



ADVANCING the PROFESSION for 100 YEARS!

MEMBER NEWSLETTER, VOLUME 7, No. 4 :: FALL 2024



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTE

Our new Team Up to Move Up Mentor Program is win-win

Channeling the magic of Halloween ...

Conjuring up additional talent/staff resources tops everyone's wish list.

Talent shortages lie at the root of many challenges facing the accounting industry today, calling to mind the "chicken or the egg" scenario. Fewer staff members means more work hours, which translates into fewer staff members.



Trish Brigham

That's why the MECPA is so focused on putting your dues to work by investing in pipeline expansion efforts. Our new **Team Up to Move Up Mentor Program** is a low-risk, light-lift, high-return (yes, you read that right) opportunity to attract more students to the profession, encouraging and guiding them along an accounting career path. Mentoring is a win-win for both parties, offering learning and development that leads to career success.

Career success – yours - is what we are all about. Connect and engage to maximize your MECPA membership. Thank you for the privilege to work with and for you.

– Executive Director Trish Brigham

Advocacy work focuses on CPA licensure pathways, Maine Board of Tax Appeals

While we await the results of next week's presidential election and its impact on tax laws, we've been busy working on draft legislation to clarify Maine statutes, so that aspiring CPAs can sit for the CPA exam with 120 academic credit hours.

This had been the norm until July, when the Maine Board of Accountancy interpreted the law as requiring 150 academic credit hours.

As states begin to consider alternative licensure pathways to address pipeline constraints, there's a risk that "substantial



equivalency" – the bedrock on which individual and firm mobility is based – will no longer apply. There is near universal agreement that mobility should be retained.

One way to address this is through automatic mobility. Four states already have these statutes, and many more are moving to enact such legislation. The MECPA's Board of Governors is considering automatic mobility, with guardrails, to protect practitioners and the public.

– See **ADVOCACY**, page 2

COMING UP ...



On the team & leadership development side of MECPA offerings, we're holding a Golf Clinic + Play + Socialize event Nov. 7 at XGOLF in Portland. Stop by and say hi!

All programs are virtual unless noted. For a full list of programs, [visit mecpa.org](http://visitmecpa.org). Members typically enjoy discounts.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nov. 6 & 7

SCORE Tax Forum, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. [Register](#).

Nov. 20

How ESG Reports Can Help with Reten-

tion & Recruitment. 11 a.m.-noon. [Register](#).

Dec. 11

Beyond the Basics: Excel & Word for the Accounting Industry. 9-11 a.m. [Register](#). (See page 7)

Dec. 12

Stress Be Gone! How to Survive Busy Season. Noon-1 p.m. Stay tuned for details.

– See **CALENDAR**, page 2

Realizing 'live to work' is toxic has done wonders for this CPA

Name: Michael Reeder, CPA
Employer: Reeder CPA Group
Title: Owner
How long in this profession: 14 years
How long as an MECPA member: 1 year

How has being a member helped you or allowed you to help someone else? Being a member of the MECPA has helped me feel connected to Maine's professional community. Our work can be isolating, especially during peak tax season, but being part of the MECPA has allowed me to connect with professionals from firms of all sizes. We all share a similar drive, and I've found that instead of seeing each other as competition, we can learn from one another and grow together.

Volunteer organization you're involved in, and what you enjoy about it: I'm actively involved in a variety of local organizations, including



Michael Reeder and his wife Mimi and daughter Rayleigh enjoy lunch in Sofia, Bulgaria.

the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Maine Association of Nonprofits, the Association for Consulting Expertise and the Greater Portland Board of REALTORS®. I also dedicate time to volunteering by speaking at SCORE business mentoring seminars. As an entrepreneurial CPA with a focus on the real estate and franchise spaces, I'm deeply engaged

with organizations like Keller Williams Maine, FranServe, IFPG, FBA, The You Network, and Vetpreneur. I believe our industry has a responsibility to demystify complex tax issues and to help folks navigate both the technical and emotional aspects of their financial picture.

Best advice you've received? The best advice I've received

was about finding a healthy work/life balance. Early in my career, I realized that by following the old-school accounting mindset – "clients always come first" and "live to work" – I had become anxious, overweight, sleep-deprived and disconnected from my family. That wake-up call led me to shift my focus to "working to live." I made a conscious effort to incorporate exercise, family time and mindfulness into my daily routine, and I encourage everyone in my firm to do the same.

