NESTOA 2019

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

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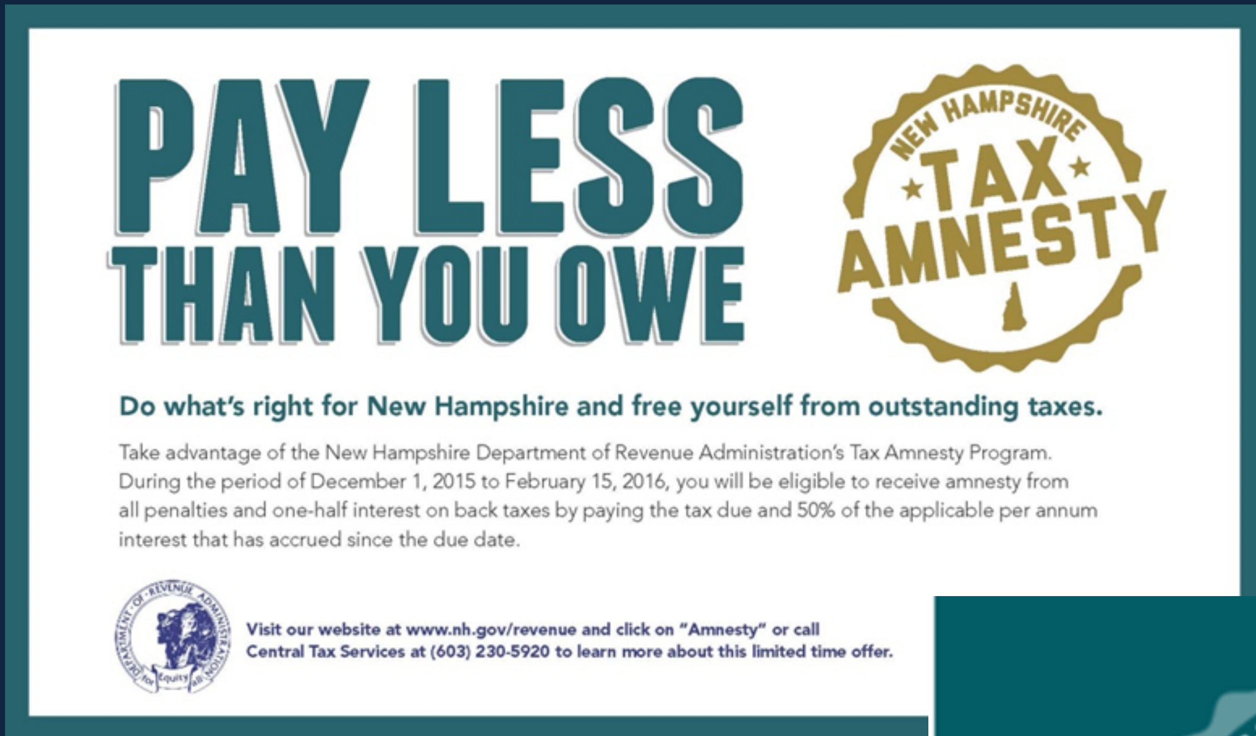
WHAT IS EVERY TAX ADMINISTRATOR'S WORST NIGHTMARE?

AMNESTY


PAY LESS
THAN YOU OWE
NEW HAMPSHIRE TAX AMNESTY
Do what's right for New Hampshire and free yourself from outstanding taxes.
Take advantage of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration's Tax Amnesty Program. During the period of December 1, 2015 to February 15, 2016, you will be eligible to receive amnesty from all penalties and one-half interest on back taxes by paying the tax due and 50% of the applicable per annum interest that has accrued since the due date.
Visit our website at www.nh.gov/revenue and click on "Amnesty" or call Central Tax Services at (603) 230-5920 to learn more about this limited time offer.


