

One of the common financial mistakes people make is not developing a road map for their financial goals. And for women, in particular, creating a financial road map is critical as they are more likely to outlive men, said Robyn Breshears, a senior vice president and private banking manager with Arvest in Springdale, Ark. Next month, Breshears will join a slate of other speakers who will help women of all ages navigate their way to financial well-being. Her presentation is part of the "Do It Herself: A Journey to Financial Freedom" financial conference to be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Nov. 4. The event is presented by the Oklahoma Society of CPAs. Breshears will speak on topics including the importance of wealth building in a session called "How Can I Make Money Grow on Trees?" Growing long-term money is a lot like growing a tree, Breshears said. Just as people think about where they want to plant a tree, and then nurture, fertilize, feed and prune it so they can enjoy its shade 20 to 30 years later, people need to think about financially planning for the long term and nurturing that plan over time. The sooner people can start saving and working toward their goals, the better, Breshears said. She recommends college graduates and new employees sign up for their employer's retirement plan as soon as they can, contributing at least as much as their employer's match or as much as they can and increasing that amount over time to meet their financial goals. "As you receive raises over time, if you don't have additional family needs, just sock that extra amount away. Once you do learn to live without it, it grows that much faster," she said. Breshears noted that women often outlive men, which means they'll need more money over a longer time. Women need to consider what their income stream will be in the future and whether they'll need to pay for long-term care. For short-term savings, Breshears recommends having a nest egg that would cover six months' worth of expenses in case of emergencies or a job loss. For long-term goals, people should consider several factors,

including how long they plan to work, what kind of income stream they want in retirement and whether they want to leave a legacy for their family. She suggests for the long term that people take a balanced approach to investing, including a combination of fixed-income investments such as bonds and Treasuries along with stocks or equities. Theoretically, these investments work together like a teeter-totter, so that when one investment is up in value the other may be down, Breshears said. "That keeps the volatility, the fluctuations in your nest egg from dipping too high or too low," she said. "The way you determine that balance is your age, how long you'll be in the markets, how long you have until you retire and your own risk tolerance." If you're the kind of person who loses sleep and checks your balance every other day and gets a stomachache, then you may need to pare back and be much more conservative, Breshears added. She noted that a lot of cash is sitting on the sidelines right now as uncertainty about the market and peoples' fears and emotions affect their decisions. But Breshears likened the current stock market to a shoe sale where people can find some great values and cheap stocks.

"It's an incredible time to be dipping your toes into the market," she said.

'Do It Herself: A Journey to Financial Freedom' Date: Nov. 4, registration 8 to

8:30 a.m., conference 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: Marriott Southern Hills Hotel, 1902

E. 71st St. Topics: Getting out of debt; basic budgeting; income taxes; starting your

own business; college savings; how to raise money-smart kids; relationship finances; overcoming financial crisis,

identify theft; building wealth and more. Cost: \$15 Register: Visit the Consumers section of

www.oscpa.com You can also send form with payment to OSCP A at 1900 NW Expressway,

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