What do you do in your free time? I enjoy spending time with my wife, daughter and pup. During summer, I also try to swim in the ocean at least once a day.

Favorite vacation spot: Actually, I'm currently spending some time in Bulgaria with my wife's family. They live in a picturesque rural town, and I've enjoyed the slower pace of life, the large family dinners and being able to take a few days to explore neighboring Greece.

MORE WORTHWHILE OFFERINGS

Dec. 13
DEMO Day! Practice Management Solutions. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
[Register.](#) FREE for members!

Dec. 20
Enabling Hybrid Work: Holistic Approach to Customer, Employee & Cyber Risk. 3-4 p.m. [Register.](#)

Jan. 16-17
Maine State Tax & Legislative Update & more! New England Tax Conference. Stay tuned for details.

TEAM & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Nov. 7
Golf Clinic + Play + Socialize. XGOLF, Portland, 5:30-7 p.m.
 Sponsored by NBT Bank. Golf spots filled, but stop in to connect with new friends and colleagues.

Dec. 5
Scavenger Hunt/Murder Mystery. With N.H. Society of CPAs.
 4:30-6 p.m. Sponsor: Payroll Management. [Register.](#) (See page 9)

ADVOCACY – Continued from page 1

The timing of state legislative sessions is challenging, as bills must be introduced by December for consideration, with no guarantee that they'll be heard. If they're not, action will be delayed until fall 2026 for the 2027 legislative session.

Efforts to garner STEM designation for accounting – also aimed at pipeline expansion – continue.

Closer to home, the MECPA's Taxation Committee has continued to periodically meet with Maine Revenue Services. Both organizations have found this ongoing communication extremely valuable. Progress has been made on addressing tax

software compatibility issues with MRS's electronic filing system and analysis of PTET legislation.

Most recently, MECPA representatives, along with our Pierce Atwood lobbyists, shared comments on improving the structure and operations of the Maine Board of Tax Appeals (which has strayed from its original mission, originally developed by the MECPA years ago) and better define and strengthen the Taxpayer Advocate role.

Interested in joining these discussions? The Taxation Committee welcomes new members. Contact [Mike Santo](#) or [Trish Brigham](#).

We're grateful to those who give back to the profession

The MECPA happily takes the lead in creating opportunities to promote the profession, but you're the stars who make these efforts impactful. We appreciate the following people for sharing their time and talent. And from the comments they share, they get a little something in return, too!

Matt Barbour, McLeod | Asciano – Guest speaker for Ameriprise Financial Group

Nicole Pelletier, BNN, and **Riley Andrews**, student Board rep – University of Maine Firm Night

Mike Perna, Reeder CPA Group – classroom speaker, Biddeford Regional Center of Technology

David Stone, BerryDunn; **Ian Lightenberg**, BNN; and **Cathy Connolly**, CJ Connolly Forensic Accounting – USM classroom speakers

Laura Emack, retired CPA, and **Ashley Beaudoin**, BDO USA – SBA Maine Next Level Leadership Program advisors

Ryan Dawson, KDS, Cape Elizabeth High student advisor

Team Up to Move Up Mentors: **Shehzi Ansari**, 3 Degrees Group; **Matt Barbour**



MECPA reps went to the University of Maine Firm Night in September to connect with students and share information about student memberships and our new mentor program.

and **Jay Grant**, McLeod | Asciano; **Kasey Bull**, Wipfli; **Leah Clair**, **Derek Collin** and **David Stone**, BerryDunn; **Stefan Lange**, Partners Bank; **Kirin Schrum** and **Sam Wartenberg**, Purdy Powers; **Tabitha Swanson**, The Swanson Group; **Logan Donahue** and **Rob Gould-Wetmore**, ARB; **Heather Goan**, Baker Newman Noyes ... and counting.

We're also grateful for our event sponsors, NBT Bank and Payroll Management. Please consider these organizations as

well as our newsletter advertisers for your business needs.



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MECPA at 100: We salute two dedicated longtime members

We're so appreciative of members who have actively supported and served the MECPA for decades – yes, decades!

