

Tax Moves to Make Now

THE APRIL TAX FILING DEADLINE IS APPROACHING, BUT YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO MAKE SOME MOVES THAT COULD MAKE THE TASK A LITTLE EASIER – AND LESS COSTLY.

BY S. KAY BELL



If you haven't yet started work on your 2010 taxes, I have some good news. Thanks to a holiday in Washington, D.C., you have three extra days to get your return to the Internal Revenue Service.

Even better, there are still some things you can do between now and April 18th to make tax time a little easier and possibly reduce your tax bill.

TAXES, THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

If you have a smartphone, you have tax help, information and even filing at your fingertips.

Intuit, maker of TurboTax, has taken the tax software mobile with the smartphone application SnapTax. Available for both iPhones and Androids, it uses image-recognition technology to read information from your W-2. After you answer a few questions and review your return, hit "file now" and you're done.

You can download SnapTax for free, but it'll cost you \$14.99 when you use it to e-file your return. The one downside of SnapTax is that it's available only taxpayers who file Form 1040-EZ and then only to those filers who make \$80,000 or less.

After you file, track the status of your return with IRS2Go, the IRS's first venture into the mobile tax world. The app, free in both iPhone and Android iterations, will tell you when you can expect your refund. Or, if you're still working on your return, IRS2Go offers tax tips. 

Celebrate!

Chez Zee celebrates our 21st Birthday and in doing so we wish to thank our guests who have celebrated so many events with us over the years.

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Graduations, whatever be the occasion, it happens at Chez Zee.

Come celebrate with us. We're saving a chair for you.



Best Desserts,
Austin Chronicle

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DICTIONARY OF TAX TERMS FOR IPHONE AND BLACKBERRY

does just what its name indicates. It's a reference for complex tax terminology.

DR. TAXES FOR IPHONE answers tax questions about deductions, deadlines and many other tax issues, culled from the most common tax-related questions.

SHOEBOXED FOR IPHONE helps you organize your receipts. Take photographs of the documents, add notations and categorize them so you won't miss any deductible expenses.

IDONATEDIT FOR IPHONE helps you track and value your noncash charitable donations.

E-FILE, FREE FILE

If you're not able or ready to file your taxes from your phone, you still have money-saving options.

More than 70% of U.S. taxpayers last year e-filed and tax software manufacturers are making deals to lure customers. Many offer free tax preparation and free or nominal charge e-filing for taxpayers who use the companies' online products. In these cases, instead of buying software and loading it onto your PC, you go to a company's website and use the software there.

Free tax preparation and e-filing also is available through the IRS's Free File program. This partnership between the government and tax software manufacturers who are members of the Free File Alliance is in its ninth year.

Free File is open to taxpayers with 2010 adjusted gross income of \$58,000 or less, regardless of filing status. To ensure your no-cost tax service, be sure to access the Free File website via the link on www.irs.gov.

TEND TO YOUR RETIREMENT

While most tax moves that could cut your 2010 tax bill had to be made by the end of last year, there still are a couple of retirement-related actions you can take now.

You have until the filing deadline, April 18th this year, to make IRA contributions that count for the 2010 tax year.

You can contribute up to \$5,000 to a traditional IRA, Roth IRA or combination of the two. If you're age 50 or older, you can contribute up to \$6,000. Remember, these are maximum amounts. If you made less than your contribution cap, then you can only contribute up to the amount of money you earned.

If you make an IRA contribution by the April deadline, be sure to tell the account manager which tax year the retirement contribution is for. Otherwise, the financial institution could assume it's for 2011 and report that to the IRS. This could pose problems if you had planned to take a deduction on your 2010 taxes.

Contributions to a Roth IRA aren't deductible, but the money is not taxed when withdrawn in retirement. Each year, many traditional IRA owners convert those accounts to Roths to get future tax breaks.

If you converted a traditional IRA to a Roth but have since changed your mind, you have time to reverse that decision. You have until Oct. 17 to move the amount converted to a Roth IRA back into a pretax account.

Now, are you ready to file your taxes? If you're still not quite there, that's OK. You still have plenty of time to use your smartphone to find the tax answers you need and make your retirement plan moves before you e-file your 1040. *aw*

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