



NEWS RELEASE

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLUE SPRINGS WOMAN SENTENCED FOR DEFRAUDING EMPLOYER OF MORE THAN \$650,000

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Blue Springs, Mo., woman was sentenced in federal court today for defrauding her employer of \$653,270.97.

Sharon Marie Wheeler, 46, of Blue Springs, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to four years in federal prison without parole. She also was ordered to pay restitution derived from the fraud, including \$653,270.90.

On July 10, 2003, she pleaded guilty to two counts of defrauding her employer, Powis Corporation, Ltd. By pleading guilty, **Wheeler** admitted that on two separate occasions between June 6, 1998, and Feb. 17, 2003, she falsely deposited checks payable to Powis Corporation into her own personal account.

Wheeler was employed at Powis Corporation in a clerical capacity from Feb. 5, 1996, until Feb. 17, 2003. She regularly worked with company invoices, sorting and distributing mail, and preparing packing slips, among other things.

She admitted that she falsely and fraudulently deposited checks payable to Powis Corporation into her personal account at a Blue Springs bank. The checks were drawn on the accounts of Powis Corporation's customers. **Wheeler** would endorse the checks by forging the business owner's signature, making them payable to her own personal account, Graves said.

Powis Corporation, owned by Michael and Linda Powis in Blue Springs, designs and manufactures computer systems for meat processing ovens and provides parts and service for commercial ovens.

She was originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on April 1,

2003.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda Parker Marshall. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow