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Yacht Broker Sentenced to Four Years for Felony Theft of Sales Tax

EVERETT, Wash., March 5, 2009 — Everett yacht broker Ronald J. Sperry was sentenced to four years in prison this week after admitting he failed to remit sales tax he collected on boat sales and underreporting his commissions to lower his state business and occupation tax.

Sperry, formerly vice commodore of the Everett Yacht Club, operated Everett Yacht Sales and Hanan Yachts.

Sperry pled guilty last November, but his sentencing had been delayed to give him an opportunity to make restitution toward his debt of nearly \$953,000, including interest and penalties. However, Sperry had only made \$3,000 in restitution since then, and Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Larry McKeeman rejected requests by Sperry for more time. Sperry might have received a lighter sentence had he made more restitution.

McKeeman did agree to let Sperry, 60, delay entering prison until the end of April to deal with some health issues and possibly make additional restitution. The judge ordered Sperry to turn over at least 40 percent of his paycheck to the state.

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

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