



Congressman

Gene Green

Reports

29th Congressional District of Texas

Spring 2008

### Tax Rebate Is Only for Those Who File a 2007 Tax Return

A tax refund designed to encourage spending, reduce foreclosures on homes, and encourage business investment will be mailed as soon as May.

Even those who have little or no tax liability may qualify for a minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 if filing a joint return) if their tax return reflects \$3,000 or more in qualifying income. For the purpose of the stimulus rebates, qualifying income consists of earned income such as wages and net self-employment income as well as Social Security or certain Railroad Retirement benefits and veterans' disability compensation, pension or survivors' benefits received from the Department of Veterans' Affairs in 2007. However, please note that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) does not count as qualifying income for the stimulus payment.

Individuals who want to qualify for a refund but would not typically file a tax return must file a 2007 tax return in order to notify the IRS of their income.

Taxpayers who received, for example, \$1000 in earned income and \$2,000 in any combination of the benefits such as social security described above can count those benefit payments toward his or her qualifying income to reach the \$3,000 earned income requirement, even though the individual would not otherwise owe taxes on such income. Taxpayers who already have filed but did not report these benefits can update their return by using IRS Form 1040X.

Rebates will be directly deposited for taxpayers who select direct deposit on their 2007 tax returns. Taxpayers who already requested direct deposit do not need to do anything else to receive the stimulus payment. For taxpayers who have not filed their 2007 returns yet, the IRS is reminding people that direct deposit is the fastest way to get both regular refunds and stimulus payments. Most taxpayers just need to file a 2007 tax return as usual.

Dear Friend,

This is our first newsletter of 2008 and it announces a number of district events. Our annual Veterans Forum, Job Fair, Citizenship Day, and an open house for the new location of our Baytown district office are scheduled in the next three months.

This newsletter discusses how to receive your federal rebate check based on your 2007 income tax return. You must file a tax return for 2007 to receive the rebate. Identity theft and how to respond and prevent it is explained on page two. Page three explains about the DTV transition for our televisions and includes a mail-in coupon to request one or two converter boxes to make sure you have T.V. reception next year. Page four discusses a new program to create more jobs at the Port of Houston in our district.

You do not have to wait for a town hall meeting to contact me. Please feel free to contact me at any of our offices or our website listed below.

Sincerely,

Gene Green  
Member of Congress

### Upcoming events in the 29th Congressional District

Monday, April 21, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Baytown Office Open House**  
909 Decker Drive, Suite 124  
Baytown, Texas 77520

Saturday, May 10, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**Veterans Forum**  
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 581  
27 Farrell Street  
Houston, TX 77022

Monday, May 12, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Job Fair**  
Houston Community College-NE  
Codwell Campus  
555 Community College Drive  
Houston, Texas 77013

Saturday, June 14, 8 a.m.

**Citizenship Day**  
Houston Community College  
8001 Fulton Street  
Houston, TX 77022

### Veterans Forum

**Saturday, May 10**  
**9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**  
**Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 581**  
**27 Farrell Street**  
**Houston, TX 77022**

Congressman Green invites all veterans and their families to a special forum designed to inform them of their rights and benefits and to allow them to communicate their views to him on issues of importance to them. Veterans Administration and DeBakey VA Medical Center staff will be available.

### Congressional offices to serve you

909 Decker Drive  
Suite 124  
Baytown, TX 77520  
281-420-0502  
281-420-0585 Fax

256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E.  
Suite 29  
Houston, TX 77060  
281-999-5879  
281-999-5716 Fax

2335 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-1688  
202-225-9903 Fax

11811 I-10 East Suite 430  
Houston, TX, 77029  
713-330-0761  
713-330-0807 Fax

Visit us on the Web at [www.house.gov/green/](http://www.house.gov/green/)

## How You Can Prevent Identity Theft

Identity theft is a serious crime. With simple personal information such as a name, Social Security number, or credit card number, identity thieves can commit fraud or other crimes in someone else's name. The implications for victims of identity theft can include damaged credit records, unauthorized credit card charges and bank withdrawals – not to mention the months or years it can take to restore their good names and credit records.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), identity theft was again the most common complaint from consumers in all 50 states in 2007. Texas currently ranks fourth in the nation for identity theft complaints to the FTC, with Houston ranking number one within Texas. The FTC estimates that nine million Americans have their identities stolen each year.

