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WATSON TO HEAD IRS CUSTOMER SERVICE FIELD OPERATIONS

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service has selected John R. (Ron) Watson to lead the executive team responsible for its field customer service programs. The team will manage the workforce, new technology and other resources the IRS is applying to assure that taxpayers receive prompt, courteous, consistent and fair treatment.

As Chief, Customer Service Field Operations, Watson will oversee a nationwide customer communications network including all non-face-to-face customer service activities such as toll-free telephone operations and correspondence programs.

"Ron Watson brings invaluable skills and a broad range of expertise to this key position," said Internal Revenue Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti. "Providing top-quality service to taxpayers when and where they need it is the primary focus of the IRS modernization effort."

Watson, a 27-year IRS veteran, will have direct responsibility for the IRS's Intelligent Call Routing technology. This technology, which was piloted in the 1999 filing season, directs incoming calls to the next available assistor in any of the IRS' call sites nationwide regardless of the caller's or the assistor's geographic location.

Prior to his selection for the new position, Watson was director of the IRS Customer Service Center in Atlanta. He has also served as the Executive for Customer Service Operations in the IRS National Office and is a recipient of the prestigious Presidential Rank Award.

Two deputy chiefs of Customer Service Field Operations, to be named at a later date, will report to Watson. Each deputy will be responsible for the day-to-day operations in five IRS Customer Service Centers. As a team, the three executives will lead the transition of approximately 20,000 IRS Customer Service employees into its modernized structure with a new emphasis on customer satisfaction.

The executives are equipped with clear lines of authority to react quickly to changing customer demands as well as to standardize work processes in order to maximize efficiency.

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