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## **Washougal man charged with tax theft**

**OLYMPIA** – Sept. 20, 2016 – Charges were filed Friday against a Washougal business owner who allegedly stole more than \$35,000 in retail sales tax intended to fund public services.

Richard A. Mehas, owner of Accurate Landscaping, is accused of collecting retail sales tax from Washington-based clients but keeping it for himself. Auditors for the Washington State Department of Revenue (Revenue) discovered the alleged tax fraud during a review of the business records spanning January 2009 through September 2013.

Mehas reported no business income to Revenue during that time.. However, invoices provided by one of Accurate Landscaping’s clients in Washington show the client paid more than \$500,000 for services and \$35,526 in retail sales tax.

Mehas had previously filed returns and paid taxes.

Collecting but not remitting retail sales tax is considered theft under Washington state law.

Revenue referred the audit file to the state Attorney General’s office for review, resulting in today’s charges.

Retail sales tax is the largest source of state revenues, supporting vital services that benefit Washington’s residents and the economy.

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### **About Revenue**

The Department of Revenue is Washington state’s primary tax administration agency, nationally recognized for innovation and service quality. Revenue collected \$20.8 billion in tax revenues in Fiscal Year 2015. These funds support education, social services, health care, corrections, public safety, natural resources conservation and other public services.