

# **Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc.**

10250 Regency Circle  
Suite 100  
Omaha, NE 68114

**Telephone: 402-492-2727**  
**Facsimile: 402-492-2680**

**[www.karstensinvestments.com](http://www.karstensinvestments.com)**

**February 11, 2016**

## **FORM ADV PART 2A BROCHURE**

This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc.. If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, contact us at 402-492-2727. The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority.

Additional information about Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc. is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov).

Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc. is a registered investment adviser. Registration with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities authority does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

## Item 2 Summary of Material Changes

Form ADV Part 2 requires registered investment advisers to amend their brochure when information becomes materially inaccurate. If there are any material changes to an adviser's disclosure brochure, the adviser is required to notify you and provide you with a description of the material changes.

Since our last annual updating amendment dated February 20, 2015 there are no material changes to report.

## Item 3 Table Of Contents

Item 1 Cover Page	Page 1
Item 2 Summary of Material Changes	Page 2
Item 3 Table Of Contents	Page 3
Item 4 Advisory Business	Page 4
Item 5 Fees and Compensation	Page 5
Item 6 Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management	Page 7
Item 7 Types of Clients	Page 7
Item 8 Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss	Page 7
Item 9 Disciplinary Information	Page 8
Item 10 Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations	Page 8
Item 11 Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading	Page 9
Item 12 Brokerage Practices	Page 10
Item 13 Review of Accounts	Page 12
Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation	Page 12
Item 15 Custody	Page 13
Item 16 Investment Discretion	Page 13
Item 17 Voting Client Securities	Page 13
Item 18 Financial Information	Page 13
Item 19 Requirements for State-Registered Advisers	Page 14
Item 20 Additional Information	Page 14

## Item 4 Advisory Business

Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc. is a registered investment adviser based in Omaha, Nebraska. Our firm is organized as a corporation under the laws of the State of Nebraska. We have been providing investment advisory services since 1993. Our firm was originally approved as a registered investment adviser in 1993, and we moved to a fee-only platform (as described more fully below) in 1997. Michael D. Karstens is our principal owner. Mr. Karstens is a Certified Financial Planner™ with more than 20 years of experience in the financial services industry.

As stated above, we are a "fee-only" investment adviser. "Fee-only" means we are paid exclusively by our clients and the amounts of all such compensation are fully disclosed to clients in writing. We do not sell products and we do not receive commissions or other compensation from any source. We do not receive soft dollar compensation or commissions from any outside party. This fee-only arrangement enables our firm to act solely in our clients' best interests; there is no financial incentive, hidden or otherwise, for our firm to operate in any other manner.

As used in this brochure, the words "we", "our" and "us" refer to Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc. and the words "you", "your" and "client" refer to you as either a client or prospective client of our firm. Also, you may see the term Associated Person throughout this Brochure. As used in this Brochure, our Associated Persons are our firm's officers, employees, and all individuals providing investment advice on behalf of our firm.

We provide our clients with a wide range of investment advisory services through our investment management programs, including financial planning and consulting, discretionary and non-discretionary management of investment portfolios, and pension consulting services. Our integrated suite of services may be offered to clients on an all-inclusive or individual basis. Please refer to the description of each investment advisory service listed below for information on how we tailor our advisory services based on an analysis of your financial situation, personal balance sheet complexities, and individualized needs.

### **Financial Planning/Consulting Services**

We offer financial planning services ranging from broad-based planning to general consulting on client directed projects. Financial planning will typically involve providing a variety of advisory services to clients regarding the management of their financial resources based upon an analysis of their individual needs. The process typically begins with a complimentary introduction meeting during which the various services we provide are explained. If you decide to engage us for financial planning services, we will collect pertinent information about your personal and financial circumstances and objectives. As required, we will conduct follow-up interviews for the purpose of reviewing and/or collecting additional financial data.

Financial plans are based on your financial situation at the time we present the plan to you, and on the financial information you provide to our firm. In providing the contracted services, we are not required to verify any information we receive from you or from your other professionals (e.g. attorney, accountant, etc.) and we are expressly authorized to rely on the information you provide. You must promptly notify our firm if your financial situation, goals, objectives, or needs change.

