

The energy of our centennial year will keep driving us

MECPA's 2024 was a year "for the books," as we ...

- Celebrated our 100th anniversary
- Expanded efforts to attract future accountants with the launch of a student mentor program and several on-cam-



Trish Brigham

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTE

pus events for high school and college students

- Connected in-person for fitness, fun and networking
- Offered unique educational programs, like AI & Ethics
- And ... advocated on your behalf through regular communication with Maine Revenue Services, the Maine Legislature and state Board of

Accountancy

We're determined to keep the positive, productive momentum of our centennial year alive through 2025.

We've kicked off the year by joining colleagues from around the country in proposing legislation allowing alternative pathways to CPA licensure.

Our successes inspire us to be optimistic as we move forward, continually reassessing and redefining the value

proposition for our members in an ever-evolving business environment and profession. The most effective way to serve and support you is by listening.

Last summer, I met with leaders of several public accounting firms. In 2025, I hope to reach more of you, post-busy season, of course.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of working for and with you.

– Executive Director
Trish Brigham

COMING UP ...

Jan. 29
Cryptocurrency Taxation (virtual), 1-3 p.m. [Register here.](#)

April 17
Year-end Celebration & Networking for Student Mentor Program, University of New England, Biddeford, 4 p.m.

May 15
MECPA Annual Meeting & Awards, 8:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3 CPE. The Brunswick Hotel, Brunswick.

June 18-20
NEGASC Annual Conference, Champlain College, Vt. [Go here FMI.](#)

Check the [MECPA website](#) for updates and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

Official recognition

Capping off a momentous 2024, we accepted – on behalf of all Maine Society of Certified Public Accountants members past and present – a recognition certificate noting the Maine Society's 100-year milestone. From left, Board member David Stone of BerryDunn, Executive Director Trish Brigham, Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows and Board member Spencer Hathaway of Baker Newman Noyes with the official certificate (which you can read on page 2!). Congratulations to all as we embark on another 100 years!



ADVOCACY

We're working on your behalf in myriad ways

It's been a very busy stretch on the legislative front. Stay up to date as news unfolds by reading our members-only, weekly LegUp email.

CPA Licensure

Earlier this month, the MECPA, with assistance from its Pierce Atwood lobbying team, introduced legislation proposing a pathway to CPA licensure with a bachelor's + 2 years experience option, an alternative to the current 150-hour academic credit requirement.

Passage of the CPA Exam, and industry related experience remains for all pathways. Similar bills have been presented in nearly 30 states, and in some cases, like Ohio, they've

– See **ADVOCACY**, page 2

THE MECPA GIVES YOU

A Leg
Up

Legislative
Update



Our Legislative Updates give MECPA members a leg up.

ADVOCACY

– Continued from page 1

been enacted.

Our omnibus bill also would protect practice privilege mobility during the time states transition to alternate pathways. The bill also clarifies that students may apply to take the CPA Exam within 120 days of earning an undergraduate degree.

State CPA Societies are initiating this legislative push, after communicating concerns about, and lack of support for, the AICPA/NASBA Competency Based Pathways Exposure Draft. The comment period for the Draft closed in December.

You can read the New England State CPA Societies' joint comment letter [here](#).

Summary results from the comment period are not yet available.

State tax laws & rules

The MECPA's Taxation Committee continues to meet periodically with Maine Revenue Services. Topics of conversation and activity include:

Proposed Rule 801 (Apportionment)

We submitted a Comment Letter opposing this proposal on several grounds, most significantly its excessive complexity and compliance burden placed on taxpayers and their tax advisors.

State & Federal Reporting Compliance: [LD 48](#)

We typically support such measures to make your job easier!

Taxpayer Confidentiality: [LD 127](#)

We'll always work to protect taxpayer information.

PTET Tax Credit [LD 191](#)

We support this, and members were involved in improving/crafting its language.

Board of Tax Appeals & Taxpayer Advocate role

We continue to review these with the goal of improving objectivity, efficiency and effectiveness.

Federal legislation

FINCEN's BOI Reporting

Alongside the AICPA and other state CPA Societies, we lobbied for an extension of the reporting deadline.

Recent litigation has effectively suspended the reporting requirement for now. We'll monitor the situation and encourage you to periodically [check the FINCEN website](#).

