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IRS Saves \$10 million not sending Tax Forms

The IRS is not going to mail income tax forms this year. One of the main reasons is to cut costs. It is estimated that the IRS will be saving about \$10 million in postage and publication costs by doing away with tax forms. In view of this, you have to download the forms yourself from the IRS website, www.irs.gov. Alternatively, you can obtain the forms from your local IRS office or call 800-TAX-FORM and they will be mailed to you.

However, be prepared for a lengthy wait. The IRS has been inundated with requests for tax forms and has not been able to send them out as quickly as the requests come in. For the most part, the IRS would not be able to mail you your forms before February 14.

There are other pertinent matters regarding your taxes this year. Firstly, the deadline for submitting your tax returns has been changed to April 18.

This is to take into consideration that April 15 (the usual tax submission deadline) is Emancipation Day, a public holiday in Washington DC.

Secondly, if you are submitting itemized items for tax breaks, you should delay submitting your returns until at least mid-February because the IRS has to reprogram its computers to take into account the extension of the Bush-era tax breaks that Congress decided upon late last year. As such, the

IRS is not able to process your itemized claims, such as for college tuition tax breaks.

Thirdly, if you earned \$49,000 or less in the last tax year, you may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, even if you are not liable to pay taxes. The EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for the low-income earning taxpayers. Call the IRS or visit their website at www.irs.gov/eitc to find out if you are qualified for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Fourthly, the IRS has partnered with the Free File Alliance to provide free usage of its tax preparation software for those earning \$58,000 and below per year. This is known as the IRS Free File program. If you choose Free File and elect to receive your refunds through direct deposit, you may receive your refund in as little as 10 days. Check out www.irs.gov/efile for more information.

Finally, there is a program called Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) that offers free tax preparation services to those who earn less than \$50,000 a year so you can save on tax preparation fees. Call VITA at 800 906 9887.