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Peninsula restaurant owner charged with felony theft of sales tax, filing false state tax returns

BREMERTON – Nov. 8, 2011 – The operator of restaurants in Kitsap and Jefferson counties was charged today with filing false tax returns to cover up the felony theft of nearly \$463,000 in sales tax he collected from customers but never remitted to the state.

The charges against Rohn M. Rutledge, 47, were filed in Kitsap County Superior Court today by the Financial Crimes Unit of the Washington State Attorney General’s Office at the request of the Washington State Department of Revenue.

According to charging papers, Rutledge operated the Main Street Ale House in Kingston and Olympic Timberhouse Restaurant in Quilcene between 2007 and 2010, during which time he repeatedly filed returns stating both businesses conducted no business. The Main Street Ale House subsequently was sold and is under new ownership.

Rutledge has admitted that he deliberately falsified tax returns filed with the Department because he was struggling to meet expenses and “knew of no way out of his dilemma.”

Rutledge formerly operated the Hungry Bear Café, which was destroyed by arson in 2006.

The maximum penalty for the charges is 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.

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