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**Free Tax Help
Being Offered By
GCCAC, AARP**

The Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC) Inc., in conjunction with AARP (American Association of Retired Persons), is offering free tax preparation at the Mary Browning Senior Center during the coming tax season. The service, called VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), targets low-income and elderly taxpayers who need assistance in filing their income taxes; however, taxpayers with higher incomes may also be eligible for the VITA free tax prep service, depending upon the complexity of their returns.

The site will be open from Tuesday, Jan. 26, through Friday, April 15, and the center is located at the corner of Center and First streets in Oakland. The hours of operation throughout the tax season are: Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 4 p.m., Wednesdays, 4 to 7 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The VITA site will follow the Garrett County Public Schools' inclement weather schedule. If school is canceled because of weather conditions, the site will also be closed.

No appointment is necessary, and the service is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. All volunteers are IRS-certified tax preparers.

Clients of the free tax prep service are required to bring

in all tax- and income-related documents, as well as a photo ID, a copy of last year's tax return, and Social Security cards for each taxpayer and dependent to be listed on the tax return.

In addition to assisting residents with filing their taxes, Jennifer Rexroad, GCCAC's financial education counselor, will be on hand to discuss financial management strategies and ways to effectively manage tax refunds.

"Many taxpayers are able to set aside part of their tax refunds to put in savings accounts, purchase U.S. savings bonds, or pay down high-interest debt," said Rexroad. "We are here to help those individuals do just that, and we are providing some financial incentives as a way of

encouraging smart financial decisions."

Free income tax preparation services and financial coaching are part of GCCAC's strategy of assisting low-income individuals and families build wealth, which will help them become more self-sufficient. For more information, persons may call Lisa Swift or Jennifer Rexroad at 301-334-9431.

