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## Provincial tax system streamlined for business, Chamber of Commerce told

Paying taxes is never an enjoyable experience, but the province is trying to make the process easier for businesses, the parliamentary assistant to the provincial Minister of Revenue told the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce last Wednesday.

“We have simplified and modernized our tax system,” said Yasir Naqvi.

The Ottawa Centre MPP said the government’s intent is to “do all we can faster, smarter and more efficient.

“We are serious about finding ways to make things easier for everyone.”

Naqvi was talking about the newly launched ONT-TAXS (Ontario’s Tax Services). It’s an online service from the Ministry of Revenue that cuts down on paper trails, saves time and is accessible around the clock.

“We’ve taken 39 ministry numbers and replaced them with one toll-free number and that’s 1-866-668-8297.”

Business owners can file one return that covers federal and provincial taxes, as opposed to the old system that had to file one for each.

Naqvi described the new system as “a smarter system that allows for streamlining and offers a level playing field.”

In making the launch, he said the government has already reduced the number of letters and paperwork passed between business and government.

So far, ONT-TAXS has cut down the paper burden by 35%.

“This is one tax form and one tax collector.”

Naqvi said a number of government initiatives have been unveiled under this goal, including the single toll-free number 1-866-ONT-TAXS that provides a 24-hours a day, seven days a week “one-window” service delivery of information.

Online access is also available with assistance and information to help business owners find a straightforward way to file corporate tax returns.

He added that the site also allows people to take ownership of being able to change personal information like the business’ address.

“They (business owners) should be spending more time running their business and less time doing government paperwork.”

The government estimates that more than 300,000 business owners use the online service, and that figure could be as high as 600,000 by 2010.

“No one wants to pay taxes, so if you’re going to pay taxes, let’s make it easy to do so.”

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