### **Portfolio Management Services**

We provide discretionary and non-discretionary portfolio management services in accordance with your individual investment objectives. If you participate in our discretionary portfolio management services, we require you to grant our firm discretionary authority to manage your account. Discretionary authorization will allow our firm to determine the specific securities, and the amount of securities, to be purchased or sold for your account, the broker or dealer to be used, and the commission rates to be

paid without your approval prior to each transaction. Discretionary authority is typically granted by the investment advisory agreement you sign with our firm, a power of attorney, or trading authorization forms.

If you enter into a non-discretionary arrangement with our firm, we must obtain your approval prior to executing any transactions on behalf of your account. You have an unrestricted right to decline to implement any advice provided by our firm on a non-discretionary basis.

### **Pension Consulting Services**

We offer non-discretionary pension consulting services to employee benefit plans and their fiduciaries based upon the needs of the plan and the services requested by the plan sponsor or named fiduciary. In general, these services may include an existing plan review, assistance in the development of a retirement plan, evaluation of retirement plan vendors, asset allocation advice, money management services, communication and education services to plan participants, investment performance monitoring, and/or ongoing consulting.

All client accounts are regulated under the Employee Retirement Income Securities Act ("ERISA"). We will provide consulting services to the plan fiduciaries as described above. Without exception, the ultimate decision to act on behalf of the plan shall remain with the plan sponsor or other named fiduciary. The plan fiduciary is free to seek independent advice about the appropriateness of any recommended services for the plan.

### **Types of Investments**

We recommend various types of securities and we do not necessarily recommend one particular type of security over another since each client has different needs and different tolerances for risk. We may also advise you on any type of investment held in your portfolio at the inception of our advisory relationship, or on specific types of investments at your request.

### **Assets Under Management**

As of December 31, 2015, we provide continuous management services for \$132,706,663 in client assets on a discretionary basis, and \$79,197,762 in client assets on a non-discretionary basis. We also advise on \$460,190,532 in client assets on a non-continuous basis.

## **Item 5 Fees and Compensation**

### **Financial Planning/Consulting Services**

The combination of services, financial planning and portfolio management, are generally included as part of our overall management fee (as described below). However, in certain circumstances, we may provide financial planning services for a separate hourly fee of \$250.00. Under these arrangements, an estimate of the total time/cost will be determined at the start of the financial planning engagement. The related fees and fee paying arrangements will be clearly set forth in the agreement for services.

Either party may terminate the agreement by providing written notice to the other party. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the agreement. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees.

### **Portfolio Management Services**

Our annual fee for portfolio management services varies between 0.50% and 1.50% depending upon the market value of your assets under our management and the type and complexity of the asset management services provided. Such fees are negotiated on a client-by-client basis and will be clearly set forth in the executed agreement for services.

Our portfolio management fee is billed and payable quarterly in advance based on the value of your account on the last day of the previous quarter. For the initial quarter of investment management services, the first quarter's fees will be calculated on a pro rata basis, which means the advisory fee is payable in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client.

We may combine the account values of family members living in the same household to determine the applicable advisory fee. For example, we may combine account values for you and your minor children, joint accounts with your spouse, and other types of related accounts. Combining account values may increase the asset total, which may result in your paying a reduced advisory fee based on the available breakpoints in our fee schedule stated above.

You may terminate the portfolio management agreement upon written notice to our firm. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the portfolio management agreement, which means you will incur advisory fees only in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees.

### **Pension Consulting Services**

For Pension Consulting Services, we will be compensated at a rate negotiated between you and our firm on a case-by-case basis. Our fees and terms of payment will be clearly set forth in the executed agreement for services. Currently, our annualized pension consulting fees range between 0.10% and 1.25% of managed assets. An estimate of the total cost will be determined at the start of the advisory relationship. The final fee shall be directly dependent upon the facts and circumstances of your financial situation and the complexity of the pension consulting services provided.

