

# Technology to help people

*www.marylandtaxes.com*

The comptroller's greatest technological achievement in fiscal year 2000 went largely unnoticed, as the calendar rolled to January 1, 2000, with no adverse impact on the people of Maryland. It was business as usual for state government's largest data center as the services people depend on, including state paychecks, vendor payments, and more were provided without interruption.

But focus on the Y2K rollover didn't keep the comptroller from upgrading other technology-based services. Upgraded communication services to the comptroller's branch offices cut the time it took taxpayer service representatives to download images of tax returns from eight minutes to a minute or less.

More than 200,000 taxpayers who file quarterly estimated Maryland income tax payments benefited from a new interactive estimated tax calculator on the Comptroller's Office Web site at [www.marylandtaxes.com](http://www.marylandtaxes.com). The new feature serves as an online worksheet for taxpayers who must make estimated payments. After taxpayers enter the relevant information, their estimated tax calculations are computed automatically, and they can download the form from the Web site.

Taxpayers went online in record numbers – almost 55,000 – in fiscal year 2000 to file their income tax returns through online tax preparation services. Tax preparers also filed a record number of Maryland returns electronically, contributing to a total of almost 408,000 electronically filed returns. Almost a quarter of a million taxpayers also chose technology to get their refund checks faster by selecting direct deposit.

A new Web-enabled credit control system enables wine and liquor wholesalers to submit credit control reports and lists online. Visitors to the Comptroller's Office Web site used a variety of other services, downloading one million forms and other publications, making 97,000 automated refund status inquiries, registering new businesses, and more – generating almost 21 million hits on the site.