

News Release

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FORMER BLAINE COUNTY MAN SENTENCED FOR EVADING TAXES AND FLYING AN AIRPLANE WITHOUT A LICENSE

Noting that the presentence investigation had gathered information that Gary J. Engman was "manipulative, evasive and a con man," a federal judge yesterday sentenced the former Bellevue man to a year and a day in prison for flying an airplane without a license and failing to file federal income tax returns four years in a row.

Engman, 56, appeared before U.S. District Judge Edward J. Lodge at the federal courthouse in Boise yesterday afternoon. In addition to the prison time, Judge Lodge also ordered Engman to serve a year of probation and pay a \$15,000 fine. Engman has already made a payment of \$70,000 to the Internal Revenue Service to cover his back taxes.

Nationwide, over the past three years about 830 people have been sentenced to prison for failing to file tax returns.

The airplane charge stemmed from a flight Engman made on April 6, 2006, from the Hailey airport to Baker City, Oregon, in a twin-engine Cessna. When questioned by Baker City authorities, Engman said he had left his airman's certificate at home. In fact, as he admitted in his plea agreement, the only certificate he had ever held was a student pilot certificate which had expired in 1995. After being questioned he obtained a new certificate, backdating it to April 6.

Engman, who now lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, formerly owned and operated Western Heritage Timber, with offices in Terreton, Idaho; Montana; and Wyoming. Even though he knew he earned more than enough income from that company to be required to file federal income tax returns, he failed to do so each year between 2001 and 2004.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, with assistance from the Federal Aviation Administration.