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PRESS RELEASE



From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Deadline for 2011 College Savings Tax Exemption is December 29

START Account Owners Can Exempt Up to \$4,800 in Deposits Per Account This Tax Year

BATON ROUGE, LA – December 29 is the deadline for Louisiana families to qualify for the 2011 tax benefits provided by START, the state's 529 college savings program.

Deposits to new and existing accounts must be *received* by 3:00 p.m. CST on December 29, 2011 to qualify for tax benefits and state matching contributions for the current calendar year.

START investors can exempt up to \$2,400 in deposits per beneficiary per year from income reported on their state tax returns. For married couples filing jointly, the exemption from income can be up to \$4,800 in deposits. If account owners are unable to make \$2,400 (or \$4,800) in deposits in one year, they can carry forward unused portions to subsequent years.

"START account owners should send in their deposits as early as possible, especially because of the holiday season," said Carol Fulco, START Director. "This is also the perfect time of year to give a gift of education by opening a new START account for a child, grandchild, niece, nephew or other family member," Fulco added. Both online and printable applications are available at www.startsaving.la.gov.

In addition to a \$2,400 or \$4,800 annual tax exemption, START benefits include a state-paid match on deposits ranging from 2 percent to 14 percent, depending on the account's classification and owner's adjusted gross income. Other benefits include a choice of investment options in fixed, variable and mixed portfolios; the flexibility to use funds at any accredited college or university for tuition, room and board, books, fees and more; and a tax exemption on earnings when used to pay these expenses.

START deposits can be made online at www.startsaving.la.gov or can be sent by overnight delivery to: START Saving Program, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Postmarks or payments mailed but not received by 3:00 p.m. on December 29, 2011, will not be credited until 2012 and will not be eligible for 2011 tax incentives.

Deposits will also be accepted in person in the Mobile/Manchac Room on the first floor of the Galvez Building in downtown Baton Rouge at 602 North Fifth Street from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 27 through Thursday, December 29. Parking is available in the Galvez Parking Garage on North Street and parking can be validated by the Galvez Building Security guard on duty. For more information, contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance toll-free at 1-800-259-5626, ext. 1012.

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