HOOSIER HILLS ESTATE PLANNING COUNCIL

www.hhepc.org **President's Message • Summer 2026**

Dear HHEPC Members and Friends,

As we wrap up the 2025–2026 year, I'm writing to introduce myself, share a few leadership changes on your board, and give you a preview of what's ahead for the Hoosier Hills Estate Planning Council.

My name is Max Varness, and I'm excited to be stepping in as your new president. I'm a CPA and IU MBA graduate, and I recently passed the CFP exam. I've been with Laughlin Financial in Bloomington for three years, the past year full-time since completing my MBA last spring. I've grown to love the Bloomington community and value the cross-disciplinary network the HHEPC brings together.

I want to extend a special thank you to **Joel Niese**, who has led the council as president and now steps into the past president role, and to our outgoing treasurer, **Sarah Burgess**. Both graciously stayed on well beyond their required terms to keep things running smoothly. I'm also pleased to welcome **Joni Chan** as our new vice president and **Elizabeth Zimnawoda**, who takes over as treasurer.

What's ahead this year

We plan to host **two estate planning seminar days** this year — one this fall (in October; we'll confirm the date once finalized) and one in the spring. Our priority is strong, relevant continuing education tailored to the full range of professions our members represent.

At the same time, we want to put renewed energy into something that has fallen out of focus since COVID: **professional networking**. We plan to bring back the social hour at our seminar days, and we're exploring organizing other informal gatherings to give us all more chances to connect outside of a formal CE setting.

We're also actively reviewing new initiatives and conducting member outreach to better understand what you're looking for from the council. To that end, I'd be grateful if you'd take a few minutes to complete a short survey here: Survey Link.

Membership dues and renewal

Finally, a note on dues. After holding steady for the past several years, annual membership dues will increase from **$150 to $200**, effective with this year's renewal. This modest adjustment allows us to keep delivering quality programming, venues, and events. Our fiscal year ends **June 30**, so now is the time to renew.

You can renew online here: Renewal Link.

Thank you for being part of the HHEPC. Whether you've been a member for decades or are considering joining for the first time, I'd love to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, ideas, or just to say hello.

Warm regards,

Max Varness
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