Dewey Martin has been a practicing CPA in Maine for 44 years. Dewey, or Professor Martin to some of you, served on the MECPA Board of Governors and on the AICPA

Council.

Bob Jackson is a 50-plus-year member of the MECPA and also served on the Board of Governors and the Maine Board of Accountancy.

Have you been a member of the MECPA for 30 years or more?

Let us know, so we can recognize you!

Meet a new member sharing his passion for the outdoors

Mike Perna, founder and principal of Reeder CPA Group, is excited about combining his passion for the outdoors with his financial expertise, as the newly appointed Treasurer of Teens to Trails.

This organization's mission is to "connect teens to life-changing outdoor experiences." Mike discovered this opportunity through his connection with the MECPA.

[Listen here](#) to learn more.



Mike Perna

Investing in developing leaders

Congratulations to David Stone, Senior Manager at BerryDunn, for being accepted into the AICPA's Leadership Academy 2024 Class.

This program exposes the next generation of CPAs to a strong ethic of service and leadership. David has served on the MECPA Board of Gov-

ernors for about five years, several of those as Board President.

Another active MECPA member, Lacy McMoarn, a principal at Dufour Tax, Portland, is a graduate of the Academy and has continued to participate in several AICPA initiatives.

PIPELINE

Cheers to latest winner of MECPA scholarship!

Congratulations to Connor Watt, the 2024-25 recipient of the MECPA Endowed Scholarship at the University of Southern Maine.



Connor Watt

Connor is a 2020 graduate of Thornton Academy, and expects to graduate from USM next summer.

"I enjoy accounting because I've always been more into numbers and with accounting, the numbers always have to match by the end."

Another love is video games – he once hoped to develop one of his own.

Connor will intern this spring with BerryDunn.

New Mentor Program builds connections with aspiring accountants, boosts our community

The inaugural group of college students in the MECPA's new Team Up to Move Up Mentor Program is 16 strong and counting!

Participants hail from colleges around the state and are looking forward to connecting with their mentors to gain insights, information and advice from the talented and enthusiastic professionals who have volunteered to help them.

The goal of the program is simple – provide positive support and informal guidance to keep students on



track through academic programs and ultimately into the accounting workforce.

Simplicity is also the name of the game for mentors,

who, like most accountants these days, are shouldering heavy workloads. Mentor-mentee pairings can be for a semester – or full academic year, but no longer.

Meet-ups can be conducted virtually, or in-person, depending on the pairs' preference and schedules.

A brief orientation session will be held at 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 8 for all mentors, and plans are in the works for some sort of in-person social event for all involved.

Want to learn more? [Contact Trish Brigham.](#)

Here's a quick and easy way to support pipeline efforts

Addressing the talent shortage, which impacts all of us, requires an all-of-us approach. What can you do to be part of the solution?

Sign the NPAG Pledge! This resource offers actions individuals can take to grow and transform the profession. Go [here](#) to sign.



Are you a tax professional, CPA, or enrolled agent?

Get your CPE credits conveniently this year with our virtual workshops!

Register at:
scoremaine.org

Tax Practitioner Institute

October 23,
2024

Maine Tax Forum

November 6 & 7,
2024



SCORE
Maine

PIPELINE



Is a Business Major for ME?

at Saint Joseph's College of Maine

November 19th, 2024 | 8:30 AM - 1:45 PM

This one day event offers an opportunity to connect with students, professors, and working professionals to learn about the many different career opportunities in the world of accounting and business. Open to any high school student with an interest in business or looking to learn more about college after high school!

Thank you to our sponsors:



WIPFLI



Questions regarding this event please contact:

Career Studio
(207) 893-7575
careerstudio@sjcme.edu

Admissions
(800) 338-7057
admissions@sjcme.edu

Scan the QR code or email careerstudio@sjcme.edu to register today!



St. Joe's 'Is a Business Major for ME?' session is at registration limit!

"I'm looking forward to facilitating the professional panel at the 'Is a Business Major for ME?' program co-hosted by St. Joseph's College and the MECPA, with funding provided by Wipfli, LLP. High school students will have an opportunity to learn more about business studies, with a heavy emphasis on accounting, in college. I'm so excited to see the MECPA playing such an active role in addressing talent pipeline challenges."



