

2016 Tax season to begin Jan. 23

The Oregon Department of Revenue and the IRS will begin processing tax returns when the 2016 tax season opens Jan. 23.

Taxpayers can submit their returns earlier, but processing won't start until the tax season officially begins. Once processing begins, returns will be processed in the order received.

As a reminder, the Oregon Department of Revenue won't be issuing personal income tax returns until after Feb. 15.

This refund hold is part of the state's tax fraud prevention activities, and will allow confirmation that the amounts claimed on returns matches what employers report on forms W-2 and 1099.

The IRS is also holding federal tax refunds until after Feb. 15, but only for those taxpayers claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Additional Child Tax Credit. Here are a few things for taxpayers to keep in mind this tax season:

- E-filing is the fastest way to get your tax refund. On average, taxpayers who e-file their returns and request their refund via direct deposit receive their refund sooner than those who file paper returns and request paper refund checks.

- There are many free or low-cost preparation options available for both federal and Oregon tax returns.

- Some software companies offer free software use and e-filing for eligible taxpayers.

- AARP and CASH Oregon provide free and low-cost tax preparation services throughout local communities.

- All Oregon taxpayers preparing their own return can file electronically at no cost using Oregon's free fillable forms.

For more information,

visit www.oregon.gov/dor and search for "free tax preparation services."

- Anyone who needs a personal income tax return booklet can order it through the Department of Revenue. The booklet is available online at www.oregon.gov/dor/forms, or taxpayers can order a copy by calling 503-378-4988 or by mailing their request — along with their name, phone number, and mailing address — to:

Forms Oregon Department of Revenue

PO Box 14999
Salem, OR 97309-0990

- According to a report from the Oregon Center for Public Policy, one in five taxpayers who were eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit didn't claim it in past tax years.

For more information about the credit and eligibility, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

- On the subject of tax credits: Oregon is offering a new refundable credit to low- and moderate-income families: the Working Family Household and Dependent Care (WFHDC) Credit.

The new credit brings together benefits previously offered under Oregon's Working Family Child Care and Child and Dependent Care credits, and replaces both credits starting in tax year 2016.

For more information on the WFHDC credit, including additional details on eligibility and supporting documentation requirements, visit www.oregon.gov/dor and look under "Popular Topics."

Visit www.oregon.gov/dor to get tax forms, check the status of your refund or make tax payments; or call 1-800-356-4222 toll-free.

Tech from 1A

"I did it mobile for eight or nine months and with Old Town being such an integral part of Florence, we were wanting to open a place down here. We happened to be walking by one day and saw this place was going to be available, so we jumped on it," she said.

Mederios is quick to add that FTS is a family business in the true sense of the word. Her mom has taken on the role of business advisor and back up employee, and her father is involved in a number of ways, including making the necessary physical changes to the storefront that currently houses FTS.

"I do the tech support part of things, but it really is a family business. So I always say 'we' when referring to the business, because I couldn't do it without them," Mederios said. "They've been so supportive and they have helped so much. My dad helped with the renovations inside and my mom helps out here when I am out on a service call. Without them I couldn't do



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

FTS's cyber lounge on Bay Street contains both MAC and PC workstations, as well as a large TV for guest use.

what I do here."

The services offered at FTS are varied, as Mederios can help with problems of all types. She can help with small issues having to do with email or phone settings for little or no charge.

Her website lists a wide array of services, including tutoring and troubleshooting, and she also offers classes in Mac and PC use.

Mederios encourages people to stop in with any questions or problems they have and she will attempt to help

them in whatever way she can, even if the problem is easily fixed.

And she said she never charges for service if she is unable to repair a problem.

The response to the opening of FTS has been encouraging.

Mederios believes as time passes, she will be able to provide services not only to residents, but also to many of the people traveling thru Florence.

"We think that come summer time, we are going to be a great

addition to Old Town, especially with travelers that may have forgotten an adapter or need to print something, or are having a problem with their phone or tablet," she said.

The interior of the cyber lounge has multiple workstations, a casual seating area in the back of the building and a large screen high-definition TV for customer use.

Mederios is also open to suggestions for other uses for the lounge.

She said she hopes that FTS will become a place that community members will gather, not only for computer issues, but also for meeting and spending time with their friends and neighbors.

"All the people here have been so nice. All the clients I have helped have been so supportive," Mederios said. "It has been very rewarding and also very humbling to be so appreciated and accepted so quickly. I am really looking forward to the future to see how far we can take this."

Florence Tech Solutions is at 1431 Bay St. and can be reached at 541-991-3705 and www.florencetechsolutions.com.



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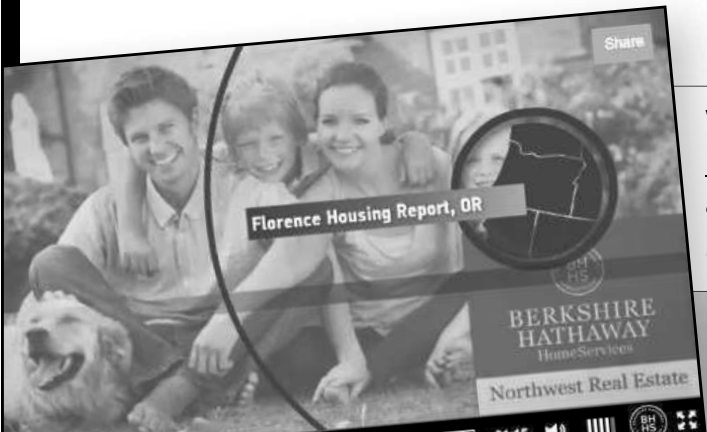


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