

Former Copalis Beach Woman Convicted of Embezzling Quinault Tribal Funds **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

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QUINAULT, Wash. - A 48 year old Las Vegas woman was convicted yesterday of twenty counts of embezzling money from the Quinault Indian Nation. court documents state that Louise Ludwig, then a resident of Copalis Beach, Washington, was employed in the finance department of the Quinault Indian Nation from 2001 to 2008. between march 2007 and November 2008, Ludwig stole \$51,111 by abusing her position as an accounting specialist with check writing authority over certain accounts. U.S. District Judge Benjamin H. Settle found Ludwig guilty after a three day trial. Sentencing is scheduled for August 20, 2012.

According to records filed in the case, Ludwig was the sole accounting specialist with check writing authority on the petty cash account. The account is used to assist tribal members who needed to cash checks or receive change after paying their cable and utilities bill. Ludwig wrote 20 checks to cash or to the bank, and used the funds to pay her mortgage or other personal expenses. On eight occasions when checks on the fund were authorized, Ludwig made the checks for amounts in excess of what had been authorized and pocketed the difference. Ludwig also used two Costco gift cards for her personal expenses. The cards had been purchased to fund necessities for tribal families after a severe storm. Ludwig used the cards to make purchases at a Colorado Costco while on vacation. Ludwig was terminated from tribal employment in December 2008, when the embezzlement was discovered when a new supervisor tasked an employee with reconciling the petty cash account. Embezzlement of tribal funds is punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The case was investigated by the FBI. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys J. Tate London and Norman Barbosa. Mr. London serves as a Tribal Liaison for the U.S. Attorney's Office.