



NEWS RELEASE
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County Attorney prepares to file lawsuits to collect local income tax

On Monday, the Multnomah County Attorney's office began mailing Final Notices to individuals who have not paid the County's voter-approved temporary income tax for 2003. Recipients of the letters will have ten days to respond to avoid having a lawsuit filed with the Multnomah County Circuit Court.

Individuals who are subject to legal action are those who have not responded to several letters requesting that they pay their tax or show they are not subject to the tax. The County Attorney expects to begin filing lawsuits in the next few weeks, and will continue sending Final Notices to individuals through the spring and summer.

Last fall, the County began contacting about 34,000 taxpayers who, according to County data base matches, appear to owe the tax. Thousands of the taxpayers contacted responded and paid the tax.

"Our initial Final Notices are being sent to individuals who appear to be bona fide residents of Multnomah County and have been given numerous opportunities to respond" said Agnes Sowle, Multnomah County Attorney, "The County is serious about collecting the tax which is owed in fairness to the 90 percent of county taxpayers who did file and pay their tax."

If the tax is owed and not paid by the due date stated in the Final Notices, the County will seek a judgment from the taxpayer for penalties, interest and collections costs in pursuing the lawsuit and collection. Judgments could be awarded as early as this summer, and the timeline for all cases will depend on many factors including court scheduling and the complexity of each case.

The County estimates that about \$8.5 million in tax revenue is due the County.

Taxpayers who still owe the tax for 2003 but have not yet filed or paid can still do so to avoid possible legal action. The tax for 2004 is due April 15. Forms and instructions are available on the County's Website at www.multcotax.org, or by calling the County's income tax helpdesk at 503-988-ITAX (4829).

The three-year income tax was created by the passage of Ballot Measure 26-48 in May 2003, and was reaffirmed by voters in November 2004. Funds from the 1.25 percent tax on the Oregon taxable income of Multnomah County residents goes to county schools, healthcare, senior services and public safety. For more information, contact Amy Swanson, (503) 988-5384.

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