Either party to the pension consulting agreement may terminate the agreement upon 30-days' written notice to the other party. You will incur a pro rata charge for services rendered prior to the termination of the agreement, which means you will incur advisory fees only in proportion to the number of days in the quarter for which you are a client. If you have pre-paid advisory fees that we have not yet earned, you will receive a prorated refund of those fees.

### **Additional Fees and Expenses**

As part of our investment advisory services to you, we may invest, or recommend that you invest, in mutual funds and exchange traded funds. The fees that you pay to our firm for investment advisory services are separate and distinct from the fees and expenses charged by mutual funds or exchange traded funds (described in each fund's prospectus) to their shareholders. These fees will generally include a management fee and other fund expenses. You may also incur transaction charges and/or brokerage fees when purchasing or selling securities. These charges and fees are typically imposed by the broker-dealer or custodian through whom your account transactions are executed. We do not share in any portion of the brokerage fees/transaction charges imposed by the broker-dealer or custodian. To fully understand the total cost you will incur, you should review all the fees charged by mutual funds, exchange traded funds, our firm, and others. For information on our brokerage practices, refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section of this Disclosure Brochure.

## Item 6 Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management

We do not accept performance-based fees or participate in side-by-side management. Performance-based fees are fees that are based on a share of capital gains or capital appreciation of a client's account. Side-by-side management refers to the practice of managing accounts that are charged performance-based fees while at the same time managing accounts that are not charged performance-based fees. Our fees are calculated as described in the *Fees and Compensation* section above, and are not charged on the basis of a share of capital gains upon, or capital appreciation of, the funds in your advisory account.

## Item 7 Types of Clients

We offer investment advisory services to individuals, pension and profit sharing plans, trusts, estates, charitable organizations, corporations, and other business entities. In general, we require a minimum of \$500,000 to open and maintain an advisory account. At our discretion, we may waive this minimum account size. For example, we may waive the minimum if you appear to have significant potential for increasing your assets under our management. We may also combine account values for you and your minor children, joint accounts with your spouse, and other types of related accounts to meet the stated minimum.

## Item 8 Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss

We may use one or more of the following methods of analysis or investment strategies when providing investment advice to you:

- Charting Analysis - involves the gathering and processing of price and volume information for a particular security. This price and volume information is analyzed using mathematical equations. The resulting data is then applied to graphing charts, which is used to predict future price movements based on price patterns and trends.
- Fundamental Analysis - involves analyzing individual companies and their industry groups, such as a company's financial statements, details regarding the company's product line, the experience and expertise of the company's management, and the outlook for the company's industry. The resulting data is used to measure the true value of the company's stock compared to the current market value.
- Technical/Cyclical Analysis - involves studying past price patterns and trends in the financial markets to predict the direction of both the overall market and specific stocks.
- Long Term Purchases - securities purchased with the expectation that the value of those securities will grow over a relatively long period of time, generally greater than one year.
- Short Term Purchases - securities purchased with the expectation that they will be sold within a relatively short period of time, generally less than one year, to take advantage of the securities' short-term price fluctuations.
- Short Sales - securities transactions in which an investor sells securities he or she borrowed in anticipation of a price decline. The investor is then required to return an equal number of shares at some point in the future. A short seller will profit if the stock goes down in price.
- Margin Transactions - a securities transaction in which an investor borrows money to purchase a security, in which case the security serves as collateral on the loan.
- Option Writing - a securities transaction that involves selling an option. An option is the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a particular security at a specified price before the expiration date of the option. When an investor sells an option, he or she must deliver to the buyer a specified number of shares if the buyer exercises the option. The seller pays the buyer a premium (the market price of the option at a particular time) in exchange for writing the option.

Our investment strategies and advice will vary depending upon each client's specific financial situation. As such, we determine investments and allocations based upon your predefined objectives, risk tolerance, time horizon, financial horizon, financial information, liquidity needs, and other various suitability factors. Your restrictions and guidelines may affect the composition of your portfolio.

