

A compassionate accounting firm? Yes, say new business partners

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Dot Belveal, left, and Kevin Van Hoesen, right, opened Tax Solutions Northwest in Meridian recently.

To get his foot in the door, Kevin Van Hoesen volunteered to work at a firm for nothing. In just three weeks, the company recognized his worth and put him on the payroll. Now, Van Hoesen performs payroll and other accounting services after opening his own firm recently with partner Dot Belveal.

In fact, Belveal was pivotal to his being hired at Martelle Law Offices in Eagle, where Van Hoesen briefly worked without compensation.

"I told them, 'I'm working toward my master's in accounting. Here's what I can do and what I want to do. See if I'm a good fit. Until then, I'll work for free,'" Van Hoesen explained during a recent interview.

Belveal, who works under contract for Martelle, advocated for Van Hoesen. "He learned quickly

and proved how valuable he was," she said of the 27-year-old.

Plus, it was tax season and Martin Martelle's law firm deals with bankruptcy, back taxes and non-filers; he also owns Attorney Tax Group.

Belveal and Van Hoesen discovered they worked well together, bringing complementary skills to their work environment. That discovery led to the launch of Tax Solutions Northwest, incorporated July 17 and officially opened for business on Aug. 1 at 3006 E. Goldstone Drive in Meridian.

If one rarely hears the term "compassion" coupled with the phrase "accounting firm," Van Hoesen and Belveal are out to change that. Though they offer a full slate of accounting services, they fill a niche other accounting firms prefer to keep at arms length. They specialize in helping individuals and businesses in "no-filing status," an IRS term.

"They're difficult to work with," Belveal said of her clients. They often haven't filed a tax return for a while, are in arrears and, out of fear, have stopped opening mail from the IRS or the Idaho State Tax Commission. They frequently have the unopened envelopes stuffed in a box they bring with them to the law or accounting offices.

"I consider myself an expert at working with those kinds of clients," Belveal said. She remarked that she and her youthful partner extend an open hand to such clientele.

"We are generous with our compassion," she said, stressing these businesses and individuals may be in dire financial trouble but are not morally bankrupt.

"The economy came crashing down. They avoided paying taxes, but not with criminal intent," she said. They're frightened of going to jail or losing their remaining assets.

"They're people out of work, they could not get work, and they may lose their house. They need help with taxes or tax liens," said Van Hoesen.

He explained other clients may be worth half a million dollars but were "too busy to file."

"You've got to listen to their stories," Belveal stated. "They take the step of inaction instead of action."

Belveal brings years of experience working with the IRS and Idaho State Tax Commission to the business, and she has established a working rapport and positive reputation with both entities. "We're bringing clients into compliance, and the rules are being followed," she said. "I've learned to ride the

line: assisting the client as well as working with the IRS.”

Also, Belveal and colleague Van Hoesen not only help untangle their clients’ tax knots, they help set them on a path of continued future compliance.

The partners are working to establish alliances with other tax professionals and attorneys to offer an open door to their filing-challenged customers. “If you have a non-filer with back taxes, send them to us,” Van Hoesen said.

So far, reception has been very good, according to Belveal. Both partners stressed they offer their services at a reasonable rate.

Other offerings at Tax Solutions Northwest include bookkeeping, accounting, tax preparation, payroll services, and audit representation. So far, Van Hoesen and Belveal are a two-person company, but they are set to bring on more professionals as needed in coming months.

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