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Fun Tax Facts

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Fun Tax Facts

By: Rachana Khandelwal, MST

Squirrels – Tax the Spirit!

In early 19th century in Ohio, most taxpayers spent time in the woods hunting for at least 100 squirrels in order to get a tax credit of \$3 against their property tax. The state legislature passed this unusual law to help farmers protect their animal feed stocks from this spirited animal entering their barns, and also giving them a tax break.¹

Día de Muertos



Photo Credit: Jim Kyle from Flickr

The makers of the James Bond movie, *Spectre* (2015), reportedly negotiated \$20 million worth of tax incentives for showcasing Mexico City and its skyline in the fictional 'Día de Muertos' (*The Day of the Dead*) parade scene.² Since then, the parade has become a reality, and is now an annual event bringing in more than 100,000 tourists to Mexico City.³

¹ Chris Studor, Property taxes too high? Early settlers here got a 'squirrel discount', The Post, July 21, 2018 available at http://www.thepostnewspapers.com/medina_county_news/property-taxes-too-high-early-settlers-here-got-a-squirrel-discount/article_c0d78a7b-7209-582c-a8cf-7bf787d24222.html.

²Brian Bardwell, From Mexico With Love: How Sony Got Millions in Incentives to Rewrite 007 Film, Tax Analysts, March 3, 2015; available <http://www.taxhistory.org/www/features.nsf/Articles/D0DB13181492C8E285257DFD0048BA22?OpenDocument>.

³Mexico City stages first Day of the Dead Parade, BBC, October 29, 201; available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-37813562>.

Out of the Tax Arena for 37 years

Madison Square Garden, one of the world's most famous sports arenas has not paid property tax since 1982 resulting in an estimated revenue loss of over \$500 million for New York City. The tax break given to the corporation as an incentive to remain in New York City was supposed to only last for ten years, however, the city failed to insert a sunset date for the tax exemption.⁴

The Swiss Military Tax

Citizens of Switzerland must perform mandatory military service once they reach the age of 19. If deemed unfit to perform service, they are liable for a Military Service Exemption tax of 3 percent on their taxable income until the age of 37. This tax also applies to Swiss citizens residing abroad.⁵

Interestingly, Roger Federer, the world champion tennis player, was exempted from conscription and paid 3 percent tax on his annual income. In 2008, he paid 450,000 Francs, which was approximately 466,000 USD.⁶ The Federal Tax Administration of Switzerland refers to this tax as a compensation charge.⁷

⁴ The Madison Square Garden Property Tax Saga, EACCNY; available at <https://eaccny.com/news/member-news/the-madison-square-garden-property-tax-saga/>.

⁵ Military Service Exemption Tax, The Swiss Authorities Online, available at <https://www.ch.ch/en/military-service-exemption-tax/>.

⁶ LE NEWS, Roger Federer- A Few Facts, January 29, 2018; available at <https://lenews.ch/2018/01/29/roger-federer-a-few-facts/>.

⁷ Swiss Federal Tax Administration, *The Swiss Tax System*, 2019 edition, page 34; available at <file:///E:/Downloads/Das%20schweizerische%20Steuersystem.pdf>.