DAILY MONEY TIP

Time donations before year's end

It's the giving season! Make charitable donations well before year-end 2013 in order to get your tax deduction. Don't wait until the last minute to make charitable donations to a favorite organization, or to transfer money to relatives free of gift taxes.

Charitable IRA rollovers are one vehicle that JPMorgan highlights to older and retired clients. In 2013, taxpayers over age 70½ can make a direct transfer of up to $100,000 from an IRA to qualified charities (not including private foundations and donor-advised funds) while counting that toward their required minimum distribution, says Julia Fisher, wealth adviser at JPMorgan in Philadelphia.

But time your gifts well, she adds; otherwise they might not count for the current tax year.

If you:

▶ Give to charity by check, the effective date of the contribution is the date the check is mailed.

▶ If you make gifts to noncharity donees by check, the effective date is the day the check clears. (Federal law allows individuals to gift up to $14,000 and married couples to give gifts of up to $28,000 to as many individuals as they wish — without triggering any gift tax.)

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▶ Gifts of stock by certificate form to charity are effective on the date of transfer according to the issuer's records.

▶ Gifts of stock by electronic transfer to charity (for example, through the Depository Trust Co.) are effective the date the stock is received according to the issuer's record. That can take days.

▶ Gifts of stock by electronic transfer to noncharity donees are effective the date the transfer is made on the books of the corporation. This can take weeks.

▶ Gifts by credit card are effective the date the charge is made to the card.

Tax on house sale

Let's say in 2013, you and your spouse sold a greatly appreciated vacation home owned for many years. The new 3.8 percent Medicare tax on net investment only affects higher-income individuals, but that includes anyone with a big, one-time taxable income or gain in this year.

Isdaner & Co., CPAs in Bala Cynwyd, says consider selling the vacation home in installments and spread the gain over several years. See the full version of their latest client note here: www.isdanerllc.com.

Tax seminars

CBIZ MHM in Plymouth Meeting will be hosting a breakfast and seminar on Dec. 3 to review some 2014 events impacting businesses and individuals. Here's the online invitation at http://goo.gl/F2Pth9. Or contact Edward R. Jenkins, tax director at CBIZ at ejenkins@cbiz.com.

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