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**ELKTON MAN CHARGED WITH USING STOLEN GSA CREDIT CARDS TO BUY
GASOLINE**

Baltimore, Maryland - Richard B. Eldreth, age 41, of Elkton, Maryland was charged by complaint today with stealing government property in connection with the unauthorized purchases of fuel using stolen U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) credit cards, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Eldreth was arrested late yesterday and had his initial appearance in federal district court at 3:00 p.m. today.

“This was just an outright theft of federal property,” said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. “Richard Eldreth allegedly used stolen GSA credit cards hundreds of times to purchase more than \$58,000 worth of fuel at gas stations.”

GSA pays fuel bills and maintenance costs for vehicles leased to federal agencies and quasi-federal agencies, including the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak). Each government vehicle is assigned a GSA Voyager Fleet Credit Card to purchase gas and maintenance for the vehicle. According to the affidavit supporting the complaint, eight GSA credit cards assigned to Amtrak vehicles in Delaware and Maryland have been used to make fraudulent purchases. Five of the eight credit cards were reported stolen or lost. From June 23 to August 31, 2008, about \$58,253 in fraudulent fuel purchases have been made with these cards at gas stations in the vicinities of Elkton, Maryland; Wilmington, Delaware; and Newark, Delaware. Many of these purchases were for quantities of fuel which exceed the tank capacity of, and for types of fuel not associated with, the vehicles to which the credit cards were assigned. One of the credit cards was used 100 times during this two month period to purchase a total of \$17,711.67 in fuel.

The affidavit further alleges that on August 12 and 19, 2008, GSA agents observed Eldreth use a credit card at a gas station in Elkton to fuel five pick-up trucks and several 50 gallon containers located in the trucks' flatbeds. Two of these vehicles were observed parked at his residence. Receipts for the fuel purchases retrieved after Eldreth left the gas station indicated that two GSA credit card which had been previously reported as stolen from Amtrak were used to purchase the fuel.

Eldreth faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for September 30, 2008.

A complaint is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by complaint is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the GSA - Office of Inspector General and the Amtrak - Office of Inspector General for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein also thanked the Cecil County Sheriff's Department, the Elkton Police Department and the Maryland Department of Environmental Protection for their assistance. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan Biran, who is prosecuting the case.