Accounting as STEM

Still on the docket, so to speak. We continue to encourage our federal legislators to co-sponsor and/or support the:

- **Accounting STEM Pursuit Act (H.R. 3541)** in the House and the **STEM Education in**

- **Accounting Act (S. 1705)** in the Senate.

STEM designation would help to attract students to the accounting profession.

Perspectives to share? The MECPA is always looking for practitioners willing to testify on tax bills in Maine.

We provide guidance and support. Please reach out to Trish Brigham to get involved in these important efforts.

PSA campaign with bankers and broadcasters a success

Did you hear a "Code Word" radio or TV ad over the past few weeks?

The MECPA, Maine Bankers Association and Maine Broadcasters Association collaborated for an advertising campaign highlighting the risks of phone fraud, particularly through AI-generated scams.

We appreciated the chance to partner with these professional groups, as this campaign fit nicely with our organization's role – to serve

as a public resource, elevate the integrity and reputation of our profession and cultivate meaningful connections.

The TV and radio stations aired the ads three times more than they had originally guaranteed, based on our investment.

As accountants, we know a good investment when we see one!

The fact that this effort delivered a public good makes the reward even sweeter!

'Of duration and longevity'



In case you're curious about what official proof of reaching age 100 looks like ... here's the state certificate given to the MECPA by Secretary of State Shenna Bellows in December.

New member enjoys the benefits of embracing opportunities

Name: Rob Gould-Wetmore

Employer: Albin, Randall & Bennett (ARB)

Title: Senior Accountant

How long in the accounting profession?

I've been in the profession around six years. I began as an accounting intern at a security and event services company, Green Mountain Concert Services in Vermont, and stayed on for a couple of years as a junior staff accountant and then as a staff accountant during COVID.

As COVID wound down, my wife Micaela and I were looking to make a change, so we moved to Maine. I began working for the state of Maine as a tax examiner in the Sales, Fuel, & Special Tax Division.

After a couple of years there, I felt I was looking for something more and decided it was finally time to make my CPA dreams a reality. I made the move to Albin, Randall & Bennett in January of 2022 and have absolutely loved it. I've had the opportunity to work in Tax and Accounting & Auditing. I'm now solely doing A&A work.

How long have you been a member of the MECPA?

Officially a member for a few months. The first event I attended was the softball game last summer and it was such a great time that I've been regularly participating and became a member.

How has being an MECPA

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: ROB GOULD-WETMORE



New and active MECPA member Rob Gould-Wetmore with his wife Micaela, enjoying some downtime.

member helped you OR allowed you to help someone else?

Being new to Maine, the MECPA has opened a networking door and Micaela and I have made new friends that share similar interests and hobbies in our community.

Volunteer organizations you're involved in? Your role/what you enjoy about it?

Most of the volunteering I do now is through ARB or the MECPA. Through ARB, I've had the opportunity to volunteer at the Maine Wildlife Park and Maine State Society for the Protection of Animals.

I'm looking forward to opportunities to volunteer

through my newfound connection with the MECPA Difference Makers Committee. Growing up, I helped organize blood drives with the American Red Cross in Vermont.

Best advice you've received?

"Put the effort in and take advantage of the opportunities that you are presented." I think this is a career where new opportunities are regularly presenting themselves – whether it's networking events, learning opportunities and industry conferences, or ways to give back to the accounting community through programs like the MECPA mentor program.

You'll always have oppor-

tunities to learn and grow, but it's up to you to put in the effort and sometimes that means getting outside of your comfort zone. I think it has helped me embrace some new experiences and put myself out there.

I think that taking advantage of the post-college opportunities to learn and grow professionally is crucial to provide quality service to clients and to stay up to date on things whether it's tax code or new technologies.

When you have free time, what do you do?

I've been enjoying exploring Maine with Micaela and our two dogs. We enjoy this time of year because we can take the dogs out for walks on the beach.

We've also been enjoying finding all the little walking trails, preserves, and sanctuaries that Southern and Midcoast Maine have to offer. When there is snow, we enjoy cross country skiing. We love good food, too, so Restaurant Week is usually a highlight of our late winter/early spring.

Favorite vacation spot?

Clearwater Lake, Maine. Micaela's family are Maine natives and have been on the lake for a long time and I've been lucky enough to spend time there.

