



# NEWS RELEASE

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*The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*  
St. Louis Little Rock Louisville Memphis

**Media Advisory**  
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**St. Louis Fed's *Regional Economist*:**  
**Have Computers Made Us More Productive?**  
**Personal Bankruptcy: The New American Pastime?**  
**Enhancing Future Retirement Income Through 401(k)s**

ST. LOUIS — The October edition of *The Regional Economist*, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis' quarterly journal of economic and business issues, features the following articles:

- **“Have Computers Made Us More Productive?”** The “Information Revolution,” particularly computers, changed the world. If so, then why haven't the expected gains shown up in the productivity data? To explore this productivity paradox, economist Adam M. Zaretzky examined some recent studies that attempt to explain this discrepancy. He discovered that although part of the explanation is mismeasurement, a potentially bigger reason is that technology has led firms to reorganize and driven up the demand for better-educated — and higher-paid — workers.
- **“Personal Bankruptcy: The New American Pastime.”** Major league baseball has had a great year, but when it comes to the game of personal finances, consumers in the Federal Reserve's Eighth District are striking out. Looking at data for the District's seven states,

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economist Michelle C. Neely found some of the highest personal bankruptcy rates in the nation, largely due to factors such as divorce, medical bills and gambling. In response, she offers several suggestions to both debtors and lenders to reduce the chances of bankruptcy.

- **“Enhancing Future Retirement Income Through 401(k)s.”** With an increasing proportion of the nation drawing health and retirement benefits, the future of the nation’s Social Security and Medicare programs is likely to be in peril. Economist Kevin L. Kliesen looked at the way workers are maintaining — and perhaps enhancing — their financial future through 401(k) retirement plans. He determined that the share of retirement income from personal assets will be much higher for tomorrow’s retirees than today’s. As a result, Kliesen concluded that policymakers must be increasingly watchful of policies that could threaten overall financial market returns.

Subscriptions to *The Regional Economist* are free and can be obtained by calling (314) 444-8809. The publication is also available on the Bank’s website: [www.stls.frb.org](http://www.stls.frb.org).

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