

## Form 23 and Form 8554 Redesign

### Talking Points

October 15, 2007

#### Background

- The Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) plans to introduce a web-based Enrolled Agent (EA) application and renewal process in 2008. This new process, **Pay.Gov**, will allow applicants to apply for and renew their EA status on-line and pay the fees with a credit or debit card. Targeting:
  - February, 2008 to rollout Form 23, and
  - October, 2008 to rollout Form 8554.
- As part of Pay.Gov, we reviewed and simplified our existing forms. We fast-tracked the redesign to meet a Pay.Gov programming deadline.
- Formed a cross-functional IRS team in July, 2007 to review existing forms and make recommendations for changes.
  - Included representatives from OPR, Chief Counsel, General Legal Services and Tax Forms & Publications.
- Just released the new designs – October 12, 2007.

#### Highlights of the new design

- Simplified the application process to significantly reduce taxpayer burden.
  - Form 23 is reduced 75%, from four pages to one page.
  - Form 8554 is reduced 50%, from two pages to one page.
  - Placed the instructions on the back-side of the forms for easy retrieval.
  - Eliminated the requirement to attach copy of a letter showing proof of passing the Special Enrollment Examination
- Better format for answering questions
  - Each form has “Important Things” reminder listed at the top
  - Divided the forms into parts to make them easier to complete.
- Translated the form and instructions into plain language to make them easier to read, understand and complete.
  - Consistent wording and consistent questions on both forms
- Simplified the amount of information we collect; only asking for information we need to process the forms.
- On-line applications will match the paper forms
  - **Form 23**
    - Eliminated collection of multiple telephone numbers – asking for best daytime phone only.
    - Eliminated questions about birth date, place of birth, spousal information, and eligibility.
    - Eliminated Schedule A where we used to collect job-related information from former employees. Former employees will simply check the box at the top of the form.
      - No longer need to attach their position description to prove eligibility.

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- Eliminated Schedule B where we currently collect information on late filed returns or unpaid taxes. We will contact the applicant if we determine a questionable tax issue.
- Reduced the number of professional practice questions from six to four.
- o **Form 8554**
  - Eliminated optional consent for IRS to disclose enrollment information. New regulations authorize us to disclose the address you provide to us on the forms. A special notice was issued in October to all Enrolled Agents to provide advance notice about this change.
  - Eliminated breakdown of CPE hours. New form only asks for total hours, by year.
- We welcome your feedback and would appreciate any suggestions you have for future form enhancements or revisions.

### **Other OPR Initiatives**

- Streamlining the processing of our Enrolled Practitioner Program Office in Detroit.
  - o Goal is to reduce cycle time for processing new applications and renewals that do not contain missing or questionable information.
  - o 90-Day implementation plan
    - Project “Ease” – Enrolled Agent Simplification Effort.
- Actively pursuing an Enrolled Agent Look-up feature on IRS.gov
- Enhancing OPR information on IRS.gov to make it more user-friendly
  - o Planning a November, 2007 launch for the new site.