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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### LOS BANOS CITY EMPLOYEE SENTENCED TO PRISON

On October 20, 39 year old Dos Palos resident Mary Ann Jones entered no contest pleas to multiple felony charges stemming from her embezzlement of over 1.7 million dollars from the City of Los Banos. The pleas were entered in front of Merced County Superior Court Judge Frank Dougherty. Following the pleas, Dougherty sentenced Jones to an 8 year state prison sentence, and ordered full restitution to the city.

The crimes occurred over a four year period, beginning in 2005. Jones, employed by the city as an account clerk, embezzled the money by stealing cash receipts and replacing them with checks from others doing business with the city. Over the four year period, Jones was able to purchase two homes, vehicles, and less tangible assets such as clothing and lavish vacations for herself and her family.

The thefts came to light when Jones was off of work for an extended period of time. During her absence, other city employees noticed discrepancies in the city's financial records. Following an audit by the city, the Los Banos Police Department was notified and took over the case. After an extensive investigation, the case was turned over to the District Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution.

"The Los Banos Police Department did a terrific job during their investigation of this case", said Chief Deputy District Attorney Harold Nutt, who prosecuted the case.

"Because of their thorough investigation, leaving no stone unturned, the evidence against the defendant was overwhelming, and led to a prompt resolution of this case", added Nutt. Nutt noted that Jones cooperated with law enforcement throughout the investigation, and made whatever assets remain available to the city.