Board President
Barbara Belik

On Nov. 19, St. Joseph's College will host nearly 100 high school students, most in-person, to give them an opportunity to learn about college business majors and the varied career pathways available to business graduates.

The event will feature student and professional panels, business challenges, (with cash prizes!), lunch and a campus tour.

"We're so excited to be partnering with St. Joseph's

College and Wipfli, LLP, the event sponsor, again," said MECPA Executive Director Trish Brigham. "We've taken lessons learned from the inaugural 'Is a Business Major for ME?' program, held back in May, and made some improvements. Registrations have more than doubled, so we're clearly making progress getting our message out."

The MECPA and Husson University will partner for a similar program in the spring.

Research report offers insights into staffing challenges

The Center for Accounting Transformation has released its "Staffing Strategies Preliminary Report," offering fresh insights and actionable solutions for firms and employers as the accounting profession continues to face staffing challenges.

This comprehensive report is the result of extensive research and analysis, uncovering key trends and strategies that can help firms of all sizes tackle staffing-related issues more effectively.

From recruiting and retention to managing workloads and enhancing employee satisfaction, the report provides a framework for building a more agile, productive, and engaged workforce.

The report highlights several crucial areas where firms can make impactful changes, including:

- Recruitment strategies for a competitive job market
- Retaining key staff members by fostering an inclusive and engaging workplace culture
- Understanding the role of emerging technologies in alleviating staffing pressures
- Exploring the benefits of flexible work arrangements and remote work opportunities in maintaining a happy, productive workforce.

Firms that adapt and implement forward-thinking strategies will be better

positioned to succeed in today's competitive and ever-evolving market. This report provides a roadmap for doing just that, offering solutions that are backed by data and tailored to the needs of the modern accounting firm.

[Download the free report today.](#)

The Center for Accounting Transformation provides professionals with a framework for utilizing innovations that are ready for adoption, the training and resources necessary to apply the innovations and an opportunity to engage the talent and community needed to further the pursuit of innovative accounting practices that drive responsible and mindful business performance.

Stay in the know by frequently visiting [MECPA.org!](https://www.mecpa.org)



PIPELINE

Pipeline woes prompt new AICPA & NASBA Exposure Drafts

The AICPA and NASBA are eagerly soliciting feedback from accounting professionals on two recently released Exposure Drafts. These were developed based on the work of the National Pipeline Advisory Group (NPAG).

The **Competency Based Pathways Exposure Draft** would create a licensure

pathway allowing CPA candidates to be measured on specific professional competencies, while working at a job.

This would be done in lieu of earning an additional 30 academic credit hours.

[Read more here](#), and [send comments here](#) by Dec. 6.

The **Proposal to Change the Uniform**

Accountancy Act (UAA) is designed to incorporate the Competency Based Pathway and clarify a process for maintaining CPA mobility across state lines.

Sections 5 and 23 of the UAA are those reflecting the changes.

[Read more here](#) and [send comments here](#) by Dec. 30.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Partnering with Maine bankers on PR campaign to protect clients

An elderly woman picks up her ringing cell phone and hears what she thinks is her grandson's voice through a lot of background noise.

"Hi, Grandma, this is Robby. I'm at the repair shop. My car ended up costing more than I expected, and I can't pay the mechanic until next week. Do you think you could possibly transfer \$700 from your bank until I get paid, please?"

Grandma: "Oh, sure, Robby. That'll be OK."

Robby: "Thanks so much, Grandma. I appreciate it a lot. Have a pen? Here's the account number."

And then the woman unwittingly transfers money to an account that has nothing to do with her grandson.

Had a family code word been in place,



she could have asked for it and realized the call was a scam when the AI-generated voice on the other end of the line

could not produce the word/phrase.

The MECPA is partnering with the Maine Bankers Association to create a series of radio and TV ads that target such scams and will be broadcast later this month and into December.

This Code Word campaign is in line with the MECPA's mission of public protection of its member and greater community. It aims to alert people to the dangers of AI-generated predators seeking to fool people into turning over their financial information.

