



News Release

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Delano Couple Facing Felony Tax Charges

Saint Paul – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced today that the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office charged Gary Collyard, 61, and his wife, Valeri Lennon, 51, both of Delano, with a combined total of nine felony tax charges. The couple allegedly owes the state more than \$62,000.

Collyard is charged with one count of filing a false tax return for tax year 2006, two counts of willfully failing to file income tax returns and two counts of failing to remit tax for tax years 2007 and 2008. Lennon is charged with two counts of willfully failing to file tax returns and two counts of willfully failing to remit tax for tax years 2007 and 2008.

According to the complaint, Collyard’s business was a real estate development and investment company, Collyard Group LLC. Lennon was a part owner of a photography business. Former employees reported that the couple lived an extravagant lifestyle at a time they claimed little income on tax returns they filed. Their lifestyle included a home in Delano with an assessed valuation of \$1.5 million and vehicles including an \$80,000 Cadillac Escalade, a \$33,000 Porsche and a \$70,000 Mercedes.

Documents show Collyard’s gross income for tax year 2006 to be \$432,000. However, the complaint states that for the same year, the couple reported income considerably less resulting in a \$1,400 refund. The couple allegedly owes the state more than \$20,000 in taxes, penalty and interest for 2006.

While they did not file a 2007 return, a completed return was found in their home and was submitted to banks by the couple, for loan applications. They claimed \$418,000 in income for Collyard and \$109,000 in income for Lennon. The couple owes the state more than \$19,000 in taxes, penalty and interest for 2007.

For 2008, bank records show Collyard earned at least \$141,000 and Lennon earned \$104,000. Collyard also submitted a loan application claiming gross annual income of \$970,000. The couple owes the state more than \$22,000 in taxes, penalty and interest for 2008.

In total, the couple owes the state more than \$62,000 in taxes, penalty and interest.

Each felony is punishable by up to five years in prison, up to a \$10,000 fine, or both.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects an individual or business is violating tax laws, at (651) 297-5195 or 1-800-657-3500. Tipsters may

remain anonymous and can also email the department at tax.fraud@state.mn.us. Last year, citizen tips resulted in 75 percent of the department's criminal case referrals.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue is dedicated to enforcing tax laws, collecting no more and no less than taxpayers owe. It takes progressively stricter measures against taxpayers who demonstrate they will not voluntarily meet their obligations.

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