

NEW IRS MISSION STATEMENT EMPHASIZES TAXPAYER SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- The Internal Revenue Service on Thursday unveiled an overhauled mission statement to reflect the agency's new emphasis on serving taxpayers.

The new statement is simple and direct. The IRS mission is to "provide America's taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all."

The new language represents the new direction for the IRS, which is working to transform itself into a customer-oriented organization. The mission also reinforces the agency's duty to administer the tax laws fairly for everyone.

"This mission statement reflects the new attitude at the IRS," said Charles O. Rossotti, Commissioner of Internal Revenue. "Our top priority is putting the interests of the taxpayers first, and this is spelled out simply and clearly in the mission statement."

The pledge will serve as a daily reminder to people both inside and outside the IRS about the agency's mission. The 27-word statement will be prominently featured on 1998 tax publications, at IRS offices around the country and on the agency's website.

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"Words alone aren't going to change the IRS, but this serves an important

purpose," Rossotti said. "The mission statement will be a reminder that we must be dedicated on a day-in, day-out basis to serving taxpayers. This is just one of the steps that we need to take."

The new mission statement was mandated by the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act approved by Congress and signed July 22 by President Clinton. The legislation required the IRS "to review and restate its mission to place a greater emphasis on serving the public and meeting taxpayers' needs."

The IRS circulated drafts of a new mission statement in July and August. The document was finalized after receiving comments from a variety of sources, ranging from public feedback on the agency's Internet site to suggestions from tax professionals and IRS employees.

The final mission statement underscores the agency's efforts to help individuals while ensuring that all taxpayers are served the by agency's commitment to apply the law fairly to all.

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[Note to editors: The new mission statement replaces an older version dating to the 1980s. The previous statement said, "The purpose of the Internal Revenue Service is to collect the proper amount of tax revenue at the least cost; serve the public by continually improving the quality of our products and services; and perform in a manner warranting the highest degree of public confidence in our integrity, efficiency and fairness."]