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DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE WARNS PENNSYLVANIANS & TAX PROFESSIONALS OF NEW TAX SCAM

Throughout the year, the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue regularly warns taxpayers and tax professionals to take extra precautions to protect their computer systems and sensitive data.



Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell on March 13 traveled to Pottstown to take part in a community forum designed to help older Pennsylvanians avoid scams and financial exploitation.

Following recent reports from the Internal Revenue Service of several tax-related scams, the department issued a warning regarding a new scam involving cyber criminals filing falsified tax returns and obtaining fraudulent tax refunds from taxpayers by posing as IRS officials and debt collectors.

While this may sound like an old scam, cyber criminals have added a new twist. Rather than routing fraudulent tax refunds to a separate account, the criminals are directing the refunds to the taxpayers' real bank accounts through direct deposit. They are using threatening phone calls to trick taxpayers into "returning" the refunds, but unsuspecting victims in some cases have forwarded the money to the criminals.

"Cyber criminals are always working to develop new schemes that will allow them to profit by stealing sensitive information from hard-working people," Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell said. "This behavior is especially common early in the year when many taxpayers are preparing to file their tax returns. This is a good time for people to think about ways that they can protect themselves."

On March 13, the Department of Revenue and other officials from Governor Tom Wolf's administration took additional steps to help older Pennsylvanians avoid being scammed by holding a town-hall style community discussion at the TriCounty Active Adult Center in Pottstown.

Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne, Secretary of Banking and Securities Robin L. Wiessmann and Revenue Secretary Hassell shared tips that all Pennsylvanians can use to protect themselves from common scams and other schemes that are prevalent during the tax filing season. The event also afforded those in the attendance the opportunity to ask questions and connect with Department of Revenue staff who specialize in working with taxpayers.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE MOVES FORWARD WITH MODERNIZATION PROJECT TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Department of Revenue is moving forward with the final phase of a multi-year modernization in several tax systems, Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell recently announced.

The project will enable the department to update the system it utilizes for personal income tax (PIT), inheritance tax, realty transfer tax, pass through entity processing, property tax/rent rebates, taxes related to the international fuel tax agreement (IFTA) and motor fuel and liquid fuel taxes. This phase of the department's modernization project will impact approximately 6.7 million taxpayers, or 52 percent of Pennsylvania's population.

"This phase of the department's modernization project will provide taxpayers with a better system to file their tax returns, receive refunds faster and access more information online," Hassell said. "One of our main objectives is to continually improve customer service, and these updates are necessary for us to meet that goal."

The project is also necessary because many of the information systems in use at the department are more than 20 years old and address only specific tax types, rather than providing a holistic view of a taxpayer's account, Secretary Hassell said.

Furthermore, the project will increase efficiency, reduce risk of system failure, facilitate improved tax collection, reduce administrative costs and allow the department to respond more quickly to ever-changing tax laws while improving overall taxpayer service.

ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE NOW AVAILABLE IN E-TIDES DOCUMENT CENTER

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue's Business Electronic Tax Filing System, or e-TIDES, now offers the capability to receive, view and download departmental correspondence electronically in PDF format. This new functionality in the e-TIDES Document Center is available to both business taxpayers and tax practitioners once the appropriate access has been granted.

For more information on how to opt-in and receive electronic correspondences, visit www.etides.state.pa.us.

TAX PROFESSIONAL E-SERVICES CENTER

Tax professionals are encouraged to use the department's Tax Professional e-Services Center for easy access to clients' tax information.

Visit the department's [Online Customer Service Center](#) or call 717-787-1392.



REVENUE SECRETARY PARTICIPATES IN ERIE CABINET IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell in February traveled to Erie to take part in Cabinet in Your Community, an event designed to connect cabinet secretaries working for Governor Tom Wolf with community leaders and members of the public.

Secretary Hassell fielded questions along with secretaries for Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Pa. Emergency Management Agency, the Pa. Department of Health, the Pa. Department of Community and Economic Development and the Pa. Department of Environmental Protection.



"By providing an opportunity for community residents to interact with state government officials, there is an opportunity to learn how the commonwealth can directly invest in their regions," Governor Wolf said. "We have received feedback from residents, college students, and local elected officials, which has opened a cooperative dialogue on how state government in Harrisburg can help communities across the commonwealth."

PA HOUSE & SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES HOLD BUDGET HEARINGS WITH REVENUE & LOTTERY OFFICIALS



Photo credit: Pennsylvania Senate Democratic Caucus James Robinson

In late February and early March, the Appropriations Committees of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Pennsylvania Senate conducted their annual budget hearings with officials from the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue and the Pennsylvania Lottery.

Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell and Executive Director of the Lottery Drew Svitko, with support from Deputy Secretary for Administration Christin Heidingsfelder and Deputy Secretary for Tax Policy Amy Gill, appeared before the committees to provide an opportunity for legislators to ask questions and discuss revenue-related topics.

In addition to testifying during the annual budget hearings, the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue and Lottery routinely work with the legislature to ensure the tax laws of the commonwealth can be and are administered in a fair and equitable manner.

HAVE YOU LIKED US ON FACEBOOK?



Pennsylvania Department of Revenue



As part of the Department of Revenue’s 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, the department proposed to increase its engagement with taxpayers and tax practitioners through social media. Currently, the department has robust website-based platforms for individuals, businesses, and tax professionals to primarily submit returns, reports, and other information. As of January 2018, the department now maintains a social media presence on Facebook with more than 2,040 followers.

Our Facebook page is used to share the following and much, much more:

- New projects that are going on within the department
- Advertise various ongoing initiatives
- Reminders of various due dates
- Demonstrate the importance of revenue collection to fund schools, protect the environment, build safe roads and create a stronger commonwealth
- Provide fun facts

2017-2018 General Fund Revenues

Revenue Collections (in millions)

Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections totaled \$20.9 billion.

