



For more information, contact:

Kim Schmanke

Desk 360-534-1602 | Cell 360-688-6102

Follow us on Twitter: @WASStateDOR

## **Lewis Co. business owner charged with stealing \$46,000 in taxes**

**OLYMPIA** – Feb. 11, 2015 – Theft charges have been filed in Lewis County against a co-owner of local builder BK Rife Enterprises, LLC. The charging papers allege Karina J. Rife, co-owner and accountant for the company, knowingly filed falsified tax returns from 2007 to 2013 to hide the company’s business activity from the state.

Invoices and other business records indicate the company collected and kept at least \$46,000 in sales tax. This is money clients paid, expecting it would be used to support local and state services such as funding schools and law enforcement. Instead, Ms. Rife admitted the business used the money to pay its bills.

BK Rife Enterprises was also doing business without a valid business registration during that period, which is a felony. The registration had been revoked for unpaid taxes.

If convicted, Ms. Rife faces thousands of dollars in restitution and penalties as well as possible time in prison.

Lewis County brought the charges on behalf of the Washington State Department of Revenue, which collects the retail sales tax and makes sure it is distributed properly to local and state government.

Retail sales tax is the largest source of state revenues, supporting vital services that benefit Washington’s residents and the economy. Businesses that collect retail sales tax do so “in trust” for the state and must remit those taxes to Revenue by the due date of the tax return for the reporting period. Failure to remit the taxes constitutes theft.

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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 more than \$19.6 billion in tax revenues in fiscal year 2014. These funds go to support public schools, social services, health care, corrections, public safety and natural resources conservation.