NEW HAMPSHIRE TAX AMNESTY
NH DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE ADMINISTRATION
LEARN MORE

MARKETING: 101

- Developed an integrated media strategy that generated awareness for Tax Amnesty.
- Created media content and selected high-impact outlets for placement.
- Leveraged knowledge of Google search and "click ad" advertising to draw potential Tax Amnesty candidates to the program via the Internet.
- Developed an integrated strategic communications campaign that targeted the largest segments of the Tax Amnesty Program participant population through a mix of earned media (web, print, TV and radio) and direct-to-taxpayer efforts.
- Identified key interest groups and conducted outreach to secure placement in e-newsletters and on the web.
- Researched and developed comprehensive local and regional media lists.
- Drafted and distributed press releases announcing the Tax Amnesty Program launch and last-chance opportunity.
- Conducted aggressive media relations follow-up, developed talking points, coordinated interviews, and collected coverage.

YOU ARE BEING AUDITED

COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

- Stakeholder Interviews – Our vendor asked taxpayers and tax practitioners what they really thought about us.
- Comprehensive Website Evaluation – Our vendor comprehensively reviewed our website for readability and ease of use.
- Work Product Review – Our vendor reviewed all of our written work product for readability and effectiveness.
  - Technical Information Releases
  - Press Releases
  - Presentations and Trainings
  - Fliers and Notifications
  - Annual Report

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the DRA in one sentence?
2. What is your perception of DRA in the media?
3. Do you feel the website provides all the necessary information for you to effectively work with DRA?
4. How is DRA sharing information and communicating with you, and do you feel it is effective?
5. How else are you communicating with DRA, and how has your experience been?
6. Do you feel DRA does an adequate job communicating legislative changes to you?
7. Based on conversation's you've had, how do you think DRA is perceived among your colleagues and peers?
8. What do you suggest DRA do to improve from a communication standpoint?

THE GOOD…

“If I ever have questions, DRA is super responsive on the phone. Someone answers immediately and is surprisingly helpful. My experience with their general phone line is that everyone is knowledgeable and my issue always gets resolved on the first call.”

*“The perception of DRA is very positive, especially in comparison to *UNAMED STATE* which gets complaints all the time.”*

“They are very open communicators, more so than other states, and are willing to sit across the table from you to discuss issues…”

THE BAD…

“DRA should funnel communications through lawyers, CPAs, BIA, Chambers of Commerce, larger accounting firms…”

“Regulations and TIRs need more examples…”

“TIRs don’t go into specifics. In Massachusetts, these releases would be much more detailed and provide guidance and context…”

“DRA could do more to get in front of the general taxpayer and also announce news including criminal investigations and legal issues.”

“DRA should work with practitioners to develop examples of common errors and mistakes…”

THE UGLY…

"I try to avoid interactions whenever possible…"

"Accountants I've heard from suggest that in general the state has a long way to go in bringing up the competency of their people in the field."

"More experienced practitioners have expressed frustration at times… I've seen bills get passed that DRA didn't have a deep understanding of, which led to confusion… there should be more technical staff working on the heavy, in-the-weeds tax initiatives."

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

STRENGTHS

- Hands-on
- Open to transparent communication
- Frequent in-person outreach
- Timely resolution of issues

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of consistent branding
- Confusing and hard to understand technical materials
- Infrequent/insufficient written guidance
- Public doesn’t understand what DRA does and our mission
- Failure to leverage key stakeholders (Example: CPA Society)
- Not taking opportunities to make a positive impression

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop target lists of key statewide stakeholders/influencers to target communication.
- Develop M&R specific e-mail communication program.
- Develop public outreach calendar and target 2-3 proactive outreach items per quarter (legislative session update, expert take on a topic of interest, annual report, criminal cases).
- Publish and proactively pitch relevant press releases about our work intended for the general public to consume.

COMMUNICATIONS CALENDAR

Month	Initiative	Tactic	Target Audience	Status	Next Steps
January	**Commissioner Announcement**	Press Release/Pitch	Statewide & Regional Media	Montagne held input call, drafted and distributed a press release and coordinated media interviews and coverage	Completed
February	**Influencer Lists**	Information Gathering	Internal	Montagne delivered grid of key audience groups for future communications and relationship building; DRA shared additional contacts to add	Montagne to update 'Elected Officials' tab and resend
	2018 Communications Calendar	Plan	Internal	Montagne delivered proposed calendar of internal and external initiatives	Lindsey/DRA to provide feedback
March	**Assistant Commissioner Announcement**	Press Release/Pitch	Statewide & Regional Media	DRA to update Montagne when nomination has been made to Governor Sununu	Montagne to schedule input call, draft media materials and conduct outreach
April	**Federal Tax Reform Legislation**	Press Release	Statewide Media	DRA to deliver report on	Once presentations are finalized,

