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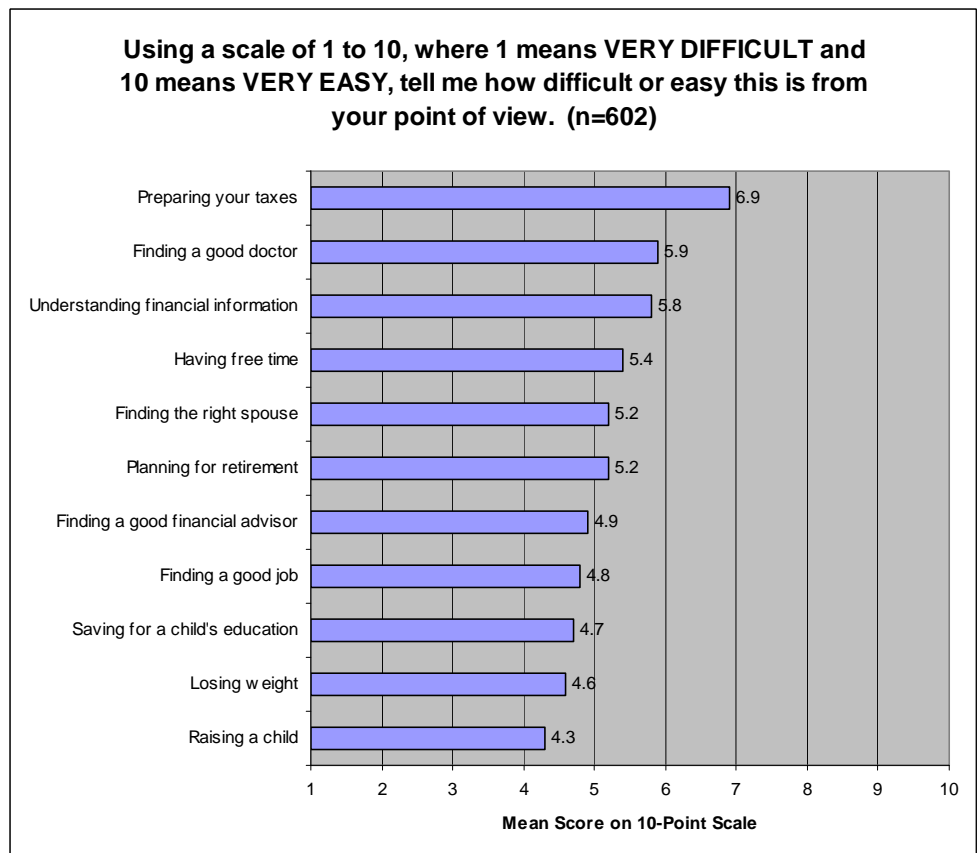
Recent Survey Reveals Challenges East Tennesseans Find More Difficult Than Preparing Taxes

On Heels of Tax Deadline, East Tennesseans Should Use Tax Refund Wisely

Alcoa, Tenn. – Think those tax forms are tough? A recent survey of East Tennesseans' attitudes about financial issues shows that getting taxes prepared is actually easiest, compared to some of life's other financial and personal challenges.

Alcoa, Tennessee-based LeConte Wealth Management found that on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "very difficult" and 10 means "very easy," East Tennesseans cited preparing taxes as the easiest of 11 tasks, with an average ranking of 6.9.

Interestingly, "finding the right spouse" and "planning for retirement" ranked neck-and-neck at an average of 5.2 on the scale. "Raising a child" received the top rating of difficulty at 4.3.



In light of more difficult tasks such as planning for retirement and saving for a child's education, this time of year also represents for many people the biggest – and perhaps the only – cash windfall opportunity received all year long, in the form of a tax refund.

In a down economy, how this money is spent, saved or invested can have a big impact on household finances. LeConte Wealth Management offers several tips to help East Tennesseans make smart use of tax refunds:

1. **First, consumers should consult their financial plan** to determine the best use of tax refund dollars. Don't have a financial plan? If that's the case, then it's important to ask, "why not?" At

this time of financial upheaval for so many people, having a financial plan is fundamental (51 percent of East Tennesseans surveyed who have not yet retired said they have decreased confidence in meeting their retirement goals since this time last year). A plan designed for one's own personal financial goals can help households deal with financial opportunities and challenges alike.

2. **Build a cash reserve.** Establish savings enough to cover unexpected expenses such as medical bills, insurance deductibles or household repairs. This cushion can help people avoid taking on debt to pay for an emergency.
3. **Reduce personal debt.** Financial windfalls like tax refunds may provide an opportunity to pay off or reduce high-interest debt. With interest rates as high as 25 percent, every effort should be made to avoid carrying any balance on credit cards.
4. **Invest.** With stock markets at historic lows, it can be a good time to contribute to accounts like 401(k)s, which offer a company match and a tax deduction, as well as IRAs and 529 plans for retirement, education or other financial goals. Investing while stock prices are discounted can help jump-start savings.

ABOUT LECONTE WEALTH MANAGEMENT, LLC:

Established in 2007 and located at 269 Cusick Road, Alcoa, Tenn., 37701, LeConte Wealth Management, LLC (www.lecontewealth.com) helps clients develop a plan to accumulate and preserve their wealth in pursuit of their unique financial goals. With more than 30 years of cumulative experience, the firm's team provides asset management, retirement planning, estate planning, risk management and business planning. Securities and Advisory Services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser.

ABOUT THE SURVEY METHODOLOGY:

The 2009 LeConte Wealth Management survey was conducted by telephone in a random digit dial sample of adult residents ages 25-80 in Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon, Monroe and Sevier counties. The survey was conducted from February 16-25, 2009, with 602 interviews completed for an overall margin of error of +/- 4 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. The average length of each telephone interview was 8 minutes and 25 seconds. The survey data was weighted to bring age and geographic concentrations for the counties in line with known U.S. Census data for the geography.

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