



NEWS RELEASE
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County Offering Incentives for Taxpayers to File by April 15 Deadline; Late Fees on Unpaid Taxes Will be Waived if Return Filed on Time, Payment Plan Followed

Multnomah County residents who cannot pay their 2003 County income tax by next Thursday's deadline will be offered a six-month window to pay overdue taxes without late fees if they file on time and follow the terms of a payment plan.

The move is an attempt to encourage people who are having difficulty paying during the first year of the three-year, voter-approved measure for schools and local public safety, healthcare and senior service programs to file a return and avoid penalties that apply for noncompliance.

The late fees that will be waived if those conditions are met are the 5 percent penalty on any 2003 tax not paid by April 15, 2004 and the additional 20 percent penalty for taxpayers who don't file within three months of the due date or extension due date.

Late tax payments, regardless of when a return is filed, will be subject to interest at a 6 percent annual rate.

If a taxpayer files a return by April 15 but has not paid the entire tax owed, they will receive a packet from the County in late May or early June showing what they owe and explaining the terms of the payment plan.

The County tax, created by passage of Ballot Measure 26-48 by Multnomah County voters last May, is 1.25 percent of Oregon taxable income after a deduction. The tax applies to Multnomah County residents only. So far, the County has distributed \$32 million in 2003 tax payments to the eight Multnomah County public school districts to ensure a full school year and to the public safety and human service agencies administering programs supported by the measure.

The County has an information sharing agreement with the Oregon Department of Revenue that will allow the County to identify and contact any Multnomah County resident who has filed a state income tax return but not a County return. Anyone found to be in noncompliance with the County tax is subject to normal collection actions available to federal and state taxing authorities.

The County tax return and instructions are available in Multnomah County libraries and post offices or by calling the telephone helpline at (503) 988-4829, or by going online at www.multcotax.org.

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