

**Tennessee Society of CPAs**  
201 Powell Place  
Brentwood, TN 37027  
1-800/762-0272  
Visit our Web site at  
[www.tscpa.com](http://www.tscpa.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Mon., June 15, 2009

**CONTACT:**  
Lindsey Deweese  
Public Relations Coordinator  
[ldeweese@tscpa.com](mailto:ldeweese@tscpa.com)

## **SMART STEPS IN RENTING A FIRST APARTMENT**

**BRENTWOOD, Tenn.** – As college students graduate this month, many will be taking the monumental step of renting their first apartment. The Tennessee Society of CPAs offers some advice on getting the right start.

### **CREATE A BUDGET**

As you set off on your own, a personal budget is a must because it helps you to maintain some control over how your money is spent and makes it possible to manage your finances wisely. Before you begin your apartment search, it's important to know how much rent you can afford, which means it's time to create your first budget. Add up how much you expect to earn - after taxes are deducted from your paycheck - each month. Now, make a list of your expected expenses, such as phone, cable and Internet bills, auto loans or commuting costs and an estimate of the cost of groceries, as well as student loan payments or other regular monthly bills. Once you've added up all these necessities, deduct that amount from your monthly earnings. Given what's left, consider how much you can realistically spend on rent.

### **SHOP WISELY**

You want to get good value for your rental dollars, especially if they are limited. That means it's a smart idea to look at several apartments in different neighborhoods in order to understand what's available in your price range. Don't be swayed by a persuasive advertisement that promises a dream apartment either. Check out each option to see if you would feel comfortable living in the area and if the building is well kept and suits your needs.

### **READ THE LEASE**

The lease for your apartment is a formal legal document, so be sure that you understand what you're agreeing to when you sign. Don't sign a three-year lease if you expect to relocate soon, in other words, since you will be responsible for the rent for the entire lease term. If you have pets, make sure the lease does not prohibit them. If you plan to have a roommate, make sure there are no restrictions on apartment sharing. In general, get a good sense of the lease's requirements and limitations and be sure they are in sync with your plans.

### **BE AWARE OF THE ADDED COSTS**

Rent is not the only expense associated with a new apartment. Your landlord may also ask for a security deposit, usually about one month's rent that is held until you move out. If a realtor finds the apartment for you, he or she may also charge a fee. Find out, too, whether the rent includes utilities, such as water, electricity and heat, or if you will have to pay for those separately.

### **LOOK INTO RENTER'S INSURANCE**

Renter's insurance will reimburse you for items stolen from your apartment or for damages to your possessions in case of a fire, flood or other disaster. Although it means an added monthly expense, without this insurance you will have to pay to replace your belongings from your own pocket, so it's well worth considering.

### ***About Money Management***

*Money Management* is a weekly column on personal finance prepared and distributed by the Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants (TSCPA) as a part of its financial literacy initiative.

Members of TSCPA are CPAs residing and practicing primarily in Tennessee in all areas of public accounting, education, government, business and industry. TSCPA offers a speakers bureau for many types of business and educational engagements. For details, visit [www.tscpa.com](http://www.tscpa.com). TSCPA is headquartered in Brentwood, Tenn.

###