

Swartz Creek Area Senior Center will do taxes for seniors, low-income individuals

by Laura Angus | Swartz Creek News
Sunday February 22, 2009, 9:05 AM



Laura Angus | Swartz Creek News Bob Shaw (left), district coordinator for the AARP Tax-Aide Program in the Shiawassee County area helps Jim Florence, president of the Swartz Creek Senior Board, with his taxes.

SWARTZ CREEK, Michigan — Orville Crothers, 91, of Swartz Creek came to the senior center for the first time this year to get his taxes done.

For more than five years, the Swartz Creek Area Senior Center has offered free tax assistance to area seniors and low-income individuals through a partnership with the AARP Tax-Aide Program. The AARP offers tax assistance to people across the state through similar partnerships.

"I usually do my own taxes, but I'm 91 years old and I'm not as sharp as I used to be," Crothers said.

IRS-certified tax counselors assist seniors and electronically file state and federal tax returns for participants, said Bob Shaw, the program's district coordinator for the Shiawassee County area.

"You can't beat it," said Crothers, who added his return is pretty much the same as it was when he did his own taxes last year.

Shaw said about 350 people get their taxes done at the Swartz Creek Senior Center each year, and last year was a peak year when seniors were filing to get federal stimulus checks. His wife, Betty Shaw, is the coordinator for the Swartz Creek area.

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Tax assistance

Help is available for seniors and low income individuals on Wednesdays and Fridays until the April 15 deadline.

• **Where:** 8095 Civic Drive

• **How to make an appointment:** Call (810) 635-4122 or stop in

• **What to bring:** Last year's tax forms and information concerning your 2007 stimulus payment, W-2s and 1099s, IRA distributions, Social Security Statements, interest and dividend statements, medical insurance information, doctor and hospital bills, house tax bills and interest statements, car license information, receipts for church and charity donations, gambling winning statements, home business information, education expenses and stock sale information.

Volunteer Katy Sanders of Gaines Township starts the process when people arrive at the center.

Seniors in general need more help with their state income tax forms than their federal tax forms, she said.

"There are just a lot of things that Michigan does provide to seniors that they might need help getting filed," she said.

Bob Shaw said some professional tax services don't know about the credits for seniors.

For example, seniors could get a credit for their vehicle because car insurance also counts as health insurance in case of an accident. It will only save about \$2, but "that's a hamburger," he said.

Marta Bentoski, assistant director of the senior center, said the center is still accepting appointments for tax help.

"It's not a requirement for people to be a member to get their taxes done here," she said.

Appointments, however, are required. Visit the center to sign up or call (810) 635-4122.