TAXPAYER OUTREACH

FILING SEASON TIPS PRESS RELEASE

eagletimes.com
EAGLE TIMES
SERVING THE TWIN STATE VALLEY

New Hampshire releases Top 10 filing tips for taxpayers

CONCORD — With tax filing season well underway in advance of April 15, the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration examined filing errors from previous tax seasons and is offering tips for taxpayers to avoid common filing errors.

"Many of the errors New Hampshire taxpayers make in the filing process can result in a delayed processing of tax returns and the issuance of assessments, penalties and interest," said Lindsey Stepp, commissioner of revenue administration. "We prepared this list of what we consider to be the top 10 tips to better equip taxpayers for avoiding easily preventable mistakes."

Top 10 Tips:

1. Use the updated form

Each year, the revenue administration updates its tax return forms to reflect any tax law, tax rate, or other changes. Often, taxpayers have downloaded a previous version and forget to update the following year- — or use one form for multiple filings. Be sure to use the return form published for the tax year being reported. Visit the revenue administration's Forms Page online to find the correct version of all forms.

2. E-filed returns do not require snail-mail

Many New Hampshire tax returns can now be e-filed. When a return is submitted electronically, there is no need to mail a paper copy to the department. Submitting both may slow the process. The revenue administration also accepts returns through its Modernized e-File System from approved software vendors. Visit the department's e-File Page to learn more about how to electronically file a New Hampshire tax return.

DATE: APRIL 4, 2018

SOURCE: PRESS RELEASE

UNIQUE VISITORS: 6,402

AD VALUE: $60

TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

AP

Property tax assistance offered for low-income homeowners

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire's Department of Revenue Administration is training low- and moderate income homeowners to assist them with property tax relief.

The department is offering a session on Tuesday and on June 21 in Concord for people who want to complete an application.

Last year, $1.4 million in property tax relief was distributed, resulting in an average of about $175 of state education property tax relief per household.

DATE: MAY 22, 2018

SOURCE: PRESS RELEASE & ASSOCIATED PRESS PICK-UP (RESULTED IN 35 ARTICLES TOTAL)

UNIQUE VISITORS: 16,879,329

AD VALUE: $156,134

HIGHLIGHTING OUR MISSION

Patch

Annual Report: DRA Collected $2.3 Billion in Taxes Last Year, Improved Efficiency & Customer Service

The New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration (NHDRA) recently published its Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report, which provides insight into NHDRA's operational initiatives, data regarding the taxes NHDRA collects, and municipal finance and assessing laws administered by NHDRA. NHDRA collected $2.3 billion in taxes during FY2018, most of which went to the New Hampshire General Fund and Education Trust Fund. Under Commissioner Lindsey Stepp's guidance, NHDRA continued to make progress on its strategic approach to improved customer service and overall modernization by completing the final phase of its electronic filing project, establishing a taxpayer services department and creating internal performance trackers for identifying areas for improvement.

DATE: OCTOBER 30, 2018

SOURCE: PRESS RELEASE

UNIQUE VISITORS: 11,911

AD VALUE: $110

TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER

New state tax collection system will leave the paper trail behind

Mike Cote

Business Editor's Notebook

LINDSEY STEPP is used to ghosts lurking in the old surgical building that houses the Department of Revenue Administration, part of a campus once home to the state mental hospital. Lights go off mysteriously. Books fall off shelves. Despite the office's modern interior, spirits from a troubled past seem trapped within its walls.

In a few years, the DRA commissioner and her colleagues might be joined by a new ghost when the department's ancient computer system is finally put to rest, thanks to a $30 million project that will propel New Hampshire's tax collection system into the 21st century.

> "This new system will house all of our taxes in one system. So you'll be able to see everything together."
>
> LINDSEY STEPP, Commissioner of Revenue Administration

On Oct. 31, Gov. Chris Sununu and the Executive Council approved a $29,550,000 contract with Fast Enterprises, a Colorado-based company that has set up its GenTax revenue information management systems in more than two dozen states, including Vermont and Massachusetts.

