



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
March 27, 2007

CONTACT: José A. Álvarez (619) 515-6635 (619) 964-1526 cell

SUPERVISORS SLATER-PRICE AND HORN URGE WORKING FAMILIES TO CLAIM THEIR EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Senior Citizen Volunteers Provide Tax Assistance at Nearly 100 Sites Countywide

With three weeks left until the April 17 tax filing deadline, Supervisors Pam Slater-Price and Bill Horn today urged San Diego County working families and individuals to claim their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The supervisors are also encouraging people to take advantage of the tax assistance being provided throughout San Diego County to help them put more money in their pockets.

“We’re making every effort to get families to claim the money they’ve earned,” Third District Supervisor Slater-Price said at a news conference at the Interfaith Community Services in Escondido, one of the nearly 100 sites across the County that provides tax assistance. “Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, we are putting more money in the hands of working families, helping to reduce poverty and improve the regional economy,” added Slater-Price, who has supported the initiative since its inception in 2003.

Slater-Price and Horn were joined by Nick Macchione, Deputy Director for the Health and Human Services Agency-North Regions, and representatives from North County Lifeline and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which help people file their taxes through their network of senior and other volunteers.

“Thousands of low-income families and individuals qualify, but on many occasions they do not know and do not claim their earned income tax credit,” said Supervisor Horn. “They worked hard for this money. They earned it, and they certainly can use it and save it to pay for housing, education, or transportation.”

Established in 2003, the goal of the EITC pilot program was to encourage low-income people to claim the tax credit the federal government has been providing since 1975. The credit was established to lift low-income families and individuals out of poverty by helping them keep more of their hard-earned wages.

Five years later, the County’s initiative is a countywide campaign that is having tremendous success.

During the 2003 tax season, volunteers at five sites filed 832 federal returns, generating more than \$600,000 in EITC refunds. By 2006, free tax services were offered at 58 sites, more than 12,000 returns

(more)



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

were filed, and nearly \$5 million EITC dollars were claimed by San Diego County working families and individuals. Since the program began, more than \$10 million EITC dollars have been returned to the regional economy.

However, approximately \$20-\$25 million of EITC dollars are left unclaimed yearly in San Diego County alone. The figure jumps to more than \$1 billion statewide.

This tax season, more than 70,000 bilingual postcards and 750 English and Spanish posters were distributed countywide. Furthermore, hundreds of volunteers are offering tax preparation assistance at nearly 100 sites throughout the County.

“The Program has been successful because, over the past four years, HHS established a countywide coalition that has expanded to every part of our county to assist low-income families claim what they’ve earned,” said Macchione. “The success is evident by the increasing number of clients that we serve every year and the amount of money that is coming back to San Diego county residents.”

The number of families and individuals claiming the EITC more than doubled last year, thanks to the addition of senior and other volunteers who spend hundreds of hours providing tax assistance at dozens of sites throughout San Diego County.

Peter Portanova, volunteers as a tax preparer for the EITC program at Interfaith Community Services and is happy to be able to give back to San Diego County residents in need.

"It's a wonderful feeling to help my neighbors achieve self-sufficiency. The joy and accomplishment I feel is unparalleled to anything else," said Portanova. "I've been so fortunate in life and giving back to others gives me a feeling of self-satisfaction and community pride."

Individuals and families who worked in 2006 and earned less than \$12,000 and \$39,000 respectively could qualify for the EITC that could be as high as \$4,500. However, they have to file a tax return.

For more information about the EITC Campaign or to set up an appointment to file a tax return, call:

Central or East Region:	(619) 283-3624
North Central Region:	(858) 974-3603
North Coastal Region:	(760) 757-0118 ext. 305
North Inland Region:	(760) 489-6380
South Region:	(619) 420-3620 or (619) 472-2900
Internal Revenue Service:	(800) 829-1040
2-1-1 San Diego:	2-1-1

###