’s beneficiary designation if any of the following events occur:

- You get married.
- You add a child to your family.
- You get divorced.
- Your primary beneficiary dies.
Dollar-Cost Averaging
Taking the Guesswork Out of Investing...

What will the stock market do today? Soar to new heights, plunge to new lows, or settle somewhere in between? Ever since the beginning of stock trading, investors have looked for signs to indicate when stock prices will rise or fall. But, so far, no one has come up with a foolproof method for consistently predicting market upswings or downturns.

Timing is Tricky
Some investors use a “market timing” strategy by buying shares when they think stock prices are at their lowest and selling their investments when they believe the market has reached its peak. Although they may be successful some of the time, few investors can repeatedly time their buy-sell decisions to correspond with market movements.

If you sell your investments when values start dropping and don’t get back in the market soon enough when prices start to rise again, you could miss out on significant gains.

Same Time, Same Amount
Instead of trying to guess what the securities markets are going to do, you may want to consider using an investment strategy known as “dollar-cost averaging.”* With dollar-cost averaging, you invest a fixed amount of money in the same investment or investment type at regular intervals. Your money buys more shares when prices are low and fewer shares when prices are high. Although there are no guarantees, your average cost per share may be less than the average share price for the same period with this method.

Dollar-cost averaging won’t completely protect your portfolio from a loss if the market takes a plunge. But it may help reduce any losses and leave you in a good position to benefit from a recovery, since you’ll still be fully invested.

* Investing regular amounts steadily over time (dollar-cost averaging) may lower your average per-share cost, but this investment method will not guarantee a profit or protect you from a loss in declining markets. Effectiveness requires continuous investment, regardless of fluctuating prices. You should consider your ability to continue buying through periods of low prices.

Reminder
Reduce clutter and save time by taking advantage of online account statements. To stop receiving paper statements, call 866.305.8846 (enter plan code 524) and ask that your account be updated to paperless only.

Securities offered to the Plan through USI Securities, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. 95 Glastonbury Blvd., Glastonbury, CT 06033 (860) 652-3239 USI Securities, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of USI Consulting Group.

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Knox County Retirement
April 2015

Asset Accumulation Program Account Access
Voice Response System: 1-800-828-4224
Online: www.usicg.com

If you are enrolled in a 457 plan other than the Knox County Voluntary 457 Plan, please contact your Plan Provider for your contributions and account balance.

Note: All 457 matches are deposited into your 401(a) Plan.