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A Ririe woman gets 2-6 years prison time for theft

REXBURG -- A Ririe woman ran out of luck in court Monday and was sentenced to prison for stealing from an employer.

As a result of a probation violation, Tamra Raymond, 46, was sentenced to two to six years in prison by Judge Brent Moss.

Raymond had been on probation on a 2007 case where she was charged for grand theft for taking funds from Christensen Dental in Rexburg.

According to court records, Christensen Dental has relocated to Wasilla, Alaska.

An investigation by the Rexburg Police Department indicated that the thefts took place between Jan. 1, 2006, and Feb. 16, 2007.

The grand theft charge was filed March 19, 2007.

On July 9, 2007, Raymond agreed to plead guilty to the charge and she was sentenced on Aug. 20, 2007.

Court records show that restitution in that case was finally set at \$45,000.

Although the two to six year prison sentence was a possibility at that time, the court retained jurisdiction for 120 days, and Raymond underwent counseling and evaluation.

But despite the retained jurisdiction period, Raymond wound up back before the court.

The probation violation was filed on Nov. 17 in relation to seven counts of forgery that were filed against Raymond in Jefferson County on Sept. 25.

In the new case, Raymond pleaded guilty to an amended charge of petty theft, and the other six forgery charges were dropped.

On Oct. 16 she was sentenced to 360 days in jail, but 338 days were suspended.

She has already served the 22 days.

In court Monday, Raymond admitted forging checks from her latest employer, Rocky Mountain Performance, an auto repair company in Jefferson County, but said she would commit to additional counseling and avoid taking positions where she would handle an employer's money.

She said she had deposited money from her husband's account into the auto repair business's account to help the company avoid overdraft charges.

"I never took any money. It was just going back and forth," she said.

Todd Porter, the owner of Rocky Mountain Performance, told the court that Raymond had forged his name on 43 checks, which led to difficulties in making payroll for his employees.

He said the losses also caused his bank to close his accounts, and he had to borrow around \$10,500 to cover overdraft charges.

Raymond's attorney, Jim Archibald, questioned why the probation department allowed Raymond to accept employment where she was handling company funds.

He recommended that she be placed back on probation so she could continue to pay restitution and receive counseling.

Prosecutor Sid Brown disputed the need for counseling.

"What's the counseling for?" he said. "It's because she has a heart as big as all outdoors? Her story is totally and completely ridiculous. She was kiting checks, until she got caught. She's a thief - she needs to go to the penitentiary."

Raymond will receive credit for time already served in the dental office case.

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