The best way to find out is to monitor your accounts and bank statements each month, and check your credit report on a regular basis. Review your financial accounts and billing statements regularly, looking closely for unknown charges.

If you check your credit report regularly, you may be able to limit the damage caused by identity theft. An amendment to the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act requires each of the major nationwide consumer reporting companies to provide you with a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months. To order your free annual report from one or all the national consumer reporting companies, visit [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com), call toll-free 877-322-8228, or complete the Annual Credit Report Request Form and mail it to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281. You can print the form from [ftc.gov/credit](http://ftc.gov/credit).

You can also deter identity theft by following these six steps: 1) shred documents with personal information before you discard them, 2) leave your social security card at home in a safe place and don't give the number out unless necessary, 3) don't give out personal information over the phone, through the mail or on the Internet unless you know who you are dealing with, 4) never click on links sent in unsolicited e-mails. Use a firewall and anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer (visit [onguardonline.gov](http://onguardonline.gov) for more information), 5) don't use an obvious password like your birth date, your mother's maiden name or the last four digits of your social security number, 6) keep personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help or are having work done on your house.

There are several signs of identity theft that require your immediate attention: 1) your bills do not arrive as expected, 2) you receive unexpected credit cards or account statements, 3) you are denied credit for no apparent reason, and 4) you get calls or letters about purchases you didn't make.



Congressman Green joined Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt at the Port of Houston in November to discuss food import safety with Port officials. Pictured from left to right are: Jeffrey O. Baldwin, director of field operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Houston, Congressman Green, Secretary Leavitt and H. Thomas Kornegay, executive director of the Port of Houston Authority.

If you suspect that you are a victim of identity theft, take the following four steps as soon as possible, and keep a record with the details of your conversations and copies of all correspondence:

1. Place a fraud alert on your credit reports, and review them regularly. Fraud alerts can help prevent an identity thief from opening any more accounts in your name. Contact the toll-free fraud number of any of the three consumer reporting companies below to place a fraud alert on your credit report. You only need to contact one of the three companies to place an alert. The company you call is required to contact the other two, which will place an alert on their versions of your report, too.

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

Experian: 1-888-397-3742

TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289

2. Close the accounts that you know, or believe, have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. Call and speak with someone in the security or fraud department of each company where you have credit accounts.

3. File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. You can file a complaint with the FTC using the online complaint form, or call the FTC's Identity Theft Hotline, toll-free: 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338).

4. File a report with the local police or the police in the community where the identity theft took place.

For additional information regarding identity theft, you may visit The FTC's website, [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft).

## New Baytown Office Open House

**Monday, April 21**

**4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

**909 Decker Drive, Suite 124**

**Baytown, Texas 77520**

Please join Congressman Green and staff as they welcome the Baytown community to their new Baytown office location.

## Digital Television Transition

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog format and transmit only digital signals. This digital television ("DTV") transition, mandated by Congress, will ultimately provide us with a variety of benefits, including more and higher-quality broadcast television programming, as well as enhanced public safety communications and additional wireless services.

You may need to take steps to ensure that your televisions continue to work after the DTV transition occurs. If you rely on over-the-air signals for your television viewing and you have an analog-only television set, you will need to acquire a DTV converter box to continue to receive local television broadcast signals. The converter box will permit analog-only televisions to receive and display the new digital signals.

Households that subscribe to cable and satellite will not need a converter box to continue to receive service after the DTV transition. Those households, however, may want a converter box if they (a) have an analog-only television set and want to be able to receive broadcast television signals over the air when cable or satellite service is not working or (b) want to receive additional channels offered by broadcasters that may not be carried by cable or satellite providers. Digital technology allows broadcasters to offer multiple channels of programming. Today, many broadcasters are using their digital signals to provide additional programming, such as 24-hour

local news or weather channels, alongside their main channels. Those additional channels may not be carried by cable or satellite providers but can be received using an antenna and DTV converter box.

