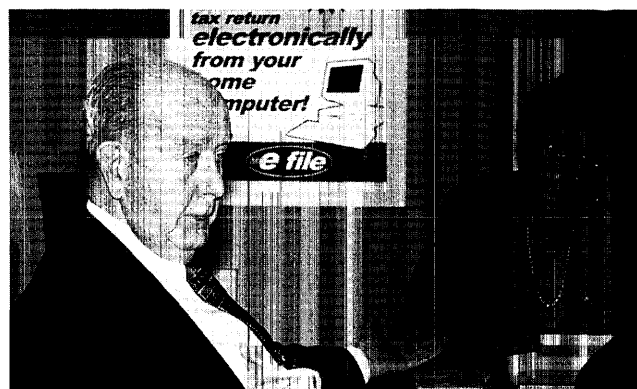

TECHNOLOGY

Comptroller William Donald Schaefer used technology to enhance services to Maryland businesses and individuals in fiscal year 1999. Record breaking responses to the features on the Comptroller's website at www.marylandtaxes.com validated Comptroller Schaefer's commitment to greater use of web communications.

More than 21,000 taxpayers took advantage of the first-time opportunity to file their Maryland income tax returns online from their personal computers. The total number of electronic returns filed by taxpayers and tax professionals exceeded the previous record setting year by 35 percent. The convenience of direct deposit was expanded to all taxpayers expecting refunds, whether they filed electronically or by paper, increasing the number of requests more than 750%. Most e-filers received their Maryland refunds in their bank accounts within 48 hours—one of the fastest tax refund records in the nation.

The agency also witnessed an 86 percent increase in downloaded forms and a seven-fold gain in the number of online visitors checking the status of their income tax refunds. Another popular website feature included a compilation of undeliverable state and federal income tax refunds—the only joint list of its kind available online in the nation.



Offering convenience. "Electronic filing is a fast, easy and convenient way to get your taxes done," advised Comptroller William Donald Schaefer at a press conference held at the Life Resources Center in Baltimore. The high-tech paperless filing option drew 35 percent more customers in 1999 than in the previous filing season.

The Comptroller offered additional digital communications tools to Maryland businesses to make it easier for companies to operate in Maryland. More than 3,000 new businesses registered tax accounts online while visiting the Comptroller's website at www.marylandtaxes.com. Retail merchants in Maryland became the first in the nation able to go online to verify tax-exempt sales. Employers were able to download tax withholding tables. Other important information on the website for businesses included financial reports and state regulations administered by the Comptroller's Office.

Tax professionals also welcomed the Comptroller's new electronic filing page, with its handy bulletin board and approved software provider links.