We try to go as much as possible because there's always family rotating in and out and we appreciate the ability to slow things down and spend quality time with the ones we love.

We're looking for a few good Board members

The MECPA Board of Governors is accepting nominations for several board seats with three-year terms that start June 1.

Do you know someone who might be interested in this exciting opportunity to

lead the MECPA and influence the direction of the accounting profession in Maine and beyond? Perhaps that person is you!

To submit a nomination, contact Trish Brigham by March 31.

MEMBER NEWS

Remembering accounting icon Peter Chandler



Peter Chandler

The MECPA's 100th anniversary served as a reminder to be grateful for the many members whose foresight, efforts and dedication to the accounting profession contributed to our reaching that milestone.

Sadly, the Maine CPA community has lost someone who made many significant contributions to the accounting profession in Maine.

Peter Chandler, a founding member of Baker Newman Noyes, long-serving MECPA Board and committee member, and chair of the Maine Board of Accountancy passed away in December.

"To me, Peter will always be the gold standard of what one should aspire to be as a tax professional or business advisor," recalled Andrew Smith, Principal, Director of TaxServices and BNN Board Chair.

"He was creative, thoughtful, professional, caring, and brilliant. Everyone that interacted with him came away better for it and I was lucky to be one of those individuals for almost 25 years. For that, I am extremely fortunate. Peter's legacy will live on with the many clients and accountants he helped throughout his career."

[Read Peter's obituary here.](#)



From left, NBT Bank's Audie Harris, Ashley Gagnon and Tim McMachen present a sponsorship check to MECPA Executive Director Trish Brigham in December.

Thank you! for making a positive difference

Organizations

- BerryDunn for funding support for our Team Up to Rise Up Mentor program
- Deloitte for its financial support of pipeline efforts
- NBT Bank for sponsoring the XGolf event & other efforts
- Springborn Staffing for providing a Maine Mariners Gift Pack raffle prize for our M&T/MECPA hockey game
- UWORLD for donating a free CPA Exam review class to students enrolled in our mentor program. Congratulations to winner Tyler Richards, a University of New England student.
- Wipfli, LLP for providing major funding for our "Is A Business Major for ME?" event at St. Joseph's College

Individuals

- M&T Bank VP Suzanne Cange, for volunteering at the St. Joseph's College event
- Wipfli's Lauren Curley, Liz Flynn, Artur Kuznetsov and Thomas MacGregor, business panelists at the St. Joseph's event
- Laura Emack, SBA Expert Advisor, NEXT LEVEL CEO program
- Tami Gower, speaker for Portland High School's Women in STEM class
- David Stone, BerryDunn, classroom speaker
- New Team Up to Rise Up Mentors: Laura Everett and Ben Lewis, Albin, Randall & Bennett; Ryan Dawson, KDS CPAs; and Evangeline McCarthy, Baker Newman Noyes

Leadership Academy takeaway: Accounting's definitely a people profession

Note: David Stone's involvement with the AICPA began when he joined the MECPA. Interested in expanding your career opportunities? Have a staff member who could benefit? Encourage them to [join the MECPA!](#)

By David Stone

In December, I traveled to North Carolina to attend the AICPA Leadership Academy. After three rounds of applications, I finally had been accepted into the program.

Why three times? It just seemed to be something I needed to do. Turns out my instinct was correct!

My Leadership Academy class included 30 people from 24 states, all CPAs between the ages of 27 and 36. Our shared passion for the profession and varying career and professional aspirations made for great conversation and learning opportunities.



Who says a work conference can't be illuminating AND fun? MECPA Board member David Stone found this to be true at the AICPA Leadership Academy in December.

My takeaway: Accounting is a people profession! A good reminder, as we head into busy season: What we do has a positive impact on people's lives. It's not about balancing a balance sheet or com-

pleting a tax return – it's about helping people. We're trusted advisors – often a person's first call in challenging times. The accounting profession is incredible and its future, bright!

Don't let HR compliance stress you out in 2025.

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MEMBER NEWS


**NOVEMBER:
X-Golf**

Left: Micah Davis-Johnson of Aries Wealth Management watches Thomas MacGregor of Wipfli hit the ball at our X-Golf event in Portland. Above: from left, Ryan Dawson of KDS CPAs, Cam McKeague of NBT Bank, Ken DeSimone of Springborn Staffing and Joe Luciano of NBT. Thanks to sponsor NBT Bank for a great evening.