While the state's existing system houses New Hampshire's three major tax types — business taxes, interest and dividends, and meals and rooms and vehicle rentals — the state's other taxes are scattered elsewhere.

"This new system will house all of our taxes in one system. So you'll be able to see everything together," said Stepp, who became the department's first female commissioner a year ago.

The project's first phase

► See Cote, Page B3

DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2018

SOURCE: PRESS RELEASE & FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW WITH COMMISSIONER

CIRCULATION: 37,912

UNIQUE VISITORS: 236,666

AD VALUE: $2,189

FIRST YEAR RESULTS

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS: 252,068

The total number of print subscriptions and broadcast viewership where articles appeared.

TOTAL UNIQUE VISITORS: 68,317,793

The total number of visitors to website where online articles appeared.

TOTAL AD VALUE: $632,740

The total value of article space or airtime for online, print and broadcast clips.

HIGHLIGHTING OUR MISSION

BUSINESSNH MAGAZINE

DRA Gears Up for Busiest Tax Collection Season

<

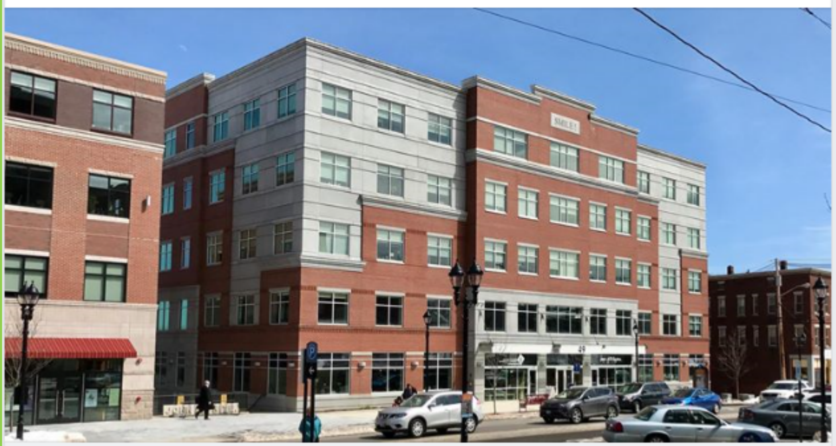
NH DRA compliance officers interact with M&R operators during NH's Ultimate Yard Sale and Food Truck Festival in Contoocook. From left: Marissa Berry (DRA), Betty Rheaume (DRA), Nicole Dow and Tara Bachman (PHILLY's GOOD EATS), Shernelle Williams (DRA) and Shawn Jones (DRA).

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE TAX SEASON EDUCATION

Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce
April 4 ·

Do you have questions about business taxes, including #tax form updates, recent legislative changes, and how to file and pay? Join us at the Chamber tomorrow morning for a cup of coffee and learn some helpful #business tax tips. We're partnering with the Department of Revenue Administration (NHDRA) to provide this educational tax #resource session for business owners in the Capital Region.

Guest presenter Assistant Commissioner Carollynn Lear will also discuss common filing errors and provide direction on additional support resources. The event will include a question and answer portion for attendees. #NH #smallbusiness #info



FRI, APR 5
Business Tax Information Session
Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce · Concord, NH
★ Interested

Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce
April 2 ·

Thank you Carollynn Lear, Assistant Commissioner from the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration, for providing a Tax Education session to business owners this morning at The Hannah Grimes Center.

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TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

