

Media Releases 2007

Taking Amnesty to Businesses

Pretoria, 19 March 2007 -- The South African Revenue Service (SARS) is continuing its efforts throughout the country to encourage business owners through on-site visits to apply for the Small Business Tax Amnesty.

Over the last week teams of SARS officials visited a large number of businesses in designated areas to ensure business owners understand that the deadline for the amnesty remains 31 May 2007. After the deadline SARS will assume a vigorous enforcement campaign against businesses that are not tax compliant.

Today SARS officials visited 97 small businesses in Beaufort-West in the Western Cape to check the levels of tax compliance and assist businesses to apply for amnesty. The Karoo town is a fast-growing centre of economic activity in the Western Cape, in particular the transport sector and associated services. About 20 applications for amnesty were received.

On Friday the amnesty unit received 201 small business tax amnesty applications on the spot during an outreach drive in Gauteng. The registration drive consisted of inspections in Springs and Pretoria.

SARS had identified specific business locations based on a risk assessment of the levels of tax compliance in these areas.

The inspections were exceedingly successful. In Pretoria, SARS officials visited 593 businesses located in Bloed and Van der Walt Streets and received 158 amnesty applications. As many as 53 additional businesses have been earmarked for follow-up inspections.

In Springs on Friday the SARS effort was complemented with assistance from the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Police Service (SAPS). Businesses in the area are largely owned by foreign nationals operating small-scale retail shops.

The inspections secured 43 amnesty applications from the 217 businesses that were visited. During the inspection 11 boxes of counterfeit cigarettes were also seized and 6 unlicensed and unroadworthy vehicles were impounded. A hair salon owner was also arrested for being in possession of 2 grams of cocaine (more information available from the SAPS).

The small business tax amnesty was announced by the Minister of Finance during in the 2006 Budget Speech last year. The amnesty window period for businesses with a turnover of less than R10 million per annum expires on 31 May this year.

To date SARS has received close to 18 000 applications for amnesty.

The contact details for the SARS Small Business Tax Amnesty Unit, where enquiries can be referred to or application forms obtained from are:

Call Centre number:
0860 12 12 20

Fax:
011 602 5502

E-mail :
sbau@sars.gov.za

Postal address:
P O Box 292
Groenkloof
0027

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