

E-FILE OPENS FOR 2009 WITH NEW FEATURES TO EXPAND TAXPAYER ACCESS, HELP SPEED REFUNDS

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has announced the opening of an expanded IRS e-file program for 2008 federal tax returns, highlighted by new features that will allow expanded access to electronic filing and help people looking for faster refunds.

IRS commissioner Doug Shulman encouraged taxpayers to explore e-file this year as the best option to file accurate tax returns and get fast refunds during the current economic downturn. The e-file program also includes new improvements to the Free File program that will allow nearly all taxpayers to e-file for free.

"These are tough times, and e-file is the best way for people to get cash in their pocket quickly," said IRS commissioner Doug Shulman. "Filing electronically with direct deposit can get refunds to taxpayers in as few as 10 days. Combined with important changes in the Free File program, we believe e-file is a better option than ever before for the nation's taxpayers."

IRS e-file totaled nearly 90 million tax returns in 2008. Almost 58 percent of all returns were filed electronically. Last year, there was a surge in e-file from home computers. Nearly 27 million people prepared their own e-file return. That's an increase of more than 19 percent from the previous year.

IRS e-file meets the needs of nearly all taxpayers, no matter how complicated or simple their returns are. E-file helps taxpayers take advantage of the tax credits available to them to maximize their refunds during these tough economic times.

A variety of tax software products are available commercially that offer e-file. This year, several of them will not charge additional fees for e-filing for the first time.

In addition, most taxpayers qualify for free tax preparation offered through Free File on the IRS web site, at www.irs.gov. Regardless of income level, taxpayers who are comfortable with filling out paper tax forms and who don't need extra assistance can use the IRS's new Free File Fillable Forms. These new online versions of paper tax forms that can be e-filed are available for the first time by visiting the IRS.gov Free File site.

Taxpayers who use e-file and who choose direct deposit can receive their refund in as few as 10 days