



Contact: William Wille, (630) 983-3216; [will.wille@ilcusys.org](mailto:will.wille@ilcusys.org)

For Immediate Release

**IL League kicks off new year  
with consumer tax initiative**

Naperville, IL., January 14, 2009 -- Each year, millions of working Americans are eligible for various income tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), but miss out because they either don't know about or how to file for them.

To that end, the Illinois Credit Union League's (ICUL) commitment to helping credit unions build a stronger community is reflected in its latest initiative, <http://www.ipaytaxes.org/> -- a free, uncomplicated web resource. This consumer-oriented Web site was designed by ICUL for usage by its member credit unions to educate consumers and help them make the most of their tax situation.

The site includes a "Maximize Your Refund" section that includes information on the various tax credits that are available, details about Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and other free online tax filing services and information about credit unions, including how to join. There's also a "Quick Connect" section with other pertinent information, including links to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office, the Federal Trade Commission, and numerous resources available via the IRS.

Enacted in 1975, EITC puts cash in the hands of low-income working families. In 2006, the federal EITC delivered \$43 billion to eligible families, and has helped lift more working families out of poverty than any other federal program. ICUL is helping credit unions make a push for EITC because an estimated 25 percent of eligible taxpayers don't know that they're entitled.

For those that do claim the credit, many turn to commercial tax preparers offering exorbitantly priced "fast cash" refunds. A free alternative is VITA, led by IRS-certified volunteers. Through the VITA program, taxpayers are encouraged to open accounts for electronic deposit of refunds, as a first step to asset building.

Connecting working families to EITC, VITA and asset building is something all credit unions can do. Whether they hang a poster, become a VITA volunteer or run a full-fledged campaign, efforts to educate working families about these powerful tax benefits will put money back into their pockets, back into the community, and give credit unions an opportunity to do what they do best-- help working people build a future free of financial hardship.

In addition to the ipaytaxes Web site, ICUL has also created an outreach action kit to assist with the development of a campaign that makes sense for any credit union. Start small or go big, credit unions will find everything they need, from free marketing material, to detailed information on organizing a community wide EITC/VITA event.

"It is our hope credit unions will support this initiative, and join the nationwide effort in spreading the word," said Joni Senkpeil, ICUL director of small credit union development.

###

**Note:** The Illinois Credit Union League (ICUL) is the primary trade association for credit unions in Illinois, which provides members with information, legislation and education. Membership is open to any credit union operating in accordance with the Illinois Credit Union Act or the Federal Credit Union Act. There are 425 credit unions in Illinois with more than 2.7 million members.