



For Immediate Release

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## LONG ISLANDERS TO BENEFIT FROM FREE TAX PREPARATION

Bethpage Federal Credit Union Announces Launch of Volunteer Tax Assistance Program (VITA) Starting February 3

Bethpage, NY - January 26, 2010 - For those Long Islanders unable to prepare their own tax returns, Bethpage Federal Credit Union, will provide low to moderate- income households the opportunity to benefit from the government's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, which offers free tax return assistance for taxpayers. Qualifying individuals with 2009 incomes of \$49,000 and below are eligible and can receive assistance at Bethpage branch locations beginning February 3 through April 14, 2010. One does not need to be a Bethpage member to qualify.

Now in its 7th year, taxpayers will work with certified volunteers and students from the various Long Island universities and colleges that participate in the VITA program and are eager to share their knowledge. Bethpage's VITA program provides students with supervised "real time" experience as part of their skills training. Bethpage has also partnered with The Health & Welfare Council of Long Island to establish The Long Island Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition, a program that helps Long Island's working class families receive an Earned Income Tax Credit if eligible, which offers discounts and refunds to working class families and individuals. Through the partnership, the EITC Coalition is providing experienced volunteers to Bethpage for its VITA program.

"We make the VITA program available as part of our commitment to the community and ongoing mission to help those in need," said Rob Suarez, Assistant Vice President of Community Development. "Over 670 returns were filed at Bethpage through last year's VITA program; and we expect even more this year."

Bethpage will offer VITA services at its Bay Shore, Central Islip, Elmont, Massapequa, Farmingdale, Freeport, Hempstead, Roosevelt, Westbury and Riverhead branches on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. Time and branch locations include:

Bay Shore: 591 East Main Street.  
Wednesdays 5pm-7pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Central Islip: 233 S. Research Place.  
Wednesdays 6pm-8pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Elmont: 1633 Dutch Broadway.  
Wednesdays 6pm-8pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Massapequa: 6257 Sunrise Highway.  
Wednesdays 6pm-8pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Farmingdale: 1033 Route 109.  
Wednesdays 5pm-7pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Freeport: 210 West Merrick Rd.  
Wednesdays 5pm-7pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Hempstead: 170 Fulton Avenue.  
Wednesdays 6pm-8pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Roosevelt: 405 Nassau Road.  
Wednesdays 6-8pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Westbury: 750 Old Country Road.  
Wednesdays 6pm-8pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Riverhead: 1095 Old Country Road.  
Wednesdays 5pm-7pm & Saturdays 3pm-6pm

Under the guidelines of the VITA program, Bethpage coordinates the services of its volunteers, who are trained by the Internet Revenue Service (IRS), to electronically prepare all specific forms including, among others, 1040EZ, 1040A, and 1040. Bethpage is also an e-file site where taxpayers can file their income tax returns electronically. E-filers will receive refunds twice as quickly as those using paper returns in as little as 10 business days when they choose Direct Deposit. Taxpayers who do not have a direct deposit account and wish to receive payment in this format can open a Bethpage account when filing their tax returns.

“I urge all qualified taxpayers to take advantage of the VITA program and Earned Income Tax Credit,” said Linda Armyn, Senior Vice President of Corporate Development and Government Affairs, Bethpage Federal Credit Union. “Not only will they receive discounts and refunds, but also free filing assistance during this difficult economic climate as well as valuable tax information from IRS-educated volunteers.”

“The Earned Income Tax Credit is the most effective anti-poverty program offered by the Federal government. Yet, thousands of Long Islanders lose out on the EITC, their hard earned money, every year because of a lack of access and a lack of awareness. Millions of dollars are lost for communities because

individuals do not claim their credit,” said Gwen O’Shea, President and CEO, Health & Welfare Council of Long Island. “The LI EITC Coalition, with critical partners like Bethpage Federal Credit Union, has worked hard to expand access and awareness around this credit on Long Island.”

Bethpage will also make mobile VITA assistance available to the employees of its Long Island partner organizations including Local 1102, ACLD, Pronto, CPC Community Program Center, Clear Vision, Touro Law College, Workplace Project and Island Harvest.

Qualifying taxpayers planning to take advantage of Bethpage’s VITA program need to bring the following materials with them for review: 2009 tax package of wage and earnings statements (Form W-2), all interest statements (Form 1099-INT), all other income and expense information, as well as a social security card and photo identification. To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present.

For more information, visit Bethpage Federal Credit Union online at [https://www.bethpagefcu.com/community\\_schedule.asp](https://www.bethpagefcu.com/community_schedule.asp) or call (800) 628-7070. Bilingual Tax Assistors are available.

About Bethpage: Bethpage is the leading Long Island community financial institution with over \$3.7 billion in assets. Bethpage maintains branches in Bay Shore, Bethpage, Central Islip, Commack, Elmont, Farmingdale, Freeport, Glen Cove, Hempstead, Huntington, Levittown, Lynbrook, Massapequa, Melville, Mineola, North Babylon, Port Jefferson, Riverhead, Smithtown, Roosevelt, and Westbury with over 200 surcharge ATMs in King Kullen, 7-Eleven, Walgreen’s and Costco locations throughout Long Island. Phone: 1-800-628-7070 or visit <https://www.bethpagefcu.com> # # #