

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Friday, April 16, is the deadline for 2010 Census forms to be filled out and mailed back. After that deadline, households that have not returned forms will be visited by Census takers starting in May.

"It's hard to overstate just how important the census is," said Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel, who has hosted several events to try to boost participation rates. "The results from this census will be used for the next 10 years to determine how much federal assistance is directed to the Central Coast. The census is vital to our communities and we need to make sure our count is as accurate as possible."

Results from the census are responsible for apportioning approximately \$445 billion each year in federal funding, with money going to schools, roads, emergency responders and more. It's estimated that every individual who is not counted results in almost \$3,000 per year in lost federal funds, or \$30,000 over the course of the next 10 years.

The census is expected to cost the federal government around \$1.5 billion to complete, but that figure would be much lower if more households mailed in the forms by the April 16 deadline.

The government spends only 42 cents when a questionnaire is returned through the mail, but if a census taker has to visit a house, that cost increases to \$57 per household. For every

percentage point increase in the mail-in participation rate, the government saves \$85 million.

"The census process is simple and it's safe," Rep. Farr said. "It should take the average household less than 10 minutes to fill out the form and the information is kept strictly confidential. It's important to remember that census data will never be given to authorities to use for immigration, tax, court or other purposes."

As of Thursday morning, the national mail-in rate stood at 67 percent. Monterey County currently stands at 64 percent, San Benito County at 68 percent and Santa Cruz County at 67 percent. Complete details on local mail-in participation rates can be found at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map>

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