

New ways of helping people

The Comptroller's Office has expanded one of its most popular programs, helping Marylanders find unclaimed funds, by joining a national database service on the World Wide Web that offers individuals and businesses a free online search of unclaimed accounts totaling \$14 billion.

Visitors to www.missingmoney.com can find out for free if they have money in 24 states, including Maryland. The site, which is endorsed by the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators, includes records of 4.5 million accounts. The comptroller's Web site at www.marylandtaxes.com also lists more than 40,000 recently reported names of unclaimed property owners in Maryland.

Newspaper ads, exhibits at fairs and conventions, and other outreach efforts helped more than 7,500 people find almost \$12 million in unclaimed funds in fiscal year 2000.

PARTNERSHIPS USE BRANCH OFFICES

Taking advantage of 20 offices throughout Maryland, Comptroller Schaefer has forged partnerships with two other state agencies, the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) and the Maryland Attorney General's Office, to bring information and services closer to the people of Maryland.

Under the new arrangement, a MIA representative will be available once a month at 17 of the offices to help citizens who want to file a complaint against an insurance company, ask questions about policies, receive educational materials and publications, or report suspected insurance fraud.

Through the partnership with the Attorney General's Office, citizens can pick up consumer complaint forms or literature on consumer issues at any of the comptroller's branch offices. People can file complaint forms with the Attorney General's Office, or personnel at the branch offices can file for them.