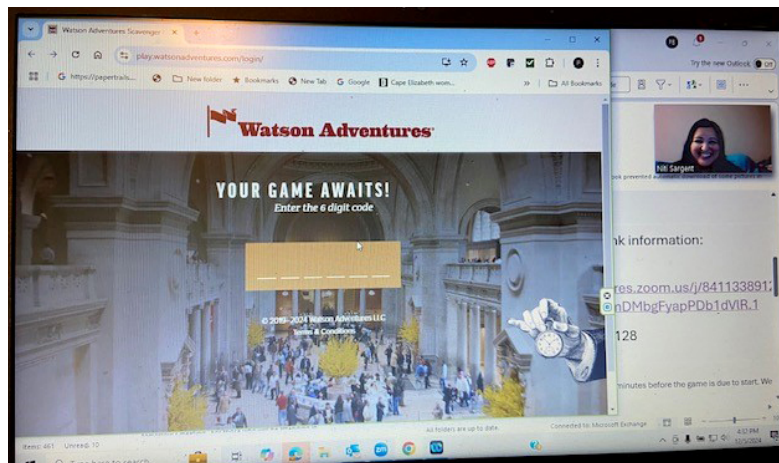

**JANUARY:
Mariners game**

We teamed up with M&T Bank for an action-packed Maine Mariners game earlier this month. Thanks to sponsor Springborn Staffing for a hefty raffle prize full of Mariners merch!

**Always a win
when we
get together
with members
and friends**

**DECEMBER:
Virtual Scavenger Hunt**

Turns out accountants are great at solving mysteries – and not just the financial kind! Congratulations to Kirin Schrum of Purdy Powers & Company and Allison V. Bishop, CPA, for earning the most points and correctly figuring out the “whodunnit” at a virtual Watson Adventures Scavenger Hunt in December. We co-hosted this fun networking event with the New Hampshire Society of CPAs. Thank you to sponsor Payroll Management, Inc.





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Fostering connections with the next generation of accountants

The MECPA maintains a robust network of contacts in Maine's high schools and colleges as part of our efforts to promote the accounting profession.

Interfacing with students heightens their awareness of accounting career opportunities and typically results in requests for more information.

The following schools are hosting Career Exploration Fairs in the next few months:

St. Josephs College

Feb 24, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. [Go here](#) FMI and to register.

Hampden Academy

Feb 6, 1-2:30 p.m., Dining Commons. Set-up is at 12:45 p.m., and photo ID required for entry. [Register here](#).

South Portland Middle School

March 5, Career Exploration Fair, 8:15-11 a.m. (Speakers do not need to stay for the entire time). FMI, email Gretchen McCloy at mcclaygr@spsdme.org.

Sacopee Valley High School

April 2, 1-3. [Go here](#) FMI and to register.

We also receive requests for classroom speakers. Sharing your career path story and highlights of a "typical day" are all it takes to create a positive experience for yourself and your student audience.

Odds are you'll inspire at least one student to consider an accounting career.

Want more information on how to get involved? Contact Trish Brigham.

MECPA Endowed Scholarships continue to bridge the gaps for accounting students

Our scholarships endowed to Husson University, University of Southern Maine and University of Maine provide financial assistance to accounting students in their pursuit of a degree.

During the past year, the



following students were recipients of MECPA Endowed Scholarships:

Husson:

Jordan Gyldden of

Hermon

UMaine: Alexia Knowlton of Rockland and Abigail Maily of Brunswick



PIPELINE

Below: A group of Windham High School students get a taste of what a career in business and/or accounting might be like; Right: Speakers at the well-received St. Joe's event.



St. Joseph's program puts doubts to rest: YES! 'A Business Major IS for You!'

On November 15, nearly 100 high school students attended a program on the St. Joseph's College campus, to learn more about careers in business, with particular emphasis on accounting.

The event, funded by Wipfli, LLP, included a business challenge competition, student and professional panels, lunch and a campus tour.

This letter from a student attendee highlights the day's impact and is representative of feedback from students and teachers alike, that human connection and conversation matters.

