



For immediate release  
August 1, 2003  
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## **IRS OVERSIGHT BOARD HEARS FROM LOCAL TAX COMMUNITY, IRS EMPLOYEES IN IOWA**

The IRS Oversight Board met with local tax practitioners, IRS employees, and representatives of low-income working family advocates in Des Moines, Iowa on July 29th. The Board asked participants to share their views on IRS successes and shortcomings, and provide their ideas and suggestions to improve service. The Board relayed the Iowans' insights to Commissioner Mark W. Everson the following day.

"This meeting was extremely helpful and informative," said Board Chair Nancy Killefer. "Chuck Kolbe, the Board member and Iowan who organized the meeting, is to be commended. Thanks to Chuck, the Board heard a diverse range of views from the tax community in Iowa. We will make sure that the IRS hears and considers the participants' good ideas."

### ***Practitioners: Praise for Electronic Tax Administration, but More Coordination Between Divisions Needed***

At the meeting, tax practitioners agreed that the success of the IRS' computer modernization program is imperative to help them solve taxpayers' problems quickly. All praised e-filing as an efficient, easy-to-use method to file returns, and said they look forward to the opportunity to be able to e-file returns for corporations, expected next year. They did say that work is still needed to coordinate processes between operating divisions. Solving taxpayer problems, they said, too often requires them to rely on the Taxpayer Advocate System.

### ***IRS Employees: Help Needed***

IRS employees in Iowa from different operating divisions voiced their concern at the attrition in their offices over the past few years. They also noted that many in their divisions will soon become eligible to retire. They underscored the need to add new employees so they can both serve taxpayers efficiently and ensure that critical skills are transferred to the next generation of tax administrators.

### ***Working Family Organizations: Understand Low-Income Community Better***

Representatives of organizations who assist those who may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) encouraged the IRS to understand better the low-income community so that qualified working families can receive their benefits. The representatives described barriers these families face, including fear of the IRS, and

living in isolated, rural areas, where help is difficult to get. Another concern is poor timing regarding the EITC precertification pilot program, part of an IRS initiative to reduce erroneous payments. Correspondence relating to the program may arrive after the tax season, when no tax clinics are available to assist potential program participants.

***Update on IRS Computer Modernization and FY2005 Budget***

The following day, the Board discussed the status of several key computer modernization projects. Commissioner Everson described two internal studies underway by SAIC and the Software Engineering Institute of Carnegie-Mellon University to review the management and technical aspects of the program. The Board will review the results of these studies when they are available.

The Board also discussed the IRS FY2005 budget, which is being developed by the IRS.

The Board's next meeting will be held September 29-30, 2003 in Washington, DC.

For additional information regarding the IRS Oversight Board, please visit [www.irsoversightboard.treas.gov](http://www.irsoversightboard.treas.gov).

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