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**Johanne M. Elie and Ricky L. Elie
Sentenced on Federal Charges**

Portland, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Johanne M. Elie**, age 49, and **Ricky L. Elie**, age 41, of Biddeford, Maine were sentenced today in U.S. District Court. **Johanne M. Elie**, who pleaded guilty on February 12, 2008, to federal wire fraud and tax evasion charges, was sentenced to 37 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$7,600 in assessments. Her husband, **Ricky L. Elie**, who pleaded guilty on February 14, 2008, to federal tax evasion charges, was sentenced to 18 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$400 in assessments. The defendants were also ordered to pay \$395,000 in restitution to Provencher Fuels, Inc. ("Provencher's") and \$49,683 to the Internal Revenue Service. Both defendants were remanded into the custody of the United States Marshal's Service to begin serving their sentences.

According to Court documents, between about 2000 and September 12, 2005, the defendants charged personal expenses to charge accounts and then **Johanne M. Elie** paid the out-of-state

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vendors for those charges with checks totaling about \$215,000, drawn on a checking account of their employer, Provencher's, also of Biddeford, causing interstate wires to be used to collect the checks. Both defendants failed to report the embezzled funds on their joint federal tax returns in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, thereby evading \$49,863 in income taxes. **Johanne M. Elie** was also found responsible for embezzling about \$180,000 in cash from Provencher's.

Provencher's is a family-owned fuel oil and propane delivery and burner service company which employed about 10 people. **Johanne M. Elie** was hired in about 1990, and between 2000 and September 12, 2005, she worked as the treasurer and/or officer manager. In that capacity, she was responsible for handling all of Provencher's financial affairs and had full check writing authority with respect to Provencher's checking account. Between 2000 and 2005, **Ricky L. Elie** was employed at Provencher's as an assistant office manager. His duties included assisting his wife with the day-to-day operations of the office, running business-related errands such as retrieving and delivering parts for the service technicians, making bank deposits, collecting on delinquent accounts, purchasing heating supplies, and other associated tasks.

According to Provencher's payroll records, between January

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2001 and December 2004, **Johanne L. Elie** received a net paycheck of between \$491.33 and \$644.80 per week and **Ricky L. Elie** received a net paycheck of between \$375.28 and \$513.27 per week. Even so, between December 2000 and October 2005, the defendants charged over \$195,000 for, among other things, jewelry, recreational vehicles, boats, vacations, motorcycles, bicycles, art, food and sporting events and memorabilia.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, the Biddeford Police Department and the United States Postal Inspection Service.

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