*Hello Ms. Brigham,
Thank you for the Accounting & Business Career Day opportunity. I really enjoyed this experience and learned some things I didn't know before, like how accountants need to take an exam for their license and that it only needs to be taken once.*

I was also wondering if it would be possible for me to have the opportunity to be a shadow to an accountant to gain further experience and knowledge.

Get back to me whenever you can and thank you so much!

The success of the St. Josephs College program, yielding benefits to the hosting college, sponsoring firm and student attendees, is fueling similar programs with other institutions.

For example, we're looking forward to participating at Husson ALIVE! on May 13 in Bangor with participation and sponsorship from Freeman Associates and BerryDunn.

If your company/firm is interested in learning more, please contact Trish Brigham.

Stay in the know by frequenting the [MECPA website](#).



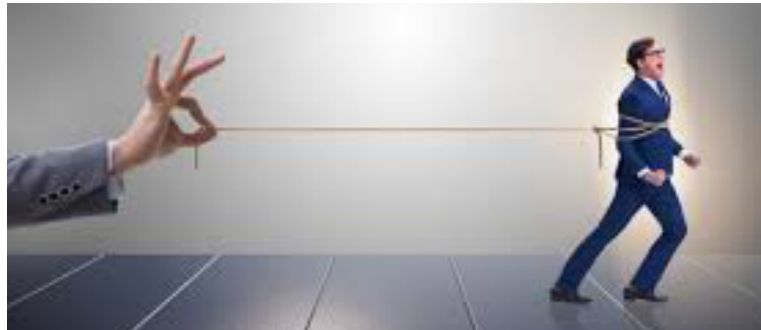
PIPELINE

Staff retention is an important piece of the puzzle

The [Center for Accounting Transformation](#) conducted a survey of firms to identify characteristics of successful staffing strategies.

The top two standouts? Leveraging technology to reduce workload (or overload as the case may be) and cultivating an inclusive and welcoming culture with authenticity.

If your firm/company is scrutinizing its approach to talent management, the survey also offered suggestions for tried-and-true approaches for sustaining the staff you already have. Pursuing all of these may not be feasible for every organization, but worth considering as part of a compre-



hensive approach to investing in your most valuable resource – your employees.

Remember, the MECPA can offer support in several of these areas as well:

- Hire/assign someone to be a dedicated recruiter.
- Improve benefit and compensation offerings.
- Overstaff for growth spurts
- Provide a supportive structure for people development
- Upskill your employees for faster career advancement

- Increase firm visibility

The research also addressed the dilemma faced by many senior managers around RTO policies.

Middle managers are feeling the squeeze as they occupy space between staff who have embraced the hybrid work culture and the C-suite, which tends to favor a full return to office.

Providing these middle managers with appropriate training on ways to guide and lead their remote workers goes a long way toward sustaining a healthy and productive hybrid work environment.

[Read the full report here.](#)

RELEVANT BUSINESS NEWS

Maine business news that may affect you and your clients ...

Paid Family Medical Leave

Maine's Paid Family Medical Leave program became effective this month, with payouts scheduled to begin in January 2026. There are groups challenging aspects of this new law.

[Go here for FAQs.](#)

Climate Action Plan

Maine Can't Wait 2.0 was issued by Gov. Janet Mills' office and Maine's Climate Council in November.

"Climate change poses a serious threat to our state's economy and environment – and that means it directly impacts the livelihoods and well-being of all Mainers," the report says. "It is not simply an environmental issue; it represents a

transformative economic challenge for all. Private, public, and nonprofit entities can and must do their part, by capturing opportunities and changing the way we build, heat, and transport things. Climate-Work Maine was created for this very purpose – to help Maine businesses grow and communities and people succeed in a carbon-constrained economy."

[Read the Plan Summary here.](#)

The Knowledge Hub: a valuable & vetted member resource

Pressed for time? Need an easily accessible resource for answers to questions that may arise during busy season?

Remember to consult our [Knowledge Hub](#), an information source that won't

leave you scratching your head like some AI responses may.

You can interact with the Knowledge Hub as an expert contributor or collect information to become an expert!

INDUSTRY NEWS

Trend toward specialization highlights value of certifications

MECPA member John Connolly, a former Board of Governors member and founder of Connolly Financial Services, has earned several AICPA credentials.

