# Amazon and IRS Secure Expansion Approvals for Drone Deliveries and Tax Filing Programs



**Amazon Expands Drone Deliveries Following FAA Approval**

Amazon has received key approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to expand its Prime Air drone delivery service. This was announced by the Seattle-based company on Thursday, May 30, 2024. The FAA permission allows Amazon drones to operate "beyond visual line of sight," enabling pilots to control drones remotely without a direct line of sight. Initially, this approval applies to College Station, Texas, where Amazon began drone deliveries in late 2022.

The approval will facilitate Amazon's plan to scale its drone operations to cover more densely populated areas in College Station and potentially expand to other locations nationwide. This development comes after Amazon demonstrated the safety of its drones by successfully navigating around airborne obstacles like planes, helicopters, and hot air balloons.

Amazon has pursued drone delivery for over a decade, encountering several regulatory hurdles. In 2013, founder Jeff Bezos had envisioned drones delivering packages to customers' homes within five years. Recently, Amazon announced it would close a drone delivery site in Lockeford, California, and open a new site in Tolleson, Arizona. With a long-term goal of delivering 500 million packages annually by drone, this FAA approval marks a significant milestone in Amazon's delivery ambitions.

**IRS Expands Direct File Program Nationwide**

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) plans to expand its free Direct File tax-filing program to all 50 states starting next year. This announcement, made on May 30, 2024, by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, follows a successful pilot program in 12 states during the 2024 tax season, where over 140,000 taxpayers used the tool.

Direct File allows taxpayers to file simple federal tax returns directly on an IRS platform. Initially limited to basic income types, the IRS aims to enhance the program to accommodate more diverse tax situations, such as income from gig work or private retirement.

The pilot program's expansion is part of the Biden administration's broader effort, funded by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, to modernize the IRS. Despite skepticism from Republicans and some state officials regarding the program's cost and necessity, the IRS reported high satisfaction rates among users and a lower than projected operational cost.

Next year’s $75 million budget for Direct File will depend on state participation, with ongoing discussions to link state tax returns to the federal platform. The program aspires to eventually cover all common tax situations, providing a seamless, digital tax-filing experience for U.S. taxpayers.