Our strategies and investments may have unique and significant tax implications. However, unless we specifically agree otherwise, and in writing, tax efficiency is not our primary consideration in the management of your assets. Regardless of your account size or any other factors, we strongly recommend that you continuously consult with a tax professional prior to and throughout the investing of your assets.

Moreover, as a result of revised IRS regulations, custodians and broker-dealers will begin reporting the cost basis of equities acquired in client accounts on or after January 1, 2011. Your account custodian will use the FIFO accounting method for calculating the cost basis of your investments. You are responsible for contacting your tax advisor to determine if this accounting method is the right choice for you. If your tax advisor believes another accounting method is more advantageous, please provide written notice to our firm immediately and we will alert your account custodian of your individually selected accounting method. Please note that decisions about cost basis accounting methods will need to be made before trades settle, as the cost basis method cannot be changed after settlement.

### **Risk of Loss**

Investing in securities involves risk of loss that you should be prepared to bear. We do not represent or guarantee that our services or methods of analysis can or will predict future results, successfully identify market tops or bottoms, or insulate clients from losses due to market corrections or declines. We cannot offer any guarantees or promises that your financial goals and objectives will be met. Past performance is in no way an indication of future performance.

### **Recommendation of Particular Types of Securities**

As disclosed under the "Advisory Business" section in this Brochure, we recommend all types of securities and we do not necessarily recommend one particular type of security over another since each client has different needs and different tolerance for risk. Each type of security has its own unique set of risks associated with it and it would not be possible to list here all of the specific risks of every type of investment. Even within the same type of investment, risks can vary widely. However, in very general terms, the higher the anticipated return of an investment, the higher the risk of loss associated with it.

## **Item 9 Disciplinary Information**

Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc. has been registered and providing investment advisory services since 1993. Neither our firm nor any of our Associated Persons has any reportable disciplinary information.

## **Item 10 Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations**

We have not provided information on other financial industry activities and affiliations because we do not have any relationship or arrangement that is material to our advisory business or to our clients with any of the types of entities listed below.



1. broker-dealer, municipal securities dealer, or government securities dealer or broker
2. investment company or other pooled investment vehicle (including a mutual fund, closed-end investment company, unit investment trust, private investment company or "hedge fund," and offshore fund)
3. other investment adviser or financial planner
4. futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, or commodity trading advisor
5. banking or thrift institution
6. accountant or accounting firm
7. lawyer or law firm
8. insurance company or agency
9. pension consultant
10. real estate broker or dealer
11. sponsor or syndicator of limited partnerships

## **Item 11 Code of Ethics, Participation or Interest in Client Transactions and Personal Trading**

### **Description of Code of Ethics**

We have adopted a Code of Ethics that sets the standard of conduct expected to comply with applicable securities laws. Our goal is to protect your interests at all times and to demonstrate our commitment to our fiduciary duties of honesty, good faith, and fair dealing with you. We adhere strictly to these guidelines. Additionally, we maintain and enforce written policies reasonably designed to prevent the misuse or dissemination of material, non-public information about you or your account holdings by persons associated with our firm. You may contact us at 402-492-2727 to request a copy of our Code of Ethics.

### **Participation or Interest in Client Transactions**

Neither our firm nor any of our Associated Persons has any material financial interest in client transactions beyond the provision of investment advisory services as disclosed in this Brochure.

### **Personal Trading Practices**

Our firm or persons associated with our firm may buy or sell the same securities that we recommend to you or securities in which you are already invested. A conflict of interest exists in such cases because we have the ability to trade ahead of you and potentially receive more favorable prices than you will receive. To mitigate this conflict of interest, it is our policy that neither our firm nor our Associated Persons shall have priority over your account in the purchase or sale of securities. These requirements are not applicable to: (i) direct obligations of the Government of the United States; (ii) money market instruments, bankers' acceptances, bank certificates of deposit, commercial paper, repurchase agreements and other high quality short-term debt instruments, (iii) shares issued by mutual funds or money market funds; and (iv) shares issued by unit investment trusts that are invested exclusively in one or more mutual funds.

