

NEWS RELEASE

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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**FORMER OFFICE MANAGER OF ELK HEATING AND COOLING IN
MADISON COUNTY PLEADS GUILTY TO TAX EVASION, THEFT FROM
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS AND FAILURE TO PAY
EMPLOYMENT TAXES**

A. Courtney Cox, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on September 23, 2009, **MARY R. STORER**, age 40, formerly of Wood River, Illinois, pled guilty to four counts of an Indictment charging her with Spies Tax Evasion, Willful Failure to File Federal Income Tax Returns, Embezzlement From An Employee Benefit Plan, and Failure To Pay Employment Taxes. The convictions carry a maximum possible penalty of up to sixteen years in prison, three years supervised release and mandatory restitution. Sentencing is scheduled for January 7, 2010.

The convictions are the result of Mary R. Storer's conduct after she was hired by Elk Heating and Sheet Metal, Inc. d/b/a Elk Heating and Cooling as their office manager in approximately February/May 2006. Elk Heating and Sheet Metal is a small, family-owned, heating and air conditioning company in Madison County. Mary R. Storer's responsibilities included answering the telephones, setting up customer appointments, and handling accounts receivable and accounts payable. Mary R. Storer was also in charge of payroll and filing and paying Elk Heating and Sheet Metal's payroll taxes. Mary R. Storer immediately began embezzling money from Elk Heating and Sheet Metal. Mary R. Storer gambled away almost all of the money that she embezzled from Elk Heating and Sheet Metal. Mary R. Storer is a heavy gambler and lost over \$103,000 at the Alton Belle Casino during 2006. As part of the plea, she admitted she committed tax evasion, embezzled money from Elk Heating and Sheet Metal's employee benefit plans and failed to pay over employment taxes of Elk Heating and Sheet Metal. She has agreed to pay restitution in the amount of \$266,056 to Elk Heating and Sheet Metal.

The investigation of the case was handled by the Internal Revenue Service/Criminal Investigations, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations OIG, U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefit Security Administration and the Wood River Police Department. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Norman R. Smith.