



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:
Mike Gowrylow
(360) 570-6048

Contractor charged with theft of \$13,000 in sales tax

OLYMPIA, Wash., Oct. 13, 2008 — A Puyallup contractor was charged today with stealing more than \$13,000 in sales tax she collected from her customers.

Charges of first degree theft and filing false or fraudulent tax returns were filed in King County Superior Court against Colleen A. Escamilla, 49, of Auburn. Escamilla, who also is known as Colleen Gonzalez, is former owner of C's Construction Labor Security and Cleaning.

The charges were brought by the Criminal Justice Division of the Attorney General's Office at the request of the Washington State Department of Revenue.

According to the charging papers, Escamilla reported only about \$1,004 of \$14,015 in sales tax collected on construction projects in 2005. Her alleged thefts were discovered during an audit conducted by the Department of Revenue.

Sales taxes collected by businesses are trust funds. Failure to remit them to the state can be charged as theft, and depending upon the amount of funds stolen could be punishable by up to 10 years in jail and a \$20,000 fine. Filing fraudulent returns is a felony subject to a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

###

