

Quarterly Newsletter

BLANTON WEALTH MANAGEMENT

November 2024



Welcome!

- Hurricane Helene affected so many of our clients, including us. Thankfully, nobody was seriously hurt and structural damage didn't surpass a few fallen trees. As we head into the holiday season, we're thankful for your safety and ours.
- **In this newsletter**, you'll find an article covering common scams and how to avoid them, some information on life insurance, and the latest updates from our team. We hope you find it both engaging and informative.
- As we approach the end of 2024, it's time to think about **required minimum distributions (RMDs)** from retirement accounts. If you have an account that requires an RMD, we will be reaching out in the next few weeks to assist with the distributions. Feel free to reach out with questions or updated instructions in the meantime.
- At the end of August, we had the absolute pleasure of hosting our inaugural Raymond James client appreciation event for our local clients at the Greenville Drive! We had a blast as we cheered on our team, tested our "money-ball" knowledge, and watched the firework show. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect, celebrate, and show our gratitude for your continued support. We can't wait to see you at our next event!

Enjoy this month's newsletter!



In this newsletter you can expect:

Important Notes
(pg. 1)

RMDs
(pg. 1)

Team Updates
(pg. 2)

How to Avoid
Common Scams
(pg. 3)

Life Insurance
(pg. 4)

*Blanton Wealth Management
- Laura & Bethany*



A note from
your team...



Laura

It's that time of year...again!

Happy holiday season to each and every one of you, your families, friends, and loved ones. We're heading at breakneck speed into 2025, and there's much to celebrate and remember during this time of year.

First, the celebrating - we successfully kicked off another school year (3rd grade!), hosted a fantastic and fun night at the Greenville Drive, and had a safe and spooky Halloween. I was also excited to be featured in this year's *Faces of the Upstate*. Photographic evidence is below.

We also weathered Debby, who showed up while we were on Kiawah, and Helene, who devastated so much of our surrounding area. I'm so thankful that the storm season is largely behind us.

Next, the remembering - at this time of year especially, I want to express my gratitude. Being thankful and mindful of the many privileges and joys in my life has always been a priority of mine, and Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays because it reminds me to slow down and not just *be* thankful but *say* thank you. I appreciate each of you individually and am grateful for our relationship.

Out of office:

Our office will be closed for Thanksgiving on 11/28 (all day) and 11/29 (after 1 pm), for Christmas on 12/24 (after 1 pm) and 12/25 (all day), and for New Year's on 1/1 (all day).

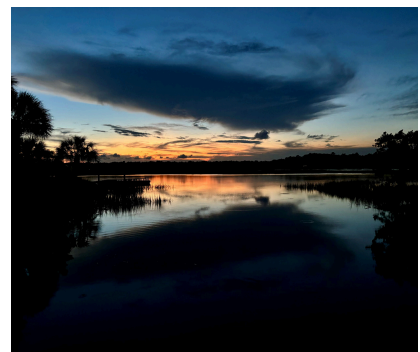
Wishing you a happy holiday season; see you in 2025!



Bethany

As the leaves fall and darkness creeps in by 5:00pm, I can't help but yearn for warmer days. This past quarter brought a wonderful beach trip to Edisto, where I enjoyed fried seafood, explored Botany Bay, and watched beautiful sunsets over the marsh. I also had a great time at the Branch Associate Conference in Atlanta. I traveled back to Atlanta a few weeks ago to see Billie Eilish perform an incredible show!

Currently, my evenings are often spent buried in study materials, all with the goal of obtaining my licenses by the new year. I look forward to what 2025 brings! Happy holidays!



10 Common Scams and How to Avoid Them

Familiarize yourself with these common swindles, often targeting retirees.

Fraudsters are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their tactics. They often target older Americans, who may have accumulated more wealth, as well as vulnerable individuals, such as widows and widowers, who may be making decisions alone and be more trusting of friendly strangers. To protect ourselves and our loved ones, it's crucial to recognize the common scams and understand how these perpetrators operate.

1. Lottery scam: You get an unsolicited phone call or email saying you've won a large prize. All you need to do is send money to pay for shipping, taxes or some ancillary fee. You send the money, but the fictional prize never arrives.

2. Grandchild scam: Your grandchild calls to confess her troubles. Or so you think. It's not uncommon for someone posing as your grandchild to call and, preying on your compassion, claim to be in a crisis situation and need money urgently. They may also beg you not to call their parents (which would give the scam away).

