BUSINESS

Agency clarifies uses of CPA designation

BY JERRY SIEBENMARK

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The state agency that regulates certified public accountants and CPA firms noticed a trend it wanted to stop.

Some Kansas CPAs have been using their professional designation in advertising, letters or other public documents in a way that would require them to have a separate practice license.

"We see that more now because information is more available to us," said Susan Somers, executive director of the Kansas Board of Accountancy. "We've got the Internet."

The trend prompted the board to post a notice on its Internet home page — www.ksboa.org — clarifying the use of CPA.

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The designation can be used after the CPA's name and in connection with his or her employer as long as the company is not providing services that fall under a separate definition of practice.

So a CPA who is a controller of a company that does not provide CPA services — or any financial or consulting services — can use the designation if it includes the name of the company for whom they work and their job title.

Where things get fuzzy, Somers said, is advertising, phone book listings, letterheads and signatures as a CPA on documents that are available to the public.

In those instances, she said, the CPA can't use the designation unless they also have a practice license.

The board's clarification of the use of CPA has been well received, Somers said.

"I've had a lot of thank yous from people," she said.

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