



OFFICE OF THE  
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**ANDERSON WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR EMBEZZLEMENT**  
February 27, 2008

This morning an Anderson woman was sentenced to three years in prison following her conviction for Embezzlement. Judge James Ruggiero sentenced Mary Elizabeth Vanatta, 58, to prison, and recommended her placement at the California Restitution Center.

The conviction stemmed from Vanatta's employment at Northern Rehabilitation and Respiratory, where she worked as the Office Manager from 2005 through September 2007. Part of her duties included overseeing the financial operations of the business. Vanatta systematically wrote checks to herself and made personal charges on the company's debit card. Because she was a trusted employee, the business owner never checked Vanatta's work. It was an elaborate scheme which was only discovered after representatives from a local bank called the business owner to discuss some charges made at casinos on the company accounts. When the scheme was uncovered Vanatta admitted to the thefts, and asked Northern Rehab and Respiratory not to involve law enforcement.

The aggregate total loss to the business was tremendous. Vanatta was ordered to pay \$206,584.02 in restitution to the Northern Rehab and Respiratory.

During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that Vanatta had been fired from three previous jobs after each business discovered that she had embezzled money. None of the prior employers ever contacted law enforcement about Vanatta's prior thefts.

This case is an excellent example of why businesses need to maintain oversight over employees who have access to finances. Further, had the other alleged victims gone to law enforcement with their suspicions, Vanatta likely would not have been in a position to commit this crime. The California Department of Corrections operates the Restitution Center in Los Angeles, California. It is a prison where non-violent offenders work in industries which require some level of skill or expertise, in order to earn money to pay restitution to their victims. Once Vanatta finishes her prison term, she will still be obligated to continue paying the victim back.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Erin M. Dervin, and investigated by the Redding Police Department Investigator Matt Zalesny.