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NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
April 9, 2009**

GRAND JURY INDICTS DOCTOR AND HIS WIFE ON CHARGES OF TAX EVASION AND CONSPIRACY

A federal grand jury in Albuquerque has indicted Dr. Mark E. Hopkins and his wife, Sharon J. Hopkins, residents of Carlsbad, New Mexico, on seven counts of tax evasion in violation of 26 U.S.C. § 7201. The indictment also charges the couple with one count of conspiracy in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371, by conspiring to impede the Internal Revenue Service in the collection of taxes due and owed.

Dr. Hopkins is an emergency room doctor at the Carlsbad Medical Center. Mrs. Hopkins is an owner of My Favorite New Mexico Foods, LLC, which manufactures and sells traditional New Mexico foods. The indictment alleges that Dr. And Mrs. Hopkins have failed to file personal tax returns since 1997 and owe the Internal Revenue Service \$1,306,239.00. As alleged in the indictment, the couple has had taxable income of at least \$260,000.00 annually since 2002.

The indictment further alleges that the Hopkins have taken numerous steps to conceal their assets from the Internal Revenue Service. Among the steps taken, Dr. Hopkins allegedly directed that all of the income payments from the staffing company that employed him make its checks, totaling \$3,049,229.00, to him payable to "Shalom Enterprises."

As alleged in the indictment, the couple entered into a conspiracy to impede the Internal Revenue Service by using nine sham entities so as to conceal their assets. Many of these sham entities were given the title "pure trusts." The indictment further alleges that the couple has set up bank accounts using fictitious EINs (employer identification numbers) and, in some instances, told the bank that the account holders were exempt from taxation. In addition, the indictment alleges that the Hopkins also sent threatening letters to the Internal Revenue Service and filed documents with the Chaves County Clerk, wherein Dr. Hopkins claimed to be a citizen of the Republic of Texas and wherein Mrs. Hopkins claimed to be a citizen of the New Mexico Republic.

If convicted of the foregoing offenses, the statutory penalty provides for imprisonment up to 40 years. Of course, an indictment is only an accusation and the defendants are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation was conducted by the Department of the Treasury, Criminal Investigation section of the Internal Revenue Service office in Las Cruces. Prosecution of this matter has been and will be overseen by the Department of Justice Tax Division, and by the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, Gregory J. Fouratt, United States Attorney.