



Press Release

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Y2KNot: STAAR Funds Manager Scores Hat Trick With Three Funds Topping 30% for 1999

Pittsburgh, PA, January 3, 2000: Mutual fund manager Andre Weisbrod has reason to be pleased. So do his shareholders. In late 1998, Weisbrod touted International, Small Company and Technology stocks as investment categories with excellent upside potential.

His convictions paid off for clients who heeded the advice to weight their portfolios toward these areas. Three of the funds he manages topped 30% total return for 1999:

- STAAR International Fund (INTF) +38.7 %
- STAAR AltCat Fund +30.7%
- STAAR Smaller Company Stock Fund +30.4%

Weisbrod sees more gains in 2000, but with some changes in weightings. He says, "I still like International and Smaller Companies. Even with strong 1999 gains, these categories still have excellent opportunities and are not priced too high." Nevertheless, he is concerned about overvaluation and outright speculation in some stocks, warning, "It is hard to justify the prices of some of the high-flying stocks, especially internet-related ones. It would make a lot of sense for them to slip back a bit. Like most things in life, stock markets tend to seek an equilibrium over time."

Long-term, Weisbrod still likes technology, but he thinks better values can be found in other long-term trend categories, including energy, health care and emerging markets. For example, he asserts that "China is a major economic force with tremendous growth potential."

Weisbrod also sees a better year for bonds, which suffered a tough year in 1999. He believes that "interest rates may rise a bit more in early 2000, but they should stabilize and possibly go lower by the end of 2000." Weisbrod, who also manages two bond funds, continues to believe bonds provide important balance and diversification to many investors' portfolios. He cautions, "Despite recent history, 100% allocation to stocks just isn't wise for most people." (1/3/00)

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