

IRS**News Release****Media Relations Office****Washington, D.C.****Tel. 202.622.4000****For Release: November 13, 2002****Release No: IR-2002-121****MILLIONS IN TAX REFUND CHECKS GO UNDELIVERED,
IRS WEB SITE CAN ANSWER THE QUESTION: 'WHERE'S MY REFUND?'**

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service announced today that it's looking for 96,792 taxpayers across the nation with \$80 million in undelivered tax refund checks. The IRS can reissue the checks after taxpayers update their addresses.

This year, a new Internet feature makes it easier for taxpayers to track down whether they have an undelivered refund. The service, which lets people check on the status of refunds online at any time, is available through the "Where's My Refund?" section on the IRS home page at www.irs.gov.

"With our new Internet feature, it's easier than ever for taxpayers to track down an undelivered refund check," said IRS Acting Commissioner Bob Wenzel.

To use the site, taxpayers must enter their Social Security number, their filing status (such as single or married filing jointly) and the amount of the refund shown on their 2001 tax return. When this information is submitted online, taxpayers see a Web page that shows the status of their refund check. Taxpayers also get instructions to resolve problems, whether it's an undelivered refund check or some other refund-related issue.

Taxpayers without access to the Internet who think they may be missing a refund check should first check their records or contact their tax preparer, then call the IRS toll-free assistance line at 1-800-829-1040 to update their address.

"We want to get this money back to where it belongs," Wenzel said. "It's a simple process. As soon as taxpayers get us their correct addresses, we can reissue the checks."

Taxpayers can avoid undelivered checks by choosing to have their refunds deposited directly into a personal checking or savings account. Direct deposit also guards against theft or lost refund checks. The option is available on both paper returns and electronically filed returns. More than 39.7 million taxpayers chose direct deposit this filing season, up 17.5 percent from last year.

Refund checks go astray for reasons that can vary with each taxpayer. Often, it's because a life change causes an address change. If taxpayers move or change their address and fail to notify the IRS or the U.S. Postal Service, a check sent to their last known address is returned to the IRS. The Postal Service says 17 percent of the nation's population moves each year, and it processed more than 44 million change-of-address cards in 2001.

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Taxpayers who have moved since filing their last tax return can ensure the IRS has their correct address by filing Form 8822, "Change of Address" with the IRS. Download the form at www.irs.gov or request it by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).

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Editor's Note: Local media looking for details on undelivered refunds should contact their local IRS Media Relations office. Local media contact names and numbers are available in the Newsroom at www.irs.gov. The "Where's My Refund?" feature, which can be used to check the status of undelivered refunds, will not be available after early December in order to prepare for the 2003 filing season in January.