



Office of the Program Director

State of Ohio
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Dear Municipal Tax Administrator:

On behalf of the entire Ohio Business Gateway Municipal Tax Project team, I would like to provide you with an important update on the status of our efforts to meet the municipal tax filing requirements of H.B. 95 (2003). As many of you know, that legislation affords businesses the option of using the Ohio Business Gateway (OBG) to file selected municipal taxes. Starting in January 2005, the OBG will allow businesses to file extension requests and estimated payments. Additional filing options for the business net profits tax and employer withholding tax are to be made available to businesses annually through 2008.

As you may recall, high-level project work began last fall when the Ohio Department of Taxation sent a survey to all municipalities across the state. The survey launched an effort that has involved, as partners, the municipal tax administrator, practitioner, and business communities. The objective of this partnering has been to ensure that the OBG meets the requirements of the law, supports the associated commitments made during testimony for the legislation, and ultimately delivers a useful and beneficial service to everyone involved.

Project partners have met at several public forums to discuss and define the main characteristics of the OBG application that will support the extension requests and estimated payments. The feedback received from the forums has played an important role in shaping the project. The result is an application design that allows tax administration departments, big and small, to operate effectively with OBG as a partner assisting in the delivery of taxpayer data and payment instructions. **In this design, municipalities retain full control and responsibility for the administration of their taxes and the ownership of taxpayer account relationships.**

The forums spawned several other successes. We have established the basis for a grass-roots communication effort via the municipal tax administrator organizations throughout the state. Personally, I have had the privilege of addressing groups of municipal finance directors and tax administrators at a number of tax-related professional conferences over the past few months. Finally, we have created a project web site (<http://munitax.obg.ohio.gov>) to provide stakeholders with easy access to information about the project and how the OBG application will work as it delivers taxpayer data and payment instructions to the municipalities. We will soon be adding a section to the web site entitled "Information for Tax Administrators" to further assist you.

There is an important near term event that requires your assistance and participation. Feedback from the survey last fall helped to frame the project work underway, but our team now needs to update those survey responses as well as collect some new information. Project partners have told us certain details of our basic design will need to be customizable to meet the different needs of groups of municipalities (for example, those with computerized tax administration systems and

those without). In addition, our intention to channel taxpayer payment instructions through your existing banking partners requires that we have an accurate listing of those banks. **You will soon receive information about this new survey separately. Please look for it and respond in a timely manner. It is extremely important that we hear from all municipalities levying income taxes.**

If you have any questions about the project or the Ohio Business Gateway, I invite you to contact me, any of the three municipal tax representatives on the OBG Steering Committee, or any of the representatives from the municipal tax administrator organizations joining us at the forums. I also encourage you to visit the project web site (<http://munitax.obg.ohio.gov>) for more detailed information about the design of the OBG application and upcoming project events.

The addition of municipal tax filing services to the OBG is a challenging effort and a significant enhancement of the OBG's overall value. The next few months will be critical to our ability to meet the January 2005 requirements of the legislation. Should you have questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact me at the address above or by sending me email (joe.zapotosky@ohio.gov).

Sincerely,

Joe Zapotosky
Program Director
Ohio Business Gateway

Municipal Tax Administrators and Stakeholders Participating at Forums

Faye Gibson	City of Dublin & Ohio Business Gateway Steering Committee
Teresa Richter	City of Cincinnati & Ohio Business Gateway Steering Committee
Tom Zammikiel	Ohio Business Gateway Steering Committee
Ed Cole	City of Akron
Scott Gill	City of Upper Arlington & Columbus Area Tax Administrators
Chris Fast	City of Lima & Tax Administrators of West Central Ohio
Mindy Frank	City of Columbus
Sharry Long	City of Blue Ash & Southwest Ohio Tax Administrators Association
Bob Meaker	CCA
Jim Neusser	RITA
Art Preiksa	City of Green & Ohio Association of Tax Administrators
Fred Pamer	City of Salem & Tri County Association of Tax Administrators
Andrew Thomas	City of Findlay & Northwest Ohio Tax Commissioners Association
Bryan Thurman	City of Springfield & Greater Ohio Association of Tax Administrators