

THOUSANDS OF U.S. TAXPAYERS DUE REFUNDS

WASHINGTON -- Still waiting for your 1997 federal tax refund?

The Internal Revenue Service is looking for 99,042 taxpayers whose checks were returned by the U.S. Postal Service. These checks total more than \$68 million, an average of almost \$690 per check. They were undeliverable because of incorrect names and addresses or because taxpayers moved and did not give the IRS their new address.

If you are due a refund and have not received it, call the IRS toll-free assistance line at 1-800-829-1040.

Choosing to have your tax refund deposited directly to your bank account is the best way to ensure that your check is delivered and to guard against loss or theft. Last year, 19.2 million taxpayers chose the direct-deposit option by filling in just two extra lines on their tax forms.

If you have moved since filing your last return, the IRS urges you to file a Form 8822, "Change of Address." You may obtain this form by calling 1-800-829-3676 or by downloading it from the IRS Website, www.irs.ustreas.gov.

The number of undelivered checks is down 877 from a year ago and is dwarfed by the total number of refunds issued by the IRS. In 1998, 82.8 million taxpayers received refunds in the average amount of \$1,346.

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