



NEWS RELEASE
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County Projects Four of Five Personal Income Tax Returns Filed On Time; Forms, Assistance Still Available for Late Filers

More than 250,000 Multnomah County taxpayers, or at least 80 percent, filed returns by the April 15 deadline for the new, three-year County income tax that voters approved last May to support local schools, public safety, senior services and healthcare programs.

“Considering this is the first year of the first local personal income tax ever in the state of Oregon, we are quite pleased with 80 percent compliance at this point,” said David Boyer, the County’s Chief Financial Officer. “We will continue to work with those who have not filed to make sure we meet the voters’ intent and get this money to the schools.”

The 1.25 percent tax on the Oregon taxable income of Multnomah County residents was due April 15 for the 2003 tax year. While penalties and interest now apply for late returns, there is still a strong incentive for taxpayers to file their return and pay during the next three months to avoid stiffer penalties. A 5 percent late penalty now in affect will go to 25 percent if a return is not filed by July 15. In addition, interest on late tax payments is now accruing at a 6 percent annual rate.

The County is offering to waive the late penalty for taxpayers who filed their return on time but still owe a balance for the 2003 tax year if they agree to and successfully complete a payment plan of up to six months. Any taxpayer in that situation will receive a statement and terms of the payment plan in the mail in June.

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. That can include, but is not limited to, reporting a non-payment of taxes to credit agencies and garnishment of wages.

“We will go out of our way to be fair and understanding for people who may have difficulty complying with this measure during the first year,” Boyer said. “But, at the end of the day, we have a responsibility to collect this tax to make sure the schools, senior service, public safety and other programs that voters supported get the benefit. In addition, it’s only fair for the overwhelming majority of residents who comply that there are consequences for those who do not.”

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

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