



## News Release

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:***

February 12, 2014

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### **Minnetonka tax preparer charged with tax crimes**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office recently charged John William Zastrow, 64, of Minnetonka, with 28 tax-related felonies.

Zastrow, a tax preparer, is charged with four counts of identity theft and 24 counts of filing a false tax return.

According to the criminal complaint, Zastrow was working as a tax preparer when 92 deposits containing his clients’ refunds were issued into a bank account he controlled. On his clients’ tax returns, Zastrow listed his address and bank account number in place of his clients’ without their knowledge or consent. The tax returns also included false information to inflate the size of the refunds.

Between 2008 and 2012, Zastrow kept more than \$31,000 of his clients’ refund money.

Each false tax return charge carries a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. The identity theft charges each carry a maximum penalty of up to ten years in prison and up to a \$20,000 fine.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects a person 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](mailto:tax.fraud@state.mn.us). In 2012, 80 percent of the department’s criminal case referrals came from citizen tips.

While most taxpayers comply with tax laws voluntarily, the Minnesota Department of Revenue takes enforcement action against noncompliant taxpayers to ensure tax laws are fairly administered.

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