

Waupaca NEWS

Accounting firm has new owner

BY ANGIE LANDSVERK
STAFF WRITER

WAUPACA – Smith & Radtke Accounting is becoming Summit Accounting & Tax.

Jason Radtke has bought the business from Brian Smith, after being Smith's business partner the past 12 years.

"We signed the papers last Tuesday (Jan. 16)," Radtke said.

While the name of the business is changing, clients are still seeing Smith in the office.

That is because Smith, who turns 62 in March, will work full time this tax season and as needed the rest of the year.

He plans to do so next year as well.

"After that it's up to him, but the door is always open," Radtke said. "Brian always has a place to work here. He knows everyone, and he knows his stuff."

The transition for the client base is important, Radtke said.

He appreciates Smith and the clients who trusted them through the years, allowing the business to grow.

"I'm looking forward to serving the community," Radtke said.

Smith is comfortable passing the torch to Radtke.

"When Jason and I became partners, whether he knew this or not in 2005, this was my plan – that Jason would eventually be the owner of the business," Smith said.

Smith started the business out of his home in the mid 1980s.

He moved it to its present location on Union Street in 1989, when it became a full-time business.

"I probably had 200 cli-



Jason Radtke (left) is congratulated by Brian Smith on becoming the owner of the accounting business. It is now called Summit Accounting & Tax.

Angie Landsverk Photo

ents back then when I started," Smith said.

Today, the business has about 3,500 clients, with an office in Manawa as well.

When Radtke and Smith became partners 12 years ago, Smith knew he had an exit strategy.

Smith originally planned to work full time until he turned 65, but decided to begin the transition into retirement a bit earlier.

"I'm just starting the change sooner, so when I am 65, I can be done if I choose," he said. "Even if you like something you do, sooner or later you need to move on from there. I think that's where I'm at. I think it's perfect timing."

Smith said the office is fully staffed, and Radtke was ready to take over the business.

The 43-year-old Radtke worked at two different accounting firms prior to working with Smith.

After one of those firms opened an office in Waupaca, Radtke moved into it.

When Smith purchased the office, "I came along with that," Radtke said.

That was about 14 years ago.

Approximately two years later, they became business partners.

Radtke grew up in Weyauwega.

He attended St. Peter Lutheran School through eighth grade and is a Weyauwega-Fremont High School graduate.

Radtke explained his decision to pursue an accounting degree at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

"I was always good with numbers," he said. "When I was in college, I started doing my own partnership tax return by hand. I was reading through all the instructions. It seemed interesting and somewhat fascinating."

He graduated from UW-Oshkosh with a degree in accounting and passed the Certified Public Accounting exam around 2001.

Radtke is also licensed to do investments, which he says gives him a different perspective on tax planning.

Summit Accounting & Tax continues to offer tax preparation, accounting and payroll.

For years, Smith and Radtke slogan has been, "We're not the cheapest. We're not the most expen-

sive. We're just the best."

Smith said, "That really does sum us up. We just want to give our clients the best service we can at a reasonable price."

Radtke said the price structure remains the same.

"One of the things that sets us apart is that we relate to our clients," he said. "We understand how hard it can be for a business to keep up, and we focus on making it easier instead of focusing on how things are being done wrong."

Summit Accounting & Tax will also continue to operate its offices in Waupaca and Manawa.

As for the name of the business, Radtke said his wife Casey helped him with that.

"Everyone has a summit they are trying to reach," he said. "We are here to help them reach that summit."

Radtke will soon introduce the new logo for the business and plans to change the signage outside the office after tax season.

He and Casey live in the area and have three daughters.

Radtke says the fact he is the full owner of the business will likely set in after the tax season.

"The end of April is when it will hit all of us," Smith said.

He described his decision to sell the business as a bitersweet one.

He built the business from scratch.

"The hard part is knowing it's time to move on. I felt I had taken it as far as I was going to with my leadership," Smith said. "I think Jason can take what we've done and improve on that. He's got the motivation, and he's got the skill and he's young."

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WAUPACA – Dr. Jon than Overby will present "The Road to Higher Ground" at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Waupaca.

Sponsored by Waupeca Academy, the program is free and open to the public.

Overby is a Wisconsin Public Radio host, ethnomusicologist, singer, conductor and world traveler.

His program will focus on his study of world music and how it can inform how one might better understand the human condition.

Overby's travels and search have taken him to Northern India, Scotland, Tibet, the Caribbean, Japan, Zanzibar, Tanzania, Ghana, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Cuba, Peru, India, Scotland and Morocco.

These travels, says Overby "may have the potential for building bridges between diverse groups who are illuminating and celebrating cultural diversity and the inclusion of marginalized groups." Overby believes "such understanding, in fact, reduce human hatred."

His current research project centers on Sacred World Music.

Overby hosts a live radio

Scholarship offered

COUNTY – Waupaca County Master Gardeners is seeking applicants for a \$1,000 scholarship.

Any graduating senior from a Waupaca County high school may apply.

Information and application forms are available from area high school guidance counselors.

Applications must be received by March 22