

## **Former Grantee Employee Sentenced for Embezzlement**

On July 6, 2006, Susan Close was sentenced in U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon to 21 months in prison, followed by 36 months of probation, and was ordered to pay \$268,863 in restitution and a \$100 special assessment. Close was the former office manager of the Tillamook County Soil and Water Conservation District, Tillamook, Oregon, a recipient of EPA grant funds.

As the office manager for the District from 2000 until her resignation in June 2005, Close was solely responsible for managing the finances of the organization, including making purchases and paying bills. While employed, she devised a scheme to embezzle money from the organization to pay for personal expenses. Close made unauthorized charges to a credit card belonging to the organization for personal items including clothing, vacations, gifts, jewelry, and furniture. Close then paid the credit card bill with the organization's funds, some of which were derived from EPA grants. On January 23, 2006, Close was suspended from participating in Federal procurement and nonprocurement activities. In February 2006, Close pled guilty to one count of theft from a program receiving Federal funds.

*This investigation was conducted jointly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Tillamook County Sheriff's Office. (Case Cost: \$112,297)*