

'Put tax refund into savings' urges family resource specialist

The Internal Revenue Service reports that it expects 147 million individual 2012 tax returns to be filed. It also estimates about 75 percent of taxpayers who file will be entitled to a refund.

While the popularity of direct deposit has simplified the tax refund process, Elizabeth Kiss, Kansas State University Research and Extension family resource specialist, encourages taxpayers to consider using the refund to improve their financial situation before rushing to spend it.

A tax refund often will be the largest single sum of money a taxpayer will have access to during the course of the year, and that's why it's important to take time in deciding how to put it to work for you, said Kiss, who noted that a tax refund is a sign that withholding for taxes has exceeded a taxpayer's liability.

While some who have difficulty saving look to an annual refund as forced savings for a specific pur-

pose, Kiss encouraged taxpayers to review their saving and spending habits and decide whether they want to continue to provide a no-interest loan to the government, or meet with their employer's human resources specialist to adjust withholding to match their tax liability and have more money in their budget throughout the year.

She also advised reviewing personal finances, including earnings, account balances, assets and liabilities, and then identifying short-term (zero to six months), medium-term (six months to two years) and long-term (more than two years) financial goals.

Such goals might include paying off a balance on a credit card or loan, saving for a down payment on a more dependable vehicle, establishing or adding to an emergency fund for unexpected repairs and expenses.

A weekend get-away or family vacation also might be a goal, said Kiss, who noted that having

a goal in mind – and being able to picture it – can inspire saving, and advised placing a picture of your goal on the household bulletin board or front of the refrigerator as a reminder.

She also suggested carrying a small notebook to track expenses for at least a week.

Tracking expenses for two to four weeks to review saving and spending habits from paycheck to paycheck and during billing cycles (such as utility, loan payments or credit card bills) also can be helpful, she said.

Once aware of where the money is going, people often decide to trim discretionary spending and direct funds toward financial goals, Kiss said.

"Saving is a choice – and an essential foundation for financial security," she said.

Information on building money management skills is available at K-State Research and Extension offices throughout the state.

Painting and parks combine in exhibit at Logan museum

The Dane G. Hansen Memorial Museum will exhibit "American Legacy: Our National Parks" from Friday, April 12, to Sunday, June 16.

For this exhibit, 38 members and guests of the Plein-Air Painters of America set up their easels in national sites across the country. The artists are among the country's most respected plein-air painters.

The adjective plein-air refers to the philosophical belief that creating art on location, challenging as it may be, is crucial to successfully documenting a visual and emotional point in time and place.

Each artist selected a favorite park to document. The more than 50 paintings depict sites from

coast to coast, border to border and from the earliest park designation to one of the most recent. The exhibition is a "field journal" experience that draws viewers into seasonal and daily experiences of color and light rendered in pigment on paper or canvas. In some instances, the field studies were used to create larger, studio paintings.

Museum hours are 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday and holidays. It is handicapped accessible and there is never an admission fee.

For information, go to www.hansenmuseum.org.

Thomas County Jail

Booked into the Thomas County jail:

- Shanna Rae Smith, 26, Colby, Jan. 30, bond violation, Thomas County Court Services/Sherman County Sheriff's Office, released same day to other agency.
- Shena Kay Faulkner, 30, Centennial, Colo., Jan. 30, driving under the influence, Kansas Highway Patrol, released Jan. 31 on bond.
- Linh Trong-Duy Do, 38, Westminster, Colo., Jan. 31, possession/distribution of hallucinogenic drugs, Highway Patrol, released Feb. 1 on recognizance.
- Liscia L. Lawrence, 52, Hoxie, Jan. 31, probation violation, Sheridan County Sheriff's Office/Court Services of Thomas County, released Feb. 7 on recognizance.
- Rogelio Blanco Srabia, 25, Garden City, Feb. 1, possession of hallucinogenic drugs, possession/distribution of hallucinogenic drugs, using communication facility to arrange sales or purchase, no drug tax stamp, Thomas County Sheriff's Office, released Feb. 7 on \$100,000 appearance bond.
- Kevin Ray Brungardt, 27,

Colby, Feb. 1, driving with license suspended or revoked, Colby Police Department, released same day with charges pending.

• Shawn Michael West, 24, Gem, Feb. 1, driving with license suspended or revoked, probation violation, Thomas County Sheriff/Court Services, released Feb. 4 for time served.

• Sergio Melgar, 32, Rexford, Feb. 2, driving under the influence, transporting open container/alcohol, Colby Police, released same day on notice to appear.

• Jimmy Wayne Martin, 50, Rexford, Feb. 2, sexual battery, battery, theft, disorderly conduct, Colby Police, released Feb. 8 on \$100,000 appearance bond.

• Rory Shane Davis, 43, Billings, Mont., Feb. 2, driving with license suspended or revoked, speeding, Highway Patrol, released same day on bond.

• Franciso Salcido-Sotelo, 47, Great Bend, Feb. 2, failure to

appear, Highway Patrol/Barton County Sheriff's Office, released same day on bond.

• Barbara Jean Tuck, 51, Atwood, Feb. 2, driving under the influence (third or subsequent) driving with license suspended or revoked, Oakley Police Department, released Feb. 4 with charges pending.

• Kile Brett Zerr, 28, Grinnell, Feb. 3, driving under the influence (fourth), Highway Patrol, released same day on recognizance.

• Derrek Wayne Sandoval, 18, Rexford, Feb. 4, probation violation, Juvenile Justice Authority, released Feb. 11 for time served.

• Percy Charles Davis, 19, Colby, Feb. 4, disorderly conduct, Colby Police, released same day on notice to appear.

• Arielle Jinnine Gil-Sanz, 19, Colby, Feb. 4, criminal damage to property, Colby Police, released same day on notice to appear.

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