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For more information, contact:

Mike Gowrylow

(360) 570-6048

**Plumbing Contractor Charged with Felony Theft of Sales Tax, Operating a Business After License Revoked**

**Tacoma, Wash.**, March 10, 2009 — A Tacoma plumbing contractor has been charged with theft of sales tax and continuing to operate a business after his license was revoked in 2006 for non-payment of taxes.

According to felony charges filed in Pierce County Superior Court, James. O. Beni Jr., 66, continued to operate Pacific Plumbing and Heating, Inc., 5039 S. Washington St., despite repeated warnings by the Department of Revenue that such post-revocation activity was illegal.

Beni is accused of collecting at least \$16,319 in state and local sales tax from customers after the Department closed his business, but remitting none of it to the state.

The charges were filed by the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney and Criminal Justice Division of the Washington State Attorney General's Office, at the request of the Department of Revenue.

Felony theft of sales tax and operating a business after its licensed is revoked is punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine, plus restitution.

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