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agency's soon-to-be-released web-based CPE tracking tool.

Jan. 01, 2006

From the January 2006 [Tax Season Survival Guide](#)

At the September Florida CPA Society Show in Fort Lauderdale last month, I stopped in at the booth for the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) and visited with Jill Gordon, a very exuberant promoter of her agency's soon-to-be-released web-based CPE tracking tool. After about five minutes of conversation, I was hooked and most definitely wanted to know more. The "more" came by way of an interview with Yordanos Dumez who is the Director of Compliance Services for NASBA. Here's your "over-the-shoulder" peek at that interview:

LaFollette: NASBA is an interesting entity. Can you tell me a little about its organization, governance and mission?

Dumez: NASBA is a 501 c(6) organization, a not-for-profit for all accounting/regulatory activity and owns 100 percent of a for-profit subsidiary, Professional Credential Services (PCS). NASBA is governed by a membership elected Board of Directors, is staffed by a President/CEO (David Costello, CPA), an Executive Vice President/COO (Lorraine Sachs, CAE), and about 140 staff. NASBA's mission is to enhance the effectiveness of state boards of accountancy.

LaFollette: How did you come to be associated with NASBA? What is your role and what are your responsibilities?

Dumez: I performed compliance audits for the Tennessee State Board of

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and, in the very near future, the new online, *Electronic Library* (ELI). The upcoming web site, www.nasbatools.com, will encompass all of the various programs included in Compliance Services. The web site is scheduled to go live the first quarter of 2006.

LaFollette: I know you've been involved with CPE for quite some time so you certainly know about the hodge-podge of regulations that practitioners face. Will NASBA's CPETracking service help practicing accountants with that?

Dumez: Myriad differences in CPE requirements exist throughout the country; we cannot change that reality. But we can and do help practitioners deal with it much more efficiently and effectively by putting at their finger tips an electronic methodology for quickly determining compliance with any state's rules and regulations.

LaFollette: Your new offering, CPETracking, is designed to eventually communicate with all 54 jurisdictions electronically. Keeping in mind the AICPA's recent failure with a mirror-image initiative at the state society level, do you feel NASBA can successfully deliver? Why? What's different?

Dumez: Our initiative is substantially different. We studiously avoided a "top-down" attitude.

Our approach was bottom-up as we looked for common threads. Our mission is to enhance the efficiency of the state boards and by providing what they need, we believe we can do so. We are simply clarifying and coordinating things

that already exist — CPE rules and regulations. As you may know, every jurisdiction

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LaFollette: Please tell me more. Exactly what is CPETracking?

Dumez: CPETracking is a tool that provides an online compliance management solution for state boards of accountancy, CPA firms, and individual CPAs. Its flexible system architecture means CPETracking can integrate with a firm's existing programs. CPAs can enter course details and immediately see their compliance by jurisdiction and reporting period. It provides for uploading scanned "evidence of attendance" and will print ready-for-filing reports and, eventually, file those reports electronically with participating jurisdictions. We're rolling out the service in early 2006. It's priced at \$20 per professional per year.

LaFollette: How will you define success for your efforts? How many users will you attract by January 2007?

Dumez: We are already successful in CPETracking with Deloitte Touche and its subsidiaries. Our success only intensifies with each new client and each new user that signs on. We would expect no less than 100,000 users by 2007.

LaFollette: Will our profession ever move away from a "time-served" CPE requirement?

Dumez: Ever is a long time. The real issue is whether state boards and state government will move away from the time-based model. I really don't see that happening anytime soon. I do see more emphasis on demonstration of competence-based learning, but I haven't seen effective measurement for such. We have bright educators, bright board people and bright professionals. Who knows what might happen in 10 years.

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LaFollette: What is your personal opinion of the emerging credentials within the AICPA (ABV, PFS and CITP)? Will CPETracking be able to accommodate their special CPE requirements?

Dumez: CPETracking can accommodate any reasonable need of its clients. We believe in and support credentials that assist the consuming public in making decisions about people/firms delivering professional services. What the future will bring, especially in the Internet age, remains to be seen. When the time is right, we'll be ready. Currently, since none of the state boards require or regulate these additional designations, they have not been our initial focus. If there is sufficient demand for including them in our tracking, we will consider it.

LaFollette: You live and work in Nashville, which is truly a beautiful place. I've been there several times. I have a single question: Just how long is Old Hickory Blvd.?

Dumez: It has no beginning and no end.

LaFollette: People's entertainment habits fascinate me. What's the last book you read, the last movie you saw, and what television show would you actually hurry home to see?

Dumez: I last read "The Tipping Point," by Malcolm Gladwell; last saw "Cinema Paradiso," and hurry home to see "Desperate Housewives." □

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