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Government telling people how to get stimulus checks

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 130 million households will get letters from the Internal Revenue Service beginning next week and it's good news.

The letters are part of an extensive outreach effort to make sure people don't miss out if they are eligible to receive a tax rebate check under the recently passed \$168 billion economic stimulus plan.

The IRS letters will remind people to file a 2007 tax return so they will receive the stimulus payment.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said Thursday that Treasury and the IRS would work hard to get the word out. "For the majority of Americans, all they will need to do is file a tax return," Paulson.

He said that the IRS would also be working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration and private groups such as AARP to "reach those who do not normally file a return and ensure they know how to get their stimulus payment this year."

The IRS mailing will be titled "Economic Stimulus Payment Notice" and it will alert people that they may be eligible for a one-time stimulus payment of up to \$600 for individuals or \$1,200 for a married couple filing jointly.

The stimulus package that Congress passed earlier this month in an effort to give the weak economy a jump-start also includes a \$300 per child payment for qualifying children younger than 17.

The IRS notices are informational and do not seek any financial information. The mailings will go to taxpayers who filed a tax return last year.

The notice states that to receive a stimulus payment this year, individuals do not have to do anything more than file a 2007 tax return.

"The IRS will figure eligibility, figure the amount and send the payment," the IRS letter states. "This payment should not be confused with any 2007 income tax refund that is owed to you by the federal government."

The IRS letter says that 2007 refunds will be made separately from the one-time stimulus payments.

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