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inbrief

Standard mileage rates for business use of automobiles increased to 37.5 cents a mile, up from 36 cents per mile in 2003, due to a rise in fuel prices last year, the Internal Revenue Service said. Taxpayers who use no more than four vehicles at the same time for business purposes may use the standard mileage rate. Previously, taxpayers using more than one vehicle at a time had to track actual expenses for each vehicle.

[Vertex Inc.](#), a Berwyn, Pa.-based provider of tax technology, introduced an online service for the leasing industry that allows companies to access taxability rules and rates specific to equipment and vehicle leasing.

Ryder System announced a leasing option offering the advantages of its full-service lease plus the ability to retain the tax benefits of ownership. The Tax Advantage Lease program takes advantage of the 2003 tax reduction law, which provides a first-year "bonus" tax deduction equal to 50 percent of the cost of the qualified transportation property acquired between May 5, 2003, and Jan. 1, 2005, and placed into service before 2006.

California truck owners who paid a higher vehicle license fee before Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger rolled back the fee should receive refunds early next year. State law allowed former Gov. Gray Davis to reinstate the 2 percent vehicle license fee Oct. 1 in the face of a budget crisis.