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Peninsula restaurant owner pleads guilty to felony theft of sales tax, filing false state tax returns

BREMERTON – Feb. 22, 2012 – The operator of restaurants in Kitsap and Jefferson counties pled guilty today to filing false tax returns to cover up the felony theft of nearly \$463,000 in sales tax he collected from customers.

Kitsap County Superior Court Judge Russell Hartman deferred sentencing of Rohn M. Rutledge, 47 to give him time to make \$774,219 in restitution, including penalties and interest. Rutledge agreed to a payment plan, and that grounds existed for an exceptional sentence above a standard sentencing range of 12 to 14 months.

The charges were brought 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 Timber House Restaurant in Quilcene between 2007 and 2010, during which time he filed state tax returns stating neither operation did any business. The Main Street Ale House subsequently was sold and is under new ownership.

Rutledge earlier admitted to investigators that he deliberately falsified tax returns because he was struggling to meet expenses.

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