

Q&A with Kimberly Robinson, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Revenue

Article By:

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Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Revenue, Kimberly Robinson, sat down with our own Bill Backstrom and Jay Adams to discuss a few things.

Q: What has been your biggest challenge returning to public service?

The greatest challenge was starting work in the middle of a budget crisis. Within days of getting to work at Louisiana Department of Revenue (“LDR”), my management team and I were tasked with providing guidance for the two special legislative sessions and the Task Force on Structural Changes in Budget and Tax Policy. In addition, there is also a Task Force on *Ad Valorem* Tax Structure, a Sales Tax Streamlining and Modernization Commission and a Transportation Infrastructure Funding Task Force. Every corner of the state and local tax system in Louisiana is under review. Fortunately, I joined a team of knowledgeable, experienced professionals who supported me in providing the information that the Governor’s Office, the Division of Administration and the Legislature needed.

Q: What has been the most rewarding aspect of returning to public service?

Working with the Edwards Administration and the team of dedicated professionals at LDR is the most rewarding aspect of my return to public service. Our people are our greatest strength.

Q: What have been the biggest administrative challenges you faced as a result of the recent and historical legislative sessions?

It is the same challenge facing every other agency head in state government right now; making the most of limited resources to continue providing the level and quality of service that Louisiana residents expect and deserve. Of course, the implementation of the myriad of legislative changes to the tax code has been a very unique challenge. We have issued policy guidance on just about every tax administered by LDR, prepared new returns, re-programmed our system for all the changes, and conducted seminars around the state.

Q: What was the most controversial legislative change that has or will affect businesses, the energy industry in particular, in Louisiana?

The sales tax rates and exemptions being effective for three months and changing again...need I say more. Beyond the sales tax changes, the changes to the corporate income and franchise taxes are fairly extensive. Louisiana now has an add back statute, market-based sourcing, and a single-sales factor for apportionment. Did I mention the franchise tax now applies to any entity electing to be taxed as a corporation for income tax purposes? We are moving forward with rule making process and I expect to receive a great deal of feedback from the energy industry during that process.

Q: Any predictions for the 2017 fiscal session?

The only prediction I feel safe in making is that we will continue to see lawmakers and the administration working hard to ensure the state's tax system meets the needs of all stakeholders, including individual and business taxpayers, tax professionals and public institutions. Easier said than done, certainly.

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