Here, John shares insights on the process of certification and their impact on professional effectiveness and success:



John Connolly

Which AICPA Credentials have you earned?

CPA
PFS
CGMA

Reason for pursuing these?

CPA: The cornerstone of my business and reputation in the community. Signifies to others my dedication,

education and ethics and opens opportunities for me professionally.

One of the most recognizable credentials with instant credibility.

PFS: This credential signifies my knowledge and experience in the area of financial planning and financial management. Encompasses taxation, retirement planning, insurance planning, personal financial planning, estates, etc.

This certification allows me to receive compensation as an Investment Advisor Representative and provides a waiver of the Series 65 requirement.

CGMA: Signifies my continued professional development in the areas of financial management, accounting, finance, planning, operations, etc. This designation shows my ability to work in and understand the global business environment.

Benefits to having them?

The combined designations add to my overall dedication to professional development and constantly expanding my knowledge base to better serve my clientele.

The instant recognition of my CPA credential opens doors, and the other designations provide a fuller array of services and a higher level of development and understanding.

How have they helped you professionally?

My designations have been my calling card, not just something on my business card.

My designations show career-long professional development and constant investment in myself and let my clients and prospective clients know I am able to serve them and are prepared to offer insights that may be beneficial to them.

Interested in learning more about AICPA credentials? [Go here.](#)

DEI efforts have positive impact on firms' success and resiliency

Setting aside the politics of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), the concept of building and supporting teams with diverse skills and backgrounds and then cultivating an inclusive culture that fosters and facilitates their success is good for

business.

Given the profession's focus on talent, its greatest asset and driver of success, The Center for Accounting Transformation conducted a research study, "The DEI Journey of the Accounting Industry."

This report seeks to foster a comprehensive and universally understood definition of DEI, and provide industry-specific strategies for leveraging DEI for the benefit of a firm and its employees.

One quote from the report sums up the importance of

DEI to the future sustainability of the accounting profession:

"The profession must strive to reflect the demographic shifts of incoming accounting students, clients, business, and society."

[Read the full report here.](#)

AICPA study reveals continued growth in Client Advisory Services

According to the latest Client Advisory Services Benchmark survey, firms reported more growth in CAS than any other service area since 2022.

Two other takeaways:

- Specialization in a particular client niche improves profitability.
- Adaptability and agility are key to operational excellence and growth.

[Read more here.](#)

SBA's NEXT LEVEL CEO program needs you – Spread the word and share expertise

The Small Business Administration is accepting applications for its 2025 NEXT LEVEL CEO program.

This initiative represents an incredible opportunity for rising leaders in small, growing companies to elevate their own and their companies' success – and a boon for Maine's economy.

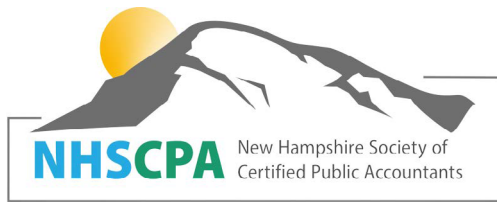
Know someone who might benefit?

Encourage them to [submit an application by Feb. 9.](#)

Interested in contributing to the program's success and making some cool contacts? CPAs are needed as guest experts to advise participants on financial statement prep and analysis on April 3 (4-6 p.m.)

FMI, contact Brad Currie at bradley.currie@sba.gov.

**Our Annual Meeting is May 15.
Mark your calendars now!**



News from the New Hampshire SOCIETY OF CPAs

News From Over the Border

“Is Accounting for Me?”

An incredible day at UNH’s Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics for “Is Accounting for Me?” High school students explored the world of accounting, participated in a fraud case study, and gained insights from industry leaders. Anoop N. Mehta, CPA, CGMA, delivered an inspiring keynote, followed by interactive team activities and panel discussions. Congratulations to Portsmouth High School for winning the Fraud Challenge competition! A big thank you to UNH, panel volunteers, fraud case judges, and participating schools for making this event a success!



Save The Date!



2025 Annual Meeting and CPA Inauguration Reception

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

5:00pm-8:00pm

Manchester Country Club

Bedford, NH

MCLANE MIDDLETON / NHSCPA M&A CONFERENCE

June 4, 2025

Jimmy's Jazz & Blues Club

Portsmouth, NH

For more information visit www.nhscpa.org