

News Release

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Aitkin tax preparer charged with tax crimes

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Aitkin County Attorney’s Office recently charged Todd William Sterling, 44, of Aitkin, with six tax felonies.

Sterling has been charged with three counts of failing to file tax returns and three counts of failing to pay taxes.

According to the criminal complaint, Sterling, a tax preparer, did not file income tax returns for tax years 2006, 2008 and 2009. Between 2005 and 2009, Sterling’s tax business prepared more than 2,400 income tax returns.

He allegedly failed to file income tax returns for the years 2006, 2008, and 2009, until June 2011 after learning he was under investigation.

Sterling told investigators he operated Aitkin Tax Service, Inc., had prepared tax returns for 20 years and understood the filing requirements.

The charges each carry a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects an individual or business is violating tax laws. That number is 651-297-5195, or 1-800-657-3500 (TTY users call 711 for Minnesota Relay). Tipsters may remain anonymous and can also email the department at tax.fraud@state.mn.us. In 2012, citizen tips totaled 80 percent of the department’s criminal case referrals.

While most taxpayers comply with tax laws voluntarily, the Minnesota Department of Revenue takes progressive enforcement action against non-compliant taxpayers ensuring tax laws are fairly administered, collecting no more and no less than taxpayers owe.

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