Congress established a coupon program to help offset the cost of acquiring a DTV converter box, which is expected to cost between \$40 and \$65. All households are now eligible to apply for and receive two \$40 coupons, each of which may be used to purchase a converter box. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is spearheading the coupon program through which consumers can obtain converter boxes. Upon request, the NTIA will mail up to two coupons and a list of local retailers in the area that sell converter boxes. The converter box coupons expire 90 days after they are issued, so please be aware you will only have approximately three months to use the coupons after you receive them. Many local stations in Houston are already broadcasting in digital in addition to analog, so you will immediately receive the benefits of improved picture quality and additional programming once you purchase and set up your converter box. **Included with this newsletter is a coupon application you can fill out and mail to receive your two coupons.**

Please make sure your friends, neighbors, parents and grandparents are aware of the upcoming transition and ask if they need help following the above steps.

For more information about the Coupon Program and how to apply for coupons, go to the NTIA website at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or call 1-888-DTV-2009. For more information on the digital transition, visit the FCC's website <http://www.dtv.gov/> or call 1-888-225-5322.

Cut out this coupon and mail by March 31, 2009 to  
TV Converter Box Coupon Program, PO Box 2000 Portland, Oregon 97208.

### TV Converter Box Coupon Program

#### 1. Your Name and Address.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last  
HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apt. #  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

**If the US Post Office does not deliver mail to your Home Address,** provide as much information as you can above regarding your Home Address and provide your Mailing Address below.

MAILING ADDRESS if different than above \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address or P.O. Box # Apt. #  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

#### 2. TV Service:

 Check the statement below that best describes your household.

- All or some of the TVs in my house are connected to one or more pay services, such as cable or satellite.  
 None of the TVs in my house are connected to one or more pay services, such as cable or satellite.

#### 3. Coupons Requested:

 How many coupons do you want?  ONE or  TWO

#### 4. Signature:

 By signing below, you declare that the above is true and correct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## New Bid Points Allow More Food Aid Cargo to Move Through Port of Houston



Congressman Green met with port officials and workers who will be servicing the new bid points at the Port of Houston in February. Pictured from left to right: B. R. Williams of the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA); Larry Sopchak, president of ILA Local 28; H. Thomas Kornegay, executive director of the Port of Houston; Congressman Green; Deborah Willits of Commodity Solutions, LLC; Tommy Isbell president of ILA Local 24; and Jay Fuentes of Commodity Solutions.

After years of working with the Port of Houston, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA) and commodity suppliers, we have succeeded in expanding the number of USDA bid points at the Port of Houston from two to twelve. This means shippers contracted by the United States government to deliver food aid to foreign countries will now be able to choose whichever Ship Channel terminal best suits their needs, reducing their costs and increasing cargo through the port.

There are significant cost differences among the numerous terminals along the ship channel in the Port of Houston. These differences increased food aid commodity costs because commodity suppliers factored in the highest possible costs when submitting bids for the "Port of Houston" terminal, even though, in many cases, the cargo would actually move through one of the less expensive locations.

Beginning around July, 2004, the Houston Pilot Program was implemented in the Port of Houston, which established separate bid points for Barbour's Cut and Turning Basin receiving locations. The pilot also made the ocean carriers, rather than the commodity vendors, responsible for the cost of unloading commodities shipped through these terminal locations. The Pilot ran through January 23, 2008, at which point the Houston bid point was permanently eliminated and replaced with twelve separate terminal bid points within the Port of Houston. This change was effective with the invitation for bid that was issued on January 23, 2008.

This permanent change to multiple bid points in the Port of Houston will make the costs of moving commodities through Houston more transparent and will ultimately reduce costs to the government. The expanded bid points program is expected to ensure lower costs in the bidding, shipping, and handling procedures and move more cargo through our port.

## Job Fair

**Monday, May 12**

**10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Houston Community College-NE**

**Codwell Campus**

**555 Community College Drive**

**Houston, Texas 77013**

Congressman Green will host the 6th Annual North Channel Area Job Fair to meet employers, explore employment opportunities and get tips on how to prepare your resume.

## Citizenship Day

**Saturday, June 14**

**8:00 a.m.**

**Houston Community College**

**8001 Fulton Street**

**Houston, TX 77022**

Congressman Green will host the 14th Annual Citizenship Day to help legal residents become United States citizens.

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



M.C.  
Presorted Standard  
W/S Carrier Route

Si le gustaría recibir una copia de este noticiero en español, hágame el favor de escribirme a 256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy E., Ste. 29, Houston, TX 77060. Si es más fácil, también puede llamar a nuestra oficina para recibir el noticiero al 281 999-5879.

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