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Revenue earns national award for tax model

OLYMPIA – April 14, 2014 – The Washington State Department of Revenue (Revenue) has taken top honors for its [online tax model](#) that allows users to redesign Washington’s tax system with a few clicks of a mouse.

The Federation of Tax Administrators (FTA) announced late Friday that [Revenue received the organization’s 2014 award for Outstanding Research and Analysis](#). The award will be presented in June, and Revenue has been asked to present information on the application at the FTA Revenue Estimating and Tax Research Conference in September.

The judges noted how the model gives everyone (legislators, governors, private individuals) access to the same information about taxes and how they affect different households. “It gives everyone a simulation model,” one judge said. It is a robust model with many variables. They also noted that it would be great to have something similar at the federal level to improve the tax policy debate.

The model allows users to manipulate the state’s existing tax structure and tax variables to create alternatives under any number of new scenarios. It is available on the Agency’s website and utilizes a straightforward Excel spreadsheet backed by a powerful combination of local, state and federal household and tax data.

The Revenue team that built this model included options for taxes that aren’t currently in use in Washington but could be contemplated by policymakers and the public.

The FTA also announced that a Revenue project that modernized the property taxation of certain utilities was recognized for Honorable Mention and requested Revenue showcase the application at the organization’s upcoming national conference in June.

The judges said the use of Geographic Information Systems to precisely locate centrally-assessed utilities "effectively solved a problematic task with work that provided a significant ‘work-smarter’ and effort-saving system by modernizing and streamlining the state’s apportionment process.”

“Revenue staff are innovative and forward thinking, and I am very proud of their work on the Tax Alternatives Model and the Property Tax GIS,” Revenue Director Carol K. Nelson said. “Both projects are worthy of national recognition and can be used by other states to advance fair and consistent taxation.”

Washington is widely recognized as a national leader and has won more FTA awards than any other state tax agency in the country, 20 in all over the past 15 years.

More information:

FTA news release: http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/awards/14_research_award.pdf

Tax Alternatives Model:

http://dor.wa.gov/content/aboutus/statisticsandreports/stats_taxalternative.aspx

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About Revenue

The Department of Revenue is Washington state's primary tax administration agency, nationally recognized for innovation and service quality. In fiscal year 2013, Revenue collected more than \$18 billion in tax revenues that support public schools, social services, health care, corrections, public safety and natural resources conservation.

About the Federation of Tax Administrators

The Federation of Tax Administrators is a nonprofit organization composed of taxation and revenue departments of the fifty states, District of Columbia and New York City. Its mission is to improve the standards and methods of tax administration.