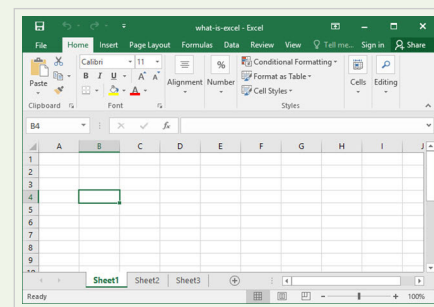
"We're glad to partner with Maine bankers to educate people about how to recognize these calls and avoid such phone scams," said Executive Director Trish Brigham.

Questions? [Contact Trish here](#).

**Stuck
in Excel hell?
Here's
a course
to the rescue!**

Have you inherited a spreadsheet that suffices but could be SO much better? Supervising a staff member who's seeking to increase efficiency?

Beyond the Basics: Excel and Word for the Accounting Industry is a great way to shift out of your frustration and into Excel Nirvana. This virtual course is from 9-11 a.m. on Dec. 11. [Register today!](#)



Society leaders meet to trade ideas, learn, collaborate



CEOs/Executive Directors heard updates about key topics of concern, including, of course, licensure, at the AICPA/CPASEA Leadership Meeting in Atlanta last month.

Above, five New England CPA Societies leaders: from left are, Trish Brigham (ME), Sadie Fischesser (VT), Melissa Travis (RI), Bonnie Stewart (CT) and Robin Hous-

ton (NH). These meetings offer Society leaders an easy way to share ideas about what's working – and what isn't – and to collaborate.



Fall AICPA Council meeting features send-off for longtime CEO Barry Melancon and focus on future of the profession

By David Stone,
MECPA representative to the AICPA

Last week, MECPA members traveled to Atlanta for the AICPA's semi-annual Council meeting, an especially powerful meeting as it was Barry Melancon's last as President and CEO of the AICPA.

Mark Koziel, current President and CEO at Allinial Global, an international association of independent accounting and advisory firms, will move into this role after Barry's retirement on Dec. 31.

My "Top 10" list of takeaways from the meeting follow:

1. Economic Concerns

61% of business leaders expect a recession, with many lacking prior recession experience.

2. Top Firm/Business Challenges

CPA firms face talent shortages and

IRS-related issues, while businesses' top challenges focus on digital transformation and AI.

3. AI Adoption

71% of leaders see AI as transformative for accounting, with 33% of firms already integrating generative AI.

4. Dynamic Audit Solution (DAS)

Over 5,000 audits use DAS, signaling a move toward enhanced audit technology.

5. Evolving CPA Firm Structures

ESOPs, private equity and other alternative practice structure (APS) models are redefining firm identity.

6. Talent Pipeline Improvements

Accounting major enrollments have risen 5%, with new CPA candidates increasing by 10,000 in 2024.

7. AI Assurance Opportunities

There is potential for CPAs to lead in ensuring responsible AI use, aligning

with their trust role. There may be opportunities to provide assurance over AI.

8. Sustainability and ESG

Upcoming SEC, California and EU rules on climate disclosures will require assurance services. This is a space that the CPA profession is well equipped to claim, but there are other professions vying for this service.

9. Global Leadership Shifts

Geopolitical dynamics now highlight leaders like Putin and Xi, affecting international business sentiment.

10. Finance Transformation

With digital transformation being a top challenge for businesses, Chief Financial Officers are now considered "Chief Future Officers."

Questions or comments related to the Council meeting or AICPA activity?

Reach out to [David Stone](#) or [Jodie Heal](#), AICPA at-large Council member.



MECPA rep
to AICPA Council

Are rising salaries enough to draw recent grads in?

For new college graduates, many with student loans, compensation is a significant factor in post-graduate job decisions.

Salaries for accounting graduates have been increasing, but a recent Accounting Today Salary Survey indicates that salaries may not be competitive enough.

[Read about it here.](#)

Go from good to great as a manager

Source: Arbing.com Newsletter

The approach of busy season may mean promotions to managerial positions for some staff members. With rare exception, most of us would agree that managing people can be rewarding, yes, but also challenging.

Whether you're naturally inclined to be a good manager or not, becoming a great manager is achievable.

[This article](#) provides some practical suggestions for growing into the type of manager both employers and employees value.

