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might have wanted to stay away from Surf City this week.

Gail Perry • May. 09, 2019



If the idea of spending two+ days discussing the complicated intricacies of multi-

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McFarlane addressed the future of sales tax, pointing out how the laws change almost daily. "If you all think that in a digital world, sales tax will be manual, it's absurd. It will be automated," he said. Reflecting on the confusion of the constantly changing sales tax environment and the familiar Benjamin Franklin quote about the certainty of death and taxes, he reinforced the need for outstanding sales tax software, suggesting, "We're closer to solving death than we are taxes."

McFarlane speculated on the future of sales tax procedures and described the current Brazilian model of "government in the middle" which he believes will likely prevail in the United States "soon." In Brazil, an invoice is registered with the government before it is issued to the customers, thus creating a government audit trail for the collection of sales tax. Some members of the European Union have adopted this process as well, and the method of government oversight on taxable transactions is gaining traction as government tax collection agencies recognize that this is a process that can be automated.

Sanjay Parthasarathy, chief product officer for Avalara, also spoke during the opening keynote, reassuring the attendees that Avalara has their backs. "Our mission here is to make your lives easier," he said. "Our goal is to reduce the uncertainty, eliminate the complexity, and accelerate the opportunities for all of you."

Attendees include sales tax accountants both from within the public accounting arena as well as major corporations around the world. The event lasts through Friday, May 10, and includes two days of sales-tax-intensive continuing education classes as well as evening parties as only Avalara seems to be able to throw.

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