3. Charity scam: You donate to one charity and end up being on every charity list. That's because they sell your name, phone number and email to other nonprofit and commercial organizations. These could include companies with similar names to charities you support – but they exist solely to scam donations.

4. Computer scam: Someone calls pretending to be from a major company, such as Microsoft, and says he can see that your computer has a virus. He offers to help you get rid of it by asking you to log into a website that lets him control your computer – then steals your ID information.

5. Timeshare scam: If you own a timeshare, you may get a call from someone claiming they're authorized to sell it for you, for a fee. After paying, however, you never hear from them again.

6. Homeowner scam: A man comes to your door and offers to clean your gutters or trim your trees, which sounds like a good idea. Until he asks for prepayment and never completes the job.

7. Medical scam: You get an unsolicited call about a discounted price for some kind of medical equipment (i.e., heart monitor, wheelchair or bathtub bench). You're asked for a deposit and your personal information or Medicaid number to send the equipment, which never arrives.

8. Foreclosure scam: You're approached by a "professional" who claims your home is under threat of foreclosure and offers to pay off your mortgage or taxes if you sign over the deed to the property. With your deed, the fraudster can then refinance the mortgage for the full value of your home and take the money. Keep in mind, even if you sign over a deed to someone, you are still liable for your mortgage obligations.

9. Caregiver and sweetheart scam: These predators claim to care deeply for you or your well-being, but after winning your trust, they gain access to your accounts to steal money or identity information.

10. Title company scam: Before purchasing or closing on a new property, a scammer intercepts an email from your real estate agent or title company. You're then sent fraudulent payment instructions to complete the transaction. Red flags include last-minute changes to instructions, a change in tone or word choice from prior emails, a new sender address and multiple payment requests.

These scams are common and widespread. But speaking with trusted loved ones or your financial professional before making decisions can help you avoid these traps. Additionally, keep in mind these tips for staying safe: Don't pay for things you don't remember ordering. Don't give your personal information to unknown third parties. Work with financial institutions that use fraud protection to safeguard your credit card and banking information. Don't click links in the body of suspicious emails, especially if they claim to come from your bank, credit card company, real estate agent or title company. Instead, log in to the company's official website or call them directly to verify. Don't let strangers into your house. Instead, ask for a business card and say your spouse, kids or lawyer will be in touch.

Be wary of caregivers and suitors, especially if you notice signs of substance abuse or other red flags. Limit the purchases and donations you make by check, which may list your home address or other key data. If you suspect you've fallen victim to a scam or that your identity has been compromised, it's time to act. Report the incident to your advisor right away to help protect your accounts, and consult [identitytheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) to see the Federal Trade Commission's recommendations for critical next steps. Additionally, reporting cybercrime incidents to the [FBI](https://www.fbi.gov) can help federal agencies respond quicker and more effectively to threats.



Financial Security Amidst Disaster

Life insurance is a crucial financial tool that provides peace of mind and security for your loved ones. It ensures that in the event of your untimely death, your family will have the financial support they need to cover expenses such as medical bills, funeral costs, debts, and mortgage payments. Life insurance can also help replace lost income, allowing your family to maintain their standard of living and avoid financial hardship.

The recent devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in the Appalachian region underscores the importance of being prepared for unexpected events. The hurricane brought catastrophic flooding, destroying homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. The loss of lives and displacement of families highlight the need for financial protection and planning.

In the wake of such disasters, life insurance can provide a safety net, ensuring that your loved ones are not burdened with additional financial stress during an already difficult time. It allows them to focus on recovery and rebuilding their lives without worrying about how to cover immediate expenses.

Life insurance is not just a financial product; it is a vital component of a comprehensive plan to protect your family's future. Please reach out if you would like to review your current life insurance policies or to discuss opening a new one.

Thank you for reading!

These policies have exclusions and/or limitations. The cost and availability of life insurance depends on factors such as age, health and the type and amount of insurance purchased. As with most financial decisions, there are expenses associated with the purchase of life insurance. Policies commonly have mortality and expense charges. In addition, if a policy is surrendered prematurely, there may be surrender charges and income tax implications. Guarantees are based on the claims paying ability of the insurance company.

BLANTON
WEALTH MANAGEMENT
OF
RAYMOND JAMES

LAURA - 864-289-2111
BETHANY - 864-289-2116

www.blantonwealthmanagement.com

112 Haywood Rd
Greenville, SC 29607