Department of Revenue - RIMS Rollout 1 Public Relations Calendar					
Month	**Date**	**Category**	**Tactic**	**Details**	**Owner**
May	Ongoing	*Internal*	Create Branded RIMS E-Blast Template & Letterhead	Similar to internal RIMS Reader, for external e-blast lists	DRA/FAST/ Montagne
			Create Branded Pre-Launch Flier	Point people to website; to be distributed to all relevant groups/offices leading up to launch as leave-behind	DRA/FAST/ Montagne
June	Ongoing	*Internal*	Build M&R Operator Resource List	To include organizations and groups operators follow/belong to	DRA/ Montagne
			Build Nursing Facility Quality Assessment Resource List	To include organizations and groups relevant to taxpayer group	DRA/ Montagne
			Build Medicaid Enhancement Tax Resource List	To include organizations and groups relevant to taxpayer group	DRA/ Montagne
			Build RIMS-specific media list	To include local, regional and national targets	Montagne
July	w/o 7.8	*Internal*	Draft RIMS Update Announcement	Press release will provide overview of progress made so far internally, upcoming internal initiatives and announce launch date	Montagne
	w/o 7.15		Draft RIMS Update E-Blast	Using information from press release	DRA/ Montagne
			Draft RIMS Update Email/Letter to M&R Operator Resources	To alert that GTC portal is launching in October, e-file and telefile leaving, upcoming familiarity resources	DRA/ Montagne
			Draft RIMS Update Email/Letter to Nursing Facility Quality Assessment Contacts	To alert that GTC portal is launching in October, upcoming familiarity resources	DRA/ Montagne
			Draft RIMS Update Email/Letter to Medicaid Enhancement Tax Contacts	To alert that GTC portal is launching in October, upcoming familiarity resources	DRA/ Montagne
			GTC Landing Page Copy Update	Create content reflective of press release and work with web services to make changes	DRA/ Montagne
	w/o 7.22	*Internal*	GTC Landing Page Update	Website updated to go live before press release is distributed	DRA/ Montagne
		External	Distribute RIMS Update Press Release	Montagne to distribute to local, regional and national media and pitch for coverage and interviews	Montagne
			Distribute RIMS Update E-Blast	DRA to send to all subscribers of M&R Updates and DRA press releases	DRA
			Send RIMS Update Email/Letter to M&R Operator Resource List	Ask targets to share with their members via email, social, mail	DRA/ Montagne
			Send RIMS Update Email/Letter to Nursing Facility Quality Assessment Contacts	Ask targets to share with their members via email, social, mail	DRA/ Montagne
			Send RIMS Update Email/Letter to Medicaid Enhancement Tax Contacts	Ask targets to share with their members via email, social, mail	DRA/ Montagne
	w/o 7.29	*Internal*	Outreach to Tax Professional Group(s)	To schedule standalone demo session or appearance at existing event in Sept.	DRA/ Montagne
			Outreach to Healthcare Group(s)	To schedule standalone demo session or appearance at existing event in Sept.	DRA/ Montagne
			Schedule M&R Operator Training	This year inviting new and existing operators	DRA
August	Ongoing	*External*	RIMS Update Announcement Pitching	Pitch update to local, regional and national media; Alert local and regional media of upcoming demo sessions	Montagne

TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

GTC News

Coming Soon: Granite Tax Connect – Your online portal to the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration

Help us spread the news!

Big changes are ahead at the NH Department of Revenue Administration. We are preparing for the rollout of our new Revenue Information Management System (RIMS), which will modernize all aspects of the tax collection and payment process.

You are receiving this news because you, or your clients who pay Meals & Rentals Tax, Nursing Facility Quality Assessment or Medicaid Enhancement Tax, will have a new online resource coming this fall!

Access to Granite Tax Connect is scheduled to be available on **October 28**, which will allow taxpayers, practitioners and all DRA customers to complete tasks online, such as:

- File taxes electronically
- Schedule automated online payments
- View correspondence
- Check the status of returns, payments and refund/credit requests
- And more!

In preparation for the October 28, 2019 rollout, We urge you (and/or your client) to consider the following tips to assist in a smooth transition:

- Log into Granite Tax Connect well in advance of filing due dates to familiarize yourselves with the system.
- Explore and ask questions far in advance of the return/payment due date to allow for proper response.
- We are committed to dedicating extra staff to assist with taxpayer inquiries following the first rollout, however, taxpayers could experience longer than usual wait times on phones as we assist users through inquiries they may have regarding the Granite Tax Connect application.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Not all paths to effective communication lead through
- The public is interested in hearing you toot your own horn.
- The press LOVES free content.
- When you ask people what they think of you – be prepared to



- Set reasonable public outreach goals and make it a part of your everyday job duties.
- Effective communication is part of your mission.

THANK YOU