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If You Want to Change the IRS...Speak Up! Taxpayer Advocacy Panel meets face-to-face in St. Paul

St. Paul (June 7, 2010) - **Have you ever wanted to tell the IRS how to do its job? You already have a voice through the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.** On June 6 through 8, St. Paul will play host to a regional meeting of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP) that will examine the submitted taxpayer issues and make recommendations to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Citizens, who are selected from among 700+ applicants each year, participate in this Panel to advise the IRS on current and proposed initiatives that focus on improving service, enforcement and tax compliance for small businesses and individuals.

The Taxpayer Advocacy Panel was established in October 2002 under the Federal Advisory Committee Act as a way of improving IRS responsiveness to taxpayers needs. The panel offers a unique opportunity for citizens to influence both the American tax administration system and the organization of the IRS.

“Taxpayer input is critical to helping the IRS improve customer service and operation, but many taxpayers don't know where or how to speak up,” said Anne Rasmussen, Vice Chair of Area 5 TAP Region and member of the Small Business/Self-Employed TAP Committee. Rasmussen is also CFO/COO of the St. Paul-based James J. Hill Reference Library that specializes in providing small businesses and individuals with practical business information at no charge.

The Department of the Treasury recognizes that the Panels provide the essential forum for direct citizen input into Internal Revenue Service (IRS) decision-making. “TAP members represent the typical taxpayer and provide the IRS with invaluable insights that are crucial to sound tax administration,” said IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman. There are seven geographically based committees and the Panels are demographically diverse with representation from each State.

While TAP has 100 members nationwide, Minnesota has two representatives, Anne Rasmussen and Bradford Lee, who sit on TAP's largest regional Panel comprising 18 members, which also includes representatives from Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Oklahoma.

“The last time TAP members held a meeting in St. Paul was many years ago,” said Rasmussen. “While all TAP committees and sub-committees meet monthly via teleconference, during the summer TAP members meet face-to-face in various cities across the U.S. to examine issues and concerns in-depth.”

While visiting St. Paul, TAP members are planning to do some sightseeing around the town. “We are planning a tour of downtown St. Paul and a stroll in Rice Park including a visit to the James J. Hill Reference Library's landmark building,” added Rasmussen.

To learn more about the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel, please visit www.improveirs.org. If you have any ideas about how to improve the IRS service, please call 1-888-912-1227.

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The James J. Hill Reference Library is a private, non-profit library located in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Library houses a world-class collection of resources and is considered the most comprehensive publicly accessible practical business library in America. The mission of the Hill Library is to provide access to and assistance in finding the practical business information clients need to succeed. The Hill Library was founded in 1921 by one of the nation's true business pioneers, James J. Hill. More information at www.jjhill.org.