## Item 12 Brokerage Practices

We routinely recommend the brokerage and custodial services of TD Ameritrade Institutional, a division of TD Ameritrade, Inc. ("TD Ameritrade") and Schwab Institutional, a division of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab"). Both TD Ameritrade and Schwab are unaffiliated securities broker-dealers and are members of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA") and the Securities Investor Protection Corporation ("SIPC"). Both TD Ameritrade and Schwab carry client accounts on their records, process transactions ordered by our firm, provide computer access to our firm for customer positions and provide quotes and data needed by our firm for the reports we provide to clients. These services are provided to us at little or no cost. Although you are not obligated to utilize the services of TD Ameritrade or Schwab, we believe that use of these firms is a convenient means of obtaining efficient transaction executions, account reference and reporting services for investment positions. However, receipt of such services also creates an inducement and conflict of interest for our firm since referring you to any other firm may result in higher reporting and overhead costs to us. In some cases, the commissions charged by a particular broker for a particular transaction or set of transactions may be greater than the amounts another broker who did not provide research services or products might charge.

Please note that although these services are provided to our firm at little or no cost, there is no soft dollar arrangement that is currently in place.

We participate in the TD Ameritrade Institutional program through which we receive some benefits from TD Ameritrade. There is no direct link between our participation in the program and the investment advice we provide to you, although we do receive economic benefits through our participation in the program that are typically not available to TD Ameritrade retail investors. These benefits include the following products and services (provided without cost or at a discount): receipt of duplicate Client statements and confirmations ; research related products and tools; consulting services; access to a trading desk serving adviser participants; access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares to Client accounts); the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from Client accounts; access to an electronic communications network for Client order entry and account information; access to mutual funds with no transaction fees and to certain institutional money managers; and discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to our firm by third party vendors. TD Ameritrade may also have paid for business consulting and professional services received by our associated persons. Some of the products and services made available by TD Ameritrade through the program may benefit our firm and/or associated persons but may not benefit you or your accounts. These products or services may assist our firm in managing and administering Client accounts, including accounts not maintained at TD Ameritrade. Other services made available by TD Ameritrade are intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. The benefits we receive through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to TD Ameritrade. As part of our fiduciary duty to clients, we endeavor at all times to put the interests of our clients first. You should be aware; however, that the receipt of economic benefits by our firm or our associated persons itself creates a conflict of interest and may indirectly influence our choice of TD Ameritrade for custody and brokerage services.

Schwab Institutional provides our firm with access to its institutional trading and operations services, which are typically not available to Schwab retail investors. These services generally are available to independent investment advisers at no charge to them so long as a total of at least \$10 million of the firm's clients account assets are maintained at Schwab Institutional. Schwab Institutional services may include research, brokerage, custody, access to mutual funds and other investments that are otherwise available only to institutional investors or would require significantly higher minimum initial investments. Schwab Institutional also makes available other products and services that benefit our firm but may not

benefit our clients' accounts. These include software and other technology that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements), facilitate trade execution, provide research, pricing information and other market data, facilitate payment of our advisory fees from our clients' accounts, and assist with back-office support, record keeping and client reporting. Our access to the foregoing products and services is not contingent upon our committing to Schwab Institutional any specific amount of business (assets in custody or trading).

The products and services we receive from TD Ameritrade and/or Schwab will generally be used in servicing all of our clients' accounts. Our use of these products and services will not be limited to the accounts that paid commissions to the broker-dealer for such products and services.

KIC believes that Schwab Institutional and TD Ameritrade provide the best services at the lowest commission rates possible. The reasonableness of commissions is based on several factors, including the broker's ability to provide professional services, competitive commission rates, volume discounts, execution price negotiations, the broker's reputation, experience and financial stability of the broker or dealer, and the quality of service rendered by the broker or dealer in other transactions.

Best execution is not measured solely by reference to commission rates. Paying a broker a higher commission than another broker might charge is permissible if the difference in cost is reasonably justified by the quality of the brokerage services offered. We do not obligate ourselves to seek the lowest transaction charges in all cases except to the extent that it contributes to the overall goal of obtaining the best results for your account.

