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Missouri's Department of Revenue: Providing Important Services to Missourians

This week I'd like to feature another state department that provides important services to the citizens of Missouri: the Missouri Department of Revenue (DOR).

Most people are familiar with the Department of Revenue because it is the agency responsible for issuing titles and registration of motor vehicles, as well as issuing driver licenses. The DOR is also the state's central collection agency for all state revenues, collecting more than \$8 billion in general revenue used to make up this year's \$21-billion-plus state budget.

However, what many people may not realize is that the agency's responsibility also includes administering some programs that are designed to help senior citizens and the disabled get a break on their property taxes. The Homestead Preservation Credit program gives eligible senior citizens and individuals who are 100 percent disabled and own their own homes a chance to lessen their property tax burden if their property taxes have increased more than a certain amount from years past. The Circuit Breaker Tax Credit is similar in nature but is designed to help low-income families who rent get a break on their taxes. If you would like more information on either of these programs, please contact my office.

Another prominent feature of the DOR is its driver's license and motor vehicle registration functions. While citizens can always go to a local fee office to get a driver's license or vehicle plates renewed, another option to consider taking advantage of is the DOR's online program to renew these important documents. More information on all of the department's services is available on its Web site, www.dor.mo.gov.

In addition to the duties discussed above, collecting taxes is also a very important job for the DOR. Without the taxes and fees collected, we wouldn't be able to fund our schools and our law enforcement efforts and the building of our roads... just to name a few of the many important functions your state government provides to you. The department's dedicated individuals are also responsible for processing those tax returns every spring and making sure that, if you've paid too much, your refund check is in the mail... or more commonly, in the electronic debit mailbox of your bank.

These are just some of the important services provided by the Missouri Department of Revenue. If you have comments or questions about any of these services or about this week's column, please

do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.