Put your critical analysis (and sleuthing) skills to the test

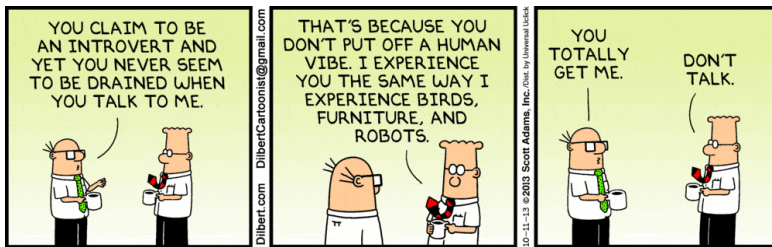


We've teamed up with the New Hampshire Society of CPAs to present a **Virtual Scavenger Hunt/Murder Mytery** on Dec. 5.

It's a great chance to be a detective from the comfort of

your couch while getting to know some new friends, make new contacts and collaborate to figure out the mystery.

It's from 4:30-6 p.m. and sponsored by Payroll Management. [Register here.](#)



Turns out introverts rule superbly!

If you haven't read "Quiet. The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking" by Susan Cain, visit your local library and pick up a copy.

Likely a case of blatant

stereotyping, but accountants are often pigeon-holed into the introvert category. If that describes you, fear not.

[As this article discusses](#), introverts can have leadership superpowers!

Prepare now for new quality measurement standards in 2025

Effective Dec. 15, 2025, firms with accounting and audit practices will be required to have a new system of quality management in place.

The new standards system is designed to enhance a firm's system of quality control by adding a risk-based approach and incorporating a risk assessment process tailored to a firm's circumstances. Firms can expect a non-pass report if they do not adequately conform to the new standards.

Compliance likely will be a primary focus of oversight activities of peer reviewers and administering entities, starting in 2026.

[This AICPA Quality Management site](#) provides resources to assist your firm through the transition to a system that complies with the new standards. Interested in learning about the evolution of these standards? [Listen here](#) to a Journal of Accountancy podcast that describes it.

Accounting and technology go hand in hand – Are your skills up to snuff?

By Paul Warrick, AICPA staff liaison for the CITP® credential

CPAs are trusted business advisors. In today's digital world, technology is reshaping business.

That is where the AICPA's CITP® credential comes in. It's not just another certification

– it's the pathway to becoming a leader who provides cutting-edge insights on financial technologies and drives innovation within their organizations.

The credential stands out in competitive job markets, commands higher salaries and opens doors to roles in

technology and data security, system processes, software development, and business intelligence that span the organization from entry level to C-suite. The CITP® credential offers access to exclusive networking opportunities, thought leadership platforms and specialized training in

emerging areas.

Interested in evolving from a traditional CPA into a tech-savvy CPA who can truly shape the future of business? Become a CITP® credential holder and enhance your career today.

[Go here FMI.](#) Contact Paul Warrick [here.](#)



News from the New Hampshire SOCIETY OF CPAs

News From Over the Border

Womens Golf 2024



NHSCPA held the 10th Annual Women's Golf Outing at Stonebridge Country Club. The winning team from Altair Group, PLLC had an amazing average of 29. Kelli D'Amore of Nathan Wechler & Company generously donated her 50/50 raffle winnings back to support the Ellie Fund.

Our Young Professionals Continue to visit schools!



From high schools classrooms to college campuses, we have been spreading the word about great accounting career opportunities.

Save the Dates:

****In person CPE****

**Surgent's Federal Tax Camp
November 6th, 2024**

**8:00 AM- 4:00 PM
Manchester, NH**

**New Hampshire Tax Forum with
McLane Middleton**

November 22nd, 2024

**8:00 AM- 4:30 PM
Concord, NH (Grappone Center)**

UNH Paul College and the NHSCPA presents

Is accounting for me?

December 5 | 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. | UNH Paul College, 10 Garrison Ave, Durham



A one-day event offering high school students the opportunity to interact with other students, practitioners, and professors while considering whether a career in accounting might be worth pursuing. Open to any high school student with an interest in business.

Schedule

9:00 a.m.	Arrival
9:15 a.m.	Keynote Address: Anoop Mehta (Past President of the AICPA)
10:15 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m.	Team Activity, Guest Speakers, and Fraud Exploration Challenge 🏆
12:00 p.m.	Lunch and Trivia (with prizes)
12:50 p.m.	Event Ends