

IRS**News Release****Media Relations Office****Washington, D.C.****Tel. 202.622.4000****For Release: 3/20/02****Release No: IR-2002-36****VISA JOINS IRS CREDIT CARD PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON – Taxpayers can now charge their federal taxes on their VISA cards. VISA's participation further enhances the IRS credit card program, which has been growing steadily since it began in 1999. Taxpayers may now use any of the four major credit cards – VISA, MasterCard, American Express or Discover Card – for federal tax payments.

The IRS also expanded the credit card program this year to include installment agreement payments for tax year 1998 or later, and extension-related payments for taxpayers who live outside the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Taxpayers can make these payments, or pay taxes due for 2001 or estimated taxes for 2002, by using either the phone or Web site services of private credit card processors.

There is no IRS fee for credit card payments, but the processors charge a convenience fee. Payment types and credit cards accepted by the processors may vary. Some tax software packages also include an option for e-filers to pay with a credit card. Tax form instructions and IRS publications, such as Form 1040, Form 1040-ES, Form 4868 (for extensions) and Publication 17, have details on making credit card payments.

The IRS electronic payment program also includes an electronic funds withdrawal (EFW) option. Taxpayers who e-file their returns may authorize an EFW from a checking or savings account. They may schedule the payment for a future date, up to and including April 15. E-filers may schedule EFWs for the 2001 tax due and one 2002 estimated tax payment. Taxpayers who request filing extensions by phone or computer may also make an EFW payment.

As of mid-March, the IRS had received more than 20,000 credit card charges, up 13 percent from nearly 18,000 for the same period last year. The charges totaled more than \$55 million. There had been nearly 100,000 EFW authorizations, a 19 percent increase from last year's 84,000. About 40 percent of the EFWs have already occurred and totaled more than \$33 million. The remaining 60 percent are for future dates. Credit card charges are processed immediately.

Taxpayers may also use EFWs to pay taxes online by enrolling in the Treasury Department's Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS). Visit www.eftps.gov for information on enrolling in EFTPS.

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2002 FILING SEASON STATISTICS

Cumulative through the week ending 3/16/01 and 3/15/02

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Individual Income Tax Returns			
Total Receipts	58,234,000	60,330,000	3.6
Total Processed	50,427,000	52,941,000	5.0
E-filing Receipts:			
TOTAL	29,310,000	33,121,000	13.0
TeleFile (phone)	3,468,000	3,231,000	- 6.8
Computer	25,842,000	29,890,000	15.7
Tax Professionals	21,653,000	24,043,000	11.0
Self-prepared	4,189,000	5,847,000	39.6
Refunds Certified by the Martinsburg Computing Center:			
Number	46,286,000	48,188,000	4.1
Amount of principal	\$82.899 billion	\$96.545 billion	16.5
Average refund	\$1,791	\$2,004	11.9
Direct Deposit Refunds:			
Number	24,155,000	27,583,000	14.2
Amount	\$53.019 billion	\$66.167 billion	24.8
Average	\$2,195	\$2,399	9.3