### **Brokerage for Client Referrals**

We do not receive client referrals from broker-dealers in exchange for cash or other compensation, such as brokerage services or research.

On occasion, although not a material consideration when determining whether to recommend that a client invest in any particular product, our firm or our Associated Persons may receive benefits, such as educational and/or social events, gratis or discounted attendance at conferences, or other products that we would not receive if it did not offer investment advice. Certain of these support services that may be received may assist our firm in managing and administering client accounts. Others do not directly provide such assistance, but rather assist our firm in the management and further development of our business enterprise.

We do not make any corresponding commitment to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific mutual funds, securities or other investment products as result of the above arrangement.

### **Directed Brokerage**

Some clients may instruct our firm in writing to use one or more particular brokers for the transactions in their accounts. If you choose to direct our firm to use a particular broker, you will negotiate terms and arrangements for your account with the broker-dealer, and we will not seek better execution services or prices from other broker-dealers or be able to aggregate trades with other client accounts (as described below at *Block Trades*). As a result, you may pay higher commissions or other transaction costs or greater spreads, or receive less favorable net prices, on transactions for the account than would otherwise be the case. Thus, when directing brokerage business, you should consider whether the commission expenses, execution, clearance, and settlement capabilities that you will obtain through your broker are adequately favorable in comparison to those that we would otherwise obtain for you. Subject to our duty to obtain best execution, we may decline your request to direct brokerage if, in our sole discretion, such directed brokerage arrangements would result in additional operational difficulties. You are encouraged to discuss available alternatives with an Associated Person of our firm.

## **Block Trades**

Transactions for each client generally will be effected independently, unless we decide to purchase or sell the same securities for several clients at approximately the same time. We may, but are not obligated to, combine multiple orders for shares of the same securities purchased for advisory accounts we manage (this practice is commonly referred to as "block trading"). We will then distribute a portion of the shares to participating accounts in a fair and equitable manner. The distribution of the shares purchased is typically proportionate to the size of the account, but it is not based on account performance or the amount or structure of management fees. Subject to our discretion regarding factual and market conditions, when we combine orders, each participating account pays an average price per share for all transactions and pays a proportionate share of all transaction costs on any given day. Accounts owned by our firm or persons associated with our firm may participate in block trading with your accounts. Such accounts are treated as client accounts and are neither given preferential nor inferior treatment versus other client accounts.

We combine orders for shares of the same securities purchased for discretionary accounts; however, we do not combine orders for non-discretionary accounts. Accordingly, non-discretionary accounts may pay different costs than discretionary accounts pay. If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we may not be able to buy and sell the same quantities of securities for you and you may pay higher commissions, fees, and/or transaction costs than clients who enter into discretionary arrangements with our firm.

## **Item 13 Review of Accounts**

We monitor client portfolios as part of an ongoing process while regular account reviews are conducted at least annually. You are encouraged to discuss your needs, goals, and objectives with our firm, and to keep us informed of any changes in this information. Additional reviews may be conducted at your request, or based on various circumstances, including, but not limited to, contributions and withdrawals, year-end tax planning, market moving events, security specific events, and/or, changes in your risk/return objectives.

Personnel currently performing reviews are: Michael Karstens, President; Mark Johnson, Investment Adviser Representative; Darren Obrecht, Investment Adviser Representative; Stephen Olafson, Investment Adviser Representative; and Scott Beal, Investment Adviser Representative. The individuals conducting reviews may vary from time to time, as personnel join or leave our firm.

You will receive transaction confirmation notices and regular summary account statements, at least quarterly, directly from your account custodian. We will also provide you with quarterly performance reports that generally include relevant account and/or market-related information such as an inventory and appraisal of account holdings, and investment performance. Refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section above for additional information on this topic.

We encourage you to reconcile our reports with those received from the qualified custodian. If you find your holdings differ between these two statements, please call our main office number located on the cover page of this brochure.

## **Item 14 Client Referrals and Other Compensation**

We do not directly or indirectly compensate non-employee (outside) consultants, individuals, and/or entities (Solicitors) for client referrals.

Refer to the *Brokerage Practices* section above for disclosures on research and other benefits we may receive from TD Ameritrade and/or Schwab Institutional, the account custodians, in connection with utilizing their brokerage services.

## Item 15 Custody

As paying agent for our firm, your independent custodian will directly debit your account(s) for the payment of our advisory fees. This ability to deduct our advisory fees from your accounts causes our firm to exercise limited custody over your funds or securities. We do not have physical custody of any of your funds and/or securities. Your funds and securities will be held with a bank, broker-dealer, or other independent, qualified custodian. You will receive account statements from the independent, qualified custodian(s) holding your funds and securities at least quarterly. The account statements from your custodian(s) will indicate the amount of our advisory fees deducted from your account(s) each billing period. You should carefully review account statements and invoices for accuracy.

## Item 16 Investment Discretion

Before we can buy or sell securities on your behalf, you must first sign our discretionary management agreement, a power of attorney, and/or trading authorization forms.

You may grant our firm discretion over the selection and amount of securities to be purchased or sold for your account(s), the broker or dealer to be used for each transaction, and over the commission rates to be paid without obtaining your consent or approval prior to each transaction. You may specify investment objectives, guidelines, and/or impose certain conditions or investment parameters for your account(s). For example, you may specify that the investment in any particular stock or industry should not exceed specified percentages of the value of the portfolio and/or restrictions or prohibitions of transactions in the securities of a specific industry or security. Refer to the *Advisory Business* section above for more information on our discretionary management services.

If you enter into non-discretionary arrangements with our firm, we will obtain your approval prior to the execution of any transactions for your account(s). You have an unrestricted right to decline to implement any advice provided by our firm on a non-discretionary basis. Refer to the *Advisory Business* section above for more information on our non-discretionary management services.

## Item 17 Voting Client Securities

Without exception, we will not vote proxies on behalf of your advisory accounts. At your request, we may offer you advice regarding corporate actions and the exercise of your proxy voting rights.

## Item 18 Financial Information

We are not required to provide financial information to our clients because we do not:

- require the prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees and six or more months in advance, or
- take custody of client funds or securities, or
- have a financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet our commitments to you.

## **Item 19 Requirements for State-Registered Advisers**

We are a federally registered investment adviser therefore this section is not applicable.

## **Item 20 Additional Information**

### **Your Privacy**

We view protecting your private information as a top priority. Pursuant to applicable privacy requirements, we have instituted policies and procedures to ensure that we keep your personal information private and secure.

We do not disclose any nonpublic personal information about you to any nonaffiliated third parties, except as permitted by law. In the course of servicing your account, we may share some information with our service providers, such as transfer agents, custodians, broker-dealers, accountants, consultants, and attorneys.

We restrict internal access to nonpublic personal information about you to employees, who need that information in order to provide products or services to you. We maintain physical and procedural safeguards that comply with regulatory standards to guard your nonpublic personal information and to ensure our integrity and confidentiality. We will never sell information about you or your accounts to anyone. We do not share your information unless it is required to process a transaction, at your request, or required by law.

You will receive a copy of our privacy notice prior to or at the time you sign an advisory agreement with our firm. Thereafter, we will deliver a copy of the current privacy policy notice to you on an annual basis. Please contact us at 402-492-2727 if you have any questions regarding this policy.

### **Trade Errors**

In the event a trading error occurs in your account, our policy is to restore your account to the position it should have been in had the trading error not occurred. Depending on the circumstances, corrective actions may include canceling the trade, adjusting an allocation, and/or reimbursing the account. Any gains or losses resulting from error correction will be placed in our error correction account with the custodian. Credit balances in the error correction account will be donated to The Omaha Community Foundation. Debit balances in the error correction account will be covered by Karstens Investment Counsel, Inc.

### **Class Action Lawsuits**

We do not determine if securities held by you are the subject of a class action lawsuit or whether you are eligible to participate in class action settlements or litigation nor do we initiate or participate in litigation to recover damages on your behalf for injuries as a result of actions, misconduct, or negligence by issuers of securities held by you.