

## News Release

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### **Osage couple charged with multiple tax crimes**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Becker County Attorney’s Office recently charged Michael Monroe Wells with five tax-related felonies and Marie Colleen Wells with two tax-related felonies.

The Wellses are both charged with one count of filing false income tax returns and one count of evading income taxes. Mr. Wells is additionally charged with one count of failing to file sales tax returns for his business, one count of evading sales tax for his business, and one count of operating his business after his sales tax permit was revoked.

According to the complaint, the Wellses both filed false income tax returns for tax years 2010 through 2014 by underreporting their gross income and overstating their deductions. Mr. Wells also failed to file sales tax returns and failed to remit sales tax collected from customers by his business, Northern Generator Service, for tax years 2011 through 2015. The department revoked Northern Generator Service’s sales tax permit in 2013 for owing more than \$192,000 in unpaid sales tax, however, according to the complaint, Mr. Wells continued to operate the business and make retail sales in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Each tax-related felony charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Although most taxpayers comply with tax laws voluntarily, the department takes enforcement action against noncompliant taxpayers to ensure that tax laws are administered fairly.

Many of the department’s criminal case referrals come from citizen tips. There is a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects that a person or business is violating Minnesota tax laws. Local callers may dial 651-297-5195 or call toll-free by dialing 1-800-657-3500. Tips can also be submitted to the department by email at [tax.fraud@state.mn.us](mailto:tax.fraud@state.mn.us). Tipsters may choose to remain anonymous.

Get the latest news and updates from the Minnesota Department of Revenue by following